

Business Battle Tactics

by Mike McVay, President, McVay Media

<http://www.mcvaymedia.com>

email: mike@mcvaymedia.com



Discover new tactics for executing strategies that come directly from the military.

I found another one. Success coach Brian Tracy has a book that issues marching orders for management. The book titled [Victory!](#) (Amacom Publishing) has a number of points that I believe are directly applicable to those of us who manage businesses relating to broadcasting. This isn't the old ideas that some research companies touted as "the answer to how to compete in programming." These are tactics assembled from a number of great generals and warriors. While some of these points are similar to what I saw in Colin Powells' book, Tracy uncovers new tactics as a way to execute strategies that come directly from the military.

Quick now, what's the Principle of The Mass and why do winners know it? How about the Principle of Maneuver? Or Concerted Action? No bells of familiarity ringing in your skull? Brian Tracy, who's made a career out of training salespeople and managers to succeed, wants to change that. His new idea is that grasping 12 concepts is key to business achievement. That's because all 12 are ideas that fueled breakthrough military victories, and, says Tracy, today's corporate leaders need military thinking to manage through topsy-turvy, economically unsettled times.

There was a time when broadcasters copied each other in using quotes from The Art Of War or in taking the Trout & Ries book Marketing Warfare and lifting from it directly as fodder for their speeches. I think that was right for then, but times are different now. An author has to be able to back up his belief in the application of the military tactics.

Tracy backs up his belief in Victory! With a point-by-point exploration of how generals win their battles. Who better to inspire success than victorious military leaders, from Alexander the Great to George S. Patton?

One has to question the relevance of military thinking and how it relates to today's radio executive. We are not talking about donning helmets and crawling through garbage dumpsters. We are talking about how to battle for the all important listener. If you are in sales, then it is how to battle for the all-important advertising dollar, especially in the over communicated and over-cluttered world. There are more ways and more places to advertise than there is advertising budget available.

Military thinking may be more important than ever to executives. The same kind of thinking that enables a person to function in the chaos and confusion of war will help a business person make good decisions in a turbulent business economy. The principles that great military leaders used to make effective decisions in high stakes situations are ideas you can use today to run a business effectively.

Tracy's book covers 12 principles of military success. In reading the book, he pinpoints one of the 12 principles, as what he thinks is the most critical – "The Principle of the Objective." Great generals don't enter battle without knowing their objectives. Everywhere in life, lack of clarity with regard to goals is 89% of success. A for-instance: When General Dwight D. Eisenhower was sent to London to take command in World War II, his orders were, "Invade Europe. Defeat the Germans." Any meaningful objective has to be as clear as this one. Make sure that everyone who is involved in pursuing a goal is crystal-clear about the objective. What are the company's goals? What are this department's goals? What is each individual's goal? The clearer everybody is, the more likely success.

Once you identify your goal and understand what it is you are attempting to accomplish, the military lessons begin to come into play. The next principle is concentration; focus all your energy on your objectives. Napoleon shows this in the Battle of Austerlitz, where his army, although outnumbered by Austrian and Russian troops, charged to victory because he ordered his troops to throw their energies into winning the highest point on the battlefield, the Pratzen Heights. From there, they were able to dominate the fight. Executives can do likewise. There have been a whole lot of books on focus lately, and what they basically come down to is that natural tendency in any organization is to diffuse its efforts over a wider and wider range of activities. But success comes to those who know how to concentrate, how to focus.

What do you focus on? According to Tracy, "We know focus matters, but we don't know where to put our energy." That's why you want to know "The Principle of the Mass." It tells us to concentrate combat power at the decisive place and time.

Tracy promotes another principle that he feels is especially suited to today's business environment, thus being correct for broadcasting. That is "The Principle of Maneuver." Maneuver tells us to remain flexible at all times. George Washington won the decisive Battle of Trenton because his troops rowed across the Delaware River on December 26, in the middle of the night. He caught the British when they were still sleepy from their Christmas celebrations. That's showing how to maneuver, how to think outside the box. All originality and progress comes from doing things differently than they were done in the past, that's the plain fact, as it works in business and well as in the military.

Getting your staff to understand what it is you're trying to accomplish is always one of the most important things to do. We are all so busy in this consolidated broadcast world that we don't take the time (nor do we have the time) to completely inform and educate our staffs. You have to tell them what the goal is, your strategy to accomplish the goals, what the objective is inside that strategy, and then empower them or assign them their role in the strategy so that they can help you accomplish it. As good as these ideas may be, many executives, according to Tracy, are looking for ways to win approval from their boss. That is the boss of the executive.

Here's how to win approval from your boss. Go to your senior manager or owner and get clear about priorities. Whatever your boss considers most important, work on it all day long, and that will bring immediate gratification both to you and your boss. How can this not please him or her?

There will be those who may feel this is a pipe dream in today's hectic, multi-tasking work world. I read it and found myself thinking, after visiting radio stations and observing what's inside the stations, there is no way that it can not be successful.

Tracy's advice here is basic. Focus on results, and on making your actions count. That sounds simple but know this: It's a mindset possessed by the top 3% of movers and shakers in American corporations. Make that kind of commitment and you are taking big steps toward becoming a standout in any organization.