

SWOT Analysis

Life is a never ending process of one conflict after another. Conflict is a theme that has occupied the thinking of man more than any other with the exception of God and Love. In the matter of selecting a career for life, certainly conflict will come into surface. In the mist of conflicting views by parents, teachers, peers and even within an individual, the right decision can only be taken by doing a SWOT analysis.

*SWOT analysis is a management technique applied in business decision making process. Though it is business management technique, it can be well applied to other areas or activities of human life, especially in selecting a **career**. SWOT analysis means analysis of **STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES and THREATS**. In SWOT analysis for deciding a career, strength refers to competitive advantages and other distinct competencies, which an individual can exert in a particular career/profession, weakness refers to constraints, shortcomings or obstacles which check movement/growth in certain desired direction, and may also inhibit individual in gaining a distinctive competitive advantage in his/her career/profession. A threat is a challenge posed by an unfavourable trend or development in the environment that would lead, in the absence of purposeful action, to the erosion of the individual's position or career growth. An opportunity is an attractive arena for an individual's action in which the particular individual would enjoy a competitive advantage.*

An individual operates in an external environment full of opportunities and threats. From an individual's viewpoint, it is helpful to visualize the total environment comprising mega, micro and relevant environments. The analysis of individual's capabilities and weaknesses becomes a pre-requisite for successful selection of career and then success in the career and life as a whole.

Majority of the man has a tendency to follow others, to do what others are doing, instead of deciding himself what he should do based on his strengths and capabilities. We always see to our neighbours, peers what they are doing. We envy our neighbour's successful career and try to copy the same to our own life without analyzing why he was successful in his career. This is one of the reasons why most of the young people made a beeline for IT and Computer courses without giving any thought or analysis. If my neighbour had succeeded in IT career why not me?

The Elephant is one of the strongest animal. But the Elephant did not know how much strength he is having and that is why a man with a small knife can control him, but a Tiger or Lion knows his strength and so you can't control him with a knife. If you know your strength through SWOT analysis and utilize it, you are going to be like the Tiger or Lion, but if you don't analyze the conflict of your Strengths and Weakness, certainly you will be carrying loads for others like the Elephant.

As a young man, you may not be aware how to do your SWOT analysis. In order to do your SWOT analysis, complete the following self-appraisal adopted for this purpose. This self-appraisal will help you to identify your strengths and weaknesses and in deciding a career for you.

QUALITY NUMBER ONE: POSITIVE SELF-EXPECTANCY

Synonyms : Optimism, enthusiasm, hope

Antonyms : Pessimism, cynicism, despair

Proverb : “That which you fear or expect most will likely come to pass. The body manifests what the mind harbours”.

Self appraisal:

01. Am I generally optimistic about all aspects of my life? How?

02. Do I expect the best of health(health is wealth) for myself? How?

03. When I am discouraged, am I indulging in a form of self-pity? Illustrate.

04. Do I look at problems as potential opportunities? Illustrate.

05. Do I praise or criticize more often? Describe.

QUALITY NUMBER TWO: POSITIVE SELF-MOTIVATION

Synonyms : *Desire for change, excitation, urge*

Antonyms : *Fear, compulsion, inhibition*

Proverb : *“Winners dwell on their desires(rewards of success), not their limitations(penalties of Failures)”.*

Self-appraisal :

01. *What are my dominant fears?*

02. *What motivating effect do these fears have in my life?*

03. *What are my dominant desires?*

04. *Do I focus most of my attention and thoughts on these desires? How?*

05. *Do I focus on the rewards of success more than the penalties of failure? Illustrate.*

QUALITY NUMBER THREE: POSITIVE SELF-IMAGE

Synonyms : Constructive imagination, visualization, creativity

Antonyms : Dark imaginings, worries, neuroses

Proverb : “What you see is what you get”.

