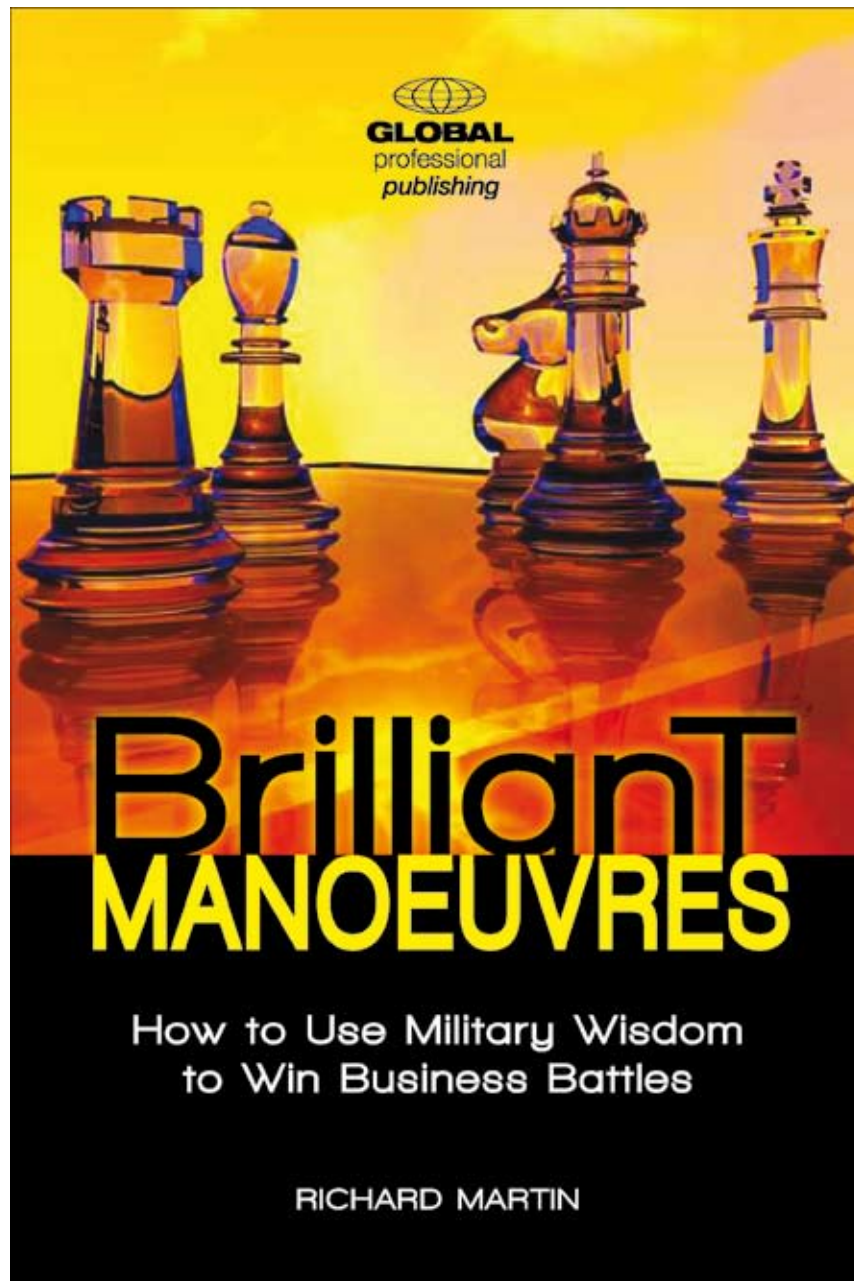


# The Brilliant Manoeuvres Study Guide

Applying Military Wisdom to Your Business  
Battles

Richard Martin



# Richard Martin



Richard Martin is founder and president of Alcera Consulting Inc. Prior to launching his consulting business, Richard attended the prestigious Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean as an officer cadet and then served for 21 years as an infantry officer in the Canadian Army. His proudest moment in the military was successfully commanding a peacekeeping force in one of the worst flashpoints of Bosnia: the town of Drvar. At the time, this led historian David Bercuson to write in the National Post that Richard Martin and his company “can do no wrong”. Richard is the only member of Alan Weiss’s Million Dollar Consulting Mentoring Hall of Fame with extensive military experience. He brings his business and military leadership experience to bear for organizations and executives in both the private and public sectors seeking to exploit change, maximize opportunity, and minimize risk.

# Introduction

As I mentioned in the conclusion to *Brilliant Manoeuvres: How to Use Military Wisdom to Win Business Battles*, I often find in my own reading that I only retain a small proportion of a book on first reading, perhaps ten per cent, and that I tend to file it away ‘for future reference.’

