

## Chapter SWOT Analysis

### What is it?

SWOT Analysis is a tool used for understanding an organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

### Why use it?

The SWOT Analysis tool can be used in identifying an organization's strengths (S) and weaknesses (W), and examining the opportunities (O) and threats (T) it is facing. The outcome from a SWOT Analysis enables organizations to focus on strengths, minimize weaknesses, address threats, and take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available.

### How to use it?

While the SWOT Analysis is typically conducted in a group session, it can also be undertaken in other forums (including electronically).

1. Introduction
  - a. encourage good listening, discussion, and who will keep things moving and on track
  - b. allow conversations to emerge, asking key questions to stimulate discussion
  - c. keep your own solutions until steps 7-8
2. Have recorder write analysis/ discussion points on board/ easel
3. Introduce SWOT method and its purpose in the chapter
  - a. Where are we? Where can we go?
  - b. ANFP reps at local level
4. (if needed and if time) have group split up and introduce themselves
5. Give 20-30 min to fill out SWOT. ALL ideas welcome for brainstorm. If group split, each needs a recorder. You can provide these tips for listing:
  - a. As you list, keep in mind that the way to have a good idea is to have lots of ideas. Refinement can come later. In this way, the SWOT analysis also supports valuable discussion within the chapter as you honestly assess.
  - b. In the beginning, though, it helps to generate lots of comments about the chapter and your goals.
  - c. In the end, it is best to limit your lists to ten or fewer points and to be specific so the analysis can be truly helpful.

### Suggested questions:

#### Strengths:

##### *Questions to ask and answer:*

- What do we do exceptionally well?
- What advantages do we have?
- What valuable assets and resources do we have?
- What do members identify as our strengths?

##### *Tips:*

- Be realistic...and honest!
- Don't just take the volunteer perspective...consider how your members view your organization.

#### Weaknesses:

##### *Questions to ask and answer:*

- What could we do better?
- What are we criticized for or receive complaints about? Are we member oriented?
- Where are we vulnerable?

##### *Tips:*

- Don't tiptoe around weaknesses, but be constructive and positive in putting them on the table.
- Get research so you know what outsiders think about your chapter.

### Opportunities:

#### *Questions to ask and answer:*

- What opportunities do we know about, but have not been able to address?
- Are there emerging trends on which we can capitalize?

#### *Tips:*

- Be open-minded...key opportunities may come from unlikely and seemingly unrelated sources.
- Consider how you can exploit your strengths or address your weaknesses to generate additional opportunities

### Threats:

#### *Questions to ask and answer:*

- Are any of our weaknesses likely to make us critically vulnerable?
- Is there significant change coming to our industry, our state, our chapter?

#### *Tips:*

- Have an open and expansive perspective.
- Keep in mind, the chapter should be drawing from member feedback... if they have none, that's a threat! (consider more member surveys)

6. Bring group together to share results. Collect and organize the differing groups' ideas and perceptions, using one of the following methods. Decide before hand how you will gather the feedback. There are at least two ways to do so:
  - a. Proceed in S-W-O-T order, recording strengths first, weaknesses second, etc.
  - b. Or you can begin by calling for the top priorities in each category -the strongest strength, most dangerous weakness, biggest opportunity, worst threat--and continue to work across each category.

There are also two ways to take information from the groups:

- c. Ask one group at a time to report ("Group A, what do you see as strengths?") You can vary which group begins the report so a certain group isn't always left "bringing up the end" and repeating points made by others. ("Group B, let's start with you for weaknesses.")
- d. Or, you can open the floor to all groups ("What strengths have you noted?") for each category until all have contributed what they think is needed.

Whichever way you proceed, the facilitator or recorder should keep writing until the input from all groups is recorded. Note repeated items across groups for "weighting" of important possibilities.

You might want to discuss some of the items as they come up. In fact, cross connections between categories-"This strength plays into that opportunity"-is what you're pursuing, so a good facilitator will tease out those insights as they arise.

At the same time, you want to keep the process moving until all the chart is complete, so facilitator and recorder should work together to begin a fifth column or new page-one for working ideas.

Encourage the participants to also make notes of ideas and insights as you build so the drawing together process will continue to be creative and collaborative.

7. Discuss and record results. If time, is there a consensus about most important items? Do they relate to your vision, mission, and goals?
8. If appropriate, prepare a written summary of the SWOT analysis to give or mail to the chapter team for continued use in planning and implementing your effort.

## Final Thoughts

The process is important not only for identifying where to apply resources and attention, it enables the chapter to put issues into perspective.

### A Sample SWOT Analysis

A chapter SWOT Analysis might look as follows:

#### Strengths:

- Our members value the professional designation.
- We have a lower meeting fee than other state association meetings.
- We provide good member service by communicating CE directly to ANFP HQ.
- Our meeting facilitators/speakers are highly-regarded in the profession.
- We have low overhead for meeting costs.

#### Weaknesses:

- It's difficult to make decisions when we are all so far apart.
- The professional designation is not included as a condition of employment in state regs.
- We are overly dependent on key volunteers.
- We do not have the resources to research the market and promote the designation.

#### Opportunities:

- The employment market for our members is expanding rapidly.
- The government has indicated a willingness to review our bill.
- There is significant interest from students to attend our meetings.

#### Threats:

- Less employers are supporting our members to attend our meetings.
- Our key sponsor has a change in leadership and may not serve as our chapter meeting site anymore.

Structure the brainstorming questions as follows:

What can we do to help us build upon or enhance \_\_\_\_\_ strength?

What can we do to improve or overcome \_\_\_\_\_ weakness?

What can we do to take advantage of \_\_\_\_\_ opportunity?

What can we do to minimize or eliminate \_\_\_\_\_ threat?