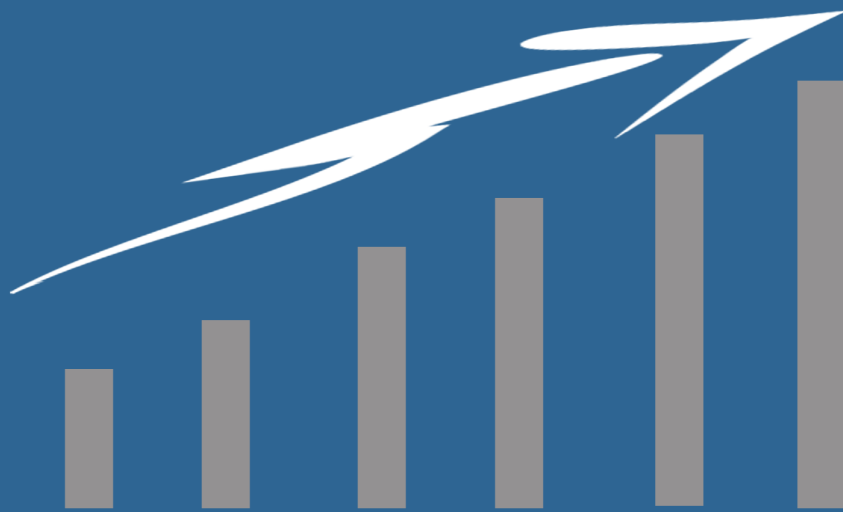


Ministry Advantage



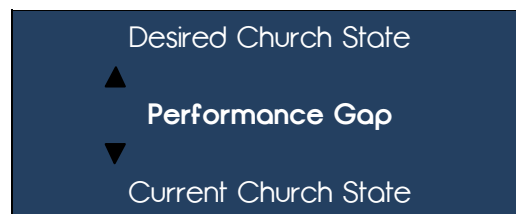
Analyzing Your Existing Church

ANALYZING YOUR EXISTING CHURCH

DETERMINING WHERE YOUR CHURCH IS TODAY

Before deciding where you want to go and how you're going to get there, you need to understand where your church is today. The difference between where you are and where you want to be is called your **performance gap**. The strategic planning process is designed to *bridge that gap* and take you to where you want to be.

This process is often called a gap analysis, because you're comparing the current state of your church with the desired state, which identifies any gaps between the two. Once these gaps are identified, you can develop an effective strategy to bridge them.



Analyzing your church in these terms provides a **comprehensive view** of where you are and where you can go. It identifies areas that need improvement, as well as potential opportunities.

The first step in conducting your performance gap analysis is to determine the current state of your church—what you're doing right and what areas need work. Perhaps you have problems recruiting and mobilizing volunteers, or a low level of worship life. Perhaps there is a morale problem or lack of teamwork. Perhaps you're facing a cash flow problem and can't make ends meet. Perhaps the church is too dependent upon your presence for smooth operations.

CONDUCTING A S.W.O.B. ANALYSIS

There are two arenas to consider when analyzing your church. One is an **internal analysis** of your organization's strengths and weaknesses. The other is an **external analysis** of opportunities and barriers that will impact your ability to achieve your vision. In order to facilitate this analysis, you can utilize the following four categories:

Strengths: What aspects of your church are growing in effectiveness? What qualities does your church possess that give you the unique ability to address specific needs or opportunities?

Weaknesses: What aspects of your church are not efficient or effective? What limitations keep you from moving forward or achieving your vision?

Opportunities: What opportunities exist now, or could in the near future, of which you might prepare to take advantage?

Barriers: What barriers exist now or could in the near future, that might derail, distract, or in some other way keep you from achieving your vision?

There are many functional areas that need to operate smoothly for your church to be successful. Ask yourself what you're doing right in each area of ministry and what needs to be improved. Examine every aspect of your church and ask yourself and the staff or volunteers responsible for each area what works and what doesn't. You may have done some of this during the church evaluation process before starting this program. Take this opportunity to do a more in-depth review of these critical areas.

Ask yourself questions like:

- ◆ Are we effectively reaching non-Christians?
- ◆ Are we creating and sustaining real community?
- ◆ Is there significant spiritual growth occurring among our core?
- ◆ Do ministry teams effectively support the vision of the church?
- ◆ Do our worship services move people toward greater understanding and intimacy with God?
- ◆ Are Christian education experiences informing and transforming?
- ◆ Is cash flow adequate to take advantage of opportunities?
- ◆ Are the staff members well trained and able to do their jobs?
- ◆ Are interviewing, hiring and reviewing procedures effective?
- ◆ Are current outreach marketing processes effective?
- ◆ Do you have clear and effective assimilation, discipleship and mobilization processes?
- ◆ Are your governance processes designed to facilitate your vision?

To assist you in doing a thorough SWOB analysis, we will review a few common biblical focuses of the church that could provide the framework for your SWOB analysis.

A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING YOUR CHURCH'S EFFECTIVENESS

This list will help you evaluate your church's effectiveness in at least key four areas. Use it as a basis for the *Take Action!* exercise (Implementation Task 1) at the end of this section.

MISSION—Extending God's kingdom beyond the local church through evangelism and compassion in our neighborhoods and the world.

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Spirit the Holy."

Matthew 28:19

WORSHIP—Developing a passionate love for God in people which expresses itself in authentic worship.

"O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you....Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied...with singing lips my mouth will praise you."

Psalms 63:1-5

SPIRITUAL FORMATION—Growing people in a knowledge of God that changes their lifestyle and character.