I believe the material in *Brilliant Manoeuvres* represents a significant departure for many readers, possibly pushing them out of their comfort zones. To really **get** this material, you have to reread it frequently, and experiment with it on a daily basis in the exercise of strategic, operational, and tactical management, as well as the leadership of your team and organization. You have to apply the lessons of military wisdom in the heat of battle in order to fully integrate them into your toolkit.

That is why I've created this complementary *Brilliant Manoeuvres Study Guide*: to provide you, the reader, with a guide to start the process of making the learning in the book real, and to integrate it into your day-to-day life as a leader, executive, and entrepreneur.

The chapters of *Brilliant Manoeuvres* are a good sequence to follow in making your own assessments and plans. Consequently, I've structured this study guide along the same lines as the book, extracting the basic principles from each chapter along with the diagnostic questions and exercises, so that you can reflect on them in your own context and write down your answers. In a nutshell, the lessons in the book can be applied in the following manner:

- For any situation you're facing, ask yourself if you have the initiative or are in a leading position. If you don't have the initiative and wish to gain it, then you must apply **Chapter 2's** principles of offensive action.
- If you've lost the initiative because of a temporary setback and want to regain it, or alternatively if you already have the lead and wish to maintain it, then you must apply the principles in **Chapter 3** on defensive action.
- To be sure of your objectives and to create commitment at all levels of your business, **chapter 4** provides a detailed approach for selecting and maintaining your overarching aim, and then for ensuring that everyone in the organization is aligned to that objective through the processes of nested hierarchical planning, mission analysis, and mission command.
- **Chapter 5** provides the tools to balance your objectives and plans within the inevitable constraints of time and resources that everyone faces in seeing their plans through to fruition.
- **Chapter 6** provides guidance for when things don't go the way you originally planned or expected, which, if you're like everyone else on the planet, should happen several times a day, a week, a year. Do not underestimate the power of uncertainty, friction, lack of knowledge, as well as your competitors' actions, to undermine and derail your best laid plans. Adopt the military mindset and go into battle assuming that things will not go as expected and that your opponents and competitors will try to defeat you, or at least hinder your actions and your chances of success.

- **Chapters 7 and 8** provide further guidance in developing your plans, first by creating a culture where everyone in the organization is looking out for the smallest of changes and characteristics in the environment so that you can gain an intelligence advantage, and then by using a logistical framework of rational calculation and phased action to achieve your goals within the constraints of time and resources.
- **Chapters 9 and 10** should be a constant reminder to you of the human dynamics of your business (or any type of organization for that matter). I recommend rereading these chapters on a regular basis until they become second nature to you, in particular your ability to assess your team's mood, morale, and cohesion, and your own abilities to lead them through thick and thin. Cycling periodically through the ten leadership principles I describe in **Chapter 10** is a good way to continually improve your leadership, as well as your ability to assess others and yourself. It will also help in developing self-awareness, which is probably the number one leadership skill, particularly as it concerns seeing one's effect on others.

# Chapter 1 – How Can Military Wisdom Apply to Business?

## *Principles*

- Military wisdom has influenced business and management theory and practice since at least the middle of the 19th century.
- Military wisdom is usually viewed as a powerful source of metaphors and analogies to provide encouragement and motivation in the context of business strategy and leadership. However, it has also been a rich source of technical and conceptual know-how for business.
- There are three levels of war that translate directly to business management: strategy, operations, and tactics.
- Strategy seeks to answer the same basic questions in the realms of war and business: What is our purpose? What are our fundamental values? What is our market? What are our goals? What are our key advantages and how should we exploit these? Etc.
- Warfare and the management of conflict play out on two distinct, but interrelated planes: the physical (i.e., material), and the moral (i.e., psychological and social). This framework is also applicable to business and organizational management. Rational analysis, prediction, calculation, and planning are all required for business success, but we must never forget the importance of human factors in business. Thus, morale, cohesion, unity of purpose, and ethical leadership are just as critical in business and management as in war and conflict.

## **Questions**

- What aspects of military history, strategy, and tactics do you find particularly compelling? Which of these aspects have you referred to in your own leadership and management practice to provide metaphors, examples, and inspiration for your 'troops'?

■ What aspects of military wisdom do you wish to learn more about and to apply to your own practice?

■ Is there a military leader that you wish to emulate, or would like your team to emulate?

■ Is there a war movie you find particularly inspiring? What lessons about leadership, morale, esprit de corps and perseverance do you draw from it?

