

## Personal SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a strategic business tool that can be applied equally powerfully to individuals. You can use it to help review where you are now and where you could be. It consists of a simple framework to organise key information on a single page.

Page 3 is divided into four quarters, to help you consider the following:

- **Strengths** - your unique selling points/what you have to offer as an employee
- **Weaknesses** - potential areas for personal development
- **Opportunities** for career development in the external environment that you could take advantage of
- **Threats** to your career development in the external environment - outside your control, to take into account when planning

A SWOT analysis can help you decide where to focus your career development effort. It will also help you determine what information you need before making decisions and give you pointers to areas that you can address in your career development planning.

### Strengths

Your strengths set you apart from your peers and are the features you can build on when planning your development or marketing yourself to new employers. Balance your self-perceptions with feedback you may have received from others, such as your supervisor, line manager, friends or relatives.

Examples:

- Your experience
- Your skills
- Your qualifications
- Your specialist knowledge
- Personal characteristics (eg enthusiasm, dedication)
- Your network

### Weaknesses

Your weaknesses are negative features within your control. Again, balance your self-perceptions with feedback you may have received from others. Your development plan can be aimed at making improvements in these areas if they would enable you to reach your career goals. Insight into your weaknesses can also help rule out areas of work for which you may not be suited.

Examples:

- Skills (look at technical/professional, general transferable and career management skills).
- Gaps in experience
- Gaps in knowledge
- Personal characteristics (eg low energy, poor motivation).

## **Opportunities for Career Development**

Opportunities for your career development are positive economic, social, business, scientific and technological trends impacting on the labour market that provide opportunities for you to exploit. These include:

- Advances or growth in your discipline that provide opportunities to use your specialist skills
- Opportunities for training and development so that you remain employable
- Opportunities for advancement or promotion
- Opportunities to transfer your skills to another area
- Opportunities to use your transferable skills in a new employment domain
- Opportunities for self-employment

## **Threats to your Career Development**

Threats to your career development are negative external conditions that may inhibit the availability of opportunities. While these are beyond your control, awareness of them allows you to plan so that you reduce the effect or overcome by, for example, developing yourself in preparation for a work area that is thriving. Examples include:

- Competitors - better qualified, more experienced, more skilled, better able to market themselves
- Economic tightening leading to fewer jobs or development resources
- Obstacles, eg lack of flexible working opportunities, discrimination, lack of childcare
- Obsolescence of your specialism as new developments in technology or changes in commercial interest occur
- Globalisation leading to geographical redistribution of work away from your current base.

Strengths	Weakness
Opportunities for Career Development	Threats