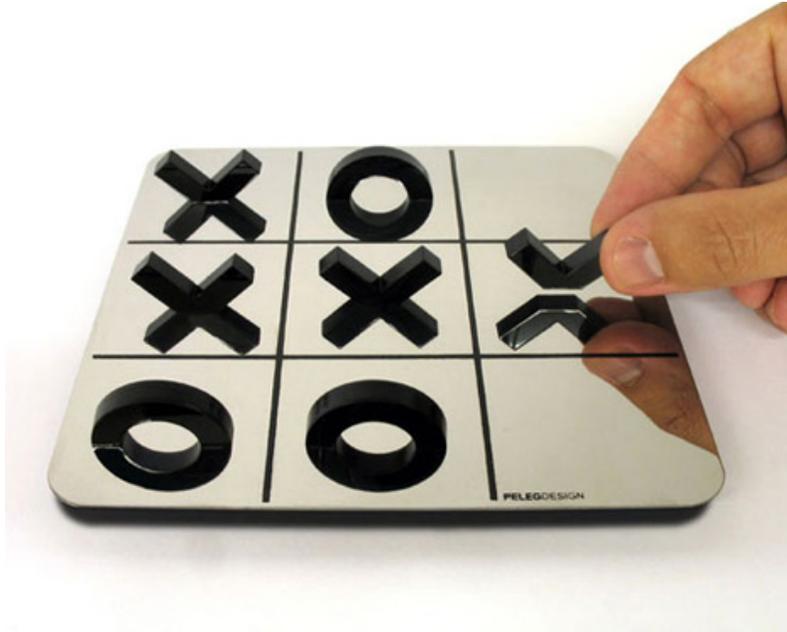




Achieving radical and sustainable improvement in top line performance

Are You Telegraphing Your Strategies and Tactics?



April, 2012

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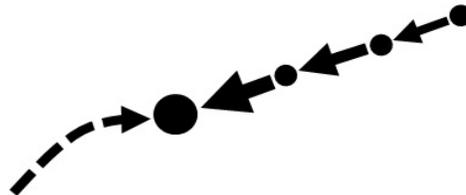
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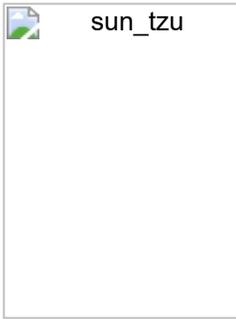
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The Challenge:

Are you winning your fair share of business opportunities? Is your market share growing at a faster rate than the competition? Does it seem the competition is one step ahead of you and beating you to the punch?

The Direct Approach:

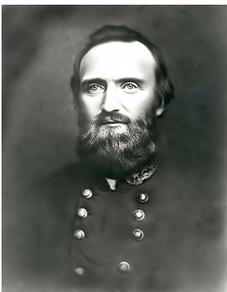




"Indirect methods will be needed in order to ensure victory."
...Sun Tzu



"Subtlety is the essence of strategy."
...B. H. Liddell-Hart



"Always mystify, mislead and surprise the enemy."
...Thomas Stonewall Jackson



"The transition from the defensive to the offensive is

If you think that your loss rate is higher than it should be, perhaps its time to rethink the basics of your playbook, especially if your organization is set in its ways and hasn't made any major recent changes to its strategic thinking. Imagine if your strategic competitors have been able to intelligently guess your next moves based upon your organization's history and predictable behavior. We call that the Direct Approach which typically manifests itself as follows:

- Announcing products and services at the same time each year (at the annual trade show).
- Providing small incremental updates and releases to products and services on a predictable basis.
- Following the same pricing guidelines for all your offerings.
- Offering the same levels of support.
- Using tried and true messaging (same old, same old, same old).

While proven methods yield predictable results, in fiercely competitive markets it may not be sufficient to maintain aggressive growth goals. Consider a different approach, known as the Indirect Approach.

The Indirect Approach:



The idea of the Indirect Approach was developed by B. H. Liddell-Hart, a famous British military historian. After studying the history of warfare his experience led him to the discovery of the idea of the Indirect Approach. Simply stated: "Identify the enemies Achilles heal and strike it quickly in order to secure a swift and decisive victory." In other words, avoid the classical thinking of launching frontal assaults against the enemy/market because they are too predictable. Frontal assaults only work when you have overwhelming numerical superiority, otherwise the leader must adopt indirect methods. It must be noted that the theme of the Indirect Approach resembles ideas from Sun Tzu's writings in *The Art of War*. In which he states, "Appear at points which the enemy must hasten to defend, march swiftly to places where you are not expected."

Psychological Dislocation

When planned and executed properly the Indirect Approach results in "Psychological Dislocation" of the enemy. These results come from the element of surprise that is achieved by attacking from an unexpected direction or through the use of unexpected tactics, force, weapons or speed. A few examples in military history are:

- The 7am, Sunday morning, December 7th attack on Pearl Harbor
- The Egyptian attack on Israel on Yom Kippur

one of the most delicate
operations in war."
...Napoleon I



"The statesmen who, seeing
war inevitable, hesitates to
strike first is guilty of a crime
against his country."
...Carl Von Clausewitz

- George Washington crossing the Delaware on Christmas night
- The attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 9/11 by Al Qaeda

In business Psychological Dislocation via the Indirect Approach can be achieved by launching an attack with unusual or expected:

- Promotion techniques (The Hunger Games)
- Speed (Casio - new watch releases)
- Technology (The Chevy Volt)
- Applications (The iPad and iPhone)
- Channels of distribution (Facebook)
- Timing (Twitter)
- Selling propositions (Nike: Just Do It)
- Pricing (Free apps)

Just Try It:

The above marketing examples can easily be applied within your business and especially within your targeted accounts. Rather than business as usual, try achieving Psychological Dislocation against the competition. It can help you win your fair share by:

- decreasing your competitors' morale
- putting their plans off balance
- increasing their fear of decision making
- reducing their fighting spirit
- and especially increasing their internal descension

Please drop us note if you would like to discuss your ideas about the Indirect Approach.

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