# Chapter 2: Offence: Seizing and Maintaining the Initiative

## *Principles of Offence*

- **Seize and Maintain the Initiative.** Offence is about taking the initiative and attacking the enemy or competition at a time and a place of one's choosing. To do this requires freedom of action, which is the ability to choose the time and place to act.
- **Manoeuvre for Advantage.** Create dilemmas for the enemy or exploit his dilemmas so that he commits to one course of action, which then creates vulnerabilities that can be exploited through superior intelligence and speed. Attack when and where the enemy least expects it.
- **Use the Indirect Approach.** The best way to defeat an entrenched enemy is to go around him, exposing weaknesses and gaps in the defence, and exploiting them to go beyond his defences in order to threaten his whole position.
- **Probe and Follow the Path of Least Resistance.** You can't know definitively at any time whether your moves are certain to work owing to incomplete information. It is therefore best to advance by probing, finding weaknesses and reinforcing successful incursions by following the path of least resistance.

## *Strategic Application of Seizing and Maintaining the Initiative*

- Do you find yourself continually responding to competitors' actions or do you instead initiate changes that your competitors must respond to?





- Are your decisions today likely to hem you in in the short, medium, or long terms? What can you do to innovate while maintaining your freedom of action in the longer term?

- How fast can you move to implement new strategies and tactics?

### *Strategic Application of Manoeuvring for Advantage*

- Regardless of the size of your current business, are you trying to penetrate a pre-existing market? If so, are there customers and market segments that are not currently well served by the competition?

- Are the existing market leaders highly successful at meeting the needs of their major customers? Are they focused almost exclusively on these customers? Do they see minor customers and un-served market segments as a nuisance or not worth the effort? If you can answer yes to any of these questions, then there may be an excellent opportunity to create a strategic dilemma for your competitors.

- Could you recombine or combine existing components and technologies in novel ways that would meet some of the unfulfilled needs of customers or a market segment that is not currently being served?

### *Strategic Application of the Indirect Approach*

- Are there customers, segments, or entire markets that are currently inadequately served or ignored by established competitors?

■ Are there existing products and services that could be modified to better meet these needs?

■ Are there components or technologies that could be re-combined or suitably modified to meet these needs?

■ Could you effectively outflank and bypass the competition by exploiting these under-served or ignored needs?

■ What competencies and resources can you bring to bear to exploit these opportunities?

■ What financial, human, technical, marketing, and sales capabilities could you develop or acquire to bypass the competition?

■ Can you keep the risks within acceptable bounds? What means could you use to do so?



■ What would it take to elevate these unexpected successes to replace the repeated failures? Can you transfer resources from the latter to the former?

■ Do you have a systematic approach to experimenting with new products, markets, processes, and business models? Are you open to change or do you stick to your knitting in the face of contrary evidence?

■ Do you reinforce successes cautiously while staying on the lookout for signs of danger and competitive threats?

# Chapter 3: Defence: Securing Position and Regaining the Initiative

## Principles of defence

- **Positioning.** Defensive manoeuvres depend above all on the selection and preparation of strong positions from which to repulse enemy assaults. As the opening quotes show, defence is inherently stronger than offence; this is largely because the defender usually gets to choose his ground and fortify it.
- **Preparation.** The more time to prepare, the better. This is because you can carefully select your position on ground that the enemy must conquer, or that allows you to control an approach to such ground. You can then take the time to get to know the approaches, the nature of the terrain, and to fortify your position.
- **Depth.** Thin defences are too easily breached. As we saw in the chapter on offence, the objective of an attacker is to find a weakness in the defences so as to penetrate deeply and disrupt the defending force. To be truly effective, defences must be arrayed in depth, with successive lines of obstacles and fortifications. It also helps if the position is located with an obstacle such as a river so as to canalize and delay the attacking force.
- **All Around Defence.** As noted in the chapter on offence, the attacker tries to go around the enemy's main defences to strike in his flank, his rear, or to completely outflank him and capture an objective behind him. This hits him in a vulnerable area and forces him to abandon his strong positions to fight in the open. As a result, the defender must always be on the lookout for an attack from any quarter. The most successful assaults are usually the ones least expected from the most unexpected direction.
- **Mutual Support.** Defences must be arrayed to support each other synergistically. That way, if the attacker tries to assault one position, there is another position nearby that can engage the attacking enemy, or from which to launch a counterattack. The attacker not only has to face a defence in depth with positions capable of sustaining an assault from any direction, but he also has to assume that another position will block his way or launch a counterattack.
- **Active Defence.** It should be apparent by now that defence doesn't imply passivity or inactivity. Just because one has lost or temporarily given up the initiative to the attacker does not mean not reacting to his moves. In fact, a strong defence requires counterattacks and other countermoves to fully exploit its inherent advantage.





- Can you prevent or delay competitors from occupying alternative positions that threaten your vital ground?

### *Strategic Application of the Principle of Depth*

- Are there alternative positions to yours in your chosen product market segments?

