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The Basic Principles of Marketing Warfare
By Robert Duro and Bjorn Sandstrom
(Chichester, England: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1987, 164 pp., \$32.95)

Winning the Marketing War
By Gerald A. Michaelson (Lanham, MD: Abt Books, 1987, 270 pp., \$22.95)

Military Action on the Marketing Front

I must admit that I undertook with some nervousness this review of two new books on the topic of the application of military strategy to marketing strategy. Despite the obvious appeal of some of the other recent books in this area, and in particular the two reviewed previously in the *JM*, there seemed to be a general tendency to overlook three key issues:

- Military strategy itself is a much more complex topic than just the writings of Von Clausewitz and his book *On War*.
- Marketing strategy must cope with a much more complex notion of territory than does the military, as well as a set of relationships with other organizations that are often more akin to diplomatic accommodation than to military conflict.
- The notion of strategy itself in business is often emergent and evolutionary rather than purely directive and prescriptive.

However, these two more recent books, in very different ways, do begin to address these issues, particularly the first one.

The Basic Principles of Marketing Warfare

The authors of this book clearly have a solid grounding in the key writings of military strategists. They are knowledgeable on the three most often quoted authorities—Von Clausewitz, Sun Tsu, and Liddell Hart—and are particularly influenced by Andre Beaufre. We are treated to battle diagrams dating from Roman times to the Arab-Israeli conflicts. However, the book has several limitations. Despite the large number of military examples, the framework for application to marketing strategy seems to advance little from that previously provided by Kotler and Singh (1981). The chapters relating to the "marketing war" have sections on both attack and defense strategies and on the relationship between the analysis and both the BCG and GE portfolio matrix approaches.

The attack strategies are classified as frontal, flanking, encirclement, bypass and guerrilla, and "burnt grass" (I must admit to having some difficulty with the last category because the examples given in terms of pricing and entertainment seem straight out of a book on sales tactics rather than marketing strategy). The defense strategies are defined as position (which roughly means countering the challenge directly), mobile (which implies flexibility and response over a wide area), counterattack, flank position (where position defense is focused on the vulnerable flanks), and strategic retreat. Much of this discussion is unoriginal except in the case of some of the examples given.

The actual business examples given are also a rather mixed collection. The authors obviously have an intimate knowledge of various Scandinavian businesses and many of their examples in this context are interesting, as are the companies (e.g., Volvo, SAS, Alfa Laval, and Electrolux). However, they also include several North American examples that seem to rely heavily on Sobel's books on both IBM (1986) and the auto industry (1984). Hence the illustrations are rather unbalanced and in some cases even questionable. The authors describe the strategy behind the IBM PC as:

A brilliant encirclement. Competitors will be forced to choose to fight at IBM's choosing or make their own computers and challenge IBM. Two fights which are very difficult to win unless IBM nods off in its position as market leader (p. 95).

By now, this statement might be regarded as a little optimistic. Indeed, history has a bit of a habit of invalidating some of the examples. In a Swedish example, the authors note that:

Frementa got into financial problems in 1986/87; not because their strategy was wrong, but because it was poorly executed.

We all have problems with examples and illustrations that go sour; concern arises, however, if we either do not recognize this fact or fail to investigate more deeply why an example turned out to be flawed.

In their attempt to relate the military strategy approach to both product portfolio approaches and the product life cycle, the authors appear rather simplistic. They show little recognition of some of the problems that are now widely recognized in the naive application of either of these analytical techniques. They do not really consider the underlying difference in logic between the two approaches, which arguably would be much more illuminating than merely putting each military strategy type into one or more portfolio "boxes."

The book is distinctly limited in some other areas also. In the context of "working with competitors," the authors state:

To create a position of strength or fighting potential, it may often be very worthwhile working together with one or more competitors in the short- or long-term.

Rather than developing this approach, the authors merely give a basic introduction to the experience curve effect.

Equally, on the topic of decision making, the authors seem unaware of the more recent work in the business field by researchers such as Mintzberg (1987) and Quinn (1977). They focus their attention on a sequential, rational analytical model for strategic decision making. Finally, the book has some of the signs of a hastily constructed English-language version, not only in terms of some of the examples, but also in cross references to page "xxx."

