

WORKSHEET NO.7 – S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

An Interview with Yourself

I have learned it is far more important to have good questions than good answers. In fact, many times the only way to good answers is through thoughtful, insightful and probing questions. The series of questions below will help you identify strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities you may not have realized before. The insight was always inside you, but it takes the right questions to bring it to the forefront of your awareness.

STRENGTHS

If we lined up 20 candidates for my job, what do I do better than any one of them? Why am I the best at what I do?

Why would my boss say I am the best? What qualities and skills would they point out? (See it from their perspective and the experiences you have shared.)

Why would my best friend say I am the best? What qualities and skills would they point out? (See it from their perspective and the experiences you have shared.)

Why would my mom and/or dad say I am the best? What qualities and skills would they point out? (See it from their perspective and the experiences you have shared.)

In my business, what makes me indispensable? What do I do, know or have that no one else does?

What kinds of activities come very easily and naturally to me? (Even if you don't think they are important or uniquely valuable, write them down.)

What do I love to do? What part of my current role or roles in the past have I really enjoyed doing?

What holds my attention? What am I doing when I lose all track of time?

What do I love to learn about?

What talent, skill or knowledge has been responsible for most of my success and happiness up to now?

What advantages do I have that others don't? (e.g., skills, certifications, education, connections, etc.)

What personal resources do I have access to?

Which of my achievements am I most proud of?

What values do I believe in that others fail to exhibit?

What advantages do I have in my network? What connections do I have with influential people?

WEAKNESSES

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

What would my boss point out as one of my weaknesses?

What would my best friend point out as one of my weaknesses?

What would my mom and dad point out as one of my weaknesses or shortcomings?

Am I completely confident in my education and skills training? If not, where am I weakest?

What are my negative work habits? (e.g., procrastinating, being late, disorganized, easily distracted, short tempered, poor at handling stress, etc.)

Do I have personality traits that hold me back in my field? (e.g., fear of public speaking, procrastination, lack of persuasive communication, poor time management, etc.)

What is the main weakness I have in the area of my main goal in life that is unable to be avoided, delegated or covered up?

OPPORTUNITIES

Who is the very best in your field? Who do you know who has the attributes you strive to obtain? Who has the results in the areas of life you desire improvement? Write down the 'who' to each of these questions as well as 'what' they have that you want. Your task is to have them mentor you in that area, even if only over coffee or dinner (your treat).

When it comes to achieving your main goal in life, what is your biggest weakness or obstacle?

WHO

WHAT

What are the existing problems your industry faces? How can you help solve them?

PROBLEMS

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

What is the biggest complaint you hear about your product, service or market? What can you do to remedy this?

COMPLAINTS

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

What is the greatest and regular accolade you hear about your product, service or market? What can you do to accentuate this?

ACCOLADE

ACCENTUATE

What three things are your competitors failing to do that are important? How can you take advantage of these mistakes?

Do your customers or vendors complain about something in your company? If so, could you create an opportunity by offering a solution?

What new technology can help you? Or can you get help from others or from people via the Internet?

THREATS

What errors did I observe about the relationship(s) my parents had? What am I doing to prevent this pattern in my relationship?

ERROR

PREVENTION

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What errors in eating, exercise, stress management and overall well-being did I observe in close family and friends growing up? What am I doing to prevent this pattern in my life?

ERROR

PREVENTION

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What errors did I observe about money growing up (spending, budgeting, saving and attitudes)? What am I doing to prevent this pattern in my life?

ERROR

PREVENTION

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If I didn't earn any money for the next six months, would I still have enough reserves to cover all my expenses and maintain my existing lifestyle? What are my total monthly expenses? (Make a plan to save six times this amount in a separate reserve account.)

If demand for my business instantly grew three times over, what systems, management, staff, cash flow, operational processes or other capacity issues would be in most jeopardy?

If demand for my business instantly dropped to one-third its existing rate, what systems, management, staff and operational process would have to be cut? (Consider how to make these as lean as possible now.)

What is my job role (if you are employed) or business's unique selling proposition? What do you do or does your business's product or service offer that no one else does? Who could duplicate this? If they did, why would I or we still remain relevant?

Who on my team is indispensable? What redundancies can I put in place that would protect me or the enterprise should something unexpected happen?

What part of your supply chain are you most susceptible to? (e.g., cost of goods, sales, distributor or joint venture partner performance, bank or financing terms, distribution, etc.)

What changing technology could threaten your position in the marketplace? What technologies should you research, study or seek training on?

What is my greatest personal weakness and how could this impede me achieving my goals?

360° VIEW

OK, ready for the dare? You are now going to ask three people three poignant questions about yourself.

A few tips:

1. Only ask those who care enough about you to be (brutally) honest. Don't waste your questions on someone who doesn't trust your relationship enough to not be afraid of hurting your feelings. I've always defined a friend as someone who will tell you that you are being an A-hole to your face when you are being an A-hole.
2. Give them permission to be candid. Tell them that you need their help and that help requires their frank feedback. Tell them the more seemingly harsh, the more constructive it will be.
3. Don't be defensive, just listen—really listen—and encourage them to explain their answer so you can receive as much outside perspective as possible.
4. Thank them sincerely for caring enough and feeling safe enough in the relationship to be completely forthright and honest with you. It's as risky and difficult for them to make their suggestions as it is for you to hear them.
5. Select one suggestion to be one of your self-improvement goals for 2010. Check in with that friend every so often for a progress report.

The Questions:

1) What do you think is my best quality? What skill or attribute do you think gives me an advantage in life?

PERSON #1

PERSON #2

PERSON #3

2) What is my worst quality? If I could improve just one thing about myself to help me better succeed with people and in life, what do you think it should be?

PERSON #1

PERSON #2

PERSON #3

3) Where do you see me sabotaging myself? What behavior(s), lack of discipline or attitudes do you think hold me back the most?

PERSON #1

PERSON #2

PERSON #3

S.W.O.T. MATRIX

Summarize the key points learned from the questions above and fill out your S.W.O.T. Matrix below.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

SUMMARY

What three skills or talents will be most responsible for your future success? Make a list of all the ways you can study, practice, get coaching, learn and develop these three skills. If you dedicate yourself to developing these three talents, in three to five years from now you can achieve a level of performance others would consider genius.

SKILL #1	STUDY, PRACTICE, DEVELOP
SKILL #2	STUDY, PRACTICE, DEVELOP
SKILL #3	STUDY, PRACTICE, DEVELOP

What is the single greatest weakness I have identified that could keep me from achieving the progress I seek over the next one to 10 years? What is my plan to strengthen or minimize this weakness?

WEAKNESS	PLAN

What is the single greatest opportunity I have available to me? How will I go after, take advantage of and expand on this opportunity?

OPPORTUNITY	PLAN

What is the single greatest threat I have identified that could prevent me from obtaining the goals and outcomes I seek? What is my plan to eliminate this risk?

THREAT	PLAN