

SWOT Analysis

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Authors Note

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Abstract

Business managers should have a clear process to outline the goals and objectives of their organization. The purpose of this paper was to conduct a SWOT analysis on the personal managerial processes found in a family-run business. The SWOT analyzed the strengths of the managerial process which included; communication, relationships, and experience. The weaknesses in management included lack of client contact and delegation of tasks. Opportunities and threats as they relate to this analysis are impatience and time management, respectively. A TOWS matrix was used to develop strategies to implement a set of processes that can help provide a roadmap moving forward as it relates to biblical scripture and the daily operation of a family-run business.

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SWOT Analysis

Introduction

Business managers should have a clear process to outline the goals and objectives of their organization. One tool that they can use is a SWOT analysis. Jones (2019) defines SWOT analysis as a planning exercise that managers use to identify internal personal or organizational strengths and weaknesses and external environmental opportunities and threats.

After a thorough personal inventory is taken and a comprehensive SWOT analysis is developed the next step is to analyze the external environment (threats and opportunities) to the internal environment (weaknesses and strengths) using a TOWS matrix. This matrix will allow the manager to develop strategies and to develop processes by making the most of the strengths and circumventing weaknesses. The TOWS matrix will also allow the manager to capitalize on opportunities and manage any threats.

This author reviewed the literature of SWOT analysis and interpretation through the use of a TOWS matrix as well as partake in online assessment tools to evaluate his strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats on a personal managerial level as it pertains to his role as a small business owner. Once he had a thorough understanding of the process and developed several strategies to provide the greatest benefit, he then integrated relevant scripture as it pertains to new thoughts and recommendations.

SWOT Analysis

As the business owner and manager begins to formulate a set of strategies that will allow him and his organization to accomplish their mission and achieve their goals one of the tools that they can use is a SWOT analysis. Jones (2019) defines SWOT analysis as a planning exercise

that managers use to identify internal personal or organizational strengths and weaknesses and external environmental opportunities and threats.

In a review of the literature as to how a SWOT analysis can be used as an inventory with the approach as a personal one versus organizational, this author found a study conducted by Deshpande (2019) that examined social marketing's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This industry sector is relevant in this author's daily work as the marketing coordinator for his family-run business. He also looked at a study by Fernandes (2019) which examined how SWOT analysis instruments used to develop long term management strategies. The work of Galabova (2019) studied how a SWOT analysis can be used in the project management process. By synthesizing the studies contained in the literature it allowed this author to have a better understanding of the process in conducting a personal inventory as it relates to business management and to have a more cohesive grasp of the need for the development of strategic objectives moving forward.

Strengths

According to Guel (2017) strengths are activities in which the business, organization, or manager performs well. These activities are often seen as competitive or efficient and considered as an asset. These strengths may relate to the experience, communication or competitive advantages. For this analysis, the author lists seven strengths. He has company and industry knowledge that has been developed for more than 25 years in the canine training industry and working with more than 2,000 clients as a certified canine behaviorist. He also has many personal and industry connections that he has utilized over his career. He has quantifiable communication and leadership skills, strategic development and risk management planning.

Weaknesses

Galabova (2019) illustrates that weaknesses include activities that the business, organization or manager does not perform well. These weaknesses can also come from a lack of resources or gaps in a management style. For this analysis, this author found several weaknesses that need to be addressed. One of his greatest weaknesses is that he is comfortable conducting the myriad back-office tasks such as marketing, accounting, and other managerial activities rather than spending time with clients. This weakness also comes into play by his lack of delegating to his team which can make him impatient and intolerant. Another weakness is he has a strong need to get things done with the consequence of getting it done the right way or not at all. This procedural error undermines the benefit of careful deliberation over time.

Opportunities

An opportunity can be defined as identification of strengths for overcoming weaknesses. (Galabova, 2019) These can be seen as untapped opportunities and are often the result of the complex influence of internal and external factors. This author highlights several opportunities through his SWOT analysis. They are the opportunity to embrace change and empower young talent to remain relevant in the canine training industry. There is an opportunity to level personal connections and be an agent of change, and the ability to learn from others in similar situations. This opportunity in particular can be found as he works his way through the doctorate program at Liberty University.

Threats

Threats are unfavorable influences of factors of the external environment and problems that arise from this environment behavior. (Galabova, 2019) Threats are relevant in every organization and within a personal management philosophy. This author recognizes two threats

as they relate to the current state of his business. One is the perception of ageism and that many in society perceive youth as more creative. This is a potential threat because in his business he may be perceived as “old school” or not up to date to current canine training methodologies. A second threat to his management is the time pressures that come with owning a small, family-run business. This “always working” mentality provides little reprieve as it relates to self-improvement and self-evaluation.

