

SWOT Analysis Including Results from 9/22/12 Town Hall Meeting

Strengths: (internal) characteristics of the business that give it an advantage over others

- Free Geek is an open, accepting place where volunteers and staff work side by side to accomplish common goals. Volunteers value the commitment to recycling and re-use, the egalitarian model that welcomes people of all backgrounds (noting the Spanish Build program as a specific strength), the breadth and depth of knowledge represented throughout Free Geek, and opportunities to learn.
- FG's numbers
- FG gives a lot back to volunteers (computers, education, community).
- Actually doing something to make the world better
- Lots of awesome energy
- Gratifying experience
- Empowers people
- Flexible scheduling
- Encourages question asking
- Peer-to-peer model
- All ages/intergenerational
- Everyone gets the same treatment
- Get to learn and to teach (each-one-teach-one)
- Supportive environment that doesn't change
- Being a part of a team
- Buzz of communication/collaboration
- Increased laptop inputs
- Implementing OS Installation
- Teaching Open Source Tech
- Internal software
- Better breadth of experience with end users
- Flowcharts and Software implementations
- Progress toward strategic deployment of spec upgrades
- Triaging breakdown procedures
- Volunteer expertise and interest
- FGDB
- Creative
- Can customize software
- Communication between staff, interns, and volunteers
- Steady stream of donations of hardware
- Free software use
- Classes becoming more technical
- Practical skills (getting your business online)
- Open to other groups outside of Free Geek

- Starting kids early on technology
- Encourages curiosity and desire to learn
- Effort in collaboration with other organizations (PDX Youthbuilders, etc)
- Not intimidating to women
- People who teach are actually interested in what they are leading
- Free Geek is well branded
- Learning is hands on, collaborative, voluntary
- Education all through the organization

Weaknesses: (internal) characteristics that place the business at a disadvantage relative to others

- Availability of resources (technology, hardware, volunteers, staff)
- Role clarity (What else can volunteers do? How to identify staff and volunteers while including both?)
- Staff sometimes “firewall” against volunteer input. Sometimes open.
- Unclear communication about volunteer expectations/opportunities
- Unclear on how volunteers can steer direction of Free Geek
- Staff not proactive enough on getting input
- Opportunities for more education
- Turned away some volunteers
- Free Geek Hours available for volunteers (students. Full time workers)
- Too much stuff to walk around
- Safety concerns/issues (including hazardous materials education)
- Breaking language barriers
- Motivation for volunteers to stay on
- Providing Free Geek “Big Picture”
- Hard to identify staff
- More awareness of communication methods
- PR
- More information about Free Geek’s impact
- Experience is context specific – doesn’t translate to marketplace
- Roller coaster ride in terms of volunteer input/opportunities
- Set up of current Build program – not enough support
- Triaging process – maintenance & relevance
- Explaining specs and technologies
- Staff spread too thin
- Ongoing problem in allocating legacy technologies
- Teaching real job skills that are marketable
- Skills learned are not always enough to get a job
- Having enough outreach to people without access Staging classes, educational profession through classes
- Build to Post Build

- Classes not challenging enough
- More teachers (volunteers) for more variety of classes
- OSS vs Windows OS experience in job market
- Post Build not as in depth as thought/expected
- Not enough spaces for interested people, follow through of volunteers to fill their shift
- Mismatch between what Free Geek provides, and what is needed (education)

Opportunities: (external) elements that the business could exploit to its advantage

- Hand out laptops
- Staff Refurbishment handheld designs
- Experimentation with smaller devices
- Be more involved in free software community – avoid surprises
- Finding more grantees
- More Networking with other non-profits
- Westside Portland doesn't know about Free Geek, awareness of services
- Teach Windows - job skills
- Online classes, online communication between students and teachers
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Threats: (external) elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the business

- The world of technology changes at an exceedingly rapid pace
- Hardware shifting towards immodular, embedded & disposable designs
- Exclusion of proprietary softwares and effect on end user
- Changes in OS are quite challenging
- Locked down hardware
- Reliance on external organizations and products
- Smaller computers: Can you put Linux on a tablet?
- Inexpensive new technologies
- Restricted devices – can't or are difficult to load software
- Protecting customer data
- Linux may not work in all devices
- Rapid software updates – hard to keep up
- Upgrades can break software – not much control
- Optical devices, solid state drives