

Step 2: Personal SWOT

The next step in developing a marketing plan for yourself is to conduct a SWOT analysis on yourself. It should tie back to the objectives you developed in Step 1. Be sure to think through each element and honestly assess where you are today. This will help you focus on what you need to accomplish over the rest of your career.

- **Strengths:** Most people have some notion of their strengths – maybe you’re an effective public speaker, pay a great deal of attention to detail, or work well with others for example. It’s likely that you’ve had those strengths reinforced by those around you over the course of your life.
- **Weaknesses:** Most people are very honest about their strengths but are typically far less likely to be aware of, or to acknowledge, their weaknesses. Corporate recruiters often tell humorous stories about the responses they receive when asking interviewees about their biggest weaknesses. Answers range from “I care too much,” or “I am too smart for my colleagues,” to “I am too attractive to have many friends.” (Any of these responses might produce a negative impression in a job interview, by the way.)
- **Opportunities:** As the global economy changes, you are looking at a job market very different from the one faced by previous generations. It is important to honestly assess your opportunities. Ask yourself questions like, What jobs are most in demand? What openings are there, and how might those put me in a better position to find my dream job?
- **Threats:** Assessing threats is an essential part of developing a strategic plan for your professional future. If the economy goes into a recession, for example, your earnings growth could be reduced for years to come. By examining what potential threats could affect your professional development and creating contingency plans, you will be in a better position to succeed in your pursuit of a job.

Learner Task: *List 3-5 strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that could affect your professional development. For each weakness and threat you identify, include a brief one- to two-sentence description of how you might overcome the challenge associated with it.*