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Job Aid *SWOT Analysis*

Weaknesses

Strengths

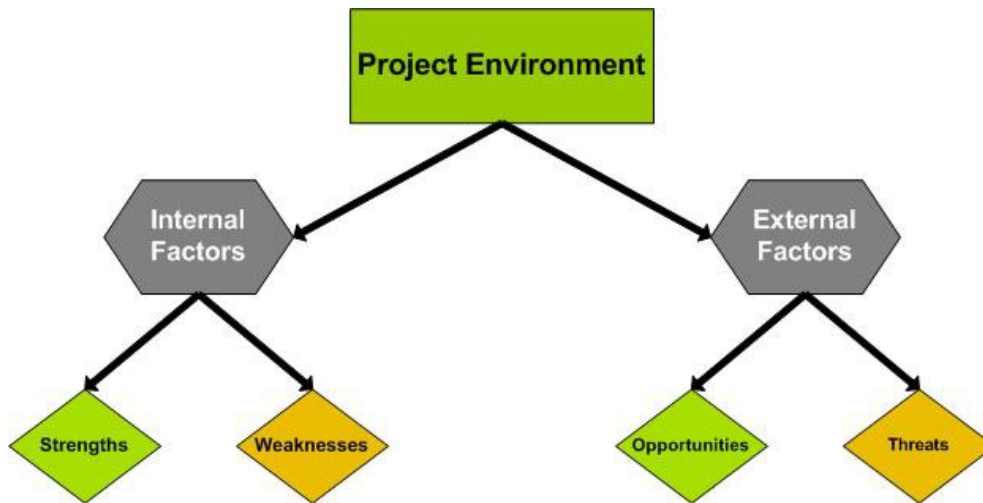
SWOT Analysis

Opportunities

Threats

SWOT analysis is a simple yet powerful strategic planning tool that is used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of an organization, project or given situation. It assists in making critical decisions related to planning, development and risk management. The goal in SWOT analysis is to identify the internal and external factors of a project or situation as well as the positive and negative aspects of each factor (*refer to figure 1 below*). This helps to promote strengths, minimize weakness, take advantage of opportunities and off-set potential threats.

Figure 1: Breakdown of SWOT factors



Application of SWOT analysis to Instructional Design Projects

SWOT analysis has its roots in business management; however, it has also become a popular tool used in project management and instructional design. Its popularity is primarily due to its ability to predict the potential success and failures of projects as well as their key inputs and outputs. To illustrate the usefulness of SWOT analysis in instructional design, consider the possible decision to design a problem-based CBT program for a global company. To determine whether this PBL-CBT program will be the best choice, the project manager or senior instructional designer can perform these **Six Simple Steps to SWOT:**

1. **Conduct an initial “environmental scan” of the project.** The scan should include basic lists of both the positive and negative internal and external factors of the project.

① Tip: Internal factors are within your control and external factors are not.

2. **Invite participation from those who will be directly involved in the project.** Conduct a SWOT planning meeting. To begin, provide participants with the initial environmental scan of the project and a brief explanation of the SWOT matrix as well as the factors that compose it (*Refer to table 1*). Then, give participants time to fill in the matrix on before continuing.

① Tip: Establish ground rules ahead of time so that the meeting is efficient and Promotes participation.

Table 1: The SWOT Matrix

INTERNAL			
POSITIVE	<u>Strengths</u> Factors that help to achieve the project objectives	<u>Weaknesses</u> Factors that can potentially stop the achievement of the project objectives	NEGATIVE
	<u>Opportunities</u> Factors that enhance the achievement of project objectives	<u>Threats</u> Factors that are potentially detrimental to project objectives	
EXTERNAL			

3. **Develop a list of internal factors.** Use a round robin or other group discussion forum with project participants to collect a bank of factors and group them as **strengths** or **weaknesses**.

① Tip: Be realistic and specific about the strengths and weaknesses; avoid grey areas.

4. **Develop a list of external factors.** Repeat the round robin or discussion forum with participants; however, this time group external factors as either **opportunities** or **threats**.

① Tip: Consider how to capitalize on opportunities and how to off-set threats in the discussion.

5. **Review the list of internal and external factors.** Provide participants with enough time to consider all of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats listed and thoroughly evaluate them.

① Tip: Briefly discuss each factor's importance before including it in the list. If the factor is of minimal importance, eliminate it from the list.

6. **Establish the priority factors and complete the SWOT!** Use a round robin or discussion forum to choose the "top three" strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Table 2 below illustrates the completed SWOT analysis for the PBL-CBT scenario.

Table 2: Completed SWOT Analysis

S	W	O	T
Self-directed learning	Difficult for non- advanced learners	Knowledge and skills can be applied to multiple scenarios	Funding may be eliminated
Progression to higher level learning outcomes	Facilitator is not present to help students or troubleshoot technical problems	Easy to administer via distance learning	Technical problems with computer technology
Application of concepts, principles, processes and far transfer procedures	Not appropriate for remembering facts, concepts, or near transfer processes and procedures	Builds long term (far transfer) knowledge and skills	Students may not be motivated to complete the CBT

References

Strategic Management–SWOT analysis. Retrieved 11/20/2018 <http://www.quickmba.com/strategy/swot/>
SWOT Analysis. Retrieved 11/20/2018 from http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05.htm

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