

## **Team-Based SWOT Analysis**

Team-Based SWOT Analysis adapts the traditional SWOT framework to help education and nonprofit teams systematically evaluate their collective Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. This collaborative approach enables teams to identify their unique capabilities, address limitations, capitalize on promising possibilities, and prepare for potential challenges. By engaging the entire team in this structured evaluation process, organizations can develop more effective strategies, foster shared ownership, and align resources toward common goals.

### **Author**

This tool was developed by Michelle Watson-Grant.

### **Goal**

To facilitate team collaboration in systematically assessing internal capabilities and external factors, resulting in actionable priorities that leverage team strengths, address growth areas, pursue mission-aligned opportunities, and mitigate relevant threats.

### **Advice**

Team-Based SWOT Analysis works best when:

- Launching new team initiatives or programs
- Onboarding new team members or leadership
- Planning for the upcoming academic year or grant cycle
- Responding to organizational changes or environmental shifts
- Seeking to improve team performance and collaboration
- Aligning diverse team perspectives toward common goals



## SWOT Analysis

### Advice cont'd

For maximum effectiveness, schedule dedicated time for the entire team to participate, ensure psychological safety for honest assessment, capture diverse viewpoints, and focus on converting insights into concrete action plans. Remember that the analysis itself is just the beginning—the true value comes from the collaborative conversation and subsequent actions.

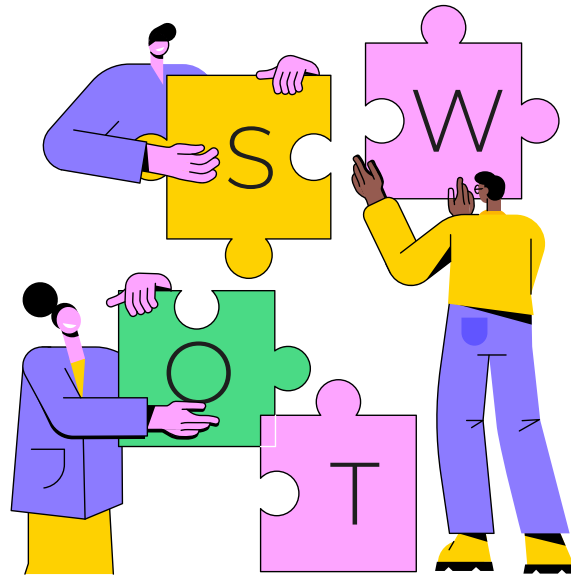


**Team Strengths (Internal, Positive)**

- Current collective capabilities that give your team advantage
- Shared skills, expertise, experience, and relationships you can leverage
- Areas where your team consistently demonstrates excellence
- Unique team characteristics that contribute to mission fulfillment

**Team Weaknesses (Internal, Negative)**

- Internal limitations that hinder team performance or effectiveness
- Skill gaps, resource constraints, or operational challenges within the team
- Areas where team improvement is needed to achieve goals
- Collaboration barriers or communication challenges



**Team Opportunities (External, Positive)**

- External factors or trends that could benefit your team's work
- Potential areas for team growth, collaboration, or increased impact
- Favorable conditions in your operating environment
- Emerging needs that align with your team's capabilities

**Team Threats (External, Negative)**

- External challenges that could negatively impact your team's effectiveness
- Unfavorable trends, emerging competitors, or environmental factors
- Potential barriers to achieving your team's objectives
- Risks that could undermine team stability or progress

## Conducting a Team-Based SWOT Analysis

### Pre-Analysis Preparation for Nonprofits and Educational Teams

- **Define Your Team's Mission-Aligned Scope**

- Clarify your team's specific purpose and contribution to the organization's mission
- Determine the specific focus of your analysis (team functioning, specific program, initiative)
- Establish the relevant time-frame (semester, academic year, grant cycle, etc.)
- Identify how the analysis will inform team priorities and resource allocation
- Consider impacts on the communities, students, or populations your team serves

- **Gather Team-Relevant Data**

- Review team performance metrics and program outcomes data
- Analyze feedback from those served by your team's work
- Collect information on team composition, skills inventory, and experience levels
- Examine workload distribution, capacity constraints, and resource allocation
- Review communication patterns and decision-making processes
- Gather insights on team climate, collaboration, and engagement levels



## Conducting a Team-Based SWOT Analysis

### Pre-Analysis Preparation for Nonprofits and Educational Teams, cont'd

- **Prepare for Inclusive Participation**

- Schedule adequate time (2-3 hours) for thoughtful team discussion
- Create a psychological safety framework for honest dialogue
- Prepare materials and questions that will prompt balanced assessment
- Consider using anonymous pre-session input for sensitive topics
- Identify a neutral facilitator (internal or external) if team dynamics warrant
- Plan for equitable participation regardless of team hierarchy or tenure





## Conducting The Team Analysis

### Critical Questions To Ask in Each Phase

#### Team Strengths Assessment: Key Questions

- What does our team do exceptionally well together?
- What unique skills, expertise, or perspectives exist within our team?
- How does our team's composition create advantages?
- What positive feedback do we consistently receive about our team?
- What team accomplishments are we most proud of?
- How do our team relationships and dynamics contribute to success?
- What team systems or processes work particularly well?

#### Team Weaknesses Assessment: Key Questions

- Where does our team struggle to perform effectively?
- What skills or expertise are missing or underdeveloped on our team?
- Where do we face resource constraints that limit our effectiveness?
- What feedback have we received about team growth areas?
- What recurring challenges affect our team's ability to deliver?
- How do our communication patterns or decision processes need improvement?
- Where do team dynamics create barriers to effectiveness?

#### Team Opportunities Assessment: Key Questions

- What external trends could enable our team to increase impact?
- What new needs exist that align with our team's capabilities?
- What potential partnerships or collaborations could extend our reach?
- What technology or innovations could enhance our team's effectiveness?
- What funding or resource opportunities align with our work?
- How could we better leverage our organization's reputation or networks?
- What learning or growth opportunities exist for our team?

#### Team Threats Assessment: Key Questions

- What external challenges could impact our team's effectiveness?
- How are funding patterns or priorities shifting in ways that affect us?
- What demographic or community changes might impact demand for our services?
- Who else is addressing similar needs in our community?
- What policy changes could create barriers to our team's work?
- What staffing or resource risks might we face?
- How are constituent expectations evolving in challenging ways?



### Team Synthesis and Prioritization

- Consolidate similar points and identify patterns
- Distinguish between major and minor factors in each category
- Identify relationships between different elements
- Prioritize factors based on mission impact and team capacity
- Seek team consensus on the most significant points in each category
- Focus on actionable insights rather than complaints or wishes



## Team Post-Analysis Strategic Integration

### Identify Team Strategic Intersections

- **Team Strength-Opportunity (SO):** How can we use our collective strengths to capitalize on opportunities?
- **Team Weakness-Opportunity (WO):** How can we overcome team limitations to pursue opportunities?
- **Team Strength-Threat (ST):** How can we use our team strengths to mitigate threats?
- **Team Weakness-Threat (WT):** How can we address team weaknesses to minimize vulnerability to threats?

### Develop Team Strategic Priorities

- **Leverage Team Strengths:** Which strengths should we amplify or apply in new ways?
- **Address Team Weaknesses:** Which limitations most urgently need improvement?
- **Pursue Team Opportunities:** Which opportunities align best with our capabilities?
- **Mitigate Team Threats:** What preventive actions can reduce our vulnerability?

