A SWOT analysis is a structured planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in a project or in a business. A SWOT analysis can be carried out for a product, place, industry, concept or person. It involves the identification of both internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to the company or thing that is being evaluated. Strengths are the characteristics of the business or project that give it an advantage over others. For strengths, you might list advantages, unique and low cost resources, factors that help your company get the sale, and factors that make the company distinctive.

Weaknesses are the characteristics that place the business or project at a disadvantage relative to others. For weaknesses, you might list: disadvantages and limitations; things that could be improved; factors causing you to lose sales; and vulnerabilities.

Opportunities are elements that the project could exploit to its advantage. For opportunities, you might list: chances to improve performance; good opportunities you can spot; new markets; and emerging technologies.

Threats are elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the business or project. For threats you might list: external trouble for the business; obstacles you face; what your competitors are doing; and new competition or substitute products.

Users of SWOT analysis need to ask and answer questions that generate meaningful information for each category to make the analysis useful and find their competitive advantage.