**SWOT Summary**

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**Strengths**
A firm's strengths are its resources and capabilities that can be used as a basis for developing a competitive advantage. Examples of such strengths include:
- patents
- strong brand names
- good reputation among customers
- cost advantages from proprietary know-how
- exclusive access to high grade natural resources
- favorable access to distribution networks

**Weaknesses**
The absence of certain strengths may be viewed as a weakness. For example, each of the following may be considered weaknesses:
- lack of patent protection
- a weak brand name
- poor reputation among customers
- high cost structure
- lack of access to the best natural resources
- lack of access to key distribution channels
- In some cases, a weakness may be the flip side of a strength. Take the case in which a firm has a large amount of manufacturing capacity. While this capacity may be considered a strength that competitors do not share, it also may be a considered a weakness if the large investment in manufacturing capacity prevents the firm from reacting quickly to changes in the strategic environment.

**Opportunities**
The external environmental analysis may reveal certain new opportunities for profit and growth. Some examples of such opportunities include:
- an unfulfilled customer need
- arrival of new technologies
- loosening of regulations
- removal of international trade barriers

**Threats**
Changes in the external environmental also may present threats to the firm. Some examples of such threats include:
- shifts in consumer tastes away from the firm's products
- emergence of substitute products
- new regulations
- increased trade barriers