



SWOT Analysis
PA Veteran Farmer Project Conference
1 April 2022

What is a SWOT and why is it important?

- A SWOT analysis is a compilation of your company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- The primary objective of a SWOT analysis is to help develop a full awareness of all the factors involved in making a business decision.
- Perform a SWOT analysis before you commit to any sort of company action, whether you are exploring new initiatives, revamping internal policies, considering opportunities to shift gears or altering a plan midway through its execution.
- Use your SWOT analysis to discover recommendations and strategies, with a focus on leveraging strengths and opportunities to overcome weaknesses and threats.

To run a successful business, you should regularly analyze your processes to ensure you are operating as efficiently as possible. While there are numerous ways to assess your company, one of the most effective methods is to conduct a SWOT analysis.

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis is a planning process that helps your company overcome challenges and determine what new leads to pursue.

The primary objective of a SWOT analysis is to help develop a full awareness of all the factors involved in making a business decision. This method was created in the 1960s by Albert Humphrey of the Stanford Research Institute, during a study conducted to identify why corporate planning consistently failed. Since its creation, SWOT has become one of the most useful tools for business owners to start and grow their companies.

When should you perform a SWOT?

You can employ a SWOT analysis before you commit to any sort of company action, whether you are exploring new initiatives, revamping internal policies, considering opportunities to pivot or altering a plan midway through its execution. Sometimes it's wise to perform a general SWOT analysis just to check on the current landscape of your business so you can improve business operations as needed. The analysis can show you the key areas where your organization is performing optimally, as well as which operations need adjustment.

Take the time to put together a formal SWOT analysis, you can see the whole picture of your business. From there, you can discover ways to improve or eliminate your company's weaknesses and capitalize on its strengths.

While the business owner should certainly be involved in creating a SWOT analysis, it is often helpful to include other team members in the process. The collective knowledge of the team will allow you to adequately analyze your business from all sides.

Characteristics of a SWOT:

A SWOT analysis focuses on the four elements of the acronym, allowing companies to identify the forces influencing a strategy, action or initiative. Knowing these positive and negative elements can help companies more effectively communicate what parts of a plan need to be recognized.

Pairing external threats with internal weaknesses can highlight the most serious issues a company faces.

Internal factors:

Strengths (S) and weaknesses (W) refer to internal factors, which are the resources and experience readily available to you.

These are some commonly considered internal factors:

- Financial resources (funding, sources of income and investment opportunities)
- Physical resources (location, facilities and equipment)
- Human resources (employees, volunteers and target audiences)
- Access to natural resources, trademarks, patents and copyrights
- Current processes (employee programs, department hierarchies and software systems)

External Factors:

External forces influence and affect every company, organization and individual. Whether these factors are connected directly or indirectly to an opportunity (O) or threat (T), it is important to note and document each one.

External factors are typically things you or your company do not control, such as the following:

- Market trends (new products, technology advancements and shifts in audience needs)
- Economic trends (local, national and international financial trends)
- Funding (donations, legislature and other sources)
- Demographics
- Relationships with suppliers and partners
- Political, environmental and economic regulations

After you create your SWOT framework and fill out your SWOT analysis, you will need to come up with some recommendations and strategies based on the results. These strategies should focus on leveraging strengths and opportunities to overcome weaknesses and threats.

Weaknesses Exercise:

For every weakness identified on your SWOT, list out 3 possible solutions that you/your team can begin to work on. Assign each one a timeframe for completion & any resources needed to complete on your quarterly goals/action plan.

SWOT Template:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats