**TYPICAL SOMERSET GP PRACTICE SWOT ANALYSIS**

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| **INTERNAL FACTORS** | |
| **STRENGTHS (+)** | **WEAKNESSES (-)** |
| * Technology * Geography * Reputation * Goodwill * Provision of specialist services/areas of expertise * Diversification * Patient relationships * Peer support * Staff – key personnel * Skills mix * Premises * Culture * Ability to manage internal change & expectations * Resilience * Appraisal mechanisms | * Time * Workload * Secondary care issues becoming primary care problems * Falling practice income * Staffing issues * Morale * Management / partnership model * Psychology of “care” – ability to say “no” * Resistance to/fear of change * Relative inability to change location * Clinical risk * Time lag in technological gains |
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| **EXTERNAL FACTORS** | |
| **OPPORTUNITIES (+)** | **THREATS (-)** |
| * Changes in population profile or need * Supply/demand * New technology * Advances in medicine * Diversification / innovation * New models of care * New areas of income * Political/regulatory * Recruitment * More flexible ways of working * More collegiate methods of working * Tax/structural finance | * Regulatory/political intervention * Media perception of issues/political rhetoric * Unrealistic expectations of patients * Litigation culture * Fracture between primary, secondary and social care models * Funding * Ebbing goodwill within profession * Loss of key staff from profession * Adverse changes in demography and lifestyle * Succession planning at partnership level * Expense of locum cover * Limits to IT infrastructure |

**What is a SWOT analysis?**

It is a planning tool which seeks to identify the strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O) and threats (T) involved in a project or business. It is a process where the management collectively identifies the internal and external factors that will affect the Practice’s future performance in the social environment in which it operates.

A Practice’s strengths and weaknesses are the *internal* factors whilst opportunities and threats relate to factors *external* to it.

**Strengths**

Strengths describe the positive attributes, tangible and intangible attributes, internal to your Practice. They are within your control. What do you do well? What resources do you have? What advantages do you have over your competition?

You may want to evaluate your strengths by area, such as your organizational structure. Strengths include the positive attributes of the people involved in the business, including their knowledge, backgrounds, education, credentials, contacts, reputations, or the skills they bring. Strengths also include tangible assets such as available capital, equipment, credit, established client-base, information and processing systems, and other valuable resources within the business.

Strengths capture the positive aspects internal to your Practice that add value or offer you a competitive advantage. In essence, it is a reminder of the value existing within your Practice.

**Weaknesses**

Weaknesses are factors that are within your control that reduce your ability to obtain or maintain a competitive edge.

Weaknesses might include lack of expertise, staff morale, lack of access to skills or technology, inferior service offerings, or the poor location of your Practice. These are factors that are under your control, but for a variety of reasons are in need of improvement to effectively accomplish your future objectives.

The more accurately you identify your weaknesses, the more valuable the SWOT will be for your assessment.

**Opportunities**

Opportunities assess the external attractive factors that represent the reason for your Practice to exist and prosper. These are external to your business. What opportunities exist in your market, or in the environment, in which you operate?

These opportunities reflect the potential that can be achieved through implementing your business strategies. Opportunities may be the result of market growth, lifestyle changes, resolution of problems associated with current situations, positive market perceptions about your Practice, or the ability to offer greater value that will create a demand for your services.

If relevant, consider placing timeframes around the identified opportunities. Does it represent an ongoing opportunity, or is it a window of opportunity? How critical is your timing to take advantage of such an opportunity?

Opportunities are external to your Practice. If you identify ‘opportunities’ that are internal to the Practice and within your control, you will want to classify them as ‘strengths’ as well.

**Threats**

What factors are potential threats to the Practice? Threats include factors beyond your control that could place your business strategy, or the Practice itself, at risk. These are also external –you have no control over them, but you may benefit by having contingency plans to address them should they occur.

A threat is a challenge created by an unfavourable trend or development that may lead to deteriorating revenues or profits. Competition – existing or potential – is always a threat. Other threats may include intolerable price increases by suppliers, governmental regulation, economic downturns, devastating media or press coverage or the introduction of a “leap-frog” technology that may make equipment obsolete.

It may be valuable to classify any threats according to their “seriousness” and “probability of occurrence.”

**Points to Consider**

* SWOT analysis creates a simplistic model in which each attribute is viewed as a strength, weakness, opportunity or threat. As a result, each attribute is seen to have only one influence on the problem being analysed when in reality, one factor might be both a strength and a weakness.
* Because SWOT analysis requires neither technical skills nor training, the analysis can be conducted internally rather than hiring an external consultant. It is a somewhat simple process that can be performed in a fairly short time. However, the information pooling and analysis is largely a subjective process that can reflect the bias of the individual(s) who generate the information and participate in the initial process.

**What’s the Relevance of the “Typical Somerset GP Practice SWOT Analysis attached?**

* The attached SWOT analysis is a starting point to your Practice’s own analysis of where it is. It has therefore been created as a discussion document, prepopulated with many of the factors relevant at this particular time as identified by PMs and advisors alike. Being a template it is, of course, a generalisation and your own SWOT analysis may end up looking somewhat different.

**What Next?**

* Undertaking a SWOT analysis enables you to track where your Practice is and where it should be going. The temptation is to do what you have always done, and wait for change to be foisted upon you. ***A GP Practice is a business similar to any other and the SWOT analysis should be used to make positive changes, be open to new opportunities and see them through***. Equally, though, it is not a static document and needs to be regularly reviewed and updated.