TOWS Matrix Strategies

According to Houben et al. (1999; as cited in Bull, Jobstvogt, Böhnke-Henrichs, Mascarenhas, Sitas, Baulcomb, and Koss, 2016) the value of a SWOT analysis not only stems from its ability to highlight the way an agent’s internal and external environment interacts to affect its success but also its ability to be used in the development of long term strategies to achieve particular objectives. Kim (2016) postulates that strategic literature has focused on internal factors (i.e., strengths, weaknesses) and external factors (i.e., opportunities, threats) there needs to be a method to develop alternate strategies by integrating both internal and external factors. This is where a method known as a TOWS Matrix comes into play. The research of Weihrich (1982; as cited in Dandage, Mantha, & Rane, 2019) proposed that the TOWS matrix as a conceptual framework for systematic analysis that facilitated matching external threats and opportunities with the internal weaknesses and strengths of an organization can be utilized. For this paper, this author used the TOWS matrix to link strengths and opportunities (‘SO Strategies’), those that link weaknesses and opportunities (‘WO Strategies’) and those that focus on strengths and threats (‘ST Strategies’) and finally those that arise from an assessment of weaknesses and threats (‘WT Strategies’).

SO

Scripture tells us that God's plan is for us to prosper and give us hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11) In examining his management style, this author has developed a strategy on how to best utilize his strengths and opportunities in which to better provide the best customer service to his clients. With more than 25 years in the canine training industry, he is in a position to level his personal and business connections to become an agent of change. One method that he developed was spurred on by the downturn in the local economy as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. He initiated a program to provide food for families that are unemployed or to fill gaps where families may be left without food. Another strategy is to utilize the knowledge that he obtains in this doctorate program as a way to better communicate with his clients and in building strategic relationships with others in the industry to provide more robust canine training opportunities not only locally here in Alaska but nationwide.

WO

One of this author's greatest internal weaknesses is the ability to delegate. In developing a strategy on how best to use an opportunity to overcome this weakness is to learn all he can about current trends and challenges in business management as he navigates through his doctorate program here at Liberty University. For many years, he felt determined that the management of his business should only be conducted by him. By having a better understanding of business management principles, he can embrace change and bring on new employees to meet the goals and objectives of the organization. When examining the scripture, 2 Timothy 2:2 (NIV) comes to mind when it comes to delegation as it says, "And when you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

ST

How best can this author use his strengths to avoid or lessen any potential external threats? One strategy is to take his breadth of experience in strategic planning and risk management and utilize that in a productive way to combat the threat of deadlines and other time commitments that have developed over the years in his business. Proverbs 1:5 (NIV) has an answer for this and by having a firm grasp of strategic planning, he can implement a process that outlines a more productive time management profile and utilize it in such a manner that it overcomes any lingering threats that can arise in the future.

WT

Scripture tells us weaknesses and threats are all around us. Galatians 6:9 (NIV) is a good example in examining how we can overcome our obstacles by doing what is right in the eyes of God. that Internal weaknesses and external threats can perdure to this day and can lead to bad managerial decisions for this author. A strategy on how to minimize the weakness of spending too much time focusing on back-office tasks is to simply spend more time with clients. By doing this it will allow him to offer better customer service to his clients and thus provide a more robust experience in the relationships that he can develop with those clients moving forward.

New Thoughts and Recommendations

The bible is replete with examples of strategic planning. One example that we see clearly in scripture is that Moses was a strategic thinker in that he was offered a God-given plan and his ministry was accomplished. Another is the strategic thinking of David in the time of battle (1 Chron. 12:32) and of course Jesus and the apostle Paul and the establishment of the early church. As this author completed the assessments online to develop a cohesive SWOT analysis for the first time in his 25 years of small business ownership and working with clients around the

country it highlights many of his strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as a manager of his family business. Having a better understanding of these paradigms and insights from scripture it provides many thoughts and recommendations moving forward.

After completing the personal inventory, he was made acutely aware of areas that require improvement and how to best utilize his strengths and opportunities to develop a strategy moving forward. Jones (2019) contends that the planning process goes beyond just identifying effective strategies but also a plan to ensure that these strategies are put into action. (p. 211) With this knowledge at hand, it will provide an equitable roadmap on becoming an agent of change in his local community and a better business owner and manager as a result.

Conclusion

The exercise of conducting a management SWOT analysis this paper was an interesting exercise in gaining a better understanding of my personal effectiveness in my small, family-run business. Before taking the online assessments, I gained a better understanding of what a SWOT analysis was and looked to the strategic literature on what is meant by strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. One journal article was particularly relevant to this project. The research of Galabova (2019) illustrated how a SWOT analysis can be used in the project management process. By synthesizing the studies contained in the literature it allowed this author to have a better understanding of the process in conducting a personal inventory as it relates to business management and to have a more cohesive grasp of the need for the development of strategic objectives moving forward. Fernandes (2019) examined how SWOT analysis instruments are used to develop long term management strategies. The work of Deshpande (2019) examined social marketing's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This industry sector is relevant in this author's daily work as the marketing coordinator for his

business. After having a firm grasp on the assessment process, he then used a TOWS matrix as developed by Weihrich (1982; as cited in Dandage, Mantha, & Rane, 2019) to identify strategies to implement moving forward in his management process.

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