

## WHY CONDUCT A PERSONAL SWOT?

The SWOT analysis increases self-awareness and highlights both our advantages and challenges. It helps us to improve and also play to our strengths. The latter is something that the British tend not to shout about that much, but most definitely should.

Finding the necessary objectivity to conduct a personal SWOT analysis can be a challenge. We often cannot see how we come across in our interactions with others, so **feedback during this process is valuable**.

## SWOT DESCRIPTIONS

READ

### STRENGTHS

- What skills do other people compliment me on, or associate me with?
- What do I do (or what skill do I possess) that is unique and sets me apart from my peers?

Remember, your strengths are internal factors that are under your control. Consider things like:

- Education/knowledge.
- Experience.
- Competencies/skills/abilities/aptitudes.
- Interests.
- Personality traits.
- Resources that you have access to, and connections that you can draw upon.

### WEAKNESSES

- What do you lack that others around you have?
- What could you do better? (Many of us are masters of deception; we cover up our weaknesses and hide them from others. Even if other people don't know what your weaknesses are, you will.)
- What do you receive consistent criticism for?
- Do you have any habits or characteristics that plague you at work or at home?
- What do other people see as your weaknesses?
- What qualifications / skills do you lack?

### OPPORTUNITIES

- How can you turn your strengths into opportunities?
- How can you create opportunities by enhancing your strengths?
- How can you create opportunities by managing or eliminating your weaknesses?
- What is happening in your organisation that may provide an opportunity for you that you have missed?
- Do any changing circumstances in your personal life present an opportunity for you to capitalise on?
- Are you working on any goals that will provide opportunities?

### THREATS

- What areas do you need to improve?
- What beliefs might be holding you back?
- Which obstacles do you face?
- Where might you be lacking in knowledge?
- What are your peers doing, that you may not have started yet?
- Which, if any, weaknesses might be significant enough to threaten your overall success?
- What are the things you need to avoid?
- Will political instability hurt you?

## HOW TO USE IT - DO

To conduct a personal SWOT analysis, ask yourself questions about each of the four areas being examined. Answer honestly, or the analysis will not generate meaningful results. With that in mind, try to see yourself from the standpoint of a colleague, family members or a friend, and view with objectivity.

It's also important to imagine the potential of what you can become.

Don't limit yourself to the strengths that you're currently exhibiting in your job.

List all of your strengths, even the ones that have been dormant for a while. Also pay particular attention to the things that you have that your peers don't.

'How are you different, unique and special?'

It's good to share these with peers and learn from each other, as this can help with delegation and also buddying people up. Who could help who, and in which area?

## ANALYSIS EXAMPLE QUESTIONS - STRENGTHS

Begin by identifying your strengths; the traits or skills that set you apart from others. Those that are unique to you:

- What are you good at naturally?
- What skills have you worked to develop?
- What are your talents?
- How strong is your network of connections?
- What do other people see as your strengths?
- What sets you apart from your peers?

## ANALYSIS EXAMPLE QUESTIONS - WEAKNESSES

Or rather... What could I develop?

This part examines the areas in which you could improve the things that may hold you back in your career:

- What are your negative work habits and traits? We all have them!
- Does any part of your education or training need improving?
- What would other people see as your weaknesses ?
- Where and what would you like to improve?
- What are you afraid to do or most likely to avoid?
- What feedback about you or your work have you received that may be holding you back?

## ANALYSIS EXAMPLE QUESTIONS - OPPORTUNITIES

Look at factors you can take advantage of:

- Is your industry growing?
- Is there new demand for a skill or trait you possess?
- What are the biggest changes occurring in the current business environment?
- Have customers or co-workers given you feedback about new services you could provide?
- • Are you working on any goals that will provide opportunities once you've accomplished them?

## ANALYSIS EXAMPLE QUESTIONS - THREATS

What are the threats to your career growth? This part considers the external factors that could hurt your chances to attain your goals, including:

- Is your industry contracting or changing directions?
- Is there strong competition for the types of jobs for which you are best suited?
- Do your weaknesses inhibit your ability to rise in your company or change jobs?
- What is the biggest external barrier to your goals?
- Are there any new professional standards or qualifications you currently need?
- Are there any new technology, education or certification requirements that will impede your progress?

## YOUR SWOT TEMPLATE

DO

### STRENGTHS

### WEAKNESSES

### OPPORTUNITIES

### THREATS



## NEXT STEPS - MATCH OR CONVERT

Once you have filled out the matrix, there are two ways to analyse the information and build a strategy: matching or converting.

Matching means connecting two of the categories to determine a course of action. For example, matching strengths to opportunities shows you where to take action. On the other hand, matching weaknesses to threats exposes those areas you should work on.

To convert is to turn negatives into positives — in other words, converting your weaknesses into strengths, or threats into opportunities. This can mean growing a skill set through learning and development or finding a creative way to feature a weakness as a strength. For instance, if you are outgoing, working in an introspective and isolated environment may not suit you very well. But if you can work towards a position, such as sales, in which you interact with many people, that weakness turns into a strength and could allow you to excel.

## OUTCOMES

Once your personal SWOT analysis is complete, it is good practice to revisit it on a regular basis and use the outcomes to design your personal plan and goals. It's a great visual, alongside your development plan, as you can see how you are improving, which is always a great feeling.