

The SWOT Analysis

Guide and Template

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What is SWOT?

**A SWOT analysis is an analysis of:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Strengths** |
|  | **Weaknesses** |
|  | **Opportunities** |
|  | **Threats** |

**Your strengths and weaknesses are internal: aspects of**

**your personality, personal skills and things that you’re**

**good at or not so good at. Strengths and weaknesses can**

**also apply to a group or organisation, rather than one**

**individual. These can also be known as advantages and**

**disadvantages, depending on the context.**

**Your opportunities and threats are external: aspects of the**

**environment, or things beyond your control, such as the**

**actions of others. Opportunities are things that you can’t**

**control but could take advantage of or exploit, whilst**

**threats can cause damage to your success potential.**

Why Would You Use a SWOT Analysis?

**A business venture or project is most likely to be successful if you’ve thought about what will make it work and what could bring it crashing to the ground. A SWOT analysis, also known as a SWOT matrix, can apply to a person or a business, a product, a place or an industry, so is a versatile evaluation tool that works in a wide range of situations.**

**The information that you record during a SWOT analysis can be used to better plan ahead, predict possible failure points and even decide if a project is ready to get off the ground at all!**

**Bear in mind that SWOT analysis may be a valuable workplace tool, but can also be useful for an individual looking to meet their own personal goals.**

An Example of Swot Analysis

**Visually, a SWOT Analysis template is usually created as a box with four squares. The squares on the left are positives and the squares on the right are negatives.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| **Opportunities** | **Treats** |

**Someone training for a marathon might list their strengths as the amount of training that they’ve done, and also the fact that they have the right clothing and equipment. Their weakness might be that they have a tendency to run too fast at the start, so could be likely to use up their energy before the race is complete. Opportunities might be the possibility of teaming up with a more experienced runner for training, or arranging a sponsorship deal to get better equipment. Threats could be bad weather on the day of the race (or during training), a niggling injury resurfacing or an illness that reduces the ability to train, or sets training back by a week or two.**

**SWOT analysis can become much more in-depth than the above, and will certainly need to be a lot more detailed if it’s going to lead to action or make a difference to a business or organisation, but the principle is the same no matter how detailed your analysis becomes.**

Can a SWOT analysis be used without a long-term goal?

**You don’t have to be looking at a long-term goal to use SWOT analysis. The same principle applies to big or small, from ‘having a sausage sandwich for breakfast’ to ‘moving business headquarters abroad to reach an international market’. You can also use SWOT analysis during the recruitment process, to help you to determine which candidates might be the right ones for your team.**

**You can also use SWOT analysis tasks as icebreakers, or just to get people talking and sharing ideas. An hour spent working on a SWOT matrix can raise some interesting**

**ideas and questions, even if things aren’t taken any further.**

Some Questions That You Might Like to Ask:

**You don’t need to answer specific questions to complete a SWOT matrix. You can simply sit down and let the ideas flow, alone or with other people. A list of questions, however, can help you on your way. Here are a few to get you started:**

***Strengths:***

**What do you see as your Unique Selling Point (for businesses/products) or as your most important personality traits?**

**What are you better at than most people/your competitor?**

**What do your customers/friends consider to be your strengths? You might want to ask around for this one, or launch a customer survey. Sometimes, a different perspective can make a big difference.**

**What resources can you draw on that you already have at your disposal?**

***Weaknesses:***

**Which of your traits are you least proud of?**

**What about yourself/your business would you most like to improve?**

**What are you not as good at as most people/your competitor?**

**What do your customers/friends consider to be your weaknesses? As is the case with your strengths, you may find that asking around reveals some interesting results. If you’re doing this on a personal level, be sure that you can handle constructive criticism!**

***Opportunities:***

**What could you do to improve your situation on a personal or business level?**

**Are there any opportunities that you can take advantage of, such as learning a new skill?**

**Could you connect with someone/do networking to take advantage of their connections?**

**Do you recognise anything that’s happening elsewhere that others might not have noticed yet?**

**Are there any events that are taking place and that you could make the most of?**

**What resources are available to you, if you decide to use them?**

***Threats:***

**What things are standing in your way and making things difficult?**

**What things might stand in your way, even if they’re not already doing so?**

**What are other people doing that might have an impact on you? What are your competitors doing or developing that might affect your business?**

**Are there any laws, rules or regulations that affect you?**

**Are there time limits that are going to negatively affect you?**

Who Should Contribute to a SWOT Analysis?

**Whilst SWOT analysis can be conducted by just one person, you’re better prepared and equipped if you hear from a wide range of different perspectives. Have a number of stakeholders do SWOT analysis separately, or you can all work together to produce a big SWOT matrix containing the responses of many different people. You’ll likely spot many common themes – things that come up again and again – but certain individuals might bring something to the table that nobody else has thought of.**



[www.staffsquared.com](http://www.staffsquared.com)

[hello@staffsquared.com](mailto:hello@staffsquared.com)

0800 033 7569