



**IntuitiveHR**  
Human Resources with Insight

# YOUR PERSONAL SWOT ANALYSIS

KNOW YOURSELF TO SELL YOURSELF

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# JOIN THE SWAT TEAM

When things get bad in the movies, they always call in the SWAT team. It stands for Special Weapons and Tactics. Well, to be unemployed in this market requires special weapons and tactics too. In this case, our weapons are the things we bring to the table that employers will want. Our tactics are the things we will do to stand apart in this sea of candidates to ensure we end up on top. In business, many companies use a SWOT analysis. In this case, it stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. This simple analysis structure guides you on looking at internal and external factors that will create or jeopardize our success.

It is time to take your search seriously and create your SWOT analysis. Before you contemplate investing the time in doing this analysis, first, be sure you are ready to be honest with yourself, truly honest. When we first lose a job, we spin many stories about why that is the case. It is easy to identify what is wrong with the company, the job, the boss, and the co-workers. Now, its time to look inside and identify and accept your contributions. No one is perfect; we all have things we are great at and pretty terrible at. This tool is for you, so be honest. What is the worst that can happen? Do you make positive changes that lead to a new opportunity?

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## STRENGTHS

What am I great at?

## WEAKNESSES

What do I need to work on?

EXTERNAL

## OPPORTUNITIES

What am I best suited for?

## THREATS

What stands in my way of success?

FAVORABLE

UNFAVORABLE

# STRENGTHS

Lets start with the easy part, our strengths. It is best to break this into two categories. First is Job Factors. These are the things that you do in your role; your skills and abilities. The second category is Competencies. These are qualities or characteristics that are important for the role; your behaviors and style.

When you look at Job Factors create a list of questions that make sense for your role. Start with some basic things and break them down a bit.

- What are you great at? When you reflect on your career and all of the work you have done. What are the things you know you are really good at. Why are you great at this? Do you think you are better than your competition? Why? Are there other things outside of this particular role, certain skills you have mastered that could help you with a new role?
- What do others say you are great at? Even trivial things that you don't think will matter should be noted here. Perhaps others note how organized you are or how well you write. While these might be skills you don't consider your strengths, if others noticed them they just may be strengths.

# STRENGTHS

- List your experience. This tool is for you so list everything. I often meet students that leave out things they have done on summer internships only to discover that they have experience with supervising, managing finances or developed idea for that employer that helped improve the organization. Others leave out volunteer work because it was unpaid. That is downright silly. I work with some intense not for profit organizations that could give any major corporation a run for its money; put it on the list. Everything you have done is part of your story. The key is learning how to market that story to make things truly relevant.
- Credentials: List education, training classes, courses, certifications, awards, achievements, memberships...you get the point
- Now do the same for your Competencies. Why do people like working with you? What makes you good at what you do? Are you a good listener, strong leader, dependable. Think about what makes you, you. What makes you unique?

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# STRENGTHS

## Job Factors

What do you think you are great at?

What do others say you are great at?

What do you love to do?

What experience do you have?

What are your credentials?

## Competencies

Why do people like you?

What do you like about yourself?

When do you shine?

What makes you unique?

# WEAKNESSES

Now for the fun stuff. This is the time for some genuine soul searching. Remember, this analysis is for you. It is important pre-work for your job search. This first step to recovery is to admit you have a problem. This is true of our weaknesses too. Even if you think it is a habit you can't change, list it. For example, I am a talker. I know it. I often remember after the fact that I need to shut up! It is important for me to list this, and know this if I am job searching because I need to balance this with being a listener. Reminding myself of this before and during important meetings is crucial to my success.

Not knowing your weaknesses, is a weakness. Not admitting your weaknesses is a weakness. Identifying and acknowledging your weaknesses is a step toward self awareness. People who are self-aware are much more enjoyable to be with. They likely have a much better chance of achieving success too. If you want to be able to sell your story, you need the whole story.

Again, you will start with Job Factors and then move on to Competencies.

- What do you struggle with? Are there tasks that you don't perform well or areas you received criticism about? What do your past reviews say?
- Do you lack experience, credentials or skills? What are they? Why is this a weakness?
- Why do people get frustrated with you? What are the things you get in trouble for?
- What do you struggle with? When do you struggle? Why do you struggle?

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# WEAKNESSES

## Job Factors

What do you struggle with?

What are other people better at?

Are you lacking experience? Too much experience?

