

SWOT Analysis

WHAT IS SWOT ANALYSIS?

SWOT analysis is one of the strategic planning tools that are often used by Business Mentors to assess an organisation's internal and external environments. It involves identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats that can impact the organisation's goals.

Strengths and weaknesses represent internal factors, such as resources, skills, or limitations, while opportunities and threats are external factors, like market trends, competition, or economic conditions.

Business mentors use SWOT analysis to help clients gain a clear picture of their current position and guide strategic decision-making for growth and problem-solving.



See page 3 for a print out of this model.

WHEN SHOULD I USE IT WITH A CLIENT?

Business mentors often use SWOT analysis in various scenarios, including:

- **Start-up planning:** to evaluate a new business idea and identify potential risks and advantages before launching
- **Strategic planning:** during periodic reviews or when designing long-term strategies to adapt to changing market dynamics
- **Problem solving:** when facing challenges to help pinpoint weaknesses or threats and identify opportunities to address the issue
- **New initiatives:** to assess the feasibility of new products, services, or market expansion plans
- **Performance improvement:** help understand why goals aren't being met and focus on specific areas for improvement

HOW IS IT USED?

SWOT analysis typically follows a structured approach:

1. **Data gathering:** the process starts with gathering insights from the business team, stakeholders, customers, and industry research. Business mentors may conduct interviews, surveys, or brainstorming sessions
2. **Creating a SWOT grid:** The analysis is often visualised in a four-quadrant grid as shown in the picture above and includes:
 - **Strengths:** internal assets, resources, or capabilities that provide an advantage
 - **Weaknesses:** internal limitations or areas where improvement is needed
 - **Opportunities:** external factors or trends that the business can leverage
 - **Threats:** external challenges, such as competitors, market changes, or regulatory hurdles
3. **Prioritisation:** Mentors guide the business in identifying key factors that have the most significant impact on objectives. For example, they may prioritise strengths that align with opportunities or threats that pose the highest risks
4. **Action planning:** Once the SWOT is complete, the mentor helps the client turn insights into actionable strategies. For instance:
 - Leverage strengths to capitalize on opportunities
 - Address weaknesses to reduce vulnerabilities to threats
 - Develop contingency plans for managing critical risks
5. **Regular Review:** SWOT is not a one-time exercise. Mentors encourage clients to revisit their SWOT analysis periodically to adapt to evolving circumstances

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- **Clarity and focus:** SWOT simplifies complex situations by breaking them down into manageable components. This clarity helps clients focus on critical priorities
- **Improved decision-making:** by highlighting internal and external factors, SWOT ensures decisions are grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the business environment
- **Enhanced strategic thinking:** the tool encourages businesses to think strategically, identifying long-term opportunities and risks instead of focusing solely on immediate concerns
- **Objective perspective:** a mentor's facilitation ensures the process is unbiased, helping the client avoid overconfidence or blind spots
- **Resource optimisation:** by identifying strengths and weaknesses, businesses can allocate resources more effectively, maximizing returns
- **Risk mitigation:** recognizing threats and vulnerabilities enables the creation of strategies to reduce risk and build resilience
- **Adaptability:** regular SWOT analysis prepares businesses to respond proactively to changes in the market or industry

In summary, SWOT analysis is a versatile and powerful tool that business mentors use to help their clients navigate challenges and seize opportunities. By fostering clarity, strategic focus, and informed decision-making, it equips businesses with the insights needed to achieve sustainable growth.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Date _____

Notes _____

Strengths

Weaknesses

SWOT

Opportunities

Threats