- Could you create products or services that would allow you to occupy them provisionally or for a longer term?

■ What is the full range of vertical positions in terms of product or service quality or perceived value?

■ Are there product market segments adjacent to or otherwise related to your key position(s) that are likely to attract competitors onto your vital ground? Could you occupy some or all of this ground?

■ Are there positions nearby that you should or could deny to competitors simply so they don't get a toehold on your vital ground? What key terrain must you occupy to prevent them from encroaching on your position(s)?

- Is there a position you must occupy provisionally to buy time for reinforcements, i.e., so you can develop a full-blown product or service to occupy that or a related product or service category?

### *Strategic Application of All Around Defence*

- Are you able to detect threats from any direction? These could be suppliers moving downstream, customers or distributors moving upstream, new technologies or products as substitutes, or completely new competitors who are entering your sector.

- Could you buy time by occupying some of these alternative positions? This ties back to the questions on depth.

■ What competitive threat(s) could completely undermine your current position? What can you do to counter them?

■ What countermoves can you make to occupy a position or to deny it to a competitor before he moves?

■ Do you have a reserve to counter unexpected threats or moves by competitors? Could you reassign resources to do so?

## *Strategic Application of Mutual Support*

- Do you offer products and services that are mutually supporting, or are they disjointed and uncoordinated? Worse, are some of them in competition?

- Could you create an ecosystem that would generate customer loyalty and reduce the probability of a competitor luring away your customers with similar products and services?

- Do your customers have needs that are currently unfulfilled and that you could meet by creating new offerings?

- Do you see a competitor that is feeding off of your success with a complementary or synergistic offering? Could you acquire that competitor or its product, or otherwise develop your own offering to meet that need?

### *Strategic Application of Active Defence*

- Have you been passive in the face of challenges and threats from competitors? If yes, why do you think this is?

- How could you become more aggressive in the face of competitors trying to take away your business?

■ What means are available to you to counterattack your competitors' incursions?

■ What opportunities are there for you to occupy a position preemptively in order to limit incursions by competitors before they occur?

■ Could you conduct a spoiling attack on a competitor that is fixing to enter your market or outflank you by offering improved products or services?

# Chapter 4: Selection and Maintenance of the Aim: The Principle of the Objective

## The Principle of the Objective

- Objectives provide focus to allow individuals and organizations to say yes or no to activities, while channelling actions and resources towards their accomplishment.
- Carefully selected objectives must balance ends, ways, and means. The key questions are: What (ends) is to be achieved and why? How (ways) should it be achieved? What resources (means) are needed to achieve it?
- Ends, ways, and means provide a framework to generate a nested hierarchy of subordinate goals that must be accomplished by elements of the organization in order to meet overarching objectives.
- Leaders and teams at all levels of an organization, from the top to the bottom, develop their own objectives through a process of mission analysis.
- The nested hierarchy of objectives and mission analysis channel individual initiative and align the entire organization toward the achievement of its overarching goals through mission command.

## *Strategic Application of Ends, Ways, and Means*

- What is your ultimate vision and objective?



■ What would be the best way to achieve this vision or goal?

■ Do you have the means to achieve this objective in the manner you've defined?

■ Do you need to change the way you intend to achieve your objective? If so, would this lead to the attainment of your goal or vision?

■ Do you need to break up your ultimate vision into sub-goals and to sequence these over time?

■ Given all of this, are your objectives still realistic? If not, what means or ways would you need to change? Are these changes realistic? If not, how can you make your objectives more realistic?

### *Strategic Application of Nested, Hierarchical Planning*

■ What is the vision or end state for which you are aiming, one that balances ends, ways, and means?

■ What mission would allow you to realize that vision or end state?

■ What is your broad intent in that regard, such as your positioning and posture? Do you wish your products and services to be highly differentiated, constantly innovating to stay ahead of the pack, or do you prefer instead to be the cost leader? Is your overall posture offensive or defensive? Are you seeking to defend your position, or to go on the attack to overtake your competitors by staking out your position in virgin territory?

■ What is the broad scheme of manoeuvre and concept of operations that will transform your vision into action and results? How does this translate into a functioning business model that can succeed over time and that supports your mission?

- What resources are required? Who will execute the plan and what roles are they expected to play? What specific tasks and responsibilities are required of the subordinate elements and leaders in your organization? How do these tasks fit together and how are they sequenced in time and space to produce the effects you're seeking?

### *Applying Mission Analysis to Your Business*

- What are the vision, end state, mission, and intent of the whole organization?

- What are the vision, mission, and intent of my superior's superior?

■ What are my immediate superior's vision, mission, intent, and concept of operations for our part of the organization?

■ What explicit tasks, roles, and functions within the greater concept of operations has my immediate superior given me?