Self-appraisal :

01. Do I still hold great dreams for my future? What?

02. Do I fantasize and imagine my monthly and yearly coming attractions? Examples?

03. Is my self-image a goal-achieving mechanism or is it a self limiting handicap?

04. What are my greatest talents?

05. What am I not good at? Why?

QUALITY NUMBER FOUR: POSITIVE SELF-DIRECTION

Synonyms : *Goal-seeking, purpose oriented, cybernetic*

Antonyms : *Aimless, non-specific, wandering*

Proverb : *“What you get is what you set”.*

Self-appraisal :

01. What is my most important lifetime goal?

02. What is my most important priority next month?

01. What is my objective for next year?

04. Where do I want to be five years from today?

05. What should be my position and standings at the age of 60?

QUALITY NUMBER FIVE: POSITIVE SELF-CONTROL

Synonyms : *Self-determination, volition, choice*

Antonyms : *Illusions, indecision, chance*

Proverb : *“Life is a do-it-to-myself project. I take the credit or the blame for my performance”.*

Self-appraisal :

01. Am I basically a lucky or unlucky person? How?

02. Are there a lot of 'have' than 'have not' in my life? What?

03. Are my choices in life limited or unlimited? Illustrate.

04. What are the different controlling influences in my world?

05. How can I better control what happens to me?

QUALITY NUMBER SIX: POSITIVE SELF-DISCIPLINE

Synonyms : *Achievement simulation, drill, practice, regular.*

Antonyms : *Repetitive error, inconsistency, lack of follow-through, irregular.*

Proverb : *“Habits being as harmless thoughts—like flimsy cobwebs—then, with practice, become Unbreakable cables to shackle or strengthen our lives”. “Habit is the second Nature”.*

Self-appraisal :

01. Do I complete the projects I begin? Examples?

02. Do I have the habit of rehearsing in my imagination? Describe.

03. Do I have the number of bad habits that I am unable to break? Illustrate.

04. Do I have an excellent memory? Do I have any good habits? Illustrate.

05. Am I totally focussed about my success in a given field? What?

QUALITY NUMBER SEVEN: POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM

Synonyms : *Self-worth, self-respect, self-confidence*

Antonyms : *Self-deprecation, self-doubt, self-pity*

Proverb : *“If you love yourself, then, you can give love away. How can you give what you don’t feel”?*

Self-appraisal :

01. Do I accept myself just as I am today?

02. Is there anyone I envy or would like to change places with? Who? Why?

03. Am I an extremely humble person?

04. Do I feel guilty when I indulge myself in some selfish activity?

05. Is it easy for me to accept compliments and praise from others? What impact criticism have upon me?

QUALITY NUMBER EIGHT: POSITIVE SELF-DIMENSION

Synonyms : *Total person (Complete Man), visionary, humanist*

Antonyms : *Shallowness, egocentricity, superficiality*

Proverb : *“When you create other winners like yourself, life will pay you back and shine its sun upon your face and put the wind at your back”.*

Self-appraisal :

01.Do I share my success with others freely?

02.Do I spend time generously sharing with my family and friends?

03.Do I believe in “Do unto others as I would have them do unto me?”

04.Do I spend much time living in memories of previous better times?

05.Do I spend much time dreaming about the things I’d like to do some day when the time is right?

QUALITY NUMBER NINE: POSITIVE SELF-AWARENESS

Synonyms : *Self-honesty, empathy, openness*

Antonyms : *Dishonesty, insensitivity, 'tunnel vision'*

Proverb : *"Oh Great Spirit, grant me the wisdom to walk in another India's moccasins for a mile before I criticize him or her".*

Self-appraisal:

01. Do I see great opportunities for improvement in my environmental, physical and mental activities?

02. Do I honestly know my own limitations in my personal, intellectual and academic life?

03. Do I try to grab opportunities in new areas or find security in already established areas/fields?

04. How would I like to cope with changes and the uncertainties in the field of career/life?

05. 'Child is the father of the man.' How would I like to be parent in future?

QUALITY NUMBER TEN: POSITIVE SELF-PROJECTION

Synonyms : *Communicative, supportive, impressive, expression.*

Antonyms : *Aloof, unfriendly, unkempt*

Proverb : *“How you walk, talk, listen and look is YOU”.*

Self-appraisal:

01.Do I project my best self at all times?

02.Do I listen more than I talk?

03.Am I an active listener, who asks many questions and asks for examples?

04.When I talk, do I believe what I speak or I often try to fool others through hypocrisy?

05.Do I try to give my best always and people feel their best when they are in my company?

SWOT Analysis of some successful people in their own words

01.Daler Mehndi, Pop Singer

Strengths: Passion for singing. Have performed non-stop for nine hours at times.

Weakness: Moody and causal some times.

Wisdom: A blind faith in God's Grace.

02.Hong Eng Hoh, Sun Microsystems

Strengths: Inter-personal skills, situational analysis and microscopic vision for detailed insight.

