LEADS_SWOT/TOWS
How It Works

SWOT/TOWS
Guide

INTRODUCTION

Strategic Planning begins with an acute understanding of Mission and Vision. This workbook assumes that the mission and vision of your organization is well documented and understood by the key stakeholders.

We begin here with the initial brainstorming exercises that lead to defining the three to five primary strategic goals which are estimated to be able to be completed in the next five years (actually you can change the planning horizons). The exercise will by its nature presents goals or objectives of varying planning horizons and this workbook ensures that those are not lost going forward. This workbook will guide you through the SWOT process. It will also guide you through the TOWS process (an organized way to analyze the SWOT).

It is our position that without the TOWS process, the SWOT is incomplete. LEADS's objective is to provide you the tools to do the SWOT, analyze the SWOT through the TOWS process, and provide a prioritized list of goals/objectives at least 3 of which would be considered Strategic Goals.
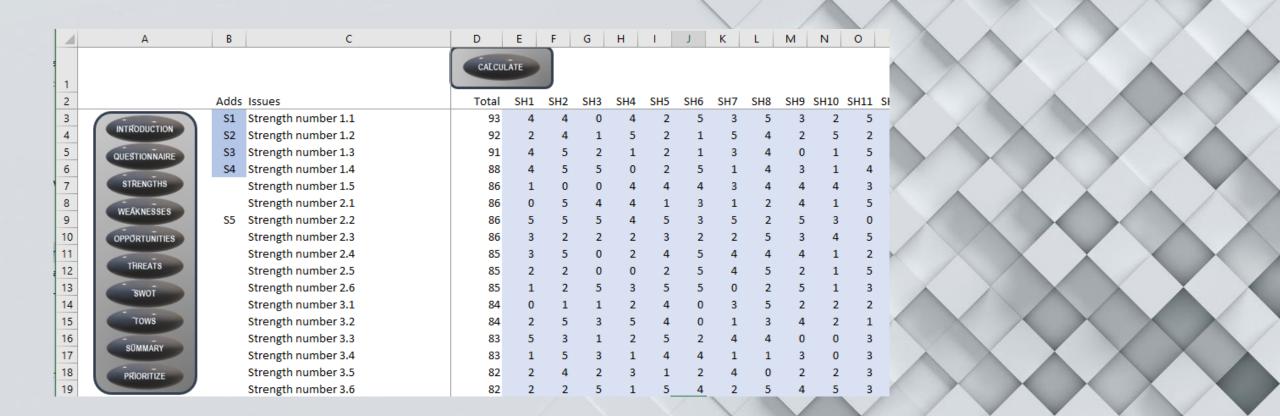
INSTRUCTIONS

PREPARATION.
Purpose. The purpose of the prep phase is to get to know the organization. What is important to them. This will help you formulate the questions that will draw out the important issues in the form of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

QUESTIONNAIRE.
1) Enter the questions into the Questionnaire (Column C)
2) For each questions put an S, W, O, or T (Column B), indicating whether the question is intended to draw out Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, or Threats
3) Send the questions to the participating stakeholders (can be done in a group session)
4) Enter the answers (issues) on the row with the question (Columns D through W)
5) Hit the "Push to SWOT"

INSTRUCTIONS

STRENGTHS – WEAKNESSES – OPPORTUNITIES - THREATS

1) Have each stakeholder review the list of in each category and rate them with the highest number representing the most important issue. You can do this virtually using copy of the category's worksheet or complete in a group session)
2) Enter the ratings into the matrix.
3) Hit the Calculate button (you can do this after completing the above tasks for all four SWOT categories).

Adds	Issues	Total	SH1	SH2	SH3	SH4	SH5	SH6	SH7	SH8	SH9	SH10	SH11
S1	Strength number 1.1	93	4	4	0	4	2	5	3	5	3	2	5
S2	Strength number 1.2	92	2	4	1	5	2	1	5	4	2	5	2
S3	Strength number 1.3	91	4	5	2	1	2	1	3	4	0	1	5
S4	Strength number 1.4	88	4	5	5	0	2	5	1	4	3	1	4
	Strength number 1.5	86	1	0	0	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3
	Strength number 2.1	86	0	5	4	4	1	3	1	2	4	1	5
S5	Strength number 2.2	86	5	5	5	4	5	3	5	2	5	3	0
	Strength number 2.3	86	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	5	3	4	5
	Strength number 2.4	85	3	5	0	2	4	5	4	4	4	1	2
	Strength number 2.5	85	2	2	0	0	2	5	4	5	2	1	5
	Strength number 2.6	85	1	2	5	3	5	5	0	2	5	1	3
	Strength number 3.1	84	0	1	1	2	4	0	3	5	2	2	2
	Strength number 3.2	84	2	5	3	5	4	0	1	3	4	2	1
	Strength number 3.3	83	5	3	1	2	5	2	4	4	0	0	3
	Strength number 3.4	83	1	5	3	1	4	4	1	1	3	0	3
	Strength number 3.5	82	2	4	2	3	1	2	4	0	2	2	3
	Strength number 3.6	82	2	2	5	1	5	4	2	5	4	5	3

INTRODUCTION
QUESTIONNAIRE
STRENGTHS
WEAKNESSES
OPPORTUNITIES
THREATS
SWOT
TOWS
SUMMARY
PRIORITIZE

CALCULATE

INSTRUCTIONS

SWOT.