■ Are there implied tasks that are required to support these assigned tasks?

■ What are the limitations on my freedom of action? In other words, are there constraints (musts) and restraints (must not's) that I must follow?

■ What can I observe, infer, and assume from the foregoing?

■ What is the most clear and concise statement of my mission?



■ Have they thought long and hard about their own mission, about how they fit into the bigger picture of the organization, the division, the team?

■ Do your people have the freedom to exercise their initiative within the strategic, operational, and tactical frameworks that have been determined?

■ Are your people afraid to take initiative for fear of upsetting their manager or of rocking the boat?



- Can you genuinely say that you and everyone in your organization are fully aligned on the higher intent and objectives, or are you pursuing your own private agenda?

# Chapter 5: *You Can't Be Everywhere at Once: Exploiting Limited Resources*

## *Dynamic Principles of Action*

- **Centre of Gravity.** The centre of gravity is what gives a body its power, balance, and strength. We can extend this by analogy to any organization. The key to effective prioritization of resources is to understand the centre of gravity of one's own side, while estimating that of the opponent.
- **Main Effort.** The main effort is the activity, function, or part of the organization that gets priority access to resources and senior leadership attention. The main effort channels and focuses the organization's resources by the understanding of both the organization's and the opponent's centres of gravity.
- **Economy and Mass.** Economy and mass are two sides of the main effort coin. Decisive action comes from mass applied to the main effort, which aims to destroy or disrupt the opponent's centre of gravity. To achieve mass, resources must be concentrated in time and space. Concentration creates weaknesses and gaps elsewhere, which must be compensated to some degree through economy of force.
- **Speed and Agility.** Time is the ultimate resource. Brute speed can compensate for time and resource limitations. If you can assess, act, and adjust faster and more often than your opponent, then you can present him with a continuous stream of dilemmas. Agility can also compensate for limited resources and can contribute to speed of decision-making, reaction, and execution.
- **Flexibility.** Organizations need flexibility to respond to threats and opportunities. This can be achieved by giving multiple roles and tasks to organizational elements.

## **Strategic Application of Centre of Gravity**

- What is the driving force of your business?



- How does your own centre of gravity make you vulnerable? How can you reduce that vulnerability to protect your own centre of gravity?

- How can you cross the T of your main competitors?

## Strategic Application of Main Effort

- From your analysis of your centre of gravity, where should your main effort lie?

■ Can you design your main effort to undermine those of your competitors? In other words, can you use your centre of gravity and main effort to cross your competitors' Ts?

■ What resources and capabilities are required to implement your main effort?

■ What secondary and supporting efforts are required to make your main effort work?

■ How can you free resources from secondary and supporting efforts to reallocate them to your main effort?

■ Who will you designate to lead your main effort?

## Strategic Application of Mass and Economy

■ What are your Question Marks, the experiments that have potential to become future Stars and even Cash Cows?

■ Are your Question Marks only in areas related to your centre of gravity and your current, main effort, or have you ventured somewhat outside the safe confines of your existing customers, products, and markets?

■ Are all of your Stars focused on the main effort?

■ Are all of your Cash Cows part of the main effort or of secondary efforts?





- Can you generate cash from your highly successful businesses to invest in creating Question Marks, and to transform those with potential into Stars?

# Chapter 6: No Plan Survives Contact with the Enemy: Planning, Friction, and the Fog of War

## *Tools for Turning Uncertainty Into Opportunity*

- **The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse:** Recognize and accept the fundamental uncertainty, friction, and incompleteness of our knowledge as the first step to formulating more realistic plans and more effective actions.
- **Assumptions:** Assumptions provide a framework to advance planning in the absence of certainty and knowledge.
- **Scenarios:** These are descriptions of future events and situations that are designed to reflect extremes and to consider possible actions and intentions of opponents so that decision-makers can consider the unexpected and prepare for it.
- **Options:** We often paint ourselves into a corner by neglecting the full range of possible courses of action. There is always more than one option at any decision point.
- **Simplicity:** Simple plans and processes are better understood and easier to implement than complicated ones.
- **Opportunism:** As US General Gordon R. Sullivan said, “Hope is not a method.” How one sees failure and opportunity is essentially a question of attitude and perspective. When the unexpected happens, you have to assess the situation quickly and determine how to use it to your advantage.

## *What is YOUR level of unpredictability?*

- Are your plans and operations simple or complicated? Would they lead to greater or lesser potential for friction? Do you have procedures and processes in place to reduce or mitigate friction?

■ What risks are you facing? What uncertainties are there in your assumptions and knowledge of markets, clients, products, employees, and competitors? Do you have plans in place to mitigate those risks?

