

Initial SWOT Analysis Compilation of Executive Board Responses

Strengths (Internal):

- Connections with forest products industry
- We have a genuine commitment to supporting industry, but also education and government
- Greater diversity of membership compared to, e.g., Society for Wood Science Technology
- Do a good job of trying to reach out to younger people, but only those within the field
- Provide a vehicle for technical communication between science and practitioners
- History and name recognition
- Name recognition and goodwill; conference/pubs experience
- A niche market publisher providing opportunities to publish technical information in a small field
- *Forest Products Journal* publication
- 1,000 members remain despite persistent decline
- Provides an organizational structure for members to "give back" to the profession
- Conferences
- Reasonable financial asset base despite debt
- Established organization with name recognition
- Core group of committed members
- We have strong international recognition and should be able to continue to build on that

Weaknesses (Internal):

- We have high levels of disorganization (at multiple levels)
- Perceived lack of international awareness and outreach
- FPS budget is very weak in a weak economy, and we therefore have little flexibility to explore innovations
- No strong funding base for cash flow. Conferences are weak. Publications are weak.
- Established/older membership may be difficult to change or to move as quickly as is needed
- Concurrent lack of student and younger members
- Society is not perceived by any sector to provide much useful information/service. Neither academic nor industry needs are served well.
- Slowness to react to developing technical/scientific interests and trends
- Aging active membership

- Has not kept pace with modern communications technology and dramatically changing membership environment
- Inability to attract many new graduates
- Lack of understanding of professional and information needs of industrial and government members or potential members
- Stakeholders not well defined nor understood in terms of potential FPS value
- Little industry membership participation
- FPS has never been very good at fostering innovation and research...if that's our primary mission focus, then I think we have failed.
- FPS is not well known outside of its primary audience
- Identity crisis - scope of what is / are forest product(s)?
- In a cash flow hole that restricts future options and challenges the ability to improve value to membership
- Not a very good track record of being innovative and dynamic
- Hugely underpowered web infrastructure
- Our target industry and membership base has changed, but we have not
- Our inability to attract and retain young members
- Connections with associations and groups has been weak, especially with environmental and other innovative organizations
- Our business model has been focused on producing a product, not on producing value

Opportunities (External):

- We hold the keys to many exciting innovative areas the public is interested in (but those areas of interest are cloaked by an outmoded image that we project)
- We have many opportunities to expand into new environmental, biomaterials, and bioenergy applications and offerings
- Expanding opportunities if we develop a stronger vision and a better image to attract "new blood" through social media and web offerings
- Growing need for technical information related to using wood among design engineers and architects
- Growing need to understand the environmental benefits and risks of using wood
- Increasing and broad awareness of global environmental issues linked with forests such as climate change, carbon sequestration, environmental services, bioenergy, green-certified forests and wood products, renewable materials, and sustainability
- Partnerships with Society of American Foresters, WoodWorks, and other organizations whose missions have broader appeal

Threats (External):

- The shrinking of the forest products and wood science profession
- Society is identified with a declining, unappealing field
- Declining base for academic core that supports key elements of education program
- Increasing age of the people that identify most closely with the FPS mission
- Competition from niche organizations that siphon off potential members
- The Internet era expectations that technical information is available immediately and for low cost
- Trend toward open source of information threatens current business model
- Reduced ability for members to secure funding for travel to participate (e.g., conferences)
- Declining academic programs to feed membership
- There are much stronger leaders in the forest products/resources sectors, and they are getting stronger while we fall behind
- Niche market, especially for publications. Too narrow of a market with few opportunities.

Parking Lot & General Comments:

- Restructure Sections and use them to recruit regionally
- Invest in new media and compete for attention of younger members from different backgrounds
- Convert to a professional organization, find merger partners
- Be a leader in the discussion of the sustainable management of a valuable natural resource (wood)
- Continue to reach out using electronic media
- Broaden scope and mission of Society to appeal to bigger group of potential members
- The Society will continue to die if we do not change direction and become more inclusive with regard to biomaterials and the scope of the Society's mission
- Accept being a smaller group and focus on quality