



## HOW TO USE A SWOT ANALYSIS TO PASS YOUR INTERVIEW



**Rowan O Grady**  
President, Hays Canada

**So you have begun your job search, prepared your CV and now you're getting yourself interview ready. A key element to being successful with interviews is understanding what you're good at so you can effectively sell yourself.**

The vast majority of employers will ask you a question around this during an interview. For example, "What are your key strengths?", or "What skills can you bring to our business?" It's important that you're equipped to deal with these, and even tougher questions, before the interview has begun. This comes down to preparation, and a SWOT analysis is a great way to prepare.

### **Time to SWOT up**

Do your own SWOT analysis looking at your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The key with this is to be honest with yourself, and if you can't be, ask someone else who can! Listing what you would *like* to think are your strengths and skipping out a couple of weaknesses you'd rather not address will not be useful.

To help you prepare your SWOT analysis, think about what you enjoy and equally what you do not. Typically you enjoy what you are good at, so this can be a simple but effective indicator.

You can also help craft your SWOT analysis by asking for [regular feedback from your colleagues and peers](#) – again ask them to be honest with you. You can also review past appraisals and one-to-ones.



### **Taking your SWOT to interview**

[Before interview](#) conduct your SWOT analysis using the above sources. Preparing this in advance, and having comprehensive knowledge of your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, will put you in a favourable light in the eyes of the interviewer. Don't stick to too rigid a script though; you don't want to be completely flummoxed if the interviewer asks you a question outside of your prepared material. Build your interview SWOT analysis using the following tips:

- **Strengths**

THE EMPLOYER NEEDS TO KNOW YOU'RE GOING TO SLOT IN WELL

Think about your positives which are your key selling points. In my opinion your strengths are best divided up into two categories: soft skills and hard skills. In other words, your qualifications and qualities which will enable you to better complete your job responsibilities, and [your personality traits](#) which will help you contribute to a positive office environment.

What skills and qualities do you have, but also what type of person are you? It's not just a case of hiring someone with the right experience, the employer also needs to know you're going to slot in well to the team. A CV is [not a great means of determining a](#)

candidate's soft skills – these are mostly identified during the interview process – so show them off.

- **Weaknesses**

Probably one of the most difficult questions you'll be asked during your interview is, "What is your biggest weakness?" Address this question by exploring the negative areas you need and wish to improve on.

Your weaknesses are the toughest and most delicate aspect of a SWOT analysis to communicate to your potential future employer. Be realistic and show that you realise and are aware of your weaknesses, along with what you are doing to turn the weakness into strengths.

For example, "I sometimes get into too many details that may delay execution" or "I find it difficult to say 'No' if someone asks for help which can overload my schedule". Don't be too honest and opt for a weakness that is going to severely impact your chances of being hired – if you've got a problem with being punctual then keep it to yourself!

- **Opportunities**

BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF AND YOU WILL SHINE

This refers to positive external conditions you can take advantage of. Start off with opportunities you see in the job you are interviewing for; this will show your interest and positive attitude.

For example, if you mentioned in your strengths that you have good communication skills you could say "Due to my knowledge of XYZ I can help train new members of the team, in turn improving my confidence level and presentation skills". The interviewer will be impressed that you've researched the role, and also that you've then matched it against your own profile.

- **Threats**

These are negative external conditions you can't control but can minimise. There are always threats you will face at your workplace; for example, overworking yourself by taking on so many responsibilities or your job responsibilities changing.

Suggest how you can minimise these threats; for example, using time management to avoid getting overworked and upgrading technical skills to keep up with industry changes to cope with the job requirements. This is probably your best opportunity to seek reassurance from your interviewer on any aspects of the job description that you're wary or unsure of.



### **Bringing it all together**

If you have effectively used the above methods you will be comprehensively armed with a fuller understanding of your own strengths and weaknesses, which you can then effectively sell to future employers. You will also, having identified the opportunities and threats, be able to demonstrate that you have [done your research on the role](#) and gone on to envisage yourself excelling within it.

Honesty is crucial with the above methods, so be honest with yourself and you will shine in your job search.

Source: <https://social.hays.com/2016/04/26/how-to-use-a-swot-analysis-to-pass-your-interview/>