■ Is there something you don't know, but should? How can you get that information or knowledge?

■ What competitive threats are you facing? What capabilities do your competitors have? Can you estimate their intentions? How would you react to their actions? Do you even care that they might or might not do something to harm your business prospects?



- **Changing Situation:** Use the mission analysis approach presented in Chapter 4 to analyze the changing situation in order to determine if goals are still appropriate. If yes, then continue with your plans. If not, then you need to rework intent, objectives, and concept of operations to bring them into line with the new realities.

# Chapter 7: Is Military Intelligence Really an Oxymoron?

## Principles of Intelligence for Business

- **Adopt a wide area of interest.** You can't just focus on what is in front of you at the present time, but must also watch the bigger picture in the future, assessing current threats and opportunities as well as ones that are only nascent or potential.
- **Seek comprehensive understanding.** Intelligence is much more than just understanding the enemy or competition. It also requires a comprehensive understanding of factors and events in the natural and human environment.
- **Intelligence is everyone's business.** Intelligence is too important to be left only to specialists. Everyone must understand the bigger picture so they can signal changes, and see how they might hinder or benefit their business unit and the whole company.
- **Data and information must be interpreted to become intelligence.** Intelligence distinguishes the important from the unimportant, the critical from the insignificant, with the aim of identifying actual and potential threats and opportunities.
- **Information is best sought through reconnaissance.** Information just doesn't fall into one's lap. It has to be sought, collected, analyzed, and assessed. This is the role of reconnaissance, which is an active process for searching for significant changes in the competition and the environment in order to reduce uncertainty and friction, as well as to gain useful knowledge for uncovering actual and potential threats and opportunities.

## *Application of Areas of Operations, Influence, and Interest*

- What are your responsibilities and level within your company?



- If you are the CEO, what is the area of interest of your company? What dimensions of the external environment are of concern to you and your company?

### *Making intelligence everyone's business*

- Do managers and employees understand the company's strategy and objectives? Can they describe the company vision and mission quickly and succinctly?

- Can managers and employees in any part of the company do the same for the intent and objectives of their part of the organization?



- Do they know their unit's areas of operations, influence, and interest? Could they give a quick overview of what a sister unit is doing, and what is of concern to them? Could they identify opportunities and threats for their own unit, for sister units, or for the company as a whole?

# Chapter 8: *Bucks, Bullets and Bully Beef: Logistics and the Sinews of War*

## *Principles of Logistics*

- **The necessity of rational analysis:** The underlying focus of military logistics is quantification and rational analysis and calculation. This principle can be applied to supply, transportation, recruiting, and other support activities, but it is also fundamental to planning. Business managers need to apply the same 'logistic' framework to all of their planning, analysis, and decision-making.
- **Marshal forces to maximize probability of success:** Ambitious objectives usually require massive levels of resources to carry them off. Military forces must marshal their resources before launching an offensive, and the same applies to business, to be in a position to exploit successes and breakthroughs. This is directly linked to the twin principles of economy and mass.
- **Establish a bridgehead to expand in hostile territory:** You need a secure base area from which to operate, so that logistics and supplies can be built up and there is a relatively solid and safe springboard for launching operations. Expansion is a risky proposition, especially in a totally new country. It is best to proceed in phases and to spread the risk over several smaller bridgeheads, which can then be consolidated prior to further expansion.
- **Develop and maintain robust lines of communication:** You never know what can happen to your sources of supply and your lines of communication. They can be cut off or disrupted. Armies and companies need alternate sources of supply, optional supply routes, and the ability to recover from disruptions in the lines of communication.

## *Questions to Develop a 'Logistical' Approach to Business*

- What aspects of your business, strategic, operational, and tactical, are amenable to quantification and rational calculation? There are probably many more than you think.

■ What is the current state, in quantitative terms, of your business, division, or team?

■ What are your objectives? What data and information do you need to make informed and timely decisions to support your plans to achieve them?

■ How have you created your plans? Are they based on rough 'guesstimates' or are they based on actual historical figures that give you the information you need to calculate realistic resources, time, and personnel requirements?









■ What could you do to prevent or protect from such disruptions?

■ How quickly can you react to a supply chain or logistical disruption? Do you have emergency operations teams and procedures in place to manage such a crisis?

■ Do all your supplies originate from one company or one geographical region? Do they pass through one transportation route or port of entry? Do you use only one transportation logistics company?



■ What could you do to diversify your sources of supply and transportation?

■ Are you well linked in with suppliers' operations, and those of your internal clients who need the supplies and support?

