



The 14th International Scientific Conference
**“DEFENSE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
IN THE 21st CENTURY”**
Braşov, November 7th-8th 2019



**SWOT ANALYSIS – MANAGERIAL TOOL FOR
ORGANIZATION’S STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT.
CASE STUDY AT THE ROMANIAN JOINT NATIONAL
TRAINING CENTER**

Alin GHEORGHE

Romanian Armed Forces, Romania

Abstract:

This paper is a description of SWOT analysis used as a tool for organizations’ strategic development. The study is examining the SWOT Analysis from a theoretical stand point, as a decision making tool for an organization to plan its future development. SWOT Analysis is but one of the methods used by decision makers and their staff to evaluate the organization by assessing the ‘strengths’, ‘weaknesses’, ‘opportunities’ and ‘threats’ pertaining that specific organization. Throughout the study the SWOT analysis is first explained from the decision maker perspective, with a focus on advantages-disadvantages and the limitations of this method, and then each component is described. Finally the study provides a Romanian Joint National Training Center SWOT Analysis as a case study.

Key words: Vision; Mission; SWOT Matrix; Strategic Planning; Master plan;

1.Introduction

Any organization, civilian and/or military, is striving to meet their leaders’ vision by achieving /accomplishing its mission and objectives, and setting its future for success through strategic planning.

The decision makers are using specific frameworks to conduct analysis of their organization, make decisions and implement specific actions in order to fulfil organization’s strategic vision.

Vision is the start point for an organization change or upgrade. The decision maker is required to provide his/her staff an envisioned image of the organization future development and capabilities. The vision describes in broad terms what the organization needs to accomplish in a medium/long term. Therefore, leaders with vision are paramount for organizational strategic development and success. The clearer the vision the easier is for the staff to develop a strategic plan to achieve the envisioned end state.

The organization’s mission is the next mandatory statement to be developed to support the vision. Missions define what an organization is striving to be in the long run and what it wants to avoid while doing so.

Out of mission statement specific objectives or goals are drawn and pointed out as milestones into the strategic plan to accomplish the mission and meet the envisioned end state or vision. These critical milestones could define the success or failure of the organization strategic development plan.

**SWOT ANALYSIS – MANAGERIAL TOOL FOR ORGANIZATION’S
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT.
CASE STUDY AT THE ROMANIAN JOINT NATIONAL TRAINING
CENTER**

In order for a sound strategic plan to be developed a thorough analysis needs to be conducted, and SWOT analysis is one of the tools that can be used to determine what is the organization status quo, to actually see what the organization looks like at a specific moment in time, by analyzing from an internal perspective, dealing with organization’s strengths and weaknesses, as well as from an external perspective, talking about opportunities and threats. When conducting analysis from an external perspective, a unit detects the critical threats and opportunities within the foreseeable future needed to be addressed in order to accomplish the mission. At the same time it allows the leaders to see what the possible adversary is likely to evolve and how the implications of that evolution would actually affect the threats and opportunities that unit is about to deal with. From the internal perspective analysis an unit identifies its strengths and weaknesses. As well as an understanding of which of its resources and capabilities are likely to provide a decisive advantage over the adversary.

The results of this analysis provide courses of action leaders need to consider in order to make an informed, timely, and sometimes, bold decision for the organization’s strategic development.

Once a strategic development decision has been made there are steps to be taken in order to develop a strategic plan, with specific actions, goals, objectives, timeline, and evaluation criteria. Implementing these specific actions, meeting the goals and objectives in the agreed timely fashion could actually tell the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful organization.

2. What is SWOT analysis?

“SWOT Analysis is a simple but powerful tool for sizing up an organization’s resource capabilities and deficiencies, its opportunities, and the external threats to its future”^[1].

SWOT Analysis is a planning tool used to evaluate the internal Strengths and Weaknesses, as well as external Opportunities, and Threats of an organization/unit. A result of a SWOT Analysis is a list of strategic improvement opportunities that could bring decisive advantages over competition or adversaries. The analysis is two folded. On one hand it identifies the internal and external factors that could help or, on the contrary could hinder, achieving a goal or strategic objective. Every identified factor needs to be analysed on the probability of occurrence and associated with respective facilitating or mitigating measures. On the other hand, once these factors are identified, for Weaknesses and Threats, mitigation measures must be carefully planned in order to decrease the probability of occurrence and/or magnitude of impact.

