### Chapter 6 Organizational Strategy NAME\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### Develop Your Career Potential

##### Purpose

To allow students to practice the SWOT analysis technique in a contextually relevant way.

#### AN INDIVIDUAL SWOT ANALYSIS

In order to maintain and sustain a competitive advantage, companies continue to analyze their overall strategy in light of their current situation. In doing so, they often use a SWOT analysis, which focuses on the strengths and weaknesses in the firm’s internal environment and the opportunities and threats present in the firm’s external environment. One way to gain experience in conducting a SWOT analysis is to perform one on yourself—in other words, conduct a personal SWOT analysis. Assume you have just completed your college education and are ready to apply for a job as a manager of a small- to medium-sized facility. Perform a personal SWOT analysis to determine if your current situation matches your overall strategy. Identifying your strengths will probably be the easiest step in the analysis. They will most likely be the skills, abilities, experience, and knowledge that help differentiate you from your competitors. Take care to be realistic and honest in analyzing your strengths and weaknesses. One way to identify both strengths and weaknesses is to look at previous job evaluation comments and talk to former and present employers and coworkers. Their comments will typically focus on objective strengths and weaknesses that you have exhibited on the job. You may also gather information about your strengths and weaknesses by analyzing your personal interests and learning more about your personality type. Most college placement offices have software to help students identify their interests and personality types and then match that information to certain career paths. This type of assessment can help ensure that you do not choose a career path that is incongruent with your personality and interests.

Probably the hardest portion of the personal SWOT analysis will be the identification of your weaknesses. As humans, we are often reluctant to focus on our deficiencies; nonetheless, being aware of potential weaknesses can help us reduce them or improve upon them. Since you are preparing for a career in management, you should research what skills, abilities, knowledge, and experience are needed to be a successful manager. Comparing your personal strengths against those needed as a manager can help you identify potential weaknesses. Once you identify weaknesses, develop a plan to overcome them. Remember that most annual evaluations will include both strengths and weaknesses, so don’t forget to include them in your analysis.

You can identify opportunities now by looking at employment possibilities for entry-level managers. In this part of the analysis, it helps to match your personal strengths with opportunities. For example, if you have experience in manufacturing, you may initially choose to apply only to manufacturing-type businesses. The last step of the analysis involves identifying potential threats. Threats are barriers that can prevent you from obtaining your goals. Threats may include events such as an economic recession that reduces the number of job openings for entry-level managers. By knowing what the barriers are and by assembling proactive plans to help deal with them, you can reduce the possibility of your strategy becoming ineffective. Focusing on a personal SWOT analysis can be a practical way to prepare for an actual company analysis, and it also allows you to learn more about yourself and your long-term plans.

Source:

P. Buhler, “Managing Your Career: No Longer Your Company’s Responsibility,” *Supervision*, May 1997.

##### Questions

1. In light of the SWOT analysis, what plans might you propose for yourself that will help you maximize your strengths, exploit your opportunities, and minimize your weaknesses and threats?
2. Write three S.M.A.R.T. goals (remember Chapter 5) that will help you implement your plans.

3. How might this assignment prepare you for both your academic and your professional career?