Manoeuvre theory

Business mission analysis process for high intensity conflict

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Abstract *The third paper in the manoeuvre warfare series, describes a prescriptive approach for the organization's operationalisation of its strategic intent. It discusses the practical planning stages adapted from the military appreciation process. Termed the mission analysis process (MAP) this framework guides planners through the initial mission analysis, the development of a course of action (CoA), followed by a landscape analysis, execution, review, reorientation, and further action if deemed necessary. This paper argues from a military paradigm using both military and business as examples. This paper emphasises the need for porous, flexible and rapid planning processes, devolved decision-making, and high levels of organizational capability, initiative, trust, and employee competence. Argues that the MAP framework facilitates organizational learning, a heightened sense of organizational participation and commitment, as well as improving business development between management levels and across the organization.*

Introduction

This paper continues the conceptual themes developed by Pech and Durden (2003) and Pech and Slade (2003). The following discussion describes one possible approach for operationalising, within a business context, a military war-fighting philosophy termed manoeuvre theory. Pech and Durden (2003) introduced manoeuvre theory as a uniquely aggressive form of proactive and competitive behaviour on the business landscape. Adapted from the initial work of Lind (1985), manoeuvre theory describes a military strategic and tactical philosophy of planning and action that utilises surprise, speed, and economy of effort to achieve its goals. Pech and Slade (2003) expanded on this philosophy by describing the benefits of the pre-emptive strike coupled with rapid movement in relation to competitors on the business landscape.

The focus for this discussion, the third in the series, is the construction of a proactive decision process that is aggressive, decisive, timely and well informed. It is argued that this process develops organizational buy-in from employees and capitalises on organizational knowledge. The proposition here is that this decision process will enhance business performance, and provide the means for overwhelming a competitor's command and control (C^2) in order to secure rapid and total victory with the greatest economy of effort. This discussion outlines one possible method of goal achievement utilising manoeuvre theory and the MAP planning process. It does not necessarily infer superiority of plans and the planning view (as for example had been strongly advocated in early strategic planning discussions, e.g. Argenti, 1980) as the elements that bring competitive advantage. Rather, it is argued that the planning framework outlined in this discussion may increase the potential for success through its constituent elements of information gathering, scenario planning, proactive behaviour, feedback, reorientation, further deployment, and continuity of effort. This approach is not advocated as the one-best-way framework for achieving organizational

success, but it is one of numerous strategic formation and implementation approaches (Mintzberg *et al.*, 1998). Its success and greatest limitation, lies in its spectacular military application. It has been proven on the battlefield in times of war, but its potential for success in business is still at the theoretical development stage. It is argued that both business and military campaigns are similar in nature and success for both require informed, rapid, and well-reasoned decision processes. The MAP approach attempts to address all five stages of the managerial decision process as adapted from Johnson and Scholes (1993, p. 58).

The framework:

(1) encourages a state of awareness, with the recognition that something is wrong, or that an opportunity exists, or that a new direction may be required;

(2) provides a methodology for data collection and analysis;

(3) facilitates rapid decision-making and problem identification;

(4) provides an iterative and flexible approach to problem resolution and goal achievement; and

(5) incorporates continual learning, feedback, re-evaluation of goals and methods, and a proactive orientation.

The following discussion is based on Porter's (1980) assumption that a new product launch or an attempt at market expansion will generate retaliatory behaviour. It is argued that no business can afford to hold the view that they operate in complete isolation and that growth plans can be made without taking competitive dynamics into consideration.

Aims and means
The aim of every strategic business decision-maker should be the rapid capture of markets, outmanoeuvring and/or containment of competitors, and the building of a reputation of reliability, quality, continuing innovation, and commitment to stakeholders. In order to achieve these goals strategic management practitioners speak of such "macro" planning phases as environmental scanning, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and finally evaluation and control (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2003; Wheelen and Hunger, 2002). Within each phase of the strategy process there are "micro" models such as Porter's Forces Model (Porter, 1980) for analysing industries and competitors. Regarding strategy implementation Okumus (2003) points out that research in this area is still limited, with many frameworks still lacking empirical research to support their claims, or these frameworks only provide partial explanations and examples of all the potential and possible interactive dynamics that may appear on the competitive landscape.

The following discussion introduces a holistic framework adapted from military planning methods incorporating strategic planning stages from initial "mission" analysis through to the execution of the final plan. This MAP framework is designed to interact with the dynamic, unpredictable, and highly competitive business landscape, as discussed by Pech and