Winning the Marketing War

In some senses this book is in a different league in terms of both military strategy and business credibility. In terms of the latter, an endorsement by Bruce Henderson must count for something:

... it has the same relevance to business competition as Darwin's *Origin of the Species* had to competition, survival and evolution in the jungle.

It is, in fact, a complex book. Despite the simple structure implied in the "Ready, Aim, Fire" and "Combat Exercises" sections, it contains thoughtful discussions about issues of military strategy and relevant business examples. In probably the most important section of the book ("Aim!" or "Major Principles for the Marketing War"), the individual chapters cover organization of intelligence, maintenance of the objective, a secure position, offensive action, surprise, maneuver, concentration of resources, economy of force, command structure, personal leadership, and simplicity. Overall, however, I think the key comment on the book by Bruce Henderson is:

A page selected at random is likely to provide a precept or insight which is relevant to your daily life.

This characteristic is a limitation of the book as well; the book does not have a clear integrating structure and the reader sometimes must work hard to get the insight.

Undeniably, however, Michaelson has done his homework. He tackles a broad sweep of military authorities and also the other two issues I raised before. On the real nature of strategic direction, he states:

In business senior officers too often expect everything to go as planned; not so in the Israeli army. Israeli officers are taught that neat battle plans will invariably break down, that the enemy will behave quite unpredictably, and that one's own forces will never fight quite as planned (p. 134).

On the relationship between warfare and diplomacy, as a Brit I particularly appreciated his example:

Question:

What's better than invading the Falklands and winning?

Answer:

A strong deterrence strategy that would have kept the Argentinians out of the Falklands (p. 192).

On the limitations of the territorial approach, he says:

One of the major principles of the Red Chinese army is that territory has no relevance . . . this is the key to the strategy of the small business guerrilla. His objective is survival. Marketing share has no relevance. He survives by retaining the mobility to move to other brands, products, or markets (p. 220).

Michaelson even recognizes what can be termed the "incompetency" problem most eloquently introduced in Dixon's (1976) book. Indeed, one could argue that we have as much to learn from military incompetence as from military successes (Saunders 1988), though this view inevitably takes us into the domain of psychology, both of the individuals themselves and of the organizations within which they operate.

Does the book have problems? Some readers might be put off by the apparent "over-simple" appearance of the book, yet it is actually very thoughtful and comprehensive. In fact, I think it is a difficult book for anyone not already reasonably involved in the military analogy. Michaelson's own solution to the "so what" question is to give the reader an executive briefing at the end of each chapter and a series of "combat exercises" to work through at the end of the book. I am not sure about the value of some of the executive briefings because they tend to take the military analogy too directly and indulge in pure sloganizing:

- On intelligence: "Beware the blabbermouth. He is a double agent."
- On positioning: "Don't tamper with the core business."
- On resources: "Keep informed on that which is critical."

Most of the topics in the "combat exercises" at the end of the book are sensible (though many might be found in a standard marketing audit checklist) and I particularly like the one for "A Plan of Action," but partly because I always liked Kipling's advice on the six questions (why, what, when, where, how, and who).

The Future of Military Marketing Strategy

Both books represent developments on the original and popular Reis and Trout (1986) book, which was recognized in the previous *JM* review as having brought attention to some of the key issues in competitive strategy, but also has been criticized for its almost exclusive focus on the dominant business and for its relatively simplistic focus on territorial competition. Of the latter two books, *Marketing Warfare* is probably the easier to read but *The Marketing War* is a much more comprehensive study.

The problem is that as the books get better—at least in terms of the three concerns I expressed originally—they also become more difficult to use. Certainly the integrating framework in the Michaelson book is fairly limited. For the purpose of exposition, more perhaps can be gained by comparing and contrasting the use of different analogies to marketing strategy (e.g., game theory, sports games, military and evolutionary ecology) much as Morgan (1986) does in his book *Images of Organization* for the analogies we use in trying to understand organizations.

