

SPU's Strategic Position: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC)

The Importance of Describing the SWOC. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges are a tool for understanding SPU's current strategic position. Describing this strategic position gives everyone the same view of the Utility, so that strategic discussions can be conducted from the same underlying context.

SWOC Definitions.

- Strengths are everything SPU does well
- Weaknesses are everything SPU doesn't do well that holds it back
- Opportunities are emerging scenarios that can make SPU more successful at delivering its promise.
- Challenges impede SPU's ability to conduct its baseline business, or achieve its promise.
- Opportunities and challenges are often external, but can also be related to customers, assets, and processes.

Where does the SWOC come from? The E-Team developed the attached draft list of top priority SWOCs based on a variety of inputs, including:

- Customer surveys and focus groups
- Employee surveys
- Line of Business and Corporate Assessments
- The E-Teams own strategic discussions and assessments

**DRAFT Top Priority Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges (SWOC)
Categorized by Four Focus Areas: Customer, Workforce, Operations, and Environment**

Strengths

<p>Customer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer trust and pride in SPU’s water quality and SPU/customer environmental efforts ▪ Customer perception that SPU services linked to quality of life ▪ Generally high customer satisfaction with SPU services 	<p>Workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employee loyalty to SPU, and pride in SPU services ▪ Passionate and professional people ▪ Analytical and strategic thinking abilities of employees
<p>Operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sound infrastructure: few service outages; redundant water supply sources ▪ High level of fiscal strength ▪ Commitment to asset management principles 	<p>Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment to environmental compliance & stewardship ▪ Good relationships with our regulators ▪ Conservation and recycling programs that lead the nation

Weaknesses

<p>Customer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Negative perceptions of rate levels and rate increases ▪ Equity issues with service delivery – perceived value for money spent depends upon neighborhood in which customer lives or works ▪ Inefficient customer-facing processes 	<p>Workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workforce challenges: lack of clear expectations, accountability, and empowerment ▪ Inadequate succession planning ▪ Inadequate soft and other skills and training
<p>Operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inefficient and excessive processes ▪ Lack of effective prioritization of work 	<p>Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of clear direction for environment/public health programs not required by regulators

Opportunities

<p>Customer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proactively identifying and solving the major problem areas for customers ▪ Expanding communication options: web services, email, texts, ESL services ▪ Increasing rate/service predictability and transparency 	<p>Workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing a culture that forges teamwork and collaboration ▪ Improving systems and processes to attract, develop, and retain capable and motivated people ▪ Improving workplace safety
<p>Operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discovering and implementing efficiency opportunities ▪ Improving collaboration and integration with other departments and agencies ▪ Ensuring sound financial practices 	<p>Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improving response to evolving external circumstances (i.e., climate) ▪ Maintaining strong relationships with regulators

Challenges

<p>Customer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General invisibility of our work ▪ High percentage of fixed costs coupled with decreasing customer demand, leading to increasing rates 	<p>Workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultural norm of avoiding difficult issues ▪ Working with unions to expand workforce flexibility ▪ Aging workforce, leading to increased on-the-job injuries and knowledge drain (with retirements)
<p>Operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insufficient drainage infrastructure in pockets of the City ▪ Limited influence/control on major cost centers (wastewater treatment; charges from other City departments) ▪ Other agency projects affecting SPU infrastructure in rights-of-way ▪ Underperforming infrastructure 	<p>Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keeping up with evolving regulatory mandates ▪ Integrating climate change science into future actions