

# S.W.O.T.: Assessing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats for Your Institution

Helpful

Harmful

Internal

S  
Strengths

W  
Weaknesses

External

O  
Opportunities

T  
Threats

### Strengths may include:

- Characteristics of the organization that will help it achieve successful outcome or reach goals
- Resources, capabilities that will contribute to success

### Weaknesses may include:

- Characteristics of the organization that might hinder successful outcome / reaching goals
- Absences of strengths
- "Flip sides" of strengths
- Things to avoid when executing program
- Factors contributing to past failures
- What other organizations might do better than yours
- "Achilles Heels"

### Opportunities may include:

- Environmental factors that might influence/contribute to successful outcome
- Unfulfilled / open niches not served by other programs (unmet customer need)
- Upcoming changes to status quo (regulatory, political, social, etc.)
- Chances made possible by unique strengths / eliminating weaknesses (?)
- Factors: Political, Economic, Socio-cultural, Technological

### Threats may include:

- Environmental factors that might prevent successful outcome
- Upcoming changes to status quo (regulatory, political, social, etc.)
- Factors: Political, Economic, Socio-cultural, Technological

Step 1: List everything you can think of for each box: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

- Try to look at your organization from an external perspective, even when assessing internal factors: What would others say about your organization?
- Try to verify/quantify statements when possible, rather than making general statements about your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

Step 2: Prioritize--what are the main 2-3 points for each box

Step 3: Make a plan--how do you address each of the points that you chose as most important