As mentioned above, the leader’s vision and organization’s mission, as well as the envisioned strategic goals and objectives, are the guideline for driving the SWOT analysis. All these are the main factors to be considered when conducting a SWOT analysis, or any other analysis for that matter. Once the internal and external analysis is complete a strategic decision is made and an action plan is being developed in order to implement the agreed improvement measures as well as the mitigation measures for any identified external threats.

¹ THOMPSON, A. A., STRICKLAND, A. J. & GAMBLE, J. E. (2007). *Crafting and Executing Strategy- Concepts and Cases*, (15th Edition), USA: McGrawHill/Irwin.

**SWOT ANALYSIS – MANAGERIAL TOOL FOR ORGANIZATION’S
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT.
CASE STUDY AT THE ROMANIAN JOINT NATIONAL TRAINING
CENTER**

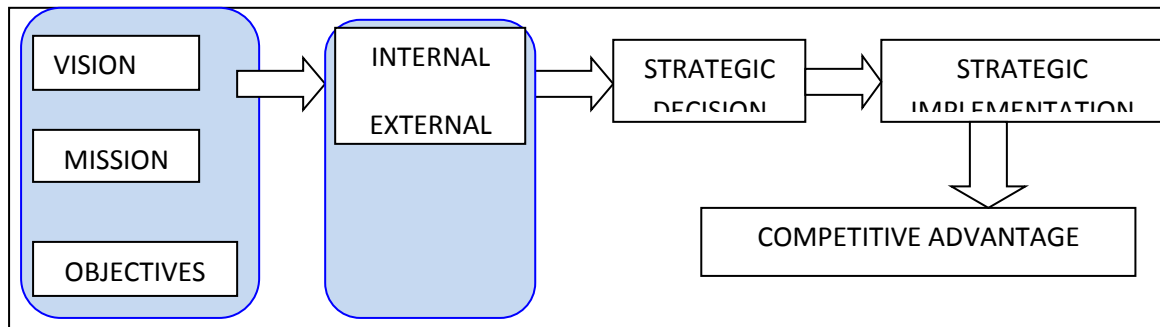


Fig.1 - The Strategic Management Process

The SWOT Analysis provides strong and weak factors of an organization that are identified by examining the elements in its environment while environmental opportunities and threats are determined by examining the elements outside its environment. Strengths and opportunities are helpful to achieve the organizational objectives. They are favourable for organizations. Weaknesses and threats are hindering to achieving the organizational objectives. They are harmful for organizations. A thorough and detailed analysis of the organization’s internal strengths and weaknesses characteristic to the internal environment and the opportunities and threats that are characteristic for the external environment becomes the very basis of a successful strategy choice that meets the expected outcome for the organization, by balancing the organization’s strengths and weaknesses in the light of environmental opportunities and threats.

Organizational Strengths: “A strength is something an organization is good at doing or a characteristic the organization has that gives it an important capability”^[2]. This is what any organization strive to foster within its environment. Organizational strengths are the factors adding value for own organization over competitors’ or adversaries’. Along with opportunities, the strengths are paramount into achieving organizations’ goals and objectives.

Organizational weaknesses: “A weakness is something an organization lacks or does poorly -in comparison to others- or a condition that puts it at a disadvantage”^[3] Even though it has a negative connotation, weaknesses, if correctly identified, could turn out into a positive result by developing a plan or specific actions in order to overcome them, thus contributing to improving organization’s status quo and therefore decisively contribute to achieving organization’s end state. Sometimes identifying and overcoming organization’s weaknesses can be more important than using the existing strengths.

Environmental Opportunities: “Opportunities are conditions in the external environment that allow an organization to take advantage of organizational strengths, overcome organizational weaknesses or neutralize environmental threats” ^[4]. The importance of identifying the opportunities in a timely fashion to be considered for

² THOMPSON, A. A. & STRICKLAND, A. J. (1989). Strategy Formulation and Implementation, (4th Edition), USA: Irwin, Inc.

³ Ibidem

⁴ HARRISON, J. S. & St. JOHN, C. H. (2004). Foundations in Strategic Management, (3.Baskı), USA: South Western.

