

Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results Analysis

SOAR: West Central Vermont Region

A strengths, opportunities, aspirations, results (SOAR) analysis is a strategic planning tool that focuses on current strengths and vision of the future for developing strategic goals. This tool differs from the commonly used SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis.

SOAR engages all levels and functional areas of an organization, while SWOT is typically a top-down approach. With SOAR, the focus is on the organization and enhancing what is currently done well, rather than concentrating on perceived threats and/or weaknesses.

When conducting a SOAR analysis, the basic questions to be answered are:

1. What are our greatest strengths?
2. What are our best opportunities?
3. What is our preferred future?
4. What are the measurable results that will tell us we have achieved our vision of the future?

SOAR Strengths: What makes us proud?

This section aims to determine the strengths of your region that you can leverage and build on to seize the opportunities you decide to pursue. This may take the form of a list and include your region's critical assets, resources, and knowhow.

SOAR Opportunities: How do we make sense of the opportunities in our environment?

This section aims to identify the opportunities that you could pursue to become more successful (to become more economically resilient and support economic development).

SOAR Aspirations: What do we care deeply about?

This section aims to identify your aspirations for your region's future. It's essentially a vision built on the strengths and opportunities you've identified to both challenge and inspire your organization to achieve. Note that your aspirations are not the same as your region's overall vision. Your aspirations will typically be nearer-term in nature. For example, a region's vision might be to have the lowest addiction rate in the country, but the next aspiration might be to bring addiction rates down to pre-1960s numbers.

SOAR Results: How do we know we are succeeding?

This section aims to show how you will know that you have achieved your aspirations and also outline how you intend to track progress towards your ambitions.

Strengths

WHAT CAN WE BUILD ON?

What the organization does well, along with its key assets, resources, capabilities, and accomplishments.

What are we most proud of?

How does that reflect our greatest strength?

What makes us unique?

What are our greatest accomplishments?

How do we use our strengths to get results?

What strengths are most valuable in our marketplace?

What do we do or have that's better than anyone else?

What do we excel at?

What do we provide that is world class?

Opportunities

WHAT ARE OUR STAKEHOLDERS ASKING FOR?

Circumstances that your team could leverage for success, eg. to improve profitability, market share, or competitive edge.

What partnerships would lead to greater success?

What changes and trends in the market align with our strengths?

What threats do we see that we could reframe as opportunities?

What needs and wants are we currently not fulfilling for our internal and external stakeholders?

Are there gaps in the market that we could fill?

What new skills do we need to move forward?

Aspirations

WHAT DO WE CARE DEEPLY ABOUT?

An expression of what you want to be and achieve in the future. A vision to build on current strengths, provide inspiration, and challenge the current situation.

What are we passionate about?

What should our future region(s) look like?

How can we make a difference?

What do we want to achieve in the future?

What strategies and actions support our perfect future self?

Results

HOW DO WE KNOW WE ARE SUCCEEDING?

Tangible outcomes and measures that demonstrate you've achieved your goals and aspirations.

What measures will tell us we are on track to achieve success?

How do we translate our vision of success into tangible outcomes?

How do we know when we've achieved our goals?

Try to propose 3-5 Indicators for a score card