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Transition Planning: Step Eight – SWOT Analysis

Strengths. Weaknesses. Opportunities. Threats. A SWOT Analysis doesn't have to be an intimidating process. In many cases, it's what we're doing subconsciously every day when we ask ourselves if we should be doing something different or how we might improve something we're already doing. The only difference: we need to write it down so we can put it into action. In fact, an annual SWOT Analysis for *any* business is probably a good thing.

Think of the analysis as both an internal *and* external evaluation. Strengths and Weaknesses are the internal side. They're often items within the control of the business owner. Opportunities and Threats require a look *outside* the business. They're the issues you can't necessarily control, but that you *might* be able to mitigate to reduce the impact on your business. Together, they can provide a wide-angle view of a lot of factors influencing the farm business.

One of the important factors influencing the accuracy and depth of your SWOT Analysis will be who you include in the process. Owners/operators are the core, but the process should also include anyone with a vested interest in the success of the business: managers, family members employed by the business, hired employees, etc. It should also include input from outside advisors such as financial institutions, accountants, attorneys, and other trusted 'partners' that support/advise the business year in and year out. While input can/should be 'filtered' based on the stake any/all of the above may have in the business, it's important to at the very least collect the input to consider versus not having it at all.

Make it as simple or complex as you want, but do *not* leave the results on a shelf to gather dust. A SWOT Analysis should be a regular business task. Need questions to help you get started? E-mail me for links to a couple of resources or find them under the Step 8 links of the Transition Planning section at: <https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/crops-soils/>.