



Achieving radical and sustainable improvement in top line performance

## ***Using Force Multipliers to Even the Odds!***



July, 2014

## The Challenge:

When everything else is equal, a larger force will invariably defeat a smaller one. Does this mean that over the long run there is no hope for a company facing larger competitors? Not at all!



***"Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier."***  
**.....Colin Powell**

## What Works:

A smaller, apparently weaker organization can fight and win against great odds...but only if it uses force multipliers...methods and tools that expand its speed or power.

Assume Blue and Red, two opposing military or business organizations are about to compete on a battlefield or marketplace, and that Red holds a significant numerical advantage over Blue.

Here are some examples of force multipliers Blue might use to neutralize or overcome the inherent advantages held by Red:

- Weapons - Blue can defeat a much larger Red force if it is equipped with superior weapons...and knows how to use them! Similarly, a sales force with a significantly superior product, service or price can out-gun a larger competitor.
- Training - If Blue's soldiers (or sales representatives) are better trained than Red's, it can prevail even if it has only comparable weapons.
- Intelligence - Blue will be able to overcome Red if it knows significantly more about its competitors' strengths and weaknesses, and has done a much better job of mapping the battlefield or marketplace.
- Surprise - Consider the results if Blue fires first! In business, a powerful and surprising thrust can sometimes shock a larger competitor into a state of "psychological dislocation" and demoralize its executives.
- Tactics - By concentrating its efforts on an even smaller part of Red's forces, Blue can defeat it in detail.
- Leadership - If Blue's army or sales force has great confidence in its leaders, it will be better able to defeat Red, especially if the latter spends more time and effort arguing about who should lead, or about what detailed tactics should be used than it does in fighting or selling.

***"The essence of strategy is, with a weaker army,  
always to have more force at the crucial point than the enemy."  
...Napoleon***

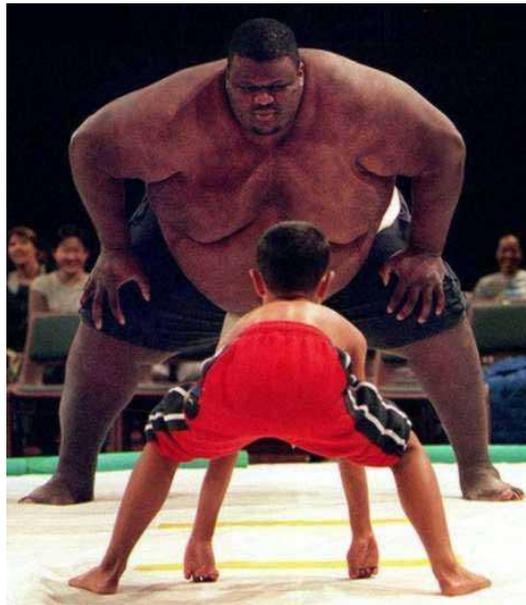
Will to Win

- If Blue desperately wants to win, it will often overcome Red, especially if the latter considers the battle "not really worth the effort."

**Just Try It:**

You do not have to wait for a formal "strategy skull session" to start thinking about evening the odds. However, when using force multipliers keep in mind the following:

- If you are on the weaker side, you can't afford to fight on the basis of "everything else being equal."
- Search for something that can serve as a force multiplier...that makes your organization, product, sales force or approach uniquely strong in one or two critical ways.
- Make sure your force multiplier is real. Imagining that your products are superior, your leadership more brilliant, your intelligence more comprehensive, and your troops better trained, leads only to disaster.
- Don't blindly adhere to "rules" set by the larger companies in your industry. These rules are almost always stacked against smaller competitors.
- Many force multipliers can be replicated easily by larger competitors. Don't count on them working time after time.
- Failure to use a force multiplier aggressively enough might simply warn an enemy or competitor who will use it against you.



***"Where absolute superiority is not obtainable,  
you must produce a relative one at the decisive point  
by making skillful use of what you have."  
...von Clausewitz***

## What's Next:

If you would like to explore ways to outsmart and out-execute your larger strategic competitors, we would welcome a call. If you have additional best practices, we would welcome hearing those as well.

You can reach us at [kappainfo@kappaeast.com](mailto:kappainfo@kappaeast.com).

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