

SWOT Analysis Guide

for AAUW California Branches



What is a Branch SWOT Analysis?

SWOT analysis is a strategic planning technique used to help a person or organization identify four factors that impact success. SWOT stands for "strength, weakness, opportunity and threat." The SWOT analysis is the collaborative, diverse, and immersive activity used to understand these factors.

AAUW California Branches can use this technique to work on any issue or problem they face. The result of the four-section analysis is a visual bird's eye view of what the branch sees and others observe. Include outside opinions. Make action plans. Success will follow. A SWOT analysis will help a branch:

- Set priorities.
- Focus on the most important characteristics and ideas.
- Plan where you want to go, based on SWOT results.

SWOT Analysis Image

	Helpful to achieving the objective	Harmful to achieving the objective
Internal Origin (attributes of the branch)	Strengths S	Weaknesses W
External Origin (attributes of the environment)	Opportunities O	Threats T

SWOT Analysis Steps to Follow

Step 1

Decide on the focus of your SWOT analysis and write your goal statement (expected outcome). A single sentence works best.

To help you with your goal statement, consider:

- What is the project, event, issue you want to analyze and take action?
- What size of a team conducting the SWOT analysis will meet your needs? Small focus group(s)? A large meeting with many members?
- What do you hope the SWOT results will reveal to you?

Step 2

Select your team for participation.

When deciding on your team, consider:

- Do you want a small, focused team to keep it simple?
- Do you want a large, diverse discussion group to have a dynamic and energetic discussion?
- Do you have participants who would make a good facilitator (guide the conversation), scribe (write the responses), timekeeper (keep the meeting on track)?

Step 3

Prepare your questions in each focus area of SWOT to stimulate discussion.

Sample “Strength” questions.

- What so we do well?
- What are our unique resources?
- What do others see as our strengths?

Sample “Weakness” questions.

- Where can we improve?
- What resources do we lack?
- What do others see as our weaknesses?

Step 3, continued

Prepare your questions in each focus area of SWOT, continued.

Sample “Opportunities” questions.

- What opportunities do we have?
- What trends can we use?
- Who can support or partner with us?

Sample “Threats” questions.

- What obstacles may harm us?
- What is the competition doing?
- Where are we at risk?

Step 4

Prepare for the meeting.

- Schedule a meeting convenient for your team, whether in person or via video conference.
- Prepare the agenda and include:
 - Time, date, location, what to bring (ideas, note paper and pen, enthusiasm)
 - The SWOT Analysis goal statement.
 - A brief description of the meeting format (definition of SWOT, what participants will do, what will be achieved).
 - Roles and responsibilities.
 - Time frames.
- Prepare meeting space:
 - Create 4 blocks for SWOT ideas, e.g., on paper, whiteboard, shared computer screen).
 - Label blocks with SWOT titles.

Step 5

During meeting, let the facilitator guide participation through the process.

- Review the agenda.
- Introduce the facilitator, scribe and timekeeper and their roles and responsibilities.
- Begin asking lead questions (prepared in advance) for each square.
- Gather ideas in each square before moving on.
 - Brainstorm ideas.
 - Let ideas flow, uninterrupted and without censorship (limitations).
 - After exhausting all ideas, move on to the next section.
 - Work from internal focus, i.e., strengths, weaknesses.
 - Work to external focus, i.e., opportunities, threats.
- After adding all ideas, review and eliminate duplicates or combine similar ideas.
- Prioritize key ideas most related to the SWOT objective (remember the goal statement).
 - Revise descriptions (if necessary) so they are brief and to the point.
 - Select top 3 to 5 ideas to review.

Step 6

Reflect on and analyze results from SWOT.

- Discuss how strengths can help the branch leverage opportunities.
- Discuss what the branch can do to minimize weaknesses or overcome threats.
- Build an action plan that satisfies the original goal statement that was defined in the beginning.
- Communicate results.
- Keep the SWOT results handy for reference or updates.

Examples of SWOT Analysis Diagrams

SWOT Analysis (simple grid)



SWOT Analysis (fancy grid)