1) Hit the ADD SWOT button.
2) Review the list and remove or edit items as necessary avoiding duplication.

TOWS.

1) Hit the IMPORT SWOT button.
2) Scroll down to the Possible Statements.
3) Place an "X" next to the statements you want to include in the TOWS. You may select up to 4 possible statements from each of the 6 SWOT groupings.
4) Hit the GOALS-TOWS button to populate the TOWS matrix with your

		Helpful	Harmful
		Strenths	Weaknesses
Internal/Current	S1	Strength number 1.1	W1 Weakness number 10.1
	S2	Strength number 1.2	W2 Weakness number 5.3
	S3	Strength number 1.3	W3 Weakness number 9.4
	S4	Strength number 1.4	W4 Weakness number 2.4
	S5	Strength number 2.2	W5
		Opportunities	Threats
External/Future	O1	Opportunity number 1.1	T1 Threat number 1.1
	O2	Opportunity number 1.2	T2 Threat number 1.2
	O3	Opportunity number 1.3	T3 Threat number 1.3
	O4	Opportunity number 1.4	T4 Threat number 1.4
	O5	Opportunity number 2.4	

		Strenths (Internal/Current)		Weaknesses (Internal/Current)		Threat (External/Future)
		S1 Strength number 1.1		W1 Weakness number 10.1		T1 Threat number 1.1
		S2 Strength number 1.2		W2 Weakness number 5.3		T2 Threat number 1.2
		S3 Strength number 1.3		W3 Weakness number 9.4		T3 Threat number 1.3
		S4 Strength number 1.4		W4 Weakness number 2.4		T4 Threat number 1.4
		S5 Strength number 2.2		W5		T5
Opportunities (External / Future)	O1 Opportunity number 1.1	SO MAXI - MAXI		WO MINI - MAXI		TO MITI-MAXI
	O2 Opportunity number 1.2	S1-O1 Maximize the Strength number 1.1 in order to take advantage of the Opportunity number 1.1		W1-O2 Minimize the Weakness number 10.1 by taking advantage of Opportunity number 1.2		T1-O4 Mitigate the Threat number 1.1 by capitalizing on the Opportunity number 1.4
	O3 Opportunity number 1.3	S1-O2 Maximize the Strength number 1.1 in order to take advantage of the Opportunity number 1.2		W1-O5 Minimize the Weakness number 10.1 by taking advantage of Opportunity number 2.4		T3-O1 Mitigate the Threat number 1.3 by capitalizing on the Opportunity number 1.1
	O4 Opportunity number 1.4	S1-O4 Maximize the Strength number 1.1 in order to take advantage of the Opportunity number 1.4				T5-O2 Mitigate the by capitalizing on the Opportunity number 1.2
	O5 Opportunity number 2.4	S1-O5 Maximize the Strength number 1.1 in order to take advantage of the Opportunity number 2.4				T5-O4 Mitigate the by capitalizing on the Opportunity number 1.4
Threats (External / Future)	T1 Threat number 1.1	S2-O2 Maximize the Strength number 1.2 in order to take advantage of the Opportunity number 1.2		WT MINI-MINI		
	T2 Threat number 1.2	S3-T1 Use the Strength number 1.3 in order to minimize the Threat number 1.1				
	T3 Threat number 1.3	S4-T1 Use the Strength number 1.4 in order to minimize the Threat number 1.1				
	T4 Threat number 1.4	S4-T4 Use the Strength number 1.4 in order to minimize the Threat number 1.4				
	T5					
Weaknesses (Internal / Current)	W1 Weakness number 10.1	SW MAXI-MITI				
	W2 Weakness number 5.3	S1-W4 Maximize the Strength number 1.1 in order to mitigate the Weakness number 2.4				
	W3 Weakness number 9.4	S3-W4 Maximize the Strength number 1.3 in order to mitigate the Weakness number 2.4				
	W4 Weakness number 2.4	S4-W4 Maximize the Strength number 1.4 in order to mitigate the Weakness number 2.4				
	W5	S5-W2 Maximize the Strength number 2.2 in order to mitigate the Weakness number 5.3				

