

The SWOT inventory process has been used for years to help business people and entrepreneurs make good decisions about their companies. The idea is that you can evaluate your company based on your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to your company.

Here is a 5 step process to get the most out of your SWOT Inventory:

- Print this form
- Consider each question and write your answer in a concise fashion. Use bullet points where possible. Try to be objective and non-judgemental.
- Use the same questions to interview partners, advisors, team members and trusted employees to gather different perspectives.
- Create an action plan for what you will do with this information and a time frame to start implementing the plan.
- Ask someone to hold you accountable. This step is critical to your success.

Strengths:		
What are your advantages?		
What do you do well?		

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What do you do better than anyone else?
What were your motivating factors and influences in starting this business?
Do these factors represent some of your inherent strengths?
What have been your most notable achievements?

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To what do you attribute your current level of success?
How do you measure your success?
What are the top 5 reasons why a customer should buy from you vs. your competitors?
What knowledge or expertise do you bring to your company?

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What is your greatest personal and business asset?
Weaknesses: What could be improved?
What do you do badly?
What does your competition do better than you?

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Which areas are you and/or employees most likely to avoid?
What are your professional weaknesses?
What are the weaknesses of your employees?
How do you position your company in comparison to your competitors?

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How do these areas affect the performance of your business? (This might include weakness in tech skills, etc.)
Opportunities: Where are the most promising prospects facing you and your business?
What is the "state of the art" in your industry?
Are you doing everything you can to position your company as being on the cutting edge?
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There are 5 major functions every business needs to succeed:

- Enrepreneur-Visionary: this is the person who drives the company
- Management and operations: the person who runs the day to day operations
- Marketing: the person/people who hold responsibility for meeting new prospects, building relationships, branding, positioning, creating a unique competitive advantage

As you examine each of these areas, identify the area each member of your team is strongest in, their areas each member of your team is strongest in, their areas of weakness and any gaps that exist in your current

- Sales: actually closing the sale and driving new revenues
- Technician/Service Provider: the person who services the clients/customers

How can you effectively fill each function?

How are you taking full advantage of useful opportunities:

Changes in technology and markets on a broad and industry specific scale.

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Changes in government policy related to your field.
Changes in social patterns, population, profiles, lifestyle changes etc.
Changes in buying styles and needs (faster turnaround time, lower prices, more selection, better quality, availability of customization, etc.)
Threats: What are the 5 greatest obstacles you currently face?

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How does changing technology threaten your company?
What is the current trend line for your business?
How does the economy negatively affect your company?
What are you currently doing to combat the negative effects of the economy?

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What are you doing to identify, train and retain your top employees?
Analysis Questions
Best done after the other questions have been answered. They are based on comparing and contrasting areas to determine the best strategies you can use in your business.
How can your current strengths be leveraged to take advantage of developing opportunities? (This is the S-O Analysis for strengths-opportunities strategies).
How can your strengths be used to counteract threats that tend to hinder the achievement of objectives and pursuit of opportunities? (This is the S-T analysis for strengths-threats strategies).

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How can weakness be overcome to take advantage of developing opportunities? (This is the W-O analysis for weakness-opportunities strategies).
How can weaknesses be overcome to counteract threats that tend to hinder achievement of objectives and pursuit of opportunities? (This is the W-T analysis for weaknesses-threats strategies).

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