



# WHY SHOULD YOU DO A SWOT ANALYSIS

## When Things Are So Uncertain?

SBDC Small Business Development Center  
The University of Scranton  
Helping businesses start, grow, and prosper.

UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON  
Center of EXCELLENCE  
SCRANTON

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SBA  
U.S. Small Business Administration

pennsylvania  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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## About the SBDC

The SBDC offers **educational programs and consulting services** to entrepreneurs looking to **start or grow their small businesses.**

SBDC consultants work with entrepreneurs in confidential, one-on-one sessions, **at no cost**, to help them with a range of business topics.

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www.scranton.edu/sbdc

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## About the SBDC

### SBDC Services

Consulting      Training      Information      Resources      Referrals

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## About the SBDC

We are part of the non-profit  
Pennsylvania Small Business Development Center  
network and are an accredited affiliate of the national  
network of Small Business Development Centers.

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# About the SBDC

Funding support and resources are provided through cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through the Department of Community & Economic Development, and by The University of Scranton.

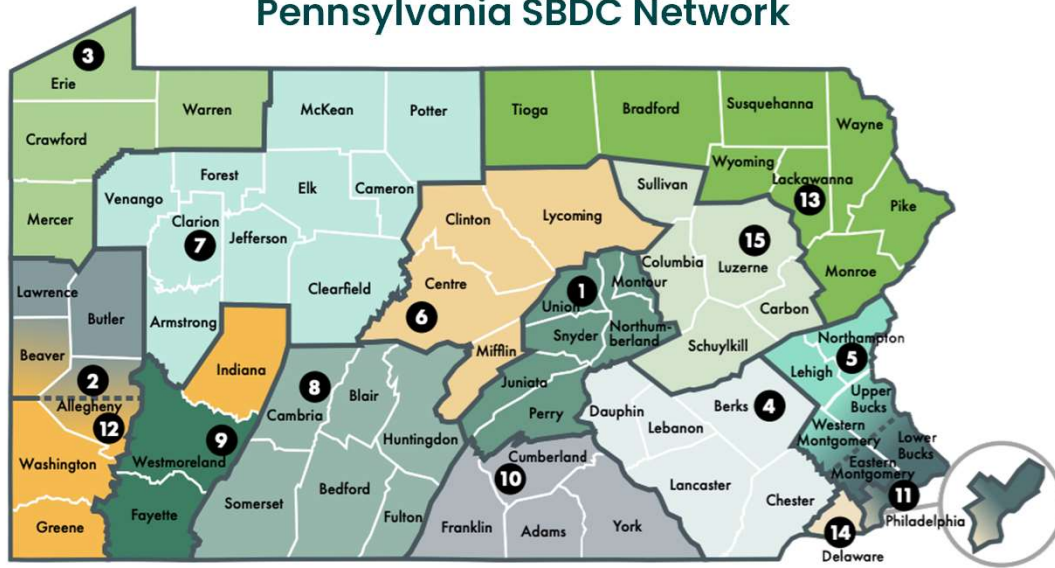


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## Pennsylvania SBDC Network



To find an SBDC near you, visit [www.pasbdc.org](http://www.pasbdc.org)

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**PASBDC**  
**Ag Center of Excellence**

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The Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) at **PennWest University Clarion**, **Penn State University**, and **The University of Scranton** established the Agriculture Center of Excellence (Ag COE) to assist Pennsylvania farmers, food producers, farmers markets, retail food establishments, restaurants, and all ag-related businesses



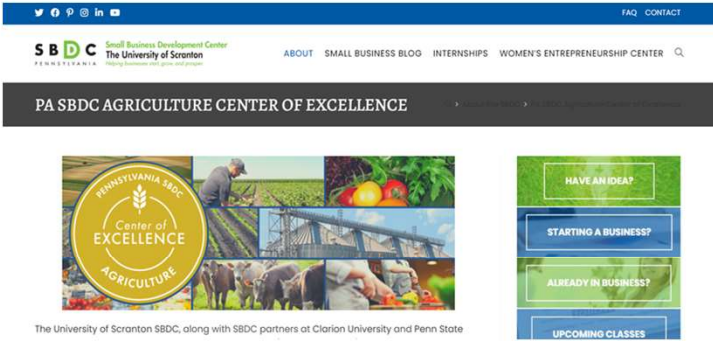
To learn about other PASBDC Centers of Excellence located at centers across the state visit [www.pasbdc.org](http://www.pasbdc.org).