Weakness: Desire to achieve too much too soon. Expecting others to be equally receptive.

Wisdom: Be focussed and work hard without an overdose of reasoning. Never be afraid of failures, escaping the situation leads you nowhere.

03.Kiran Karnik, President NASSCOM

Strengths: Relationship management skills, ability to apply intelligence to get maximum from the situation and practically optimistic.

Weakness: Introvert nature and tendency to seek perfection.

Wisdom: Prepare yourself to accept challenges. Choose a career that interests you, but never forget to excel if you want to be acknowledged.

04.Amit Govil, MD, Sapient India

Strengths: Focussed, motivated and goal oriented. I energize people to work in harmony.

Weakness: Short attention span, short tempered and an urge to trust people at first sight.

Wisdom: Consider your professional life as a project. Define your goals and your milestones so that you don't lose track.

05.Dipak Jain, Dean, Kellogg Graduate School of Management, US

Strengths: I come from a family of committed teachers. My grandfather was a headmaster of a school in Tezpur, Assam.

Weakness: I am perhaps too Indian by nature.

Wisdom: When your shadow becomes longer than your height, remember the sun is about to set.

06.V.N.(Tiger) Tyagarajan, CEO, GECIS

Strengths: Quest for life-long learning; team building and leadership approach.

Weakness: Life is too short to learn all I want to.

Wisdom: Relish challenges that bring change; assignments that create big impact. Take risks, dream big and not be satisfied.

07.Sanjoy Gupta, VP&GM, Amex(India)

Strengths: I am pretty analytical and very perceptive. Assets are my a strong relations with people.

Weakness: My excessive level of modesty, which is not required always.

Wisdom: To possess a magical ability to keep people continuously working.

08. Pradeep Kar, MD, Microland Group

Strengths: Good team player, group leader, immersed in the future, easy and fun to interact.

Weakness: Need to better manage time and priorities.

Wisdom: Think of something, be passionate about it, do it and never regret. Remember, nothing ventured nothing gained.

09. Siddhartha Basu, Quiz Master and producer of Star TV's KBC.

Strengths: Suave, articulate, razor-sharp intellect, well read and charming.

Weakness: I don't hardsell myself.

Wisdom: It's every communicator's dream to be associated with a humorously popular show that entertains as well as informs.

10. Kiran Bedi, Iron Lady of India

Strengths: Dare-Devilry, professional integrity, a reformist Zeal and 'my internal sense of security'.

Weakness: Impatient, often court controversies, 'I am just a doer, leaving my actions to any interpretation'.

Wisdom: You reap as you sow: sow service and reap joy; sow hard work and reap rewards.

11. Sanjay Kapoor, CEO, Bharati Cellular Ltd.

Strengths: Easily adopt to changes, be these environment, geography, culture or just anything.

Weakness: More skewed towards work than fun. Need to improve the balance.

Wisdom: Strongly believe in 'Who moves my cheese?' Change is inevitable and we have to be prepared to savor the adventure,

12. Lajinder Bawa, Oriflamme Network Marketing

Strengths: Dynamic, approachable and responsive.

Weakness: Can not find more time in a day.

Wisdom: Hard work and positive attitude is the key to success.

13. Raj Joshi, VP, Macmillan India

Strengths: Commitment, leadership capabilities, analytical skills, positive emotions, an eye for details, hard work and patience.

Weakness: Obsession with one mission and a tendency to push things a bit too hard.

Wisdom: 'Be conscious of your duty and do your best with careful planning, deeds and commitment. The gains will follow in time.'

14. Deepak Shourie, MD, Discovery Communications India

Strengths: I follow my instincts and let passion and creativity fuse together.

Weakness: I am a disciplinarian and expect the same from my teammates.

Wisdom: Let your passion explore something different. Be a trendsetter, not a trend-follower.

(The SWOT analysis of a adult individual or successful person shall be certainly different from the SWOT analysis of a young soul, but going through it will help you to do your own SWOT analysis in a better perspective and wider spectrum.)

SET YOUR GOAL

*“ To know one’s self is hard to know
 Wise effort, effort vain;
 But accurate self-critic are
 Secure in times of strain
 This much of effort bring success;
 I have the power; I can
 So think, then act, and reap the fruit
 Of your judicious plan”*

Panchatantra

After you complete the self-appraisal to do your SWOT analysis, it is the time to set your goal and mission of life. It is important to know the career drivers that motivate you most before you decide your career and mission/goal of life.

