

A matrix that turns a SWOT from an inventory into strategy by systematically pairing internal strengths and weaknesses with external opportunities and threats, generating four families of options: SO, WO, ST and WT.

PREPARED BY _____ DATE _____

SO: USE STRENGTHS TO SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES

Weihrich's maxi-maxi cell, the position every organisation would prefer: strategies that deploy existing strengths to capture external opportunities. He saw the other three cells as positions to be worked back towards this one, converting weaknesses to strengths and threats to opportunities where possible.

WO: OVERCOME WEAKNESSES THROUGH OPPORTUNITIES

The mini-maxi cell: a genuine opportunity is visible but an internal weakness blocks it. The strategy develops or acquires the missing capability, through investment, hiring, alliance or acquisition, in order to pursue the opportunity.

ST: USE STRENGTHS TO BLUNT THREATS

The maxi-mini cell: strengths deployed to cope with or avoid external threats. Weihrich cautioned that strength should be used judiciously here; meeting every threat with direct confrontation can be costlier than deflecting or outlasting it.

WT: MINIMISE WEAKNESSES AND AVOID THREATS

The mini-mini cell, aimed at minimising both weakness and threat. Weihrich's examples are unsentimental: retrenchment, joint venture with a stronger partner, or in the extreme, liquidation. Its presence forces the survival conversation that SO-flavoured planning avoids.