**SWOT ANALYSIS – MANAGERIAL TOOL FOR ORGANIZATION’S
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT.
CASE STUDY AT THE ROMANIAN JOINT NATIONAL TRAINING
CENTER**

strategic planning is of the outmost importance for the decision makers. Opportunities refer to either time and/or actions needed to be taken in order to create an advantage over the competition. Opportunities are those that would provide positive results for the organization, as a result of the analysis of the environment.

Environmental Threats: For organizational managements, a threat is the element that makes it difficult or impossible to reach the organizational goals. Threats are the situations that come out as a result of the changes in the distant or the immediate environment that would prevent the organization from maintaining its existence or lose its superiority in competition, and that are not favourable for the organization.^[5] (Ülgen and Mirze, 2010: 161). Identifying the environmental threats is one of the most difficult tasks for the staff to accomplish. Once correctly identified mitigation measures are employed inside and/or outside the organization to protect it and be able to meet the aforementioned objectives and goals

3. A SWOT analysis of the Romanian Joint National Training Center

The Romanian Joint National Training Center (JNTC), situated in Cincu, Romania, is the largest Romanian Land Forces training capability used for collective training, both for national and partner/allied countries units, in a joint and multinational environment.

JNTC has a 100 years old history, being used over time in different ways to train Romanian units. It started as a live fire range first for artillery and infantry units and evolved all the way to being able nowadays to conduct joint, multinational exercises.

The Land Forces HQ chief vision on JNTC is to become a South East European Regional training center capable of conducting national and multinational training events, across the full spectrum of operations up to division level using cutting edge real, constructive and virtual simulation systems.

JNTC mission is to conduct collective training for the Romanian/partner/allied units’ HQs and their staff, and subordinate units in order to increase their readiness level for conducting operations across the spectrum of operations by using a combination of existing simulation systems, as well as live fire capabilities.

JNTC’s key tasks:

- 1) Training leaders and staffs for Romanian and multinational units to conduct operations across the full spectrum of conflict
- 2) Develop CIS infrastructure to support national and multinational exercises
- 3) Develop specific training programs for individual and collective training
- 4) Develop a complex training capability using cutting edge techniques, technology and equipment from modelling/simulation domain as well as real simulation
- 5) Develop the facilities and infrastructure to support individual and collective live fire exercises
- 6) Connect the Romanian National Simulation Network (JNTC is the lead stakeholder) to NATO simulation training network. JNTC is a regional simulation network hub for regional training events.

⁵ ÜLGEN, H. & MİRZE, S. K. (2010). İşletmelerde Stratejik Yönetim, (5. Baskı), İstanbul: Beta Basım Yayım.

**SWOT ANALYSIS – MANAGERIAL TOOL FOR ORGANIZATION’S
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT.
CASE STUDY AT THE ROMANIAN JOINT NATIONAL TRAINING
CENTER**

- 7) JNTC becomes a certified regional training center for both Romanian and multinational units training for any mission in any operational environment
- 8) Develop JNTC’s logistic support infrastructure to sustain all exercises participants

JNTC level of ambition and major objective:

By 2021 JNTC reaches full operational capability and becomes a regional training center using cutting edge simulation systems, technology and equipment to support combined arms and joint training events.

There are also **specific objectives** established for JNTC such as:

- 1) Connect with national, NATO and European simulation training networks
- 2) Develop the necessary capabilities to conduct joint, multi-echelon, distributed, and integrated training events up to division level, in a multinational context

Based on the above elements the JNTC’s SWOT analysis can identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that are to be used to make a plan in order to meet the established objectives.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong reputation / training experience - Skilled JNTC cadre - Training Capacity & framework - Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of personnel - Limited maneuver space - Limited life support capacity - Limited maintenance capacity - Life cycle of SIM systems
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use different funding streams for capabilities development - Regional countries contributing to JNTC training capability pool - Romanian authorities commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surrounding countries training facilities - High prices of SIM systems life cycle replacement - ROUNATSIMNET vulnerabilities

Fig. 2 – JNTC SWOT analysis matrix

JNTC Strengths:

- Strong reputation / training experience

Based on recent JNTC history and all the training events conducted within the last 12 years this training center has built a strong reputation throughout the Romanian units but even more throughout the partner and allied units that benefited of the outstanding training experience JNTC has provided. The After Action Reviews conducted after each exercise

**SWOT ANALYSIS – MANAGERIAL TOOL FOR ORGANIZATION'S
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT.
CASE STUDY AT THE ROMANIAN JOINT NATIONAL TRAINING
CENTER**

brought up things to be improved pertaining the training events as well as positive remarks on aspects that needed to be maintained. For all the training events JNTC has provided the best training capability Romanian Land Forces has been able to offer for all participants building up reputation on the realism of the training environment, the simulation systems used, professional after actions reviews provided to units, JNTC cadre experience, and the partnership with the US Army Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) from Hohenfels Germany, which provided the initial *train the trainer* program for JNTC personnel.

