



Taking Charge

Part IV:

MISSION: Pinpoint your organization's location in time and space. Perform a quick SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis.

Use all of the sources of information available to you to answer the questions in Chart 7: Focus on your organization, the things you are directly responsible for and over which you exercise control. For example, if you lead a work group that performs a customer relations function, focus on it, not the larger organization.

Chart 7 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
What are our major strengths? What do we do well?	What are our major weaknesses? What do we need to improve on?

<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <p>What are our major opportunities?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <p>What are our major threats?</p>

You don't need to do days of research to complete this SWOT. On the other hand, don't overlook information simply because it doesn't match your desires or expectations. Be honest with yourself. A SWOT gives you a snapshot of where you are as an organizational leader and what is facing you.

WHY IT WILL WORK

Imagine driving on a highway at night. It's pitch dark, the only illumination comes from the headlights of the car you're driving. No other vehicles are in sight. You have no map, no GPS, no two-way radio, nothing except you and the car you're driving. How would you know which direction to drive? Which way do you go? You might guess and be right but wouldn't you rather know where you are, then choose the direction you take? Yes, of course.

Knowing where you are as a leader is vital, just like it's vital to know where you are when driving on a highway at night. Knowing where you are allows you to determine a point of departure, the point from which you will lead forward.

Strategies

- The most important set of actions you will ever perform as a leader are those associated with taking charge as a leader. The actions you take as a new organizational leader will set the tone and direction for you and the people you lead into the future.

- General Gordon Sullivan, former Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, wrote a book entitled, “Hope is Not a Method.” Don’t expect things to happen because your intentions are good, or because you hope they will happen.
- Expect to change. You will. The people around you will change you and you will change them. Performing the SWOT should tell us what is good. Keep it and make it better. Change what’s not good.
- You have no “grace period” when you take charge. You are in charge from the minute you become the leader.
- Never, never, never, say anything bad about your predecessor. It’s unprofessional.