

Personal Career Development SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis is an effective tool for capturing an accurate and informed view of where you are currently with career development. From this analysis, you and your mentor will have a road map that shows you how to capitalize on your strengths and minimize or eliminate their weaknesses. This map should be used to take advantage of opportunities for a more personalized mentoring experience.

What is a SWOT analysis?

This strategic planning tool is commonly used in business as a marketing analysis. A SWOT analysis focuses on the internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats. This strategic tool is also used in career planning to ensure you to make the most out of your talents and opportunities.

The Personal SWOT analysis provides insight that can assist you in:

- More impactful mentoring conversations
- Brainstorming possible career directions and opportunities
- Flagging and protecting against possible threats.
- Highlighting opportunities to take advantage of on and off campus (conferences, career center workshops, professional association meetings).
- Understanding the skills, attributes and experiences you should emphasize and the ones you should give less focus.

Upon completion of your Personal SWOT analysis, your mentor can assist you in developing goals and plans based on the results.

Instructions begin on page 4 with a 2 X 2 SWOT Analysis template on page 5. Examples to consider for each SWOT category are listed beginning on page 6 with a sample Personal SWOT analysis following on page 8.

A personal SWOT analysis is a look at you and your professional goals and experiences. It will help you identify where you need to improve, and more importantly allows you to identify your internal strengths that you can capitalize on to seize your opportunities and prevent any external threats. Completing the SWOT requires you to assess your current situation and reflect internally (i.e. your strengths and weaknesses) before you can look to the future and explore externally (opportunities and threats).

The **Personal SWOT analysis** shown below asks you to consider the following factors:



To construct your Personal SWOT analysis to set a course for career development and planning, examine your **current** situation. What are your strengths and weaknesses? How can you capitalize on your strengths and overcome your weaknesses? What are the external opportunities and threats in your chosen career field?

Strengths

Internal positive aspects that are under control and upon which you may capitalize in planning

List what you consider to be your most marketable skills.

How can your skills transfer to other roles?

What are your best leadership qualities?

What do other people see as your strengths?

Which of your achievements are you most proud of?

Weaknesses

Internal negative aspects that are under your control and that you plan to improve

What is the level of demand for the skill-sets that you possess?

What development strategies could you adopt to increase your chances of obtaining experience in your desired field?

Do you have a network of strategic contacts to help you, or offer good advice?

Opportunities

Positive external conditions that you do not control but of which you can plan to take advantage

What gaps in capability do you perceive you have for the entry level roles you aspire for?

What tasks do you usually avoid because you don't feel confident doing them?

What will the people around you see as your weaknesses?

Do you have personality traits that hold you back in your field?

Threats

Negative external conditions that you do not control but the effect of which you may be able to lessen

What is the level of competition for their roles that interest you?

What obstacles do you currently face at home, work or school?

Could any of your weaknesses lead to threats?

When completing the **SWOT analysis**, you should consider:

- feedback you've received from your professors/instructors/counselors
- comments you've received from your peers and extracurricular leadership
- the results of any job/internship evaluation discussions with their manager/supervisor

How to Create Your Personal SWOT Analysis

1. Use the two-by-two grid provided on the next page or outline headers with the headings STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, and THREATS.
2. In each quadrant or header, write out ideas in bullet-point form. Be as specific as possible.
3. Stretch to come up with true insights. Take a break after your first draft, and revisit your analysis.
4. Edit. Delete repetitive ideas, and sharpen less specific ones.

SUBMIT A COPY TO YOUR PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS AND MENTORS

5. Analyze what it all means during your October/November mentoring session.
6. Determine possible actions, set goals around results and revisit the SWOT throughout the year.

