

# Business Resilience Toolkit

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## Know your strengths and weaknesses

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### Transcript:

What is your organisation good at?

Knowing your strengths will make your organisation stronger. It will help you achieve your objectives. And it can help you survive a crisis.

Hello, I'm Ellen Schuler and I'm a business consultant at Community Business Bureau.

In this video I will talk about how you can use your organisation's strengths, when it is important to work on your weaknesses and how you can learn to become more adaptable.

Strengths are the qualities that differentiate you from other organisations providing similar services or programs. Strengths are the things your not-for-profit is doing well. Your internal resources, such as skilled, motivated, and knowledgeable staff can be your strengths. Assets such as buildings or capital can also be part of your strengths.

To identify your strengths, it is helpful to involve your staff. Also, review what your customers say about you.

And question what your competitors would say about you. If you find it difficult to identify your strengths it may help to review which programs or services work well and why.

When your organisation is under threat try to play to your strengths. This will lead to better performance and cost less energy than managing your weak spots.

Knowing your strengths is important and it is equally important to know when to use them. When opportunities arise ask yourself if and how you can use your strength to seize these opportunities.

So, should you ignore your weaknesses?

Weaknesses are the things your organisation lacks. The things other organisation do better than you or the things that are your time wasters or drain you energy. Weaknesses can also be the things your customers dislike about your organisation. Lack of funding and resource limitations can be a weakness.

Looking at your weaknesses can be unpleasant, but it is equally important.

When you look at your list of weaknesses, I recommend questioning for each of your identified weakness:

- Does this weakness hold us back from achieving our objectives?

- Will addressing this weakness make us more efficient and help us grow our social impact?
- Does this weakness make us more vulnerable to a crisis or disruption?

If you have answered 'no' to each of these questions your weaknesses will not matter too much.

However, if you feel a weakness could pose a barrier to achieving your objectives or is making you more vulnerable you need to address this to move ahead and to increase your resilience.

For example, if your internal IT capability is weak and your IT system keeps confidential client information and is vulnerable towards cyber-attacks you cannot ignore this.

You may find an easy way to overcome your weakness by seeking external help. Maybe you could collaborate with someone, engage a contractor or mentor? This could be a temporary measure until your systems are up to speed and your staff are upskilled in the area.

One weakness that often comes up is 'lack of experience' in a certain area or field. If your organisation has never worked in that field, you won't know until you try. It might be worthwhile to ask how quickly your staff learns, adapts and is open to trying new things. Is your team able to overcome the challenges and how?

Adaptability is one of the most important skills for resilience. It is a skill that takes practice and commitment.

Here is how you can grow the adaptability of your team:

- Encourage learning from others, both inside and outside of the organisation
- Encourage new ideas and allow people to trial new things
- Allow for mistakes and if things go wrong extract the positives and the learning

To grow your organisation's resilience, you need to know your strengths and utilise them as much as you can. You also need to know your weaknesses and address those that are critical. And you need to be adaptive. Growing the adaptability of your team will help you flex in response to changing conditions.

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