Personal SWOT Analysis

Discover new opportunities. Manage and eliminate threats.

SWOT Analysis is a powerful technique for identifying Strengths and Weaknesses, and for examining the Opportunities and Threats we face. Used in a personal context, it helps you develop our career in a way that takes best advantage of our talents, abilities and opportunities.

What makes SWOT particularly powerful is that with a little thought, it can help uncover opportunities that we are well placed to take advantage of. And by understanding our weaknesses, we can manage and eliminate threats that would otherwise catch us unaware.

How to Use the Tool

To carry out a SWOT Analysis, write down answers to the following questions:

Strengths:

- What advantages (for example, skills, education, or connections) do you have that others don't have?
- What do you do better than anyone else?
- What personal resources do you have access to?
- What do other people (and your boss in particular) see as your strengths?

Consider this from your own perspective, and from the point of view of the people around you. And don't be modest; be as objective as you can. If you are having difficulty with this, try writing down a list of your characteristics. Some of these will hopefully be strengths!

In looking at your strengths, think about them in relation to the people around you – for example, if you're a great mathematician and the people around you are great at math, then this is not likely to be a strength in your current role, it is likely to be a necessity.

Weaknesses:

- What could you improve?
- What should you avoid?
- What things are the people around you likely to see as weaknesses?

Again, consider this from a personal and external basis: Do other people perceive weaknesses that you do not see? Do co-workers consistently out-perform you in key areas? It is best to be realistic now, and face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

Opportunities:

- Where are the good opportunities facing you?
- What are the interesting trends you are aware of?

Useful opportunities can come from such things as:

- Changes in technology, markets and your company on a broad and narrow scale.
- Changes in government policy related to your field.
- Changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyle changes.
- Local events.

A useful approach to looking at opportunities is also to look at your strengths and ask yourself whether these open up any opportunities.

Alternatively, look at your weaknesses and ask yourself whether you could open up opportunities by eliminating them.

Threats:

- What obstacles do you face?
- What are the people around you doing?
- Is your job (or the demand for the things you do) changing?
- Is changing climate or technology threatening your position?
- Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten you?

Personal SWOT Analysis Worksheet

Name: Date:

Strengths:

1. What advantages (for example, skill, education or connections) do you have that others don't have?

2. What do you do better than anyone else?

3. What personal resources do you have access to?

4. What do other people (and your boss in particular) see as your strengths?

Weaknesses:

1. What could you improve?

2. What should you avoid?

3. What things are the people around you likely to see as weaknesses?

Opportunities:

1. What are the good opportunities facing you?

2. What are the interesting trends you are aware of?

Threats:

1. What obstacles do you face?

2. What are the people around you doing?

3. Is your job (or the demand for the things you do) changing?

4. Is changing climate or technology threatening your position? How?

5. Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten you?

Individual Development Plan

Based on the above, complete the following and develop a self-improvement plan. Your plan may include a request for training, increased meetings with a supervisor to analyze issues and improve skills, team meetings with others to discuss common issues, coaching, and/or a renewed approach to a daily supervisory practice.

1. My strengths:

2. Areas where I need improvement:

3. My individual objectives for the next 6 months:

4. My plan to achieve objectives: