



STRATEGIC ANALYSIS TOOLS

ACT-ON¹

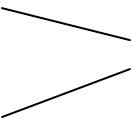
This tool was developed by David Cohen of Advocacy Institute. ACT-ON is a variation of what many people know as the "SWOT Analysis, but with an activist's touch." Where SWOT stands for "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats," the ACT-ON variation stands for "Advantages, Challenges, Threats, Opportunities and Next Steps." In the psychology of advocacy, Cohen believes that there is power in the words we choose to advance our work. Instead of "Weaknesses" in the SWOT model, we choose "Challenges". Why? We can work to overcome challenges in our advocacy efforts. While SWOT ends the process on a negative note (Threats), ACT-ON ends with Opportunities and Next Steps, again with an eye toward what is possible, and actions (Next Steps), that move the process forward, leading planning and analysis into action.

ACT-ON is a tool best used to conduct an initial 'big picture' assessment and see the potential areas for interventions. In addition, it can provide a good bridge between the environment and the problem itself.

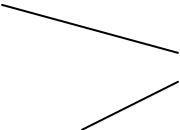
¹ Adapted from Cohen, David; de la Vega, Rosa, and Watson, 2001. Advocacy for Social Justice: A Global Action and Reflection Guide, Chapter 2. Kumarian Press, Inc., Connecticut, USA.

“ACT - ON”

A Tool for Assessing your Environment and Creating an Initial Strategic Plan

A - Advantages  refers to organizational or internal capacity

C - Challenges

T - Threats  refers to societal or external environment

O - Opportunities

N - Next steps  refers to initial plan of action

Exercise

Go back to your circle of colleagues. Apply the ACT-ON to your situation and see what it tells you, and what actions it might direct you to do.