

## Quality and Safety Series, Season 1, Episode 6: SWOT Analysis

The speaker is Christine Bailey, Quality Improvement Organization Executive Director, HSAG.

Speaker 1 (00:03):

So, our objective today is we're going to define a SWOT analysis. Look at the components of a SWOT analysis, and discuss the uses and benefits. So, what is a SWOT analysis? A SWOT analysis in a matrix form. It can be in a table form with columns, but we're going to look at this matrix form because I really think it's easier to use. It's used to organize and evaluate the strategic position of an organization or project. When we do the SWOT analysis, it really is meant to highlight and optimize what we do well, our strengths, and our opportunities, and then what maybe makes us more vulnerable or increases our risk of failure. This is subjective and objective information, and we really like to complete this as an activity in a group setting. You know, getting everybody together and talking this through.

Speaker 1 (01:08):

And it, it helps us focus our activities for our project, making sure we're addressing those vulnerabilities and optimizing what we do well, and reducing the chance of failure for our project by addressing those things that we know can be a barrier. For internal, we're looking at resources, capabilities within your organization or within the department. You're implementing something...a quality activity. So, for internal, we want to look at what we do well, and what those barriers or risks are to our success. Again, for external, we want to look at factors that have an impact on our project. It doesn't have to be external to your organization. Think of project areas, and we want to look at those opportunities and threats. Think of, we have internal to our project, external to our project, we have positive attributes and vulnerabilities. Our positive attributes are going to be internal strengths that will support our project: what we do well, what our resources on are. We're going to look at external opportunities that we can leverage: partnerships, tools, resources—that kind of thing.

Speaker 1 (02:32):

And then our vulnerabilities are going to be our internal weaknesses and, and barriers, and then also our external threats that could jeopardize our chance of a success. So, for strengths or internal positive attributes, what advantages do you have? What do you do well? What relevant resources do you have? And what do others see as your strengths? So, weaknesses: our internal vulnerabilities, what could we improve on? What are the barriers to my, our project? And what are the root causes of past failed projects? So, think back on what are the things that that caused us to fail when we've tried to implement things in the past. Lack of leadership provider or provider buy-in. If your leadership is not behind this or you don't have a provider champion it can really be a stumbling block. And staff pushback. Listen to your staff.

Speaker 1 (03:39):

If they're pushing back, you need to dig for a deeper reason why they're pushing back. And a great strategy I use is getting some of those naysayers on my team because they give me great insight on what my weaknesses are and the things I'm going to have to overcome to make sure my project succeeds. Opportunities. So, these are kind of external positive attributes. What are the industry trends? Are there best practices and evidence-based practices to support your project? Doing literature searches, trying to identify the best evidence-based practice



that supports our project. Look for partnerships and collaboration. If you're piloting a new project, you can find financial opportunities and grants. So, what obstacles do you face? So, look at the competition. So, consider, you know, what are your competitors doing? You know, looking for potential loss of key providers. So, if I am initiating a project and my champion is thinking of leaving, that can be a problem.

Speaker 1 (04:52):

Leadership turnover. So, you have that buy-in and then all of a sudden the leadership turns over. So, kind of consider those as you're talking about your threats. So, analyzing your results. So, once you get your matrix completed, you know, we want to look at the strengths and opportunities that are substantial enough to support our project. And then, when we look at our weaknesses and threats, they're not all a game changer, but there are times that you're going to have to mitigate your weaknesses and threats. You know, look at alternative staffing. Are there ways that we can streamline what we're doing so that it's not as heavy of a lift? So, you know, once you define those weaknesses and threats, then that group really needs to brainstorm and say, "are these things we can overcome or not?"

Speaker 1 (05:51):

You need to start working to break down those barriers and then develop your strategies based on those, your results. You need to prioritize what you're going to do and use your results when you create your action plan. So, the actions I'm going to take, whether it's mitigating those barriers, coming up with ideas and opportunities and strengths, we want to work those into our action plan that will help us succeed. So, what are our key takeaways? SWOT analysis is an important tool to identify external and internal strengths and weaknesses. SWOT helps you identify the barriers and challenges that you need to address prior to beginning a project. And then, it allows us to optimize our strengths and opportunities to improve the success of your project.

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