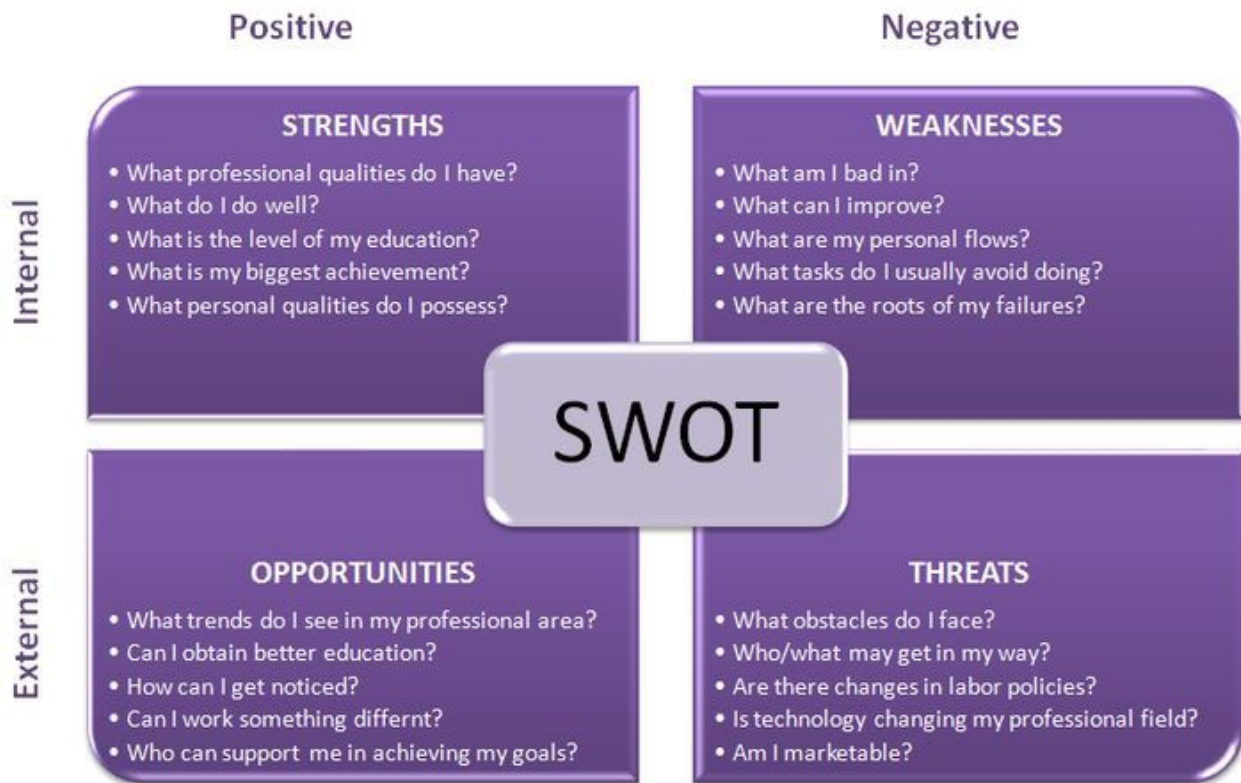


Personal SWOT Analysis



You are most likely to succeed in life if you use your **talents** to their fullest extent. Similarly, you'll suffer fewer problems if you know what your weaknesses are, and if you manage these **weaknesses** so that they don't matter in the work you do.

So how you go about identifying these strengths and weaknesses, and analyzing the opportunities and threats that flow from them? **SWOT Analysis** is a useful technique that helps you do this.

What makes SWOT especially powerful is that, with a little thought, it can help you uncover **opportunities** that you would not otherwise have spotted. And by understanding your weaknesses, you can manage and eliminate **threats** that might otherwise hurt your ability to move forward.

If you look at yourself using the SWOT framework, you can start to separate yourself from your peers, and further develop the specialized talents and abilities you need to advance your career and help you achieve your personal goals.

How to Use the Tool

To perform a personal SWOT analysis, first print out the following [Worksheet](#), and write down answers to the following questions.

Strengths

- What advantages do you have that others don't have (for example, skills, certifications, education, or connections)?
- What do you do better than anyone else?
- What personal resources can you access?
- What do other people (and your boss, in particular) see as your strengths?
- Which of your achievements are you most proud of?
- What values do you believe in that others fail to exhibit?
- Are you part of a network that no one else is involved in? If so, what connections do you have with influential people?

Consider this from your **own perspective**, and from the **point of view of the people around you**. And don't be modest or shy – be as objective as you can. Knowing and using your strengths can make you happier and more fulfilled at work.

And if you still have any difficulty identifying your strengths, write down a list of your **personal characteristics**. Some of these will hopefully be strengths!

Tip:

Think about your strengths in relation to the people around you.

For example, if you're a great mathematician and the people around you are also great at math, then this is not likely to be a strength in your current role – it may be a necessity.

Weaknesses

- What tasks do you usually avoid because you don't feel confident doing them?
- What will the people around you see as your weaknesses?
- Are you completely confident in your education and skills training? If not, where are you weakest?
- What are your negative work habits (for example, are you often late, are you disorganized, do you have a short temper, or are you poor at handling stress)?
- Do you have personality traits that hold you back in your field? For instance, if you have to conduct meetings on a regular basis, a fear of public speaking would be a major weakness.

Again, consider this from a **personal/internal perspective and an external perspective**. Do other people see weaknesses that you don't see? Do co-workers consistently outperform you in key areas? Be realistic – it's best to face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

Opportunities

- What new technology can help you? Or can you get help from others or from people via the Internet?
- Is your industry growing? If so, how can you take advantage of the current market?
- Do you have a network of strategic contacts to help you, or offer good advice?
- What trends (management or otherwise) do you see in your company, and how can you take advantage of them?
- Are any of your competitors failing to do something important? If so, can you take advantage of their mistakes?
- Is there a need in your company or industry that no one is filling?
- Do your customers or vendors complain about something in your company? If so, could you create an opportunity by offering a solution?

You might find **useful opportunities** in the following:

- Networking events, educational classes, or conferences.
- A colleague going on an extended leave. Could you take on some of this person's projects to gain experience?
- A new role or project that forces you to learn new skills, like public speaking or international relations.
- A company expansion or acquisition. Do you have specific skills (like a second language) that could help with the process?

Also, importantly, look at your strengths, and ask yourself whether these open up any opportunities – and look at your weaknesses, and ask yourself whether you could open up opportunities by eliminating those weaknesses.

Threats

- What obstacles do you currently face at work?
- Are any of your colleagues competing with you for projects or roles?
- Is your job (or the demand for the things you do) changing?
- Does changing technology threaten your position?
- Could any of your weaknesses lead to threats?

Performing this analysis will often provide key information – it can point out what needs to be done and put problems into perspective.

Key Points

A SWOT matrix is a framework for analyzing your strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats that you face. This helps you focus on your strengths, minimize your weaknesses, and take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available to you.