- Skilled JNTC cadre

As mentioned above, most of the JNTC cadre have been trained at JMRC and learned and implemented the way to conduct an efficient training event using specific simulation systems and specific techniques for the unit to benefit the best from the training experience.

- Training Capacity & framework

Training at JNTC provides the capacity and the framework for up to a brigade HQ and three battalions using constructive simulation, two battalions using real simulation and one company using virtual simulation system. The live fire ranges can fit up to a maneuver battalion as well as fixed and rotary wing platforms to conduct live fire exercises.

- Technology

JNTC is the only training center in Romania providing a training experience using all three simulation systems in an integrated manner, providing one single common operational picture for the training audience. At the same time JNTC is the Romanian hub when conducting distributed exercises with other European simulation training centers using constructive simulation systems.

- Commitment

There is an enduring Land Forces HQ as well as JNTC leadership commitment to continue improving the training experience in Cincu by using all the existing ways and means to deliver it, but at the same time build new capabilities for future exercises.

JNTC Weaknesses:

- Lack of personnel

JNTC manpower was developed to cover all the tasks associated with JNTC mission. The current manning however is not at the level to be sufficient to cover all the tasks when conducting exercises. Therefore augmentation is key to fill all the positions JNTC cannot cover. The problem is that the augmentees are not experienced enough and the training experience could potentially be affected.

- Limited maneuver space

With a maneuver space of about 103 square kilometers JNTC can only accommodate up to one maneuver battalion and a combat support battalion conducting training simultaneously.

- Limited life support capacity

Life support is another shortfall that needs to be addressed. With a capacity of accommodating approximately 1,500 soldiers on hard top buildings and feeding capacity up to 1,500 soldiers there is a limited capability to conduct an exercise with more than a brigade HQ and two battalions. For bigger exercises augmented life support for the participants is required.

- Limited maintenance capacity

**SWOT ANALYSIS – MANAGERIAL TOOL FOR ORGANIZATION’S
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT.
CASE STUDY AT THE ROMANIAN JOINT NATIONAL TRAINING
CENTER**

JNTC’s maintenance capabilities can only fit the needs of JNTC’s vehicles and equipment. For all exercises supplementary maintenance capacity is to be considered.

- Life cycle of SIM systems

All JNTC’s simulation systems and equipment are now towards the end of their life cycle and need either upgrades or replacement. This requires funding streams either national and/or allied funding programs. Time is also a negative factor to be considered in accessing any of the fund streams for equipment life cycle renewal.

JNTC Opportunities

- Use different funding streams for capabilities development

As mentioned above there are multiple funding streams that could be used for future projects to improve JNTC training capabilities. NATO through NATO Security Investment Program (NSIP), US through Foreign Military Sales (FMS), Foreign Military Funds (FMF), and European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), as well as national funds are all choices to be considered for funding projects.

- Regional countries contributing to JNTC training capability pool

When declared as a Regional Joint Training Center other regional partners and/or allies could contribute to improve the training capability and in return use its facilities to train their troops in Cincu.

- Romanian authorities commitment to spend 2% of GDP on defense

After the last NATO summit, a political commitment in Romania has been agreed upon to allocate 2% of Romania’s GDP for defense spending for the next ten years. The training is a major component for readiness level of the units committed to NATO and other missions under different organizations. Therefore there are good chances for more funds to be allocated for JNTC’s future projects.

JNTC Threats

- Surrounding countries training facilities

Most of the surrounding countries have been built their own combat training centers. These centers are now competitors for JNTC to attract NATO or US funds in the region for improving training capabilities.

- High prices of Simulations systems life cycle replacement

As mentioned JNTC’s SIM systems built in the early 2000s are now towards the end of their life cycle. Any upgrade or replacement of any of the SIM systems are very expensive and cannot be done all at once. The new SIM systems and technologies are offering perhaps more capabilities but at a higher price.

