SWOT Analysis: How To Do The Research

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You’ve just been assigned a SWOT Analysis project. What do you need to know? How are you going to find it? Where do you get started? This handout is a guide to conducting the research that will help you to get the answers to the questions. The Paul J. Gutman Library has the business information resources you need to get the information for a SWOT Analysis project. Here is a diagram of the SWOT Analysis framework: (learn more at:  http://www.philau.edu/infolit/sba/candiresearch.htm )

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  Analytical Area          Examples                        Library Resources
  Strengths (Internal)    Good Brands                      EX: Microsoft – extraordinary cash reserves
                        Profitable Patents                Hoover’s Online – good start point (public)
                        Good Reputation                   ValueLine – company & industry analysis
                        Positive Financials               Business & Company Resource Center
                        Access to Resources               ABI/Inform – articles
                        Unique Technology                 SEC Documents (EdgarScan) – 10K report
                        Cash Reserves                     L/N – Disclosure Report; articles; transcripts
  Weaknesses (Internal)   Aging Infrastructure            EX: Ford – Reputation for Poor Quality
                        Outmoded Technology               Hoover’s Online - competitors
                        Financial Problems                ValueLine – company & industry analysis
                        Pending Lawsuit                   Business & Company Resource Center
                        Flawed Distribution               ABI/Inform / Business Source Premier-- articles
                        Scandal/Ethics Issues              SEC Documents
                        Leadership Instability            L/N – Disclosure Report; articles; transcripts
  Opportunities (External) Unfilled Consumer Need         EX: Pfizer – Insomnia Cure Needed
                        Demographic Shifts                ABI/Inform / Business Source Premier-- articles
                        Resource Price Shifts             ABI/Tradeline (trade journals) or Dateline (local)
                        Trade Barriers Removed            L/N – articles – newspapers/magazines
                        New Technologies                  L/N – Industry/Market search
                        Regulations Loosened              B&CRC – Advanced Search for articles
                        Possible Merger/Venture            Plunkett – Industry analysis and statistical data
  Threats (External)      New Competitor                   Ex: Kodak Faces Digital Camera Popularity
                        Consumer Tastes Shift             ABI/Inform / Business Source Premier-- articles
                        Substitute Products               ABI/Tradeline (trade journals) or Dateline (local)
                        New Regulations                   L/N – articles – newspapers/magazines
                        Workforce Shifts                  L/N – Industry/Market search
                        Weak Economy                      Plunkett – Industry association contact information
                        Outmoded Technologies             Plunkett – Industry association contact information
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