

SWOT ANALYSIS

The SWOT analysis is an effective tool for analyzing the internal and external environments within which you are operating in the EPA Region 8 Roundtable. This tool involves creating an analysis of **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities** and **Threats**.

Internal analysis looks at the member's **strengths** and **weaknesses** consisting of the circumstances, objectives, and conditions that surround members as they operate within the Roundtable. For example, they get to share information with members in other states to help complete assignments. On the other hand, workload does not enable them to use this collaborative power to the extent they would like.

External analysis looks at the **opportunities** presented in the marketplace that the Roundtable and its members compete within and the **threats** (i.e., other technical assistance programs, growth of consulting capability, etc.) that the Roundtable and its members face in that marketplace. The opportunities and threats are generally not something you can control. Knowing what you face, however, gives you the ability to adjust Roundtable operations to changing external environments. Following are some of the variables that you must keep track of:

- Competition
- Environmental conditions
- Customers and potential customers
- Government regulations (new Executive Order)
- Political shifts
- Social or cultural changes
- Technology changes
- The economy

You have to decide what factors will impact and affect the Roundtable. These factors can be researched by the Peaks to Prairies Center or by your own staffs.

Strengths

- What do you and your state program bring to the Roundtable?
- What do you do very well in line with the theme of the strategy development meeting?

Consider this from your own point of view and from the point of view of the people you deal with. Don't be modest, be realistic. If you have any difficulty with this, try writing down a list of your P2 technical assistance program characteristics. Some of these will hopefully be strengths!

Weaknesses

- What could you do to improve the P2 technical assistance function in your state?
- What things do not get accomplished due to time and budget constraints?
- What should be avoided?

Again, this should be considered from your program's perspective and the views of the people you deal with – do other people perceive weaknesses that you don't see? Do other state technical assistance programs do any better? It is best to be realistic now, and face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

Opportunities

- What good opportunities face the Roundtable through collaboration?
- What are the interesting trends in technical assistance provision?

Useful opportunities can come from such things as:

- Being seen as a valuable resource
- Local events
- Changes in government policy related to technical assistance provision
- Improved communication with other content providers.

Threats

- What obstacles does the Roundtable face?
- Do the members' goals and strategies line up with the Roundtable's?
- What is being done by the members to gain spotlight on their common issues?
- Are changing behaviors threatening the Roundtable's position?
- Who is threatened by the Roundtable's activities?

Think of all the stakeholders (organizations with an interest in technical assistance provision) and put yourself in their shoes. Do they feel threatened by the Roundtable's collaborative efforts?

Take a sheet of paper and put the headings of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats down on the paper. Start compiling your listing for the meeting. We will create a master listing for the strategic planning meeting.