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[www.scrantonsbdc.com/about-sbdc/agriculture-center-of-excellence/](http://www.scrantonsbdc.com/about-sbdc/agriculture-center-of-excellence/)

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**Strengths**

- very accessible for a lot

**Weaknesses**

- costs
- continued to outlast business
- probably hard to find
- strong competition

**Opportunities**

- stabilization of youth and financial institutions

**Threats**

- very hard to change
- hard to make

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## A New Way to Use SWOT

- Explore the balance between
  - Pre-pandemic Strengths and Weaknesses
  - “New Normal” Opportunities and Threats
- Before, Strength and Weakness analysis was the focus
- Now, Opportunities and Threats lead the way to prepare for
  - Future short-term shocks
  - Longer term implications



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## Challenges and Threats of a Highly-fluid Environment

- Managing demand fluctuations
- Shoring up cash reserves
- Getting sufficient labor and services
- Thinking about longer term supply challenges
- Talking to customers

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## Ways that SWOT Assists in Planning

- Business plans center on goals/objectives
- Opportunities for sustainability/resilience
- Recognized Threats lead to proactive counter-actions
- Strengths support response
- Weaknesses pinpoint improvements needed

		Helpful to achieve objective	Harmful to achieve objective
Internal to the organization		Strengths – attributes that are helpful to achieving the objective	Weaknesses – attributes that are harmful to achieving the objective
External to the organization		Opportunities - external conditions that are helpful to achieving the objective	Threats - external conditions which could do damage to the objective

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## Your Assignment

- Review the SWOT Guide
- Do the practice SWOT analysis
- Check the “answer sheet”
- Bring questions to the live session (February 13<sup>th</sup>)
- Prepare to conduct a SWOT for your farm



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## Meet the Ryans

- Small dairy operation
- 3 Generations
  - Jean
  - Paul & Margaret
  - Jane, Hal, & Susan
- New enterprise
- Ties to current production
- Branching out in new directions

### Exercise: Sample SWOT Analysis

Here is an example of a small farm that needs to diversify in order to remain sustainable. This farm family needs to conduct a SWOT analysis. Read the example and conduct your own SWOT analysis for the Ryan family. When you are done, you can check your answers against the answers prepared by experienced users of the SWOT analysis tool. Those answers are on the page after your fill-in-the-blanks page. If your answers are close to the experts' answers, you are ready to do your own SWOT analysis.

#### Meet the Ryan Family

The Ryan family has operated a dairy farm for over 50 years. Paul Ryan, age 40, milked the dairy from his father 20 years ago. The dairy is average-sized for the area; the Ryans milk 60 cows, grow most of their own forage and grain, and raise their own heifers. The family withdraws about \$30,000 from the farm business each year for living expenses. The dairy is located in a rural area, but urban and suburban areas are close by. The nearest city has a population of 100,000.

Margaret Ryan, 42, is Paul's wife. They have three children: Jane, Hal, and Susan. Margaret used to work on the farm, but for the last 8 years she has been working full-time as a clerk-typist in the school district office. Take-home pay from this job is \$18,000, plus health, dental, and other benefits that extend to the whole family. At this point, Margaret oversees the finances with Paul, occasionally milks, and manages the household.

Jane Ryan, 21, has just received her bachelor's degree in culture arts from the local community college. During the summer, Jane helps full-time on the farm with the milking. She is considering farming as an occupation, but would like to continue her work in value-added food production.

Hal Ryan, 16, is in high school and works with his father part-time during the school year, and full-time during the summer. He is not interested in the dairy or in any type of farming and would rather attend a university and study science, engineering, or economics.

Susan Ryan, 12, is a middle school student who really enjoys the farm. She takes care of the calves after school, belongs to 4-H, and has just begun to show an interest in helping with the crops, although she is too young to drive the tractor.

Jane's brother, 64, is Margaret's brother. Since the death of her husband 8 years ago, Jane has lived with the Ryans; she shares an interest in cooking with her granddaughter, Jane.



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## SWOT Exercise Introduction

Prior to class on February 13, please read the SWOT Analysis case study found here:

<https://www.horizonfc.com/agbiz-masters-year-one>

Password: Year1

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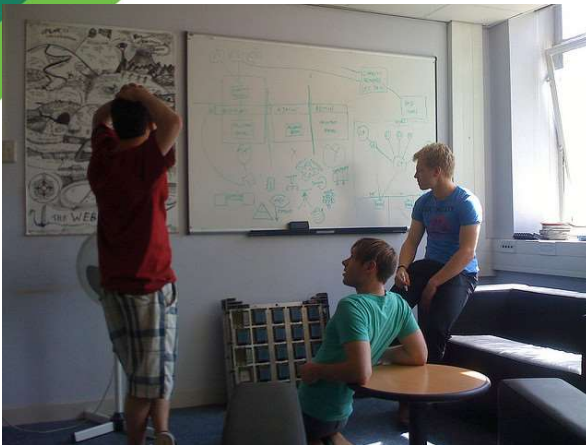
## Using Your SWOT Analysis Homework

Come prepared to the class on February 13 to discuss the Ryan Families Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

On your own time, reflect and draft a SWOT Analysis for your own farm.

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## SWOT is Still a “Team” Activity



"Brainstorming" by Paul Downey on flickr.com CC BY 2.0

- Gather stakeholders
- Solicit honest opinions
- Get everything “on the table”
- Collect all thoughts, then sort into categories, assign, and PLAN

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**Thank you!**

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