# Chapter 9: “The Moral is to the Physical as Three is to One”<sup>1</sup>: Morale, Cohesion and the Motivation to Perform

## *Organizational Dynamics from a Military Standpoint*

- **The real test of morale is adversity.** It's not what you do when you're successful that counts, but rather what you do when you're facing adversity and obstacles; this is the real test of morale.
- **Morale is different from mood, and is built on unity and cohesion.** Strong morale is built upon unity of purpose and action, determination to succeed, and cohesion in the face of opposition, disruptions, uncertainty, friction, and obstacles.
- **Perseverance and courage come from faith in the mission.** No one can call up the reserves of strength, courage, and motivation needed to persevere without total belief in their mission and vision, and in the nobility or validity of their cause. Powerful metaphors can rally people around the mission and vision.
- **People need to feel they are part of something bigger than themselves.** Strength comes in numbers, but the group must be made up of the right people, and have a structure and purpose that resonates at all levels of the organization.
- **True motivation and discipline come from within.** Individuals perform at their best when they are impelled to do so from within themselves. External rewards and punishments only go so far in influencing behaviour.

## *How Is Your Perseverance?*

- What obstacles have you faced in business that appeared insurmountable at the time but that in retrospect were not so?

<sup>1</sup> The maxim “The moral is to the physical as three is to one” is attributed to Napoleon.

■ How did you overcome them? Where did you find the reserves of will and perseverance to overcome them?

■ What role did your co-workers and business colleagues/partners play in supporting you or pulling together to overcome them?

■ Did you ever lose hope? What did it feel like? How did you gain it back?







■ Do you follow set procedures for communicating objectives and measuring progress in achieving them?

■ Do you conduct regular meetings to talk about strategy and tactics, and to solve real problems that will get you closer to your goals?

■ Do people feel free to come forward with suggestions to improve performance, or do they expect those above them in the hierarchy to solve all their problems for them?

- Do people know what is expected of them? Do they know the mission and vision of the organization? Do they know the objectives and performance metrics? Have they conducted their own mission analysis and planning, so they know how they fit into the bigger scheme of things?

### *How is the mood in your organization?*

- Are people happy to be working together? Do they joke around or are they morose?

- Do people complain a lot in your organization? What do they complain about? Do they complain about superficial things and minor creature comforts, or are they more focused on substantial issues?



■ Do people feel free to approach management with issues, or do they let them fester and lead to grievances?

■ Are people making suggestions to improve things as a whole, so the company can achieve its mission and goals, or are they focused on improving things for themselves?

■ Is there a major discrepancy in perks and privileges between executives and the rank and file of the organization? Large differences in this regard can breed resentment and anger in employees and lower level managers.



■ Is there passion for this purpose? Do people come to work excited to find new ways to serve the company's customers according to this purpose?

■ Do you use strong imagery and metaphors to convey this ideology or purpose, or the mission and vision?

■ Take the time to articulate your purpose using a metaphor or image. Start to communicate it to your entourage, your subordinates, your colleagues, and your customers.



- Are your people allowed to gravitate into teams or do you deliberately create them?

### *How Is Motivation and Discipline in Your Organization?*

- Are people motivated to perform by intrinsic motivators such as the mission and vision, challenge, and morale and cohesion of the organization? Or, are they motivated by external, hygiene factors?

- Do you take care of your people? Do they have the creature comforts they need? Would they be able to function in an emergency situation without worrying about their safety, security, and welfare?

■ Does your organization function by punishment and reward, or by recognition and responsibility?

■ Is there a true spirit of cooperation and mission command in your organization, or are people expected to do as they are told, and nothing more?

# Chapter 10: Follow Me: The Art of Leadership

## *Exploring the Art of Leadership*

- **Competence is the heart of leadership.** Truly effective leaders, leaders who are inspiring and visionary, have the means and will to balance style and substance effectively. They realize that leadership is based on substance, i.e. competence, but effective leaders also need a personal style and attention to people.
- **Transformational leadership leads to exceptional performance.** Traditional forms of transactional leadership based on conditional rewards and punishments are no longer effective to generate the performance needed in today's world, whether in business or any other field. Leaders must transform how their followers see themselves, the world, their organization, and what they can achieve as individuals and as groups.
- **Leadership must be ethical.** Leadership and ethics are really two sides of the same coin. A leader must be worthy of followers' loyalty, confidence, and respect. Superiors, peers, and the wider society that is served by the organization must also believe in leaders. Ethics and professionalism must be part of every leader's development, education, and accountability.
- **There are ten principles of military leadership that anyone can use.** Military forces around the world have developed lists of leadership principles to guide their officers, non-commissioned officers (NCOs, for example sergeants and corporals), and soldiers at all ranks and levels of responsibility and authority. Leaders and managers in all fields, and especially in business, can use these same principles to diagnose, teach, and improve leadership, both their own and that of their followers and colleagues.