In such a comparison we should be able to see how the different analogies focus our attention on different aspects of the overall strategy issue. For instance, we can see the different "framing" assumptions in terms of such basic issues as the impact of objectives and signals, the role of rules and the opportunities for imitation, the nature of conflict and territorial advantage, and the role of cooperation rather than pure conflict in long-term survival. With such a comparative framework, the Michaelson book would be excellent supplementary reading for both students and executives on the implications of the military analogy.

Effective application of lessons from military strategy requires effort on behalf of the reader, as even Michaelson cautions: ". . . my personal belief is that a very high percentage

of the art may be learned through diligent study and practice." When one is transferring ideas from one domain to another, there is no substitute for thought and effort.

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Marketing Strategies for Physicians: A Guide to Practice Growth

By Stephen W. Brown and Andrew P. Morley (Oradell, NJ: Medical Economics Books, 1986, 256 pp., \$36.95)

Involving Physicians in Product Line Marketing
By Lynne Cunningham and Charles Koch (Chicago: Pluribus Press, Inc., 1987, 127 pp., \$25.95)

Product Management for Hospitals: Organizing for Profitability
By James C. Folger and E. Preston Gee (Chicago: American Hospital Publishing, Inc., 1987, 121 pp., \$29.50)

The Role of Physicians in Marketing

The three books reviewed here pertain to the physician's and/or administrator's role in marketing. The first serves as a guide for physicians in the use of marketing. The second discusses the role of physicians in product line planning and marketing clinical services. The third discusses the product management concept for hospitals, with input from physicians, nurses, and allied health professionals who serve on production teams. All three books are targeted primarily to physicians and administrators of health care organizations and address the same sub-

ject—the marketing of medical care. The books obviously reveal the continued interest in marketing by health care professionals.

Though much—perhaps even most—of what the authors present has been practiced by "businesslike" physicians and administrators for some time, there was no sizeable market for such books until the last five years. Before then, physician marketing was viewed as unethical, unprofessional, and unnecessary. Administrators of hospitals and other health care organizations have used a "form" of marketing for a much longer period of time, but unfortunately the emphasis was on promotion, specifically advertising, and public relations.

Now that physicians and other administrators have "discovered" the full realm of marketing, they still may have unrealistic expectations about what can be attained with its use. In the past, the practice of marketing principles as described in these books may have enabled physicians and/or administrators of health care organizations who had a natural sense of business to earn considerably more than their equally competent, but less aggressive colleagues. Today the differential advantage in using marketing strategies and tactics is not so great. However, their use many mean the difference between income satisfaction and disappointment for established physician practices and health care organizations. For new physicians and practices, the full use of marketing as indicated in these books is a near necessity.

Strengths

Though all three books stress the important marriage of marketing and health care, Brown and Morley make more explicit use of mainstream marketing. If one were to recommend a single source to physicians, especially to those who are favorably predisposed to marketing, *Marketing Strategies for Physicians* is the clear choice. A real strength of Brown and Morley's book is the eight appendices in which the authors present sample survey formats, demographic analyses, marketing plans, and specific actions such as how to develop a patient newsletter and how to work effectively with the media. This material is well-designed to be adapted by any medical practice.

Whereas Brown and Morley provide a marketing guide for physicians (and, with some adaptation, for administrators of health care organizations), *Involving Physicians in Product Line Marketing* focuses more narrowly on physician and consumer input to the planning and marketing of new hospital programs' product lines. Cunningham and Koch do a credible job in outlining the PRIMOE model (purpose, research and analysis, internal audience, marketing mix, objective setting, and evaluation) for market-based planning. The rest of the work centers on a discussion of the elements of the model. A strength of this book is the "real world" examples, which range from geriatrics, obstetrical services, a cardiovascular center, oncology services, to trauma care.

Product Management for Hospitals comes closer to serving as a guide for the management of product lines than does Cunningham and Koch's book. Folger and Gee emphasize the role of product management in health care organizations by defining the term, providing a historical development of product line management's role in business and in the health care arena, and carefully enumerating the responsibilities and characteristics of a product manager. The authors, currently involved in the health care field, have invested some years in the industrial world. The authors' backgrounds are reflected in their approach to the book's subject matter—for example, a section on irreconcilable differences between industry and hospitals. Important contributions of this book are the parallels drawn