



## Working with Groups:

# SOAR Analysis

SOAR analysis (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, results) is a relatively new, more positive, asset-based technique than the traditional SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis. It allows for a more focused discussion on the positive aspects of organizational development and community assets. SOAR analysis leverages strengths and opportunities to create shared aspirations and measurable results.

SOAR helps groups to:

- Reach for a vision.
- Serve the group's mission.
- Achieve goals and objectives by identifying measurable results.
- Develop a plan to help the group deliver on its mission and goals/objectives while reaching for the vision.
- Implement an action plan.

A comparison between the traditional SWOT and new SOAR techniques is listed in the table below.

### Contrast between SOAR and SWOT approaches

<b>SOAR</b>	<b>SWOT</b>
Strengths: What are our greatest assets?	Strengths: Where can we outperform others?
Opportunities: What are the best possible market opportunities?	Weaknesses: Where can others outperform us?
Aspirations: What is our preferred future?	Opportunities: How can we exploit the market?
Results: What are the measurable results?	Threats: What/who might take our market?

A SOAR analysis can be conducted in several ways. Following is a common approach.

1. Identify a situation that an organization needs to address. For example, perhaps it is a change in the organization's funding structure or change in community needs.
2. Hand out large sticky notes to participants and ask them to list the organization's strengths — one comment to each note.
3. Collect the notes. Post and discuss them as a group.
4. Next, do the same thing for opportunities, aspirations, and possible results.
5. The topics and sequence of topics should help the group better discuss the issue at hand and lead into a more detailed conversation about possible measurable results and outcomes.

Reference: Heartland Center for Leadership Development. (2004). *Discovering the future of your hometown – workshop manual*. Workshop sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

Source: *Working with Groups: Generating Ideas, Making Decisions, and Enhancing Communication*, by Phyllis I. Schoenholz and Cheryl A. Burkhart-Kriesel, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, EC478, 2008, The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture. Adapted with permission.