



Conducting a SCOT Analysis (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Threats)

Description:

This tool provides a step-by-step guide to conducting an effective SCOT analysis.

How it can be used:

As you explore new opportunities, conducting a SCOT analysis is a simple yet effective way of identifying your organization's strengths and challenges as well as the external opportunities and threats.

Through the SCOT process, you will be guided to:

- leverage your Strengths
- understand your Challenges
- recognize Opportunities
- counteract Threats

A SCOT analysis will be helpful in assessing the relevance and value of potential initiatives and assist you in making strategic decisions.

Why use a SCOT analysis?

- Explore the possibilities of new opportunities
- Help make decisions about the viability of opportunities and your organization's capacity to respond
- Clarify where change is possible
- Review and adjust current programming where necessary to support new initiatives

Conducting a SCOT analysis: Set the stage

Follow these guidelines for your SCOT process and increase your probability for success.

- Include as many of the relevant stakeholders as possible; each brings a different perspective and staff will be more engaged in implementation if they've been involved in the process.
- Be specific when describing the elements of the SCOT analysis.
- Be realistic when describing your challenges and strengths; this is only effective if it is accurate.
- Consider the current context and also consider what the future could hold.
- Engage the people who have the authority and ability to implement the actions.
- Keep the process simple and clear and a reasonable length.





Conducting a SCOT analysis: The Steps

1. Assign someone to lead or facilitate the process; this person must be able to listen to and process a lot of information, keep the group on task, and ensure the process moves clearly and quickly.
2. Assign someone to record the responses in order to produce a report after the session. Use flip charts and/or whiteboards to record the groups' discussions.
3. Explain the SCOT analysis and why this is being undertaken. It might be helpful to give an example to clarify the difference between the internal and external factors.
4. Divide your stakeholders into small groups; consider mixing up the types of stakeholders to ensure a broad mix of perspectives. Ensure the groups are no larger than ten people to ensure participation.
5. Provide supplies (flipchart, whiteboard) and a format for recording their input.

Conducting a SCOT analysis – “Thinking *Inside* the Box”

6. Allow 20-30 minutes for the groups to brainstorm and identify the strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats from their perspectives. Remind them not to rule out any ideas. Consider posting the following questions to help stimulate discussion.
 - a. **Questions that help identify strengths (internal to the org., within our control)**
 - i. What do we do well?
 - ii. What are we proud of?
 - iii. What resources do we have and use well?
 - iv. How would others identify our strengths?
 - b. **Questions that help identify challenges (internal to the org., within our control)**
 - i. What do we feel we could do better?
 - ii. Where have we been trying to improve but haven't been successful?
 - iii. Where do we see recurring issues?
 - c. **Questions to help identify opportunities (external to the org., outside our control)**
 - i. What is happening in the community that provides us with opportunities?
 - ii. What are other organizations doing that could affect us?
 - iii. What is happening in the broader health context that **could** affect us?
 - iv. What trends should we be aware of that positively affect us?
 - d. **Questions to help identify threats (external to the org., outside our control)**
 - i. What trends should we be aware of that could negatively affect our population or our ability to provide programs and services?





- ii. Are we adapting to changes in the environment (i.e., political directions, technology, demographics, etc.)?

e. **Offer the following suggestions:**

- i. Record all the ideas that the group offers, you can sort them later.
- ii. Once there have been many comments generated about your organization, start to sort them into broad categories.
- iii. To prepare for presenting to the larger group, attempt to limit your lists to 10 or fewer points that are specific.

- 7. Reconvene the large group. Collect and organize the groups' ideas and suggestions in a matrix or column format.

SCOT ANALYSIS		
INTERNAL These are elements within our organization; within our control	<u>Strengths</u> Examples: expertise, strong community relationships, strong cultural practices, etc.	<u>Challenges</u> Examples: high staff turnover, lack of financial expertise, etc.
EXTERNAL These are factors outside the organization; not within our control	<u>Opportunities</u> Examples: provincial funding for skills development, lowered rates of TB, etc.	<u>Threats</u> Examples: band elections, government funding cuts, flooding, etc.

- 8. Begin filling in the matrix or columns, consider the following approaches:

a. Involve the groups:

- i. Ask each group to report, varying which group starts each section to ensure that no group ends up having to repeat points made by others. OR
- ii. Open the floor to all groups (i.e., “*What strengths did your group identify?*”) for each category until all groups have contributed and the matrix is complete.

b. Fill in content:

- i. Proceed in S-C-O-T order, recording strengths, and then challenges, then opportunities, then threats. OR
- ii. Record the top or most urgent priorities in each category (strongest strength, most dangerous challenge, biggest opportunity, worst threat) and continue





to enter ideas into each category.

- c. The facilitator or recorder should keep writing until the input from all groups is recorded. Note which items that are repeated by different groups to signify importance.
9. Be prepared to discuss items that are cross-connected; for example, *“this strength can be used to overcome that threat”*.
 - a. Keep the process moving until the chart is complete. If there are ideas that are outside of the current matrix, consider adding a “working ideas” column.
 10. Discuss and record the results. If required:
 - a. Come to a consensus about the most important items in each category.
 - b. Relate the analysis to your vision, mission, and goals.

Conducting a SCOT Analysis – The Follow-up

11. If appropriate, prepare a written summary of the SCOT analysis to provide back to participants.
12. Use the SCOT analysis as a ‘snapshot’ that clarifies the current situation.