## **10 Timeless Leadership Principles**

1. Achieve professional competence.

- Do people follow you willingly because they believe you will lead them to success, or do they follow you out of obligation and compulsion?

■ Do you have the skills and knowledge you need to carry out your leadership functions well? Do you have the right attitude?

■ What must you do to acquire more professional skills and knowledge?

■ Do you have the right blend of substance and style? What quadrant would you put yourself in on the graph of style versus substance?



2. Appreciate your own strengths and limitations, and pursue self-improvement.

- What are your key professional and personal strengths? What do superiors, subordinates, and peers appreciate the most in you? What do you most enjoy doing? What are your best talents?

- What are your key professional and personal limitations? What do people tease you about, or make jokes about your quirks and behaviour? What consistently takes you longer to do? What requires more effort, or drains you of energy and passion? These are indications of weaknesses and limitations.

3. Seek and accept responsibility.

- What missions or tasks do you take on without hesitation? Which ones do you avoid?

- Does responsibility and authority scare you, or are you invigorated and challenged by taking on more responsibilities?

#### 4. Lead by example.

- Have you ever been forced to work for or follow a leader of dubious competencies and integrity? How did you feel? How did your co-workers feel? What mechanisms did followers adopt to compensate for the leader's weaknesses?

- Conversely, have you ever had the pleasure to work for a leader who was competent and who provided a superb example of professional excellence and ethical integrity? What was it like? How did you and your co-workers feel and act? What were the mood, morale, and cohesion like?

- Are you always a good role model and example for your followers and peers? Are you truly worthy of their loyalty, confidence and respect at all times?

5. Make sure that your followers know your meaning and intent, and then lead them to the accomplishment of the mission.

- What are your objectives for your team and your organization? Have you communicated these to your people? Could they repeat and interpret them in their own words? Would they be able to continue with the mission if something went wrong in the original plan? Would they have the confidence and the means to do so?

- When is the last time you spoke to your team? When is the last time you just walked around, and asked people what they were doing, why they were doing it, and how it fit in with the over-arching mission and plan?

- When you give direction, do you then disappear to your bunker, or do you stick around to see how things are going to provide encouragement, advice, and timely decision-making to make sure you stay on track while adjusting plans and means to meet the objectives?

6. Know your followers and promote their welfare.

- Do you know every one of your immediate subordinates by name? Do you know their background? Where are they from, what are their goals, what are their particular strengths and limitations? If you can't answer these questions about your immediate followers, then you don't really know them.

- What do your subordinates want? What do they need? How can you balance the two, and communicate the results of this balance?

7. Develop the leadership potential of your followers.

- Do you give extra responsibilities to your highest potential subordinates? Do you force them out of their comfort zone? Do you give them the skills, knowledge, and tools they need to do their supervisory or management job?

- Do you have a process to identify, select, and groom high potential leadership candidates in a formal way?

- Are people encouraged to take initiative and responsibility, or do you punish them—implicitly or explicitly—for doing so?

## 8. Make sound and timely decisions.

- Do you make decisions or defer them as long as possible? Are you a maximizer or a satisficer? The former waits for the perfect plan and the perfect time to implement it, often wasting valuable opportunities because of perfectionism and consequent hesitation. The latter acts when there is sufficient information and then adjusts the plan and its execution as more information comes to the fore.

- Are your decisions usually sound and effective? Do your subordinates, peers, and superiors routinely support your decisions, or do they often or occasionally contest them?

- Do you find yourself having to constantly change or reverse your decisions after the fact, or are they sufficiently robust to survive the first contact with reality?

- Do you make decisions quickly when you have just enough information, or do you wait for just a little more information and the perfect time to act?

9. Train your followers as a team and employ them to their capabilities.

- Is your business organized and structured to provide clear lines of authority, communication, and accountability?

- Are people employed in the right roles with responsibilities, authority, and training that are commensurate to their talents, strengths, competencies, training, education, and personal goals in addition to the needs of the organization?

- Do employees and managers know the vision, mission, objectives, and overall strategy of the organization? Have managers and supervisors conducted their mission analysis to know how they fit into the big picture? Have they communicated their objectives and plans to their teams? Does a philosophy of mission command and initiative prevail, or is everyone hesitant to decide and act for fear of retaliation and punishment?

10. Keep your followers informed of the mission, the changing situation, and the overall picture.

- Do your team members often come to you wondering what is happening? Worse, do they simply do their job in the dark without letting on that they haven't a clue as to where the organization is going, what is happening with the overall situation, how things are progressing, or what is expected of them?

- Do your people feel empowered to fulfil the objectives of the organization, or do they see it as someone else's responsibility?



- Can they paraphrase the company's vision and mission, its major objectives and strategy, the means and plans to achieve these?

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