

Identifying Community Strengths

Technique #1 – SWOT Analysis

PURPOSE: To combine needs-based corrective approaches with appreciative inquiry techniques resulting in a balanced, community-wide discovery of strengths and weaknesses.

TIME: The following instructions describe the full process for a SWOT analysis. In practice it takes at least 45 minutes: 10 minutes for each category and five minutes for wrap-up.

TASKS:

1. Ensure attendees know what S.W.O.T. means; that Strengths and Weaknesses are from within their community, and that Opportunities and Threats come from outside their community.
2. Distribute a supply of four (4) colors of index cards or Post-It Notes to each attendee. (The exact color doesn't matter, just ensure there are four noticeably different colors.) We recommend:
 - a. Green = **S**trengths
 - b. Pink = **W**eaknesses
 - c. Yellow = **O**pportunities
 - d. Blue = **T**hreats
3. Ask attendees to legibly write down what they think of as “Strengths” within their community; one per card or Post-It. If the strength has a physical location, ask them to include the address or at minimum, descriptive location characteristics.
4. Repeat this process three more times – once each for Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
5. On a large sheet of paper or poster board, draw two lines in the form of a big +, dividing the page into four quadrants. Write the words Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in each of the boxes, respectively.
6. Ask attendees to stick or tape their written comments into the appropriate box: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.
7. In round-table discussion format, read through each of the Strengths and encourage attendees to comment on these. Do this for each of the four categories. Try to arrive at a consensus of five comments in each category that are the most significant.



Technique #2 – Fusion Tables

PURPOSE: To illustrate a technique for mapping any list of data containing location information.

TIME: The following instructions describe the full process for creating and mapping a Google Fusion Table. Time requirements vary widely depending upon the complexity and availability of the spreadsheet data.

TASKS:

1. Create a list of Strengths and Weaknesses (Assets and Liabilities) using a spreadsheet.
2. Include a column having location information. Any of the following will work, depending upon how precisely you want the data point mapped. Keep in mind that for the table to work, all data must be in a single column or cell.
 - a. Street address, city, state
 - b. City, state
 - c. Zip code
 - d. Landmark name (a place name recognized by Google Maps)
 - e. X,Y coordinates (possible, but more advanced process to geocode)
3. Add a column called “category” and identify each data point as a “strength” or a “weakness” in that column.
4. Add a column called “icon”.
 - a. For “strengths”, type in the value “large_green”
 - b. For “weaknesses”, type in the value “large_red”
 - c. (Google Map offers 5 color choices for markers: red, blue, yellow, green, purple. Each can be displayed in two sizes: large or small)
5. Save your spreadsheet to a location to which you can readily navigate.
6. Ensuring your PC has internet connectivity, launch your web browser and go to www.google.com
7. Create a Google account if you do not already have one. Safeguard your login and password.
8. Go to <https://docs.google.com>
9. Click the red “CREATE” button and select “Table (beta).” Under “Import new table,” click the “Browse...” button and navigate to your spreadsheet on your computer. Click “Next” and your data will be imported.
10. A preview will be displayed. If your data seems to be lining up in the correct columns, click “Next;” otherwise, click “try a tutorial” to learn more about formatting your data.
11. Renaming and adding attribute data is optional. Click “Finish.”

The screenshot shows a spreadsheet with the following columns: Project, Icon, Status, Profile, Address, and Category. The data rows include various project names and their corresponding locations and categories.

