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SWOT Analysis

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Larry Fitzpatrick’s Tailor Business

# Strengths

## Internal

* **Customer Service:** Small business with personal relationships with certain clients.
* **Premium Products:** Off the rack suits, designer products, and custom-tailored suits.
* **A focus on the bestselling products:** Off the rack suits and designer products are bringing in the most money.
* **Quality Control:** We are constantly receiving requests for custom tailored suits because of their high quality in the eyes of the customer.
* **Trust:** The customer’s trust Larry Fitzpatrick and know him. They trust he does good work and will do an excellent job.

# Weaknesses

## Internal

* **Shoes, Belts, etc.**: Not our expertise, we should stick to what we do well.
* **Having resourceful staff:** A system for the manufacturing department to keep track of work and where to assign employees on the job will help with having resourceful staff available.
* **Credit selling:** Not selling on credit to the customers who can afford it or selling on credit to those who can’t afford it.
* **Managing stocking costs:** Over stocking several materials we don’t need, gathering dust on the shelves.
* **Record keeping:** Turning a paper-only system into a digital, automated system that doesn’t require a team of accountants.

# Opportunities

## External

* **Higher-dollar custom orders:** Custom tailored suits and a growing number of orders for them will grow the business as these customers seem to be willing to pay more.
* **Federal tax cuts:** Recent federal tax cuts for businesses should help.
* **The company’s niche:** Building personal relationships with the local business owners.
* **New tech:** A new automated system will help control inventory, sales, expenses, income, and pay for workers making life easier for the Owner Mr. Fitzpatrick, the sales department, bookkeeping, manufacturing, and purchasing.
* **Store credit:** Store credit allows customers to buy in bulk and payoff over time, however the business doesn’t have a system for figuring out who has good credit and who does not.

# Threats

## External

* **Aggressive competitor:** Men’s Warehouse and the constant deals they offer.
* **Successful competitors:** Belk, Macy’s, J. C. Penny, Marshall’s
* **Economic changes:** Recent tax cuts should help the business, however, tariffs on goods imported from China may bring about higher costs for materials. Maybe buy from US manufacturing?
* **Changing business climate:** Suits were more common 70 years ago than today. Bringing custom suits to the new generation will prove to be a challenge.
* **Vulnerabilities:** Changes in fashion trends.

# Supporting Narrative

Larry Fitzpatrick’s tailor business is the perfect example of an American small business turned into major, profit-making company. It shows with hard work, risk, and faith you can build anything. While this business may be top-notch, they could be running their business a lot better. Having a complicated paper-record system is causing this company tons of problems. Not knowing what to have employees work on, lack of store credit on sales, poor management of stocking materials in the manufacturing process, and poor record keeping are hurting this company in more ways than one.

Dylan, head of the manufacturing department has experienced the hurt first hand. According to him it’s hard to keep track of orders that have been worked on, what has been done on them, if they are done, and which have been shipped off to the customers. He’s also frustrated because sometimes one order is to much work for one person and keeping detailed paper-records for each project is way too time consuming and ultimately a waste of his, and his employee’s time. Dylan is looking for something that will allow him to know exactly what is going on, so he can assign his worker’s stations and projects when they clock in for their shifts.

John, the sales manager, has his complaints about operations at the business also. The problems range from not being able to offer personalized customer service in the bulk that they have. They simply have too many customers for himself and his salesmen to get to know on a more personal level. A system for figuring out who the big customers are, which have good credit with the store, and what items they tend to buy in what configurations (such as size, color, item type, etc.) would allow John to communicate to his sales associates what to show the customers and sell them. This system would also allow John to figure out which salesmen were lazy, and which are hard workers who make the effort to get to know their customers. One suggestion I have as a developer is a system of logging which salesmen have the best sales. I work at Staples part time and we have a system where extended service plan dollars plus store credit plan sales are divided by hours worked to give us a sales rating. Employees with higher sales ratings are given more hours during busy times of the year such as Black-Friday, Christmas, and back to school. Higher rated salesmen also win prizes during sales competitions that are held a few times a year. I think a similar system for John and his associates would help the business better identify their good workers and reward them accordingly, encouraging further growth in sales strategy from everyone. This will allow the business to offer more deals and sales to our customers, and also compete with

Jennifer, the bookkeeper, has her own complaints as well with the paper records system at the company. Having an automated system that connects transactions, cash counts, refunds, returns, and commission along with hours worked, hourly pay, and salaries for senior employees would make her life as the bookkeeper more manageable. From our interview with her we have discovered the company simply cannot afford to higher any more bookkeepers, and to give accurate information on losses and profits there must be an automated system. Simple things such as posting daily ledgers, reconciling the daily sales reports from John are overwhelming tasks. As a developer, creating a secure database and forms applications to run on computers and cash registers can eliminate this problem. Simple related fields in database tables can connect parallel data and allow easy modification, retrieval, creation, and deletion from a database. I would need to secure this system with some sort of authentication, which I will need to do more research on before I start on such a system. A system on the local network vs on the web would also help prevent a lot of cyber attacks since it wouldn’t be accessible anywhere except on company computers. The downside is if the business decides to expand to other locations a system redesign might become a necessity.

Derrick from the purchasing department has his issues with the system also. As head of the department he has noticed the company has lots of vendors that stock a lot of different patterns and fabrics. Unfortunately keeping up with inventory seems to be difficult. The company loses lots of money on materials gathering dust on shelves, and from losing customers over orders finished late due to insufficient supplies. As a developer a simple database for inventory would fix this problem easily. A form logging how much of each specific fabric each project will allow us to keep up with how much we need. A program to analyze monthly, quarterly, and annual use of certain materials will also allow us to predict how much we will need to stock up on before certain times of the year.

My action plan as a developer is to first layout how my data will be organized. Making mock database designs on my marker board and in Microsoft Visio will allow me to visualize how I will organize and store data, and how data will be related to other data. Going forward from there I will create databases in either SQL or Microsoft Access depending on what my research reveals about the pros and cons of each approach. Next, I will also begin working on forms applications allowing a user interface for data entry and retrieval, along with programs that will run in the background to perform calculations and analyze our data. I will need to continue to do research on certain systems before I get too specific on program development. I will also continue to study best practices for designing similar systems.

I believe this business has something special that it offers to people and I believe any flaws it may have can be fixed using a new system founded on better organization, using technology as the toolbox.