"You have given up your old way of life with its habits. Each of you is now a new person. You are becoming more and more like your Creator, and you will understand him better....Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us. Let the message about Christ completely fill your lives...Whatever you say or do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Colossians 3:10-11,16

"As you know Him better, He will give you, through His great power, everything you need for living a truly good life...you must learn to know God better and discover what He wants you to do...The more you go on in this way, the more you will grow strong spiritually and become fruitful and useful to our Lord Jesus Christ."

2 Peter 1:3,5,8

COMMUNITY—Creating a mutual love among the people of God that increases commitment, transparency, and servanthood.

"They devoted themselves to...fellowship....All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need."

Acts 2:42,44

"Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."

Romans 12:13

"...serve one another in love."

Galatians 5:13

You need to identify the strengths and weaknesses of your church before you can begin taking corrective action and pursuing new opportunities. Answering the questions, "What are we doing right?" and "What areas need work?" are important to the strategic planning process and the success of your church. But they aren't the whole process, and you will want to make sure you don't get so caught up analyzing the present that you don't move forward to define the future. The old saying that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link applies to church as well. Every link must be strengthened for your church to run at its optimal level.

Once more, we encourage you to come before God as you reflect on these questions. Ask the Lord to guide your mind and heart as you think about His leading in your church and the direction He would like your church to take in the future. What "links" does God want strengthened in the church under your care?

TAKE ACTION!

*Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 1:
Determining the Current State of Your Church.*

DEVELOPING A SWOB STRATEGY MATRIX

What does a SWOB analysis indicate about what should be included in your strategic plan? If you are developing or revisiting the directional statements of your church (mission, vision, values and framework), a SWOB analysis can give you a solid perspective on the current reality within which your direction is being formed. But the primary value of conducting a SWOB analysis comes from matching the specific internal and external factors and evaluating the interrelationships for the purpose of discovering effective strategies.

For example:

- ◆ Which strengths have a relation to, a bearing on, or are affected by, which opportunities.
- ◆ Which strengths can help us take advantage of specific opportunities or overcome certain weaknesses or barriers?
- ◆ Which opportunities might help us overcome certain weaknesses or barriers?
- ◆ Which internal strengths can effective strategies be built upon?
- ◆ Which weaknesses does our strategy need to focus on correcting?
- ◆ Do our church's weaknesses disqualify it from pursuing certain opportunities?
- ◆ Which opportunities do we have the strongest passions and resources to pursue with success?
- ◆ What barriers should our church pray most about and plan to overcome?

From the matches, you can generate a list of alternative strategies, evaluate them, eliminate redundancy and ones that won't work now, and finally select strategies that will work to help you take the next steps toward the vision of your church. Periodically conducting a SWOB analysis and creating a strategy matrix will lead to establishing the most effective goals and objectives for your church.

Review the list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and barriers you created during your SWOB analysis and rank them based on those that will have the greatest impact on your ministry. For example, consider: What strengths are likely to have the most impact on your mission and vision? What weaknesses are likely to endanger, or are most counter to, the success of mission and vision? Select the top three in each category for use in discovering the best strategies for your church.

The following matrix illustrates how to use your prioritized SWOB list to create a SWOB Strategy Matrix:

SWOB STRATEGY MATRIX

		<i>External</i>	
		<u>Opportunities</u> Generate a list of opportunities that exist in your external environment. Choose the three most promising opportunities.	<u>Barriers</u> Generate a list of potential barriers or threats that exist in your external environment. Choose the three most potentially threatening barriers.
<i>Internal</i>	<u>Strengths</u> Generate a list of church strengths. Choose the three most vital strengths.	<u>S/O Matches</u> Match strengths to key opportunities. Strategy: Use strengths to take advantage of opportunities.	<u>S/B Matches</u> Match strengths to major potential barriers. Strategy: Use strengths to overcome potential barriers.
	<u>Weaknesses</u> Generate a list of church weaknesses by listing your deficiencies. Choose the three most critical weaknesses.	<u>W/O Matches</u> Match weaknesses with major opportunities. Strategy: Take advantage of opportunities that will overcome weaknesses.	<u>W/B Matches</u> Match weaknesses with major potential barriers. Strategy: Develop defensive strategies to minimize weaknesses and overcome potential significant barriers.

TAKE ACTION!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 2: Developing a SWOB Strategy Matrix.

TAKE ACTION!

IMPLEMENTATION TASK 1: DETERMINING THE CURRENT STATE OF YOUR CHURCH

Review the following segment of Section 1 in this Module:

◆ *Determining Where Your Church Is Today*

Then review the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and barriers in each of the following areas. Feel free to add other categories you feel would help you do a complete analysis of the key aspects of your church.

Mission	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Barriers
Worship	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Barriers

Spiritual Formation	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Barriers
Community	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Barriers

Other:-----	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Barriers
Other:-----	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Barriers

Other:-----	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Barriers
Other:-----	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Barriers

MI Implementation Task 2: Developing a SWOB Strategy Matrix

Review the following segment of Section 1 in this Module:

♦ *Developing a SWOB Strategy Matrix*

Then complete the following template using the instructions and the matrix on pages 24 and 25. This will assist you in developing strategies that leverage your strengths, minimize weaknesses, take advantage of opportunities and overcome barriers.

SWOB STRATEGY MATRIX

		External	
		Opportunities	Barriers
Internal	Strengths	S/O Matches	S/B Matches
	Weaknesses	W/O Matches	W/B Matches

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