- ROUNATSIMNET vulnerabilities

As any other computer network working online, ROUNATSIMNET is exposed to digital threats that could affect the execution of national or multinational distributed exercises.

- Personnel burnout

Due to the JNTC manning level and considering the number of training activities planned to be yearly conducted at Cincu, personnel fatigue is a negative factor already affecting JNTC’s men and women working to support all exercises.

The results of the SWOT analysis should be quantified and combined with gap filling priorities to establish a comprehensive prioritization within a Master Plan that addresses at least the medium term future.

**SWOT ANALYSIS – MANAGERIAL TOOL FOR ORGANIZATION'S
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT.
CASE STUDY AT THE ROMANIAN JOINT NATIONAL TRAINING
CENTER**

After all the above aspects have been analyzed , personally, I would develop a strength and opportunities focused JNTC development strategy, yet without ignoring addressing the weaknesses and potential mitigation measures for the identified threats. In this SO strategy the strengths need to be maintained and fostered with the new coming personnel, and at the same time the development opportunities have to be the thrust for JNTC to reach its level of ambition and major objective. Moreover, the identified weaknesses are to be addressed and eliminated or at least diminished through an aggressive advertisement for new personnel to join the JNTC team and prioritized projects focused on increasing life support capacity. A medium to long term plan to add more maneuver space into JNTC is also a must to fit the continuous increasing request for training at Cincu.

Even though there is no silver bullet to be sure that the JNTC is going to meet its level of ambition, I believe that a sound strategy, thoroughly analyzed, endorsed by the higher echelons and supported by JNTC's partners is most probable to provide the highest chance to reach the desired end state.

4. Conclusion

The SWOT analysis has been used over the years as a technique in the analysis of internal and external environments to provide insights for strategic decision. SWOT involves to determine objectives and to identify the internal and external factors which are advantageous and disadvantageous to achieve those objectives. Strengths and weaknesses are studied while considering current and future opportunities and threats.

For JNTC case study the SWOT analysis is just one of the tools used by its leadership and staff to determine the status quo of the organization, the external threats that need to be mitigated and the opportunities that need to be pursued or taken in order to improve JNTC in planning, preparing and conducting the training events and provide a better training environment for the Romanian and/or partner/allied units. The result is a Master Plan or a road map comprising the objectives needed to be achieved and the threats and weaknesses that need to be addressed.

References:

- [1] THOMPSON, A. A., STRICKLAND, A. J. & GAMBLE, J. E. (2007). *Crafting and Executing Strategy-Concepts and Cases*, (15th Edition), USA: McGrawHill/Irwin.
- [2] THOMPSON, A. A. & STRICKLAND, A. J. (1989). *Strategy Formulation and Implementation*, (4th Edition), USA: Irwin, Inc.
- [3] HARRISON, J. S. & St. JOHN, C. H. (2004). *Foundations in Strategic Management*, (3.Baskı), USA: South Western.
- [4] ÜLGEN, H. & MİRZE, S. K. (2010). *İşletmelerde Stratejik Yönetim*, (5. Baskı), İstanbul: Beta Basım Yayım.
- [5] GÜREL, E. & TAT, M., *SWOT Analysis – A theoretical review*, available online at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Emet_Guerel/publication/319367788_SWOT_ANALYSIS_A_THEORETICAL_REVIEW, retrieved on 28May2019.

**SWOT ANALYSIS – MANAGERIAL TOOL FOR ORGANIZATION’S
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT.
CASE STUDY AT THE ROMANIAN JOINT NATIONAL TRAINING
CENTER**

[6] DEALTRY, R. (1992). *Dynamic SWOT Analysis: Developer’s Guide*, United Kingdom: Dynamic SWOT Associates.

[7] CHERMACK, T. J. & KASSHANNA, B. K. (2007). The use and misuse of SWOT Analysis and implications for HRD professionals, *Human Resource Development*, 10 (4)

[8] WEIHRICH, H. (1982). *The TOWS Matrix- A Tool for Situational Analysis*,

Long Range Planning, 15 (2).

[9] HUMPHREY, S. A. (2005). *SWOT Analysis for Management Consulting*, SRI Alumni Association Newsletter, December.