UPDATE THE CHART BEFORE GRADUATION

(ALSO CONSIDER UPDATING WHEN IMPROVEMENTS ARE MADE IN ANY SPECIFIC AREA)

PERSONAL SWOT ANALYSIS

Mentee Name _____ Date: _____

Strengths

Internal positive aspects that are under control and upon which you may capitalize in planning

Weaknesses

Internal negative aspects that are under your control and that you plan to improve

Opportunities

Positive external conditions that you do not control but of which you can plan to take advantage of

Threats

Negative external conditions that you do not control but the effect of which you may be able to lessen

Additional sheets of paper can be used if needed using the same headers outside of the 2 X 2.

Strengths

Strengths are your internal, positive attributes and selling points. You have some control over these. Examples include:

- A solid education. (accomplishments and plans)
- A strong network.
- Commitment, enthusiasm and passion for your field.
- Good contacts/successful networking
- Interaction with professional organizations
- Personal characteristics (e.g., strong work ethic, self-discipline, ability to work under pressure, creativity, optimism, or a high level of energy)
- Positive personal traits.
- Relevant skills, competencies, knowledge and work experience.
- Specific transferable skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, leadership skills)
- Strong technical knowledge within your field (e.g. hardware, software, programming languages)
- Work Experience

Weaknesses

Weaknesses are your internal negative attributes. You have some control over these as well. Examples include:

- A lack of direction or focus. (Lack of goals, lack of self-knowledge, lack of specific job knowledge)
- A lack of education.
- A lack of work experience or relevant experience.
- Negative personal characteristics and poor work habits.
- No network or a small one.
- Weak professional or career-management skills.
- Low GPA, wrong major
- Weak skills (leadership, interpersonal, communication, teamwork)
- Weak technical knowledge

Opportunities

Opportunities are uncontrollable external events that you can potentially leverage. Examples include:

- A booming economy.
- A specific job opening.
- An upcoming company project.
- Career path you've chosen provides unique opportunities
- Emerging demand for a new skill or expertise.
- Favorable industry trends.
- Geography
- Opportunities for advancement in your field
- Opportunities for professional development in your field
- Opportunities you could have in the field by enhancing your education
- Opportunities you could have through greater self-knowledge, more specific job goals
- Positive trends in your field that will create more jobs (e.g., growth, globalization, technological advances)
- Referral to a high-powered contact.
- Strong network
- Use of a new technology.

Threats

Threats are uncontrollable external factors that may work against you and require you to take protective action. Examples include:

- Changing market requirements and their impact on your employer.
- Changing professional standards that you don't currently meet.
- Companies are not hiring people with your major/degree
- Competition from your cohort of college graduates
- Evolving technologies you're unprepared for.
- Graduates who went to schools with better reputations.
- Graduates with superior skills, experience, knowledge
- Industry restructuring and consolidation.
- Limited advancement in your field, advancement is cut-throat and competitive
- Limited professional development in your field, so it's hard to stay marketable
- Negative trends in your field that diminish jobs (downsizing, obsolescence)
- Reduced demand for one of your skills.

PERSONAL SWOT ANALYSIS

Sample SWOT analysis for Abilene, a marketing student interested in a career in advertising

Strengths

- I communicate well with my coworkers and customers.
- I have a 3.4 major GPA
- I have the ability to ask key questions to find just the right marketing angle.
- I'm completely committed to my future success in advertising.
- I'm very creative. I often impress professors with a new perspective on the brands we discuss.

Opportunities

- I'm attending a major marketing conference next month with my academic advisor. This will allow for strategic networking, and also offer some great training seminars.
- My career advisor set me up with an RVCC Alum who worked at an advertising firm. We are having lunch in Oct.

Weaknesses

- I get nervous when presenting ideas to my boss or in class, and this fear of public speaking often takes the passion out of my presentations.
- I have a strong, compulsive need to do things quickly and remove them from my "to do" list, and sometimes the quality of my work suffers as a result.
- This same need to get things done also causes me stress when I have too many tasks.

Threats

- The current economic climate has resulted in slow growth for the marketing industry. Many firms have laid off staff members or are considering further cutbacks.
- Many internship opportunities are unpaid and would present a financial hardship (vs. a paid opportunity)

Additional Sheets of paper can be used if needed using the same headers outside of the 2 X 2.