

## War Strategies & Business

There are a whole slew of executives out there that equate business success not with winning over customers and generating a profit, but rather with the complete and total defeat of competitors. They see their success in terms of their ability to impose failure on others. This view, while not the healthiest, in Tudog's view, points to a growing trend in business, whereby tactical approaches that were once correlated to sports, are now instead associated with war. And while Tudog doesn't think the equation is particularly useful (or correct), we do recognize that there are strategies applied in war that could serve to provide a company with a powerful strategic and competitive advantage. These strategies are worthy of exploration.

The successful implementation of a war effort incorporates the organization and simultaneous allocation of massive resources, all toward the same ultimate objective. Leaving aside aspects of troop levels, training grades, and other classic war elements that constitute and could tip the balance of power, Tudog has identified 10 features of war strategies that are also critical in the business arena. They are:

1. **Strength Assessment** – in order to fully understand your potential you need to understand where your strengths are and how they can be positioned in the field so as to maximize your efforts. You need to understand where your assets are best placed and how they can be situated to bring in the best results.

2. **Weakness Assessment** – just as you need to know your strengths, you also need to know your weaknesses so that you can avoid entering into circumstances whereby your resources will prove to be insufficient. By know your weaknesses you are able to work around them, making sure that you are not in situations that call for more than you can muster.

3. **Targeting** – it is equally important to hit the right target as it is to make certain you don't hit the wrong one. Targeting allows you to understand who you wish to speak to, who you wish to speak against, and how you are best able to deliver your message. The right message delivered the wrong way will fall short, just as the wrong message delivered the right way will.

4. **Positioning** – where you are versus where your opponents are is critical battlefield intelligence. So too is knowing where you are, where you want to go, and where and how the opponent can hinder your advance. Knowing this allows you to plan a path of least resistance or accumulate the resources you need to overcome their challenge.

5. **Optimizing Assets** – the way you use the resources and assets you have can determine the outcome of your effort. You need to make certain you have all the tools you require before you embark on your battle so that you have the capacity to sustain it until your objectives are reached. If you misuse or waste assets, you may find yourself low on capacity or unable to strike when the best opportunity is presented.

6. **Innovation** – being able to think on the go, think creatively, and essentially out-smart your opponent is critical to winning. During the course of a campaign there are many unforeseen, unexpected and unintentional events that occur and require often immediate response. Without the time to think things through, analyze data, or test your options,

you need to have the stomach, the mind, and the heart to act – and to do so creatively and effectively.

**7. Execution** – getting the job done is always the key to success. All the planning in the world does not matter if the plan is never executed. The ability to organize and implement an execution plan is critical, as is the ability to time the execution properly so as to best take advantage of the opportunity as it presents itself.

**8. Status Analysis** – you most likely can't advance if you don't know where you are, and you cannot commit resources if you do not know if they are available. A status analysis gives you the tools you need to immediately understand your circumstances, so you can quickly determine the best way to maximize your results under the current situation.

**9. Strategy Review** – as your campaign progresses you need to make certain that the strategies that made sense and were working at the beginning of your effort are still the most reasonable and sensible at the more advanced stages. This strategy review will give you the chance to consider your successes to date, your new position (based on those successes), and your newly acquired goals (that may be a result of your new position). The shifting of strategy (as well as tactics) is not as ill-advised as once thought. As long as the execution of the changes is handled well, the actual changes can be extremely effective as they will most likely catch your opponents off-guard.

**10. Organization & Leadership** – no battle, whether on a military field or a marketplace, can be successfully waged without the organization to support it and the leadership to inspire it. The organization is necessary to enable execution, whether it comes in the form of supplies, logistics, training, intelligence, or support. The resources necessary to win, even if they are allocated, can't be leveraged properly without the appropriate organization. The role of leadership, in heading the organization, is critical. There are times when the battle is raging and the motivation, hope, and abilities of the people you are relying on get diminished. Only leadership can spark the will to overcome the obstacles, and do whatever is necessary to prevail.

There is plenty about war we don't need to bring into our lives, but when it comes to moving large organizations across wide areas and getting people to collaborate resources and skills toward a common goal, war can serve as a practical example.