**PERSONAL SWOT ANALYSIS**

SWOT Analysis is a powerful technique for identifying Strengths and Weaknesses and for examining the Opportunities and Threats you face as you go through life. As you add to your portfolio of abilities, recheck your SWOT regularly so that you are always aware of your self-worth, the things that you need to improve on and the best ways of taking advantage of your specific talents, abilities and opportunities.

SWOT is illuminating; it helps you uncover opportunities that you may not be aware of until you do this exercise. And by understanding your weaknesses, you can manage and eliminate threats that would otherwise catch you unawares.

More than this, you can start to distinguish yourself from your peers, developing the specialised talents and abilities needed to accelerate your career in your chosen field of work.

How to use the worksheet:

Write down answers to the questions listed and don’t be modest, be as objective as you can:

**Strengths**:

● What advantages (e.g. skills, education or connections) do you have that others don’t have?

● What do you do better than anyone else?

● What personal resources do you have access to?

● What do other people see as your strengths?

Consider this from your own perspective and from the point of view of people around you. Write down a list of your characteristics then identify from that list those that you would consider strengths.

When looking at you strengths consider them in relation to the people around you, e.g. if you’re really good at English and the people around you are really good at English this is not likely to be a strength, it is more likely to be a necessity. However, if you are really good at Creative Writing and the others find that difficult, this is a strength specific to you.

**Weaknesses**:

● What could you improve?

● What should you avoid?

● What things are the people around you likely to see as weaknesses?

Again, consider this from a personal and external basis: Do other people perceive weaknesses that they may comment on about you but that you do not see? Do others consistently out-perform you in key areas? Be realistic about this, no self-delusion as it is better to face any unpleasant truths early rather than when it’s too late and someone else has pipped you to the post in getting the job that you want.

**Opportunities**:

● Where are the good opportunities facing you?

● What are the interesting trends you are aware of?

Useful opportunities can come from such things as:

● Changes in technology, markets and industries in which you are interested, on both a broad and narrow scale.

● Changes in government policy related to careers you’re interested in.

● Changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyle changes, etc.

● Local/National Events.

A useful approach to looking at opportunities is also to look at your strengths and ask yourself whether these open up any opportunities for you.

Alternatively, look at your weaknesses and ask yourself whether you could open up opportunities by eliminating them.

**Threats**:

● What obstacles do you face?

● What are the people around you doing?

● Is the demand for the career you want to pursue changing?

● Is changing technology threatening your outlook?

● Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten you?

Just as your strengths can often bring opportunities, your weaknesses can often bring threats. Check the weaknesses you’ve listed and make sure that you’ve identified any threats that could come from them.

**Take Action**:

This is the most important bit! If you don’t take action your investment of time and energy in completing your SWOT Analysis will be rendered redundant.

Update your personal planning system to reflect your SWOT Analysis. Where you’ve identified possible opportunities, set yourself goals to explore them with a view to capitalising on them. Where you’ve identified possible threats, set goals to investigate them with a view to eliminating, managing or minimising them.

**Key Points:**

A SWOT Matrix is a framework for analysing your strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats you face. This helps you to focus on your strengths, minimise your weaknesses and take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available.

Carrying out this analysis will often be illuminating – both in terms of pointing out what needs to be done and putting problems into perspective.

Have fun!