Project	Icon	Status	Profile	Address	Category
Executive SP On-Site Outreach	small_red	outreach		Out Shores, Alabama	612-85-001 and 002 - Executive SP On-Site NFO
Executive SP On-Site Outreach	small_red	outreach		Wetley, Alabama	612-85-001 and 002 - Executive SP On-Site NFO
Food House Outreach	small_red	outreach		Montgomery, Alabama	205 - CF
Food House Outreach	small_red	outreach		Los Angeles, California	205 - CF
Food House Outreach	small_red	outreach		Dulles, California	205 - CF
Executive SP On-Site Outreach	small_red	outreach		Washington, DC	612-85-001 and 002 - Executive SP On-Site NFO
Executive SP On-Site Outreach	small_red	outreach		Fort Worth Beach, Florida	612-85-001 and 002 - Executive SP On-Site NFO
Executive SP On-Site Outreach	small_red	outreach		Hammond, Florida	612-85-001 and 002 - Executive SP On-Site NFO
Food House Outreach	small_red	outreach		Atlanta, Georgia	205 - CF
BP Oil Spill Community Outreach	small_red	outreach		Charlottesville, Louisiana	104 - Shell Oil & Petroleum Products Inc. 200 - BP Oil
BP Oil Spill Community Outreach	small_red	outreach		Greenville, Louisiana	104 - Shell Oil & Petroleum Products Inc. 200 - BP Oil
BP Oil Spill Community Outreach	small_red	outreach		Lafayette, Louisiana	104 - Shell Oil & Petroleum Products Inc. 200 - BP Oil
Executive SP On-Site Outreach	small_red	outreach		Sully, Louisiana	612-85-001 and 002 - Executive SP On-Site NFO
Executive SP On-Site Outreach	small_red	outreach		Charlotte, Louisiana	612-85-001 and 002 - Executive SP On-Site NFO
Executive SP On-Site Outreach	small_red	outreach		Monroe, Louisiana	612-85-001 and 002 - Executive SP On-Site NFO
Medical Device Health Rollout for DHS	small_red	outreach		Alameda, Louisiana	612-85-001 and 002 - DHS Medical Outreach
Medical Device Health Rollout for DHS	small_red	outreach		Alexandria, Louisiana	612-85-001 and 002 - DHS Medical Outreach

Do It Yourself!

DIY DIY

12. You now see your data – probably highlighted yellow – in a fusion table. From the “Visualize” tab click “Map.” The geocoding process then begins.
13. Fusion Tables will try to geocode using the first column of data in your table. This is probably not your “address” field so you will need to select your desired “address” field from the drop-down box next to “Location.” Your data will be re-geocoded.
14. Now pan and zoom the Google map to your area of interest (your area of Texas). You should see data points all in a single color.
15. To color code the points on your map, click the “Configure styles” link. A “Change map styles” dialog pops up. Click “Column,” select “Use icon specified in a column,” and select your column named “icon” and click the “save” button. The icon size and color you specified in your data table will now be used to create the map. (If you did not create this column, you cannot utilize this feature.)
16. Zoom and pan with your mouse until you can clearly see all of your data points.
17. To share this map with others, you need to make it public.
 - a. Click the “share” button at the top right corner of the map.
 - b. Under “Who has access” it will probably say “Private.” Click the “Change” link to the right. Either choice other than Private will enable you to share the link to your map. Click “Save.”
18. Click and copy the “Link to share” to the clipboard memory and paste it into an email message or other document to send to your friends.
19. To quickly capture the image of the map you’ve created, hit “Print Screen” on your computer’s keyboard to take a snapshot of your screen. You can then navigate into a Word document (or other document) and right-click to choose “Paste” into that document.



Technique #3 – Digital Community Photo Album

PURPOSE: To illustrate a tool which can be used to build a “digital community chest” showcasing photos of community assets and their locations.

TIME: Taking the photographs and uploading them to your Panoramio album is the most time consuming part of this exercise. If a tech-savvy individual has 12 geocoded photos on her smartphone she could complete this exercise in 10 minutes.

TASKS:

1. Take digital photographs of places in your community that you consider to be “strengths” or “assets”.
 - a. Most smartphones and many digital cameras now have the ability to embed location information (geocodes/coordinates) invisibly into each digital photo file. Be sure to activate this on your device to streamline the process. Many Android phones offer an app called “Latitude” that helps to assure this is activated.
2. Login to Google’s Panoramio service [www.panoramio.com] and establish a group for your community asset map project.
3. Upload at least one photo into your group.
4. Invite others in your community to contribute photos to this shared group.
 - a. Each participant must create their own personal account with Panoramio.
 - b. Search for your group name (i.e. Conroe Community Asset Album). Click “Join Group.”
 - c. Moderator must accept the user before he/she can post photos.
 - d. Alternately, participants could email (or thumb drive) their digital photos to the moderator who handles the technical tasks.
5. Once uploaded, each photograph should be “tagged” for later sorting with descriptors such as “strength,” “weakness,” or others such as “commercial,” “house,” “vacant lot,” etc.
6. If a photo lacks embedded geocode information it can be manually positioned on the map at the time of upload. The person uploading must know the physical site where the photo was taken.
7. To view the map, click “Your photos” and then “on the map” link. The resulting webpage will show thumbnails of your photos on the left and a map of their locations on the right.
8. To share your community asset album and map, click the “Your photos” link to make sure you are on your page; then copy the content of the browser address box (the URL) when you’re looking at your personal (Your Photos) page and paste it into an email message. The format is: [<http://www.panoramio.com/user/your-user-number>]

The more community members you invite and who participate in building your community asset album, the more successful and representative it will be.