



In their newsletter, the TAC said that it was now imperative to obtain generic antiretroviral agents and they are hoping for successes through their pressure on the drug companies via the Competition Commission. The deal announced by the Clinton Foundation will bring the prices of generic antiretrovirals down to less than R90 per month for government.

Moreover, the TAC states that the success of the treatment plan rollout depends on their ability to mobilise their communities. They intend focusing much of their energy at the level of the District Health Service. They will assist with service delivery but keep up their pressure through mobilisation and demonstrations when needed.

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PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

BUSINESS PLANNING PART III

Internal environmental analysis

The preceding steps in the business planning process focussed predominantly on the external environment in which the practice operates. Now that some external aspects have been briefly addressed, the business planning process shifts its focus to the internal environment of the practice. Again the objective is to identify issues that need to be addressed in the context of the operational or action plan. The objective is to provide a picture of the current and potential operations of the company; to assess the effectiveness with which resources have been allocated in the past, demonstrate principles that can be used to allocate resources in future, and estimate the strengths and weaknesses of the company with a view to identifying how threats may be countered and opportunities may be pursued.

A key success factor of the internal environment analysis is to ensure an atmosphere that will encourage honest self-inspection. Should the planning process include junior staff or external stakeholders, it will be necessary for the facilitator and the partners to make it clear that everyone can speak their mind. Constructive criticism, rather than mudslinging, should be encouraged. The internal environment analysis is done by using the following:

- strengths and weaknesses analysis
- product/service portfolio analysis
- identifying 'key success factors'
- competitive advantage analysis.

Strengths and weaknesses

In undertaking this analysis it is necessary to identify all the strengths and weaknesses in all areas of the practice that can influence the capacity of the practice to conduct business.

Typically these would include identifying strengths and weaknesses in the following areas:

Human resources

- Medical practitioners
- Other health care practitioners
- Support staff

Financial resources

- Cash
- Loans
- Shares
- Outstanding payments

Services or products

- Consultations
- Surgical services
- Technological (sonars, ECG, etc.)
- Specialised (geriatric, antenatal, obesity)
- Health promotion
- After hours/emergency

Assets

- Consulting rooms
- Clinics
- Equipment
- Pharmaceutical stock

Operational systems and procedures

- Appointment system and waiting time
- Report and feedback to patients
- Referral systems
- Financial management system (billing, debt collection, cash flow analysis, etc.)
- Patient flow
- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Practice outcome audits

Marketing mechanisms

- Business cards
- Brochures
- Advertisements
- Relationship-building activities (health education sessions, home visits, follow-up calls)

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