**SWOT analysis for better personal understanding**

A SWOT analysis is a useful technique for understanding your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It is a good tool for analysing yourself and crafting goals.

When you have completed this analysis, you could use your findings as the basis for a discussion with your mentor.

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| **Strengths*** What do you do well?
* What unique resources can you draw on?
* What do others see as your strengths?
 | **Weaknesses*** What could you improve?
* Where do you have fewer resources than others?
* What are others likely to see as weaknesses?
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| **Opportunities*** What opportunities are open to you?
* What trends could you take advantage of?
* How can you turn your strengths into opportunities?
 | **Threats*** What threats could harm you?
* What is your competition doing?
* What threats do your weaknesses expose you to?
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Consider answers to the following questions:

**STRENGTHS**

* What advantages do you have that others don't have (for example, skills, certifications, education, or connections)?
* What do you do better than anyone else?
* What personal resources can you access?
* What do other people (and your boss, in particular) see as your strengths?
* Which of your achievements are you most proud of?
* What values do you believe in that others fail to exhibit?
* Are you part of a network that no one else is involved in? If so, what connections do you have with influential people?

Consider this from your own perspective, and from the point of view of the people around you. And don't be modest or shy – be as objective as you can.

**WEAKNESSES**

* What tasks do you usually avoid because you don't feel confident doing them?
* What will the people around you see as your weaknesses?
* Are you completely confident in your education and skills training? If not, where are you weakest?
* What are your negative work habits (for example, are you often late, are you disorganized, do you have a short temper, or are you poor at handling stress)?
* Do you have personality traits that hold you back in your field? For instance, if you have to conduct meetings on a regular basis, a fear of public speaking would be a major weakness.

Again, consider this from a personal/internal perspective and an external perspective. Do other people see weaknesses that you don’t, see? Do co-workers consistently outperform you in key areas? Be realistic – it's best to face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

* What new technology can help you? Or can you get help from others or from people via the internet?
* Is your industry growing? If so, how can you take advantage of the current market?
* Do you have a network of strategic contacts to help you, or offer good advice?
* What trends (management or otherwise) do you see in your company, and how can you take advantage of them?
* Are any of your competitors failing to do something important? If so, can you take advantage of their mistakes?
* Is there a need in your company or industry that no one is filling?
* Do your customers or vendors complain about something in your company? If so, could you create an opportunity by offering a solution?

You might find useful opportunities in the following:

* Networking events, educational classes, or conferences.
* A colleague going on an extended leave. Could you take on some of this person's projects to gain experience?
* A new role or project that forces you to learn new skills, like public speaking or international relations.
* A company expansion or acquisition. Do you have specific skills (like a second language) that could help with the process?

Also, importantly, look at your strengths, and ask yourself whether these open any opportunities – and look at your weaknesses, and ask yourself whether you could open up opportunities by eliminating those weaknesses.

**THREATS**

* What obstacles do you currently face at work?
* Are any of your colleagues competing with you for projects or roles?
* Is your job (or the demand for the things you do) changing?
* Does changing technology threaten your position?
* Could any of your weaknesses lead to threats?

Performing this analysis will often provide key information – it can point out what needs to be done and put problems into perspective.