

The SCOPE Planning Model – An Alternative To SWOT Analysis

[Standard](#) · Posted by [Webb 36.0](#) on October 7, 2011 · [17 Comments](#)



For generations in marketing and business we've used the SWOT model to provide an initial analysis and classification of the issues facing a business as it starts to evaluate its position and devise strategy. It has served us well since its inception in the 1960s with its simplicity, functionality and intuitiveness; remaining un-changed and un-equivocal for over 40 years. It provides a useful tool for segmenting internal and external factors into positives and negatives, yet in doing so it can be limiting in its scope to introduce wider factors which could or should come into play when developing our plans.

Most executives merely use the SWOT as a method of grouping factors into the 4 buckets, with limited conscious effort to align internal Strengths to specific external Opportunities, or to understand Weaknesses in regard to mitigating Threats. In this respect, the SWOT doesn't provide a progression in its strategic development. I'd therefore like to put forward the SCOPE planning model for consideration as an alternative to SWOT:

S – SITUATION: Rear-view pertaining conditions which have a relevant and material impact on the planning decision with regards to internal or external environmental factors.

C – CORE COMPETENCIES: Unique strengths and abilities of the business which provide the fundamental basis for the provision of added value to customers and are critical to the delivery of competitive advantage.

O – OBSTACLES: Potential issues and threats that could jeopardize the realisation of future Prospects.

P – PROSPECTS: Possibilities, chances and opportunities existing both internally or externally to the business which have an apparent probability of enhanced sales and / or profits created through the leveraging of its Core Competencies.

E – EXPECTATIONS: Future-view anticipated developments in internal and external conditions that could materially influence or impact the delivery of plans to meet the identified Prospects.

SITUATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rear-view pertaining conditions which have a relevant and material impact on the planning decision with regards to internal or external environmental factors. 	
CORE COMPETENCIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique strengths and abilities of the business which provide the fundamental basis for the provision of added value to customers and are critical to the delivery of competitive advantage. 	OBSTACLES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential issues and threats that could jeopardize the realisation of future Prospects.
PROSPECTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibilities, chances and opportunities existing both internally or externally to the business which have an apparent probability of enhanced sales and / or profits created through the leveraging of its Core Competencies. 	EXPECTATIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future-view anticipated developments in internal and external conditions that could materially influence or impact the delivery of plans to meet the identified Prospects.

The SCOPE Planning Model

SCOPE retains many similarities to SWOT, yet allows extra freedom to present additional information and reflections pertinent to the planning process.

The **Situation** provides an outline and understanding of the prevailing conditions upon which the strategic plan is to be developed. It should consider both internal and external factors which have led the business to its current status, and which have a bearing on the identification of future opportunities, trends and plans.

Core Competencies are specific factors that a business sees as being central to the way it operates which fulfil 3 key criteria:

1. Are not easy for competitors to imitate, i.e. are unique
2. Can be leveraged across products and markets
3. Contribute to the end consumer's experienced benefits, i.e. add value

In these respects, Core Competencies provide the fundamental basis for the business achieving a competitive advantage in it's defined market given the pertaining conditions.

Obstacles may be either internal or external, and reflect specific issues which need to be addressed if the business is to realise future Prospects. In this respect, they shouldn't necessarily be defined as either a "Weakness" or "Threat" but rather be perceived as hurdles to the plan to be overcome over the duration. "Weaknesses" imply longer-term systemic issues causing a strategic disadvantage. Obstacles are shorter-term situations that need to be resolved.

Prospects are chances for the business to create additional sales and / or profits by taking advantage of its Core Competencies in the context of its Situation. Identification of Prospects provides the foundation for both goal setting and strategic development going forward.

Expectations reflect anticipated developments, i.e. what does the planner see happening in the future which could have either a direct or indirect influence on the execution of the plan and achievement of the defined Prospects. What are the key predications that will have a bearing on the plan? These can be both quantifiable and subjective, providing the planner with an appreciation of and insights into the future on which to direct their strategic thinking.

SCOPE is not intended to be a replacement for SWOT. It is not necessarily better. It merely provides an alternative way of categorising the factors upon which strategic development can take place. It enables us to structure our analysis and thinking for framing the context on which to develop strategies and plans in a naturally progressive fashion.

You can now view or download The SCOPE Planning Model PowerPoint presentation at Slideshare [here](#).