INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

IOC ATHLETE CAREER PROGRAMME

PROBLEM SOLVING - SWOT ANALYSIS

What is the purpose of the following fact sheet?

SWOT Analysis is a powerful technique for understanding your strengths and weaknesses, and for looking at the opportunities and threats you face.

Used in a personal context, it helps you develop your career in a way that takes best advantage of your talents, abilities and opportunities.

What makes SWOT particularly powerful is that, with a little thought, it can help you uncover opportunities that you are well placed to take advantage of. It also helps you understand your weaknesses, so you can manage and eliminate threats that would otherwise catch you unawares.

To carry out a SWOT Analysis, write down answers to the following questions:

Strengths:

- What advantages (for example, skills, education or connections) do you have that many others don't have?
- What do you do better than most anyone else?
- What personal resources do you have access to?
- What do other people (and your coach in particular) see as your strengths?

Consider this from your own perspective, and from the point of view of the people around you. And don't be modest; be as objective as you can. If you are having any difficulty with this, try writing down a list of your characteristics. Some of these will hopefully be strengths!

Weaknesses:

- What could you improve?
- What should you avoid?
- What things are the people around you likely to see as weaknesses?

Again, consider this from a personal and external basis: Do other people perceive weaknesses that you do not see? Do other athletes consistently out-perform you in key areas? It is best to be realistic now, and face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

Opportunities:

- Where are the good opportunities facing you?
- What are the interesting trends you are aware of?

Useful opportunities can come from such things as:

- Changes in technology, markets and your company on both a broad and narrow scale
- Changes in government policy related to your field
- Changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyle, etc.
- Local events

A useful approach to looking at opportunities is also to look at your strengths and ask yourself whether these open up any opportunities.

Alternatively, look at your weaknesses and ask yourself whether you could open up opportunities by eliminating them.

Threats:

- What obstacles do you face?
- What are the people around you doing?
- Is your job (or the demand for the things you do) changing?
- Is changing technology threatening your position?
- Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten you?

Carrying out this analysis will often be illuminating - both in terms of pointing out what needs to be done, and in putting problems into perspective.

Key points:

A SWOT matrix is a framework for analysing your strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats you face. This helps you to focus on your strengths, minimise weaknesses, and take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available.

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