Given below are nine career drivers. All you have to do is to mark them 1,2,3... depending upon how much importance you give to particular drivers. The most important drive according to you should be marked 1 and the least important 9. Be honest to yourself.

01.	Material Rewards: seeking possessions, wealth and high standard of living.	
02.	Power/influence: seeking to be in control of people and resources.	
03.	Search for meaning: Seeking to do things, which are believed valuable for their own sake.	
04.	Expertise: Seeking a high level of accomplishment in a specialized field.	
05.	Creativity: Seeking to innovate and be identified with original output.	
06.	Affiliation: Seeking nourishing relationship with others.	
07.	Autonomy: Seeking to be independent and able to make decisions for oneself.	
08.	Security: Seeking a solid and predictable future.	
09.	Status: Seeking to be recognized, admired and respected by the community at large.	

After marking the career drivers according to its importance in your life, complete the following questionnaire in brief (within 50 words) and you will have your goals ready in your hand for ready reference. This will be your benchmark for future goals/mission and update your goals along with the changes of time.

01. What is your goal you want to achieve during the current year ? What is your goal after five years?

02. What do you enjoy most in your leisure time?

03. What do you think is your strengths in your personality?

04. What are your weakness?

05. How important it is for you to win?

06. What do you worry about most? Your career/ your relation with friends and parents/any other thing.

07. Who or what irritates you most?

08. How intelligent are you compared to most people you know?

09. If a genie could give you anything you wished, what would it be?

10. What do you want in life and what price you are ready to pay for it?

11. Write the mission statement of your life within two/three sentences.

Decide your Own Course of Life

Once you have done your SWOT analysis, know your career drivers and set your goal, then it is not a very difficult task to choose a career and decide your own course in life for you. You know what you want in your life, you know where you have the potential, and you know where there are opportunities for you. In addition to SWOT analysis, goal setting and knowing the career drivers, some of the factors you should give due importance while deciding your course of life are:

- (i) **Intelligence:** *Intelligence include your I.Q., Social Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence (E.Q.). Total intelligence is more important to be successful in life and career than simply having a high I.Q. There are many cases where an academically brilliant executive, considered a genius in his field, had failed miserably in his career only because he did not have enough social intelligence and emotional stability.*
- (ii) **Personality:** *You may be a person of Introversion or Extroversion. You may be a person of Dominating personality or Submissive personality. If you are of Introvert in nature, you should not choose a career, which demand people with Extrovert nature. You may be too social or you may like loneliness to do creative work. It is you yourself, who can judge your personality best. Give due importance to your personality while deciding your career.*
- (iii) **Interest:** *All work is hard unless you care for it and are interested in it. No amount of ability, aptitude, financial backing or any other such kind of support can be of any use if the requisite interest in the job is absent. However mind that possessing a high degree of interest towards an occupation does not guarantee success in it without considering other factors.*
- (iv) **Special Aptitudes:** *If one is good in art, it would be really sad for him to if he takes up a career where he had to work in a machine shop. M.F. Hussain can't play better cricket than Sachin Tendulkar nor Tendulkar can sing better songs than Daler Mehndi.*
- (v) **Physique:** *Various jobs have various physical demands and the choice should be made after careful consideration of all the relevant facts involved in it. A man with poor health and heart problem should not take a career in the mountain brigade of the army.*
- (vi) **Sex:** *Though legally, socially men and women are equal, nature had given them different physique, capabilities. So some careers are more suitable for men and some for women. So this factor should also be considered by students while choosing a career.*
- (vii) **Age:** *Some careers need early entry to be successful in that career. Late entry may lead to frustration due to unfulfilled ambition and necessity of working under much younger people(in age).*

By this time I think you have realized that obtaining a degree in engineering, medicine or management is not a career or be all and end all in life. It is only the first step in the career. There are some more qualities required to be developed, if not inherent in your personality to be successful in the career. For example some careers need capability to do team work. Your performance will be determined by the performance of other team players. Some careers need your capability to manage your superiors/boss and your cordial relation with them. You can not go up in the ladder in the career of management by simply doing hard work, if you can't manage cordial relation with all the person who is above you in the hierarchy. Some people may say it buttering or some may say it managing your boss, but one thing is clear that unless you have this quality, it may be difficult for you to go to the top of the ladder. There are of course some careers or profession where talent and hard working alone are enough. So remember all these things when you take a life long decision, choosing a career.

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