

Weight watchers swot analysis

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Strengths * Brand Recognition * Patented Points Program * Science Based Approach/Clinically Proven Results * Multiple Support Options * History of successful Weight Loss * Multiple Payment Options * Flexible Meal Plans * Face to Face Support Groups * Located in 30 Countries and on the Web| Weaknesses * Slow Weight Loss * Costly over time * Successful weight loss is not typical| Opportunities * Science Driven approach can be a Medical Model * Affiliation with the Department of Education* Affiliations with Fitness Centers * Meeting the growing weight loss needs around the world| Threats * Strong Competition * Competitors new products and innovation * Surgical Procedures offering quick weight loss| Weight Watchers International is a Weight Loss Business that utilizes the philosophy of a Science-driven approach to help participants, also known as members, lose weight by forming helpful habits, eating smarter, getting more exercise and providing support.

They target consumers who want to manage their weight through weight loss or weight maintenance. Their vision is to ensure Member satisfaction and retention by making Members feel cared for, well informed, part of the group and motivated to succeed. Weight Watchers has been around for 50 years and has developed their brand of providing weight loss services and products that make them a leading weight management service globally. The patented points program is based on a formula calculating the protein, carbohydrates, fat and dietary fiber content developed with consultation from a Scientific Advisory board. Each food is assigned a points value that reflects how the body breaks down food and converts it into energy.

This Board is made up of world renowned medical experts to ensure that its weight loss plan is based on the most current scientific expertise. (Weight Watchers International) The GoodHealthGuidelines utilized by Weight Watchers are also recommended by the United States Department of Agriculture Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. (USDA) Weight Watchers offers a variety of support options to members who attend weekly meetings which are located in 30 countries around the world, weigh and go at store locations, attend meetings in their place of employment (At Work Meetings), or utilize the internet to participate in Weight Watcher's services. Members are encouraged to share their struggles and successes.

Struggles and successes are employed to motivate other members to achieve their weight loss goals by following the program and obtaining the proprietary tools offered for purchase. Members who reach their goal and maintain it for six weeks become Lifetime Members. Lifetime members maintain their membership by continuing to participate on a monthly basis. These members are free advertisements who attest to the success of the program. The meal plans are simple and the Points Plus system is very flexible. Each member receives a Daily Point Target (DPT) based on their height, weight, gender and age. The DPT represents the amount of food that each person should eat in a day.

Foods that are low in fat and sugar tend to have lower point values and provide more volume to a meal or snack than less healthy options. Required foods are non-specific so the member is permitted to choose how they will consume required foods such as dairy, healthy oil, and whole grains. All foods and drinks are permitted as long as the point value is calculated and

accounted for when deducted from the DPT. Many members succeed in their weight loss efforts but not all members are successful. One of the biggest complaints of the program is that it offers slow weight loss. Our culture is one that appreciates immediate gratification. (The Associated Press, 2006) The competition offers much quicker weight loss methods.

The success obtained by Lifetime members who worked for weeks, months and years to accomplish their goals is not nearly as appealing to the average consumer who is inundated with quick fix fad diets. (Speri) Weight Watchers offers a lifestyle change that reduces food intake. It is not designed as a quick fix but instead is one that promotes healthy lifestyle changes that gradually accomplish weight loss. The consumer's cost for Weight Watchers is very low compared to other weight loss programs or at least it appears so up front. (Sugar) There are no meals, shakes, supplements or bars that are required to be purchased in order to participate in the program. The food that you eat on plan is very much the same food that one could purchase in any grocery store or restaurant.

There are multiple periods of free registration throughout each year and the weekly fee is nominal at approximately \$13.00 per week. The problem with this is that there are many hidden costs at Weight Watchers. The proprietary point system is unlike any other weight loss system. Successful members utilize food scales and measuring cups to weigh and measure their food, pedometers and activity monitors to measure a person's activity level, cookbooks, calculators and more. These products can all be purchased at lower prices from many convenience stores but they do not convert their information into point values the way that the Weight Watcher products do

so many members purchase expensive Weight Watchers products to assist them with their weight loss journey.

Additionally, the gradual weight loss concept requires members to attend for longer periods of time before they are able to reach a free Lifetime status. Lifetime members remain free if the member maintains their weight at no more than two pounds above their goal weight. Most people's weight fluctuates regularly and fees are charged no matter what the reason for the weight gain. Weight Watchers has many opportunities to join with the medical profession to promote its science based plan. The Scientific Advisory Board that is hired to consult with Weight Watchers is made of Medical Professionals and the weight loss method is one that is promoted by most medical doctors even if they do not promote the Weight Watcher's brand. USDA) The United States alone has determined that Obesity in America is common, serious and costly. (Fox News Latino) Weight Watchers has promoted a medical model for many years. An affiliation with the medical community would surely add value to the weight management scientifically based model that is currently promoted at Weight Watchers. The United States First Lady, Michelle Obama, has brought additional light to the obesity epidemic and the need for American's to manage their diets. Her " Let's Move" initiative has gained the attention of the entire country. Weight Watchers is a healthy living model that combines healthy foods with more activity.

Teaming up with fitness centers, exercise centers and schools will accomplish more together than the weight loss community or the physical fitness community can do on its own. A true healthy lifestyle includes eating

right and moving more. (Grain Foods Foundation) Our quick fix society is one that shows little patience for counting calories or points utilized by slower burning weight loss programs. The competition has now gone beyond that which offers diets where certain foods are limited or forbidden, and some are replacing them with pre-cooked meals that are very high in sodium. These programs, including NutriSystem, do not promote weight maintenance following the program but they do promote mindless weight loss.

Those who follow this program do not need to think about what to eat or how to prepare it as all of the meals and shakes are prepared, frozen and shipped to the dieter's home. (" NutriSystem: Lose weight with meals conveniently delivered to your home") Many diet programs eliminate foods and replace them with supplements. The Atkins diet, for example, restricts the dieter's ability to consume carbohydrates. This means that all sugars including fruits and vegetables are minimized or omitted from one's diet. It is not in line with a medical model approach for healthy weight loss but it does promote quick weight loss. Unfortunately, this does pose a threat to Weight Watchers as the weight loss experience in such a plan does satisfy the quick fix needs of those who opt for these types of plans. Frazier) In an attempt to make weight loss quicker and easier, the medical profession has taken to providing surgical procedures that reduce the size of the stomach by removing part of the small intestine. This procedure is very risky to one's health and has a tremendous amount of medical complications associated with it. It is however, one that does not require that a person who has had the surgery to persevere delayed gratification and behavioral changes that are required when one loses weight following a weight loss program such as Weight

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