Summary Results.
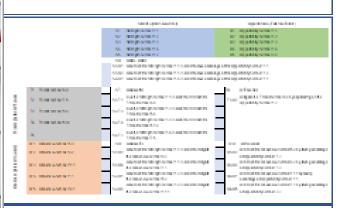**This section is a report to help inform leadership of the progress made**

1) Delete the sample SWOT.
2) Hit the INSERT SWOT button.
3) Resize the SWOT to fit.
4) Delete the sample TOWS.
5) Hit the INSERT TOWS button.
6) Resize the TOWS to fit.
7) Hit the "Top 24" button. This imports the goals from the TOWS matrix.
8) Combine statements, eliminate duplication and reword the goals as needed.
9) Enter the an estimated time horizon for the completion of each goal.
10) Hit the "SG LTO STO" button.
11) Hit the "Push To PRI" button.
12) There are text boxes on the page so that you can provide introductory/informative statements. There is one above the SWOT, one above the TOWS, and one above the list of Goals/Objectives generated from the TOWS.

INSTRUCTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS

Alternate TOWS.

An alternate TOWS is available for use in the Summary Results. I prefer the alternate as it fits better in a report layout and removes the unnecessary Weakness-Threat (mini-mini) analysis section.

		Strenths (Internal/Current)		Opportunities (External/Future)	
		S1 Strength number 1.1		O1 Opportunity number 1.1	
		S2 Strength number 1.2		O2 Opportunity number 1.2	
		S3 Strength number 1.3		O3 Opportunity number 1.3	
		S4 Strength number 1.4		O4 Opportunity number 1.4	
		S5 Strength number 1.2		O5 Opportunity number 3.2	
		SO MAXI – MAXI			
		S1-O1 Maximize the Strength number 1.1 in order to take advantage of the Opportunity number 1.1			
		S1-O2 Maximize the Strength number 1.1 in order to take advantage of the Opportunity number 1.2			
		S1-O4 Maximize the Strength number 1.1 in order to take advantage of the Opportunity number 1.4			
		S1-O5 Maximize the Strength number 1.1 in order to take advantage of the Opportunity number 2.4			
Threats (External / Future)	T1 Threat number 4.8	ST MAXI-MINI		TO MITI-MAXI	
	T2 Threat number 7.5	S3-T1 Use the Strength number 1.3 in order to minimize the Threat number 1.1		T1-O4 Mitigate the Threat number 1.1 by capitalizing on the Opportunity number 1.4	
	T3 Threat number 5.6	S4-T1 Use the Strength number 1.4 in order to minimize the Threat number 1.1		T3-O1 Mitigate the Threat number 1.3 by capitalizing on the Opportunity number 1.1	
	T4 Threat number 5.10	S4-T4 Use the Strength number 1.4 in order to minimize the Threat number 1.4		T5-O2 Mitigate the by capitalizing on the Opportunity number 1.2	
	T5			T5-O4 Mitigate the by capitalizing on the Opportunity number 1.4	
Weakness (Internal / Current)	W1 Weakness number 5.3	SW MAXI-MITI		WO MINI – MAXI	
	W2 Weakness number 9.2	S1-W4 Maximize the Strength number 1.1 in order to mitigate the Weakness number 2.4		W1-O2 Minimize the Weakness number 10.1 by taking advantage of Opportunity number 1.2	
	W3 Weakness number 11.1	S3-W4 Maximize the Strength number 1.3 in order to mitigate the Weakness number 2.4		W1-O5 Minimize the Weakness number 10.1 by taking advantage of Opportunity number 2.4	
	W4 Weakness number 1.1	S4-W5 Maximize the Strength number 1.4 in order to mitigate the			
	W5 Weakness number 10.1	S5-W2 Maximize the Strength number 2.2 in order to mitigate the Weakness number 5.3			

A brief word on the TOWS matrix. Every TOWS matrix I've seen on the internet look like this:

You might have notice we've provided a slightly different model:

Lets call the first the 4 zone system and the latter the 6 zone system. Simply put the traditional 4 zone system leave out the possibility that an Opportunity could help mitigate a Threat or that a Strength could be used to combat a Weakness. Our 6 zone system covers those possibilities. The two zones shown in the green shapes are the added zones. I call the TO (Threat-Opportunity) zone a MITI-MAXI (mitigate-maximize) zone. The SW (Strength-Weakness) zone is a MAXI-MITI zone.

the WT zone (MINI-MINI) is highlighted with the red shape to draw your attention to the fact that adopting a strategy based on issue combinations from this zone is generally a strategy of avoidance. These strategies, while they should be noted, are not necessarily actionable. Each Weakness and Threat listed in this zone also has an entry in the WO and SW zones which will produce actionable strategies.

How It Works