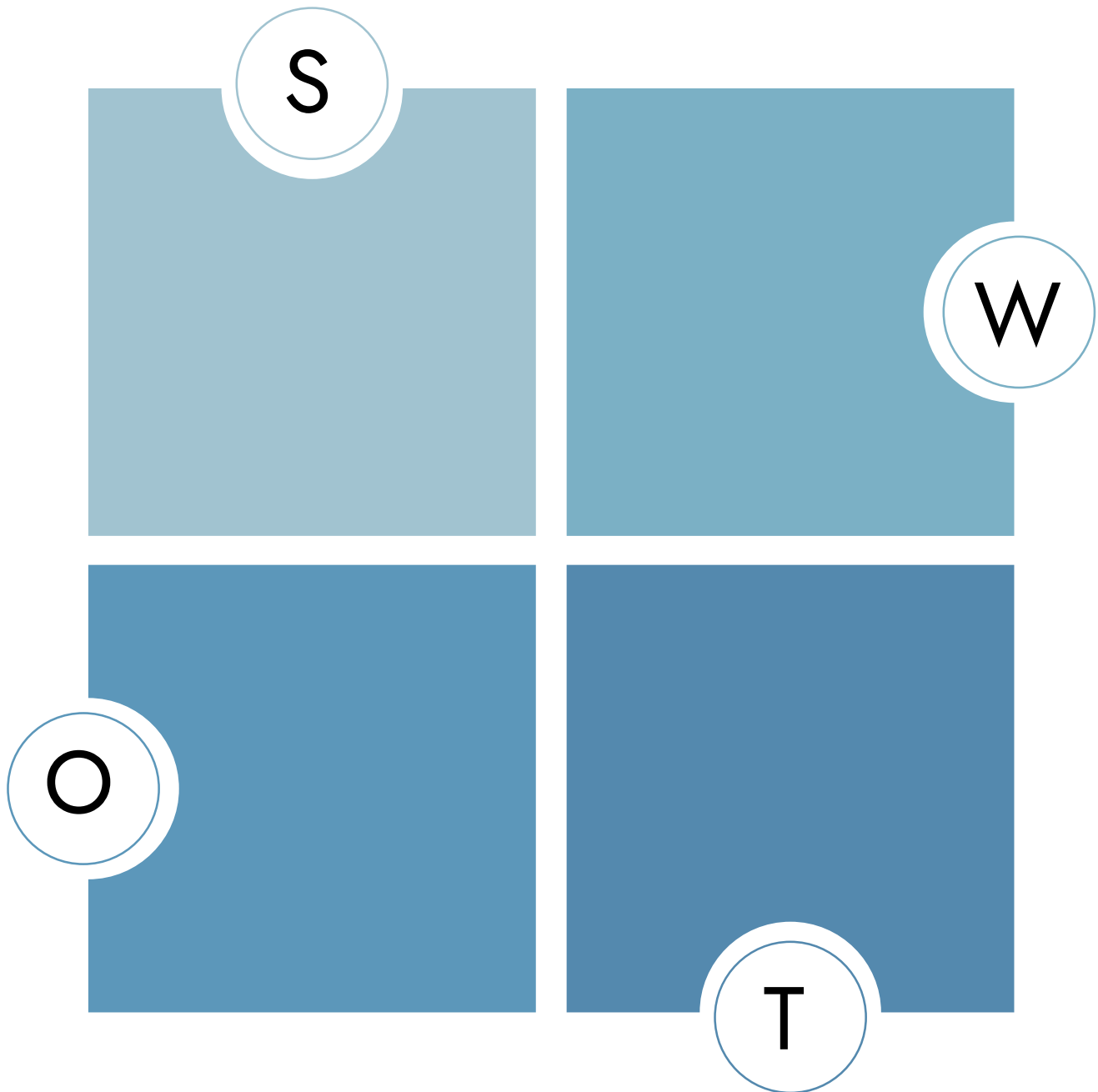
### Create Team Action Plans

- Define specific team initiatives based on strategic priorities
- Assign responsibility for implementation within the team
- Establish timelines and resource requirements
- Determine success metrics and evaluation methods
- Schedule regular team check-ins to monitor progress
- Integrate into broader team planning processes



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### Team-Based SWOT Analysis Template



## Conclusion & Post-Analysis

### Develop Strategic Priorities

- **Leverage Strengths:** What strengths should we further develop or apply in new ways?
- **Address Weaknesses:** Which weaknesses most urgently need improvement?
- **Pursue Opportunities:** Which opportunities align best with our mission and capabilities?
- **Mitigate Threats:** What preventive actions can reduce our vulnerability to key threats?

### Create Action Plans

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### Team SWOT Facilitation Tips

- **Create Psychological Safety**
  - Begin with team agreements about respectful dialogue
  - Emphasize that the goal is team improvement, not individual criticism
  - Model vulnerability by sharing your own perceived strengths and growth areas
  - Acknowledge that all teams have limitations and challenges
- **Ensure Balanced Participation**
  - Use structured participation techniques like round-robin or written contributions
  - Create space for quieter team members to contribute
  - Consider anonymous input methods for sensitive topics
  - Be mindful of power dynamics and hierarchies
- **Focus on Specific Examples**
  - Encourage team members to provide concrete examples rather than generalizations
  - Ask "What makes you say that?" to draw out supporting evidence
  - Document specific instances that illustrate patterns
- **Maintain Team Focus**
  - Keep discussion centered on factors the team can influence
  - Redirect individual complaints to team-level patterns
  - Frame weaknesses as growth opportunities rather than deficits
  - Focus on actionable insights rather than venting
- **Connect to Team Purpose**
  - Regularly refer back to the team's mission and the populations served
  - Evaluate SWOT factors based on impact on team effectiveness
  - Consider how each insight relates to improved outcomes
  - Close with renewed commitment to team purpose



