

Ashland Inc. - SWOT Framework Analysis

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Date: April 2012

Pages: 20

Price: US\$ 100.00 (Single User License)

ID: AC9B302808DEN

Abstracts

SWOT Analysis, is a strategic planning tool used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or in a business venture. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieving that objective.

The aim of any SWOT analysis is to identify the key internal and external factors that are important to achieving the objective. SWOT analysis groups key pieces of information into two main categories:

Internal factors – The strengths and weaknesses internal to the organization.

External factors – The opportunities and threats presented by the external environment.

The internal factors may be viewed as strengths or weaknesses depending upon their impact on the organization's objectives. What may represent strengths with respect to one objective may be weaknesses for another objective. The factors may include all of the 4P's; as well as personnel, finance, manufacturing capabilities, and so on. The external factors may include macroeconomic matters, technological change, legislation, and socio-cultural changes, as well as changes in the marketplace or competitive position. The results are often presented in the form of a matrix.

SWOT analysis is just one method of categorization and has its own weaknesses. For example, it may tend to persuade companies to compile lists rather than think about what is really important in achieving objectives. It also presents the resulting lists uncritically and without clear prioritization so that, for example, weak opportunities may appear to balance strong threats.

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