

8. THE BEST MEAL

Preparing a Long-Term Plan to Serve Up Success

The strategic plan section of a business plan outlines the long-term vision and direction of the business. It provides a roadmap for achieving the business's goals and objectives. The various elements that typically go into this section include:

Mission Statement: defines the core purpose of the business. It explains why the business exists and what it aims to achieve. A clear and compelling mission statement helps guide decision-making and aligns the team with the business's goals. Keep it under 15 words.

Vision Statement: outlines the long-term aspirations of the business. It describes what the business aims to become in the future. A strong vision statement provides inspiration and direction for the business's strategic initiatives.

SWOT Analysis: identifies the business's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the internal and external factors that can impact the business. It helps in identifying strategic priorities and areas for improvement.

Strategic Goals and Objectives are the long-term targets that the business aims to achieve. Objectives are specific, measurable actions that will help in reaching these goals. This section should outline the key strategic goals and the corresponding objectives, along with timelines and performance indicators.

The strategic plan is a comprehensive document that provides a roadmap for the business's long-term success. It requires careful planning, realistic goals, and a thorough understanding of the market and competitive landscape. By addressing all these elements, the strategic plan helps in making informed decisions, aligning the team, and achieving sustainable growth.

TAKING STOCK

EVALUATING STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS

A SWOT Analysis is a tool that can help you to analyse what your company does best right now, and to devise a successful strategy for the future. SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. A SWOT analysis is a tool to conduct an environmental scan that involves the careful monitoring of an organisation's internal and external environments for detecting early signs of opportunities and threats that may influence its current and future plans.

Environmental scanning also identifies factors and trends that will influence the future of your business. It identifies risks and implications associated with these trends. It looks at the present situation as well as future potential developments.

To perform a SWOT analysis, take the information from an environmental analysis or scan and separate it into internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external issues (opportunities and threats). This analysis determines what may assist the business to achieve its objectives, and what obstacles must be overcome or minimised to achieve desired results.

The four quadrants of SWOT are:

- **Strengths** are characteristics (aspects) of the business, or business team, that give it an advantage over others.
- **Weaknesses** (or limitations) are characteristics that place the team at a disadvantage relative to others.
- **Opportunities** are *external* chances to improve performance (e.g., make greater profits) in the environment.
- **Threats** are *external* elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the business or project.

EXAMPLE OF A SWOT ANALYSIS FOR MOST BUSINESSES:

Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Location• Abilities of people in the business• Strong brand names• Good reputation among customers• Good communication skills	Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of patent protection• A weak brand name• Poor reputation among customers• High-cost structure• Lack of people skills• No experience
Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An unfulfilled customer need• Arrival of new technologies• Loosening of regulations• Removal of international trade barriers• Government policy• Location: opposite school. Taxi rank• Seasonal weather	Threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shifts in consumer tastes away from the firm's products• Emergence of substitute products• New regulations• Increased trade barriers• Poor economic conditions• Load shedding• Strikes• Theft and fire



When using SWOT analysis, be realistic about the strengths and weaknesses of your organisation. Distinguish between where your organisation is today, and where it could be in the future. Also remember to be specific by avoiding grey areas and always analyse in relation to the competition (i.e., are you better or worse than your competition?).

Finally, keep your SWOT analysis short and simple, and avoid complexity and over-analysis since much of the information is subjective (based on opinion). Thus, use it as a guide and not a prescription.

SWOT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

