SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Outline your strengths

For example: location, staff expertise, competitive advantage, price, reputation, quality control.

Weaknesses

Outline your weaknesses

These might include lack of expertise, limited resources, lack of access to skills or technology, inferior service offerings, or the poor location of your business.

Outline how you will protect your strengths

For example, you could increase your advertising budget to increase awareness of your competitive advantage and your location. You could speak at industry events to demonstrate expertise, or you could use social media and your website to promote in relation to your competition.

Outline how you will reduce your weaknesses

For example, you could increase your advertising budget to increase awareness of your competitive advantage and your location or you could invest in specialized staff training, shop around for better suppliers, seek professional advice about updating your technology and scout the area for a better location.

Opportunities

Outline your opportunities

These may be the result of market growth, lifestyle changes, resolution of problems associated with current situations, positive market perceptions about your business, or the ability to offer greater value that will create a demand for your services.

Outline how you will maximize your opportunities

For example, you could increase your advertising budget to increase awareness of your competitive advantage and your location or you could decide to develop new products or services that align with a shift in market demand.

Threats

Outline your threats

These may include price increases by your suppliers, governmental regulation, economic downturns, a shift in consumer demand that reduces your sales, or technology that may make your products, equipment, or services obsolete.

Outline how you will reduce the impact of the threats

For example, be proactive by keeping a close eye on governmental policies that might affect your business, so you're forewarned. Conduct regular cash flow forecasts and stay ahead of technological advances and invest in them to reduce the risk of becoming obsolete.

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SWOT analysis template

Use our SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Template to document the parts of your business that need improving, and parts that provide you true competitive advantage. Complete the template to identify the practical steps you can take to build a better business.

Common uses of a SWOT analysis

A SWOT template has many uses and not confined to just your business. Other examples include:

- **Competitor SWOT.** Select a main competitor and complete the SWOT around their business. Then outline what you can do to minimize their strengths and opportunities and find ways to exploit their weaknesses and threats.
- **Market SWOT.** If you're considering entering a new market, complete a SWOT for the country or region you're investigating.
- **New product SWOT.** Identify the pros and cons of developing something new. Being able to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of your business and various projects are essential when fine-tuning your strategy.

If possible, combine complementary sections for greater impact, for example:

- **Match opportunities to strengths** such as coordinating new market entry (opportunity) with existing strong brand awareness advantage (strength).
- **Match weaknesses to opportunities**, such as improving logistics (weakness) to meet a new market (opportunity).
- **Match threats to strengths**, for example, tackling a price-leading market entrant (threat) with a PR campaign highlighting brand trust (strength).
- **Prioritize solving any weaknesses and threats,** for example, you have outdated equipment (weaknesses) and a new faster and cheaper competitor with new technology (threat) has just entered the market.

Note. This is a guide only and should neither replace competent advice, nor be taken or relied upon as financial or professional advice. Seek professional advice before making any decision that could affect your business.