Do you need credentials? Do you have the right credentials?

## Competencies

What is your Achilles heel\*?

What do people complain about?

When do you struggle

What makes you unique?



# OPPORTUNITIES

The world is your Oyster. What you want is in your reach if you are willing to do the work to get there. There are many opportunities to consider during your search. Each of these could offer you stepping stones to the next thing. Every step along the way is a step closer to happiness; so keep stepping.

- **Networking:** What are your networking opportunities. Where can you meet people that can help you advance in your career? Do you know how to network effectively? There is an art to doing this well. Learn it.
- **Take Classes:** I have met professionals that don't seek credentials or certifications unless their employer will pay for it. Take your future in your own hands and figure out how to get the credentials you need. The Department of Labor offers money to qualified people who are looking for work. There are many other outplacement services that provide classes. Research and find them.
- **Volunteer:** I have heard many unemployed people say they won't volunteer because they need to get paid. Well, employers like to hire people who are working. While that might not seem fair, it is what it is. Volunteer work is work. It is experience, it creates references and it feels good.

# OPPORTUNITIES

- Consulting: Is this an option for you? Do you have former bosses or colleagues that need project support? Can you take on a few projects while you search?
- Job Postings: Find the job posting sites that are right for your career path. Be creative. Only apply for jobs you are genuinely qualified for.
- Social Networking: Let Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn be tools in your search. Be sure to have well updated profiles and look for opportunities regularly because new things are added everyday.
- Market Trends: Are there new things happening in the world that might be well suited for you? Many people leave their jobs and start entirely new paths based on new trends. Examples are selling energy or green initiatives. My husband left his corporate job and decided he preferred landscaping and plowing and the life that offers him. He makes a bit less money but he is so much happier. We all are.

External

# OPPORTUNITIES

Don't put all your eggs in one basket...

While your searching for your next thing, keep busy. Take advantage of every opportunity to learn, meet new people, gain experience and shine.

Classes...learn something new

New trends in the market

Social Networking

Job Postings you truly match up to

Networking

Volunteering...gain experience, learn new things, give back, good Karma!

Consulting: Do you have the entrepreneurial spirit?

# THREATS

Threats are the things that are getting in your way of achieving your goals.

Threats and fears can sometimes be synonymous. In this section, capture both. What are your perceived threats and what are you afraid of. Before I began consulting, I was paralyzed by the fear of doing it for about 2 years. Initially, it caused me to take another full time job. My threat was my fear. Once I finally got over my fears I found my path to a much happier and lucrative life.

- Competition: What are you up against? What do the people competing with you have that you don't?
- Resume: Is it ready? Will it work for you? Does it stand out and truly define who you are and what you have done? Does it highlight your achievements and show you strengths? Does it align with the job? Do you have variations for different roles?
- Job Market: What is the market in your area like? Are there other locations that would be better for you based on your expertise?

# THREATS

- **Money:** Do you have resources to support you during your search. Can you generate some income during this time to alleviate the pressure? Needing money is a threat in your search for several reasons. First, this fear may subconsciously impact your interview skills and decisions. Trying to find part-time, per-diem or contract work to supplement may help. Take what you can get until you find what you want. However, if you don't have to, don't settle. Another reason this can be a challenge is you may need to incur some expenses to be effective in your interviews.
- **Interview Skills:** Are you prepared? Do you know how to shine in this session? If not, can you seek help?
- **Image:** In the job market you need to be at your best and that includes looking your best. Is your image helping or hurting? Take time to take care of yourself.

External

# THREATS

What stands in your way of success?

Many things or people will be obstacles to your success. Identify what those are and be sure that you are not one of them.

What are the current requirements or expectations for your preferred job?

Is your resume strong?

How is the job market in your field of interest and geography?

\$  
finances & cash flow

Is your image ready for the role?

childcare

Do you know how to interview?

Who is your competition?

Is your network strong?

Work/Life Balance

The Road to  
Success

# YOU GOT THIS...

Your  
Future

Today...

**SWOT  
Analysis**

**MATERIALS**

Resume  
Update and  
Interview  
skills  
practicing

**GET OUT  
THERE**

Network,  
social  
network,  
web search,  
apply for  
jobs.

**DEVELOP**

Build your  
experience &  
credentials

**PERSEVERE**

Stay Strong.  
Be patient.  
Don't give  
up.

If you  
continue to  
focus on the  
right things  
you will find  
you next  
great thing.