

The SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis can be very helpful in evaluating the strategic effectiveness of existing church programs. It should be used in conjunction with brainstorming new and alternate church programs. The SWOT analysis works basically like this.

STEP 1

Assemble several leaders/teachers from a program and add in one or two people who have observed the program from the outside. Let them know that, as church leaders, you are looking for an honest and positive critique of existing programs so as to be more effective for the Lord. Sometimes it helps to give the group a name like "strategy group" or "development committee."

STEP 2

The group should discuss and write down the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the program. The process will take several hours and may require multiple meetings.

On the following page is a sample SWOT analysis. The hypothetical church has "evangelism" as a critical area of ministry. One of the church's evangelistic activities is their book table at the county fair. Their group sat down to evaluate how effective the book table had been and determine what should be done in the future. (On the last page, we've provided a form that you can copy and use in your church).

On a SWOT form, the top two boxes examine the *positives*; the bottom two boxes examine the *negatives*. The left two boxes examine the *past*; the right two boxes examine the *future*.

STEP 3

At the bottom of the SWOT form, the group should rate the overall effectiveness of the program on a scale of 1 to 10 and make a recommendation to the church's leadership about whether the program should continue as it currently is, whether it should be improved, or whether it should be stopped. Most programs will need improvement.

STEP 4

On the back page of the form, the group should write down specific steps to improve the program, make assignments regarding who will do what, and set some deadlines. The SWOT analysis has no profit if the group walks away and makes no specific plans to tackle the issues (James 1:23-24).

SAMPLE SWOT FORM

Critical Area Of Ministry: Evangelism	
Existing Strategy / Program: <i>Book Booth at the county fair</i>	
Ministry Team: <i>Jim Smith, John Inman, Rita Goodman</i>	
Ministry History: <i>Table with books set up at the May county fair for the last five years</i>	
<p>Strengths</p> <p><i>Our people come across as being sincere</i> <i>We have good books & Bibles</i> <i>Our church name gets out there</i> <i>There have been some good discussions</i> <i>We've gotten a few visitors at church (none have stayed to our knowledge)</i></p>	<p>Opportunities (Internal & External)</p> <p><i>Thousands of people walk by our table</i> <i>We should attract kids</i> <i>We should have a video playing</i> <i>We can train our people in the gospel/apologetics</i> <i>We could have more color, prizes, a clown/magic</i></p>
PAST	FUTURE
<p>Weaknesses</p> <p><i>Our people don't start conversations proactively</i> <i>Our people don't know the gospel or how to bridge conversations well enough</i> <i>Our display is colorless</i> <i>Our books are for believers, not unbelievers</i> <i>The people-skills of some of our people are weak.</i> <i>We shouldn't argue with Mormons at the booth</i></p>	<p>Threats (Internal and External)</p> <p><i>Waning enthusiasm among our workers</i> <i>No threats from the fair committee</i> <i>No problems with other attending churches or cults</i></p>
NEGATIVES	
<p>Effectiveness Rating: - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 + ___ Continue <u>X</u> Improve ___ Discontinue</p>	<p>Comments:</p>

SAMPLE STRATEGY FORM

Tasks	Responsibility	Due Date
<i>Talk to fair committee about electronic displays</i>	<i>Jim</i>	<i>By October 1</i>
<i>Talk to Pastor Pete Simmons about evangelism courses and develop a training proposal</i>	<i>John</i>	<i>By October 1</i>
<i>Research cost of kids' videos, puppets or computer displays</i>	<i>John</i>	<i>By October 15</i>
<i>Research a totally revamped display and table. It has to be transportable and colorful - Velcro</i>	<i>Rita</i>	<i>By October 15</i>
<i>Research printed church materials like pens, T-shirts, magnets, etc.</i>	<i>Jim</i>	<i>By October 15</i>
<i>Speak to two people about helping out with the booth next Spring.</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>By October 15</i>
<i>Next meeting</i>		<i>October 15</i>
<i>Meeting with all booth personnel</i>		<i>November 9</i>
<i>First meeting for evangelism training</i>		<i>November 16 (tentative)</i>

SWOT ANALYSIS FORM

Critical Area Of Ministry:	
Existing Strategy / Program:	
Ministry Team:	
Ministry History:	
Strengths	Opportunities
Weaknesses	Threats
Effectiveness Rating: - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 + ___ Continue ___ Improve ___ Discontinue	Comments:

STRATEGY FORM

Tasks	Responsibility	Due Date
<p><i>Next meeting</i></p>		