

What is a SWOT Analysis?

One of the requirements of being successful is your ability to grow. Active, continuous personal development separates the successful from the mediocre. But how do you do it?



Businesses use SWOT analysis to help them to develop business strategy; it can also be used at an individual level to develop a personal development plan.

To complete a SWOT analysis you need to think about:

- Your **strengths** and **weaknesses** - your internal characteristics/skills/knowledge.
- Your **opportunities** and **threats** - the external factors relating to your workplace or industry.



Strengths

Use the following questions to help you to identify what your strengths are:

- What have you been praised for in the last 12 months?
- What strengths have been identified in feedback from your line manager?
- What makes you stand out from other people?
- What qualities are you particularly proud of?
- What successes have you had in the last year?
- What unique skills/knowledge do you have that a workplace would need?

With this list you are trying to identify what sets you apart from everyone else.

If you find it difficult to think about your strengths, you may want to ask a trusted friend or family member to help you.

Weaknesses

Use the following questions to help you come up with a list of weaknesses:

- What gaps have you got in your skills/knowledge?
- Do you have any bad habits that are holding you back?
- When have you failed to meet expectations?
- What has been identified as a weakness to you in feedback from your line manager and others?
- What complaints have you received about your work in the last 12 months?
- What things do you find most difficult?
- What internal factors are holding you back?

At this stage of the SWOT analysis you need to get the balance right between being honest with yourself and not being overly harsh on yourself!



Opportunities

Opportunities are things that are external to you, that could help you to achieve your objectives.

Use these questions to identify the opportunities that are available to you:

- What resources are available for you that would help you to achieve your objectives?
- Do you know the specific career path you want to take?
- Who do you know that could help to support you achieving your objectives?
- What courses could you attend that might help you to achieve your objectives?
- Have you found any vacancies recently that might be of interest to you?

Threats

Threats include anything external to you, that could prevent you from achieving your objectives.

Use the following questions to find out what threats you face:

- What challenges do you face?
- Are you in competition with anyone else?
- Who might stand in the way of you achieving your objectives and why?

In summary:

To conduct a SWOT analysis, simply;

- *identify the objective you want to achieve*
- *identify your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats*
- *Analyse your findings - utilise strengths and opportunities and minimise weaknesses and threats*
- *Put together a development plan that will help you to achieve your objectives.*