## Common Team SWOT Analysis Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them:

- **Surface-Level Analysis**
  - Instead of: "Communication is a weakness"
  - Better: "Our team needs consistent channels for sharing program updates across shifts"
- **Blame-Focused Discussion**
  - Instead of: Allowing finger-pointing or complaints
  - Better: Focus on systems, processes, and collective responsibility
- **Ignoring Power Dynamics**
  - Instead of: Letting hierarchies determine whose input matters most
  - Better: Create structures that value diverse perspectives regardless of position
- **Action Without Accountability**
  - Instead of: Creating a wish list without ownership
  - Better: Assign specific responsibilities and follow-up mechanisms for improvements
- **Neglecting External Perspective**
  - Instead of: Relying solely on team self-assessment
  - Better: Incorporate feedback from those you serve and other stakeholders



**Sample Team-Based SWOT Analysis for a School Teaching Team**

**S**

- Diverse teaching backgrounds and specializations
- Strong collaborative culture and knowledge sharing
- Extensive experience with project-based learning
- Multi-lingual capacity among team members
- Established systems for curriculum development
- Strong relationships with students and families

**W**

- Limited expertise in educational technology
- Inconsistent assessment practices across team
- Time constraints limiting collaboration
- Varying comfort levels with data analysis
- Limited capacity for parent communication
- Uneven workload distribution

**O**

- District emphasis on cross-curricular integration
- New professional development grant availability
- Growing community interest in experiential learning
- Potential partnership with local science center
- Technology integration funding available
- Increasing demand for multilingual education

**T**

- Increased class sizes planned for next year
- New standardized testing requirements
- Potential budget cuts to support staff
- Competing educational program in community
- Teacher shortage affecting recruitment
- Rapidly changing technology expectations

## **Team SWOT Integration Strategies for the Teaching Team**

### **Team SO Strategy**

Leverage our diverse teaching backgrounds and project-based learning experience to develop a distinctive cross-curricular program that qualifies for the new professional development grant.

### **Team WO Strategy**

Address our limited educational technology expertise by establishing a structured peer learning system that capitalizes on the available technology integration funding.

### **Team ST Strategy**

Utilize our strong collaborative culture and established curriculum development systems to create efficient approaches to meeting new standardized testing requirements while maintaining our teaching quality.

### **Team WT Strategy**

Address our time constraints and uneven workload by implementing shared planning tools and redistributing responsibilities to better manage increased class sizes and maintain teacher wellbeing.

## Sample Team-Based SWOT Analysis for a Nonprofit Program Team

S

- Strong program delivery expertise
- Diverse community connections
- Data collection systems in place
- Bilingual capacity across team
- Shared commitment to participant-centered approach
- Adaptability and creativity in problem-solving

W

- Limited capacity for grant reporting
- Inconsistent follow-up with participants
- Over-reliance on specific team members
- Gaps in evaluation expertise
- Meeting efficiency needs improvement
- Limited succession planning

O

- Increasing foundation interest in our focus area
- Growing community need for our services
- Potential partnership with healthcare provider
- New technology for remote service delivery
- Support available for staff professional development
- Positive media attention to issues we address

T

- Potential funding cuts in next fiscal year
- Increasing competition for limited resources
- Staff burnout risks with growing demand
- Rising costs for program materials
- Transportation barriers for participants
- Changing compliance requirements

## **Team SWOT Integration Strategies for the Nonprofit Program Team**

### **Team SO Strategy**

Leverage our diverse community connections and strong program delivery expertise to build a compelling case for increased foundation support in our focus area.

### **Team WO Strategy**

Address our limited evaluation expertise by utilizing professional development support to build team capacity for demonstrating program impact to new potential funders.

### **Team ST Strategy**

Use our team's adaptability and participant-centered approach to design more resource-efficient service delivery models that can sustain impact even with potential funding reductions.

### **Team WT Strategy**

Address our over-reliance on specific team members by implementing cross-training and documentation processes that distribute knowledge and responsibilities more evenly, reducing burnout risk and improving succession planning.