

Carrying Out a SWOT Analysis

Carrying out a SWOT analysis helps build a picture of your organisation and its place within its operating environment. The word SWOT stands for - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.

What you need to do ...

1. Invite the people you feel can help
2. Ask someone not directly involved with the organisation to facilitate. Make sure that the facilitator is briefed very in advance
3. Give each participant a sheet of paper, showing a square divided into each of the 4 sections: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
4. Draw a copy on a whiteboard or flip chart pad.
5. Ask participants to consider a set of questions from their own viewpoint and from the perspective of the people they deal with.

Some things you might like to look at:

Strengths:

- What are your advantages over other organisations in your field?
- What things do you do really well?
- What particular skills/expertise do you have?

Weaknesses:

- What could you improve on?
- What things are you doing, what shouldn't?
- What should you be doing but can't?

Opportunities

- What can you expand on?
- Where should you put your efforts?
- What are the next steps?
- Are there any trends in your community that you can use to your advantage?
- What government policy opportunities exist?

Threats

- What obstacles are in your way?
- What are your competitors doing? What are they planning?
- What are your funders doing? What are they planning?
- How is the demand for your services? Are your clients less satisfied or more satisfied?

6. Brainstorm - there are no wrong answers, or stupid suggestions.
7. Pull all the answers together and see where they fit and where they don't. Leave enough time to discuss outlying answers and see if people agree with them. Identify where strengths and opportunities can be maximised and threats and weaknesses overcome.

Use the SWOT lists to develop recommendations for the organisation's future strategic and/or business plan.s

DISCLAIMER: While all care has been taken in the preparation of this material, no responsibility is accepted by WDCVS, its staff or volunteers, for any errors, omissions or inaccuracies. This resource has been prepared to provide general information only. No responsibility can be accepted by WDCVS for any known or unknown consequences that may result from reliance on any information provided in this publication.