

## **PURPOSE OF THE TOOL**

Although EoT is often concerned with details of training - reactions to learning, improved performance and so on - there's also the need to take a more strategic view. For example, taking a typical course being run at a training institution, what value is being obtained from a considerable investment? Should the course continue to be run, or are there perhaps better options to meet the same training need? Should a training institute, or indeed a funding agency, continue to support the provision of this course, or could resources be better directed elsewhere? Lots of strategic questions may need evaluating before decisions can be taken.

SWOT analysis is a well-known tool of management, often used to help clarify business issues. It's a tool we've adapted for use with the TNA Toolkit (Tool 2.1), and one that can be adapted again for EoT. The purpose of the EoT version of SWOT analysis is to examine strategic issues concerning training and development. It has particular significance following the government's declaration of providing 'training for all' and the introduction of IT-based learning systems.

## **DESCRIPTION**

'SWOT' is a mnemonic for an analysis of four factors related to training performance:

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|----------------------|---|
| <b>Strengths</b>     | What are the strengths of a training institute or function, or of a particular training strategy that is or could be used? What are trainers or other contributing to the institute or function proud of? What evidence is there that existing training has pleased client organisations, trainees and funding agencies? What is the potential to improve either the effective or efficient use of available resources? |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>    | Where is a training institute, or a particular training function weak? What are the weaknesses of an organisation's training function? In the opinion of trainers, training administrators, stakeholders and trainees, at all levels from senior officials to lower cadre workers - and from customers and beneficiaries, where are the deficiencies?   |
| <b>Opportunities</b> | In what sort of ways can training and development, generally, or training institutions or organisational training functions take advantage of opportunities created by technological changes, or government initiatives?  |
| <b>Threats</b>       | What changes to technology, or government policies are likely to be dangerous to the existing strategies and resources being used to provide training in the public sector? Are expectations or demands likely to present threats, especially to training institutions, or the roles and responsibilities of trainers?  |

The analysis can be focussed in different ways to suit the purpose of the analysis. For example:

- External issues influencing success of a training institute.
- Internal issues determining how well a training institute can utilise available resources to satisfy client organisations, funding agencies or trainees.
- A combination of both internal and external issues that together provide a basis for analysing aspects of a training institute's performance - or of an organisation's training function.

At an early stage in an EoT, you may choose to use this tool to obtain answers to such questions as:

### **Developments in Society**

How will changes in society influence the organisation?

What changes in government policy or legislation can be expected?

**Customers**

How big is the market into which training institute provides its services?

Will this market change, and in which way?

What will be the purchasing habits of its customers?

Which tendencies will affect an institute's market opportunities?

How can these opportunities be exploited?

Will there be a change in the volume of business?

What level of quality are customers willing to pay for?

**Funding**

How many funding agencies does the institute have?

How will the most important agencies develop resource provision in the future?

Is there likely to be an increase or decrease the number of funding agencies?

**Competitors**

How many competitors are there?

Who are the most important?

How will they affect the market for the institute's services?

How are the market for the institute's products and services likely to change?

What is the level of price, quality and supply compared to competitors?

**Services**

What demands are customers likely to make on the organisation's services?

What changes are likely to occur?

To what extent is the institute able to meet customer requirements?

Which services are likely to be more in demand in the future?

What are the consequences of falling demand for some institutional services?

**Technology**

What technological changes will affect the institute's operations and business?

What is the institute strategic planning in terms of investment in programmes or resources?

Are any of the present programmes are likely to become redundant in the near future?

**Workers**

What is present staff levels compared to the business the institute is currently attracting?

Is this likely to change in the near future?

What are the current levels of competence relative to what is desirable?

Which category of worker has the greatest potential to improve performance?

Are workers sufficiently flexible to enable them to respond to business demands?

Is the institute able to retain its best, most competent workers?

Are workers willing to be trained?

Would they respond positively to opportunities for professional development?

What factors may cause workers to resist opportunities for training and development?

Although these questions are directed toward training institutions, ones very similar could be asked of an organisations's training function. Nor should a funding agency feel absolved from such analysis.

### **HOW TO USE IT**

Decide the issue(s) to be analysed. The examples given above indicate typical issues that can be used. You may decide to use several SWOT analyses, each dealing with a major issue. Remember, your consultancy is for training purposes so don't get distracted into issues where you have no expertise or authority.

You may choose to compile a SWOT analysis yourself using information obtained from interviews. Alternatively, you could invite stakeholders, trainees and others with an interest in training and development to contribute.

Focus attention exclusively on the issue being analysed. Otherwise, the quality of the analysis will be impaired by trying to include too many disparate factors.

Use the attached form to compile the SWOT analysis. Initially, move from one factor to another and then, finally 'brainstorm' to obtain additional items.

<b>SWOT Analysis</b>	
Issue:	
<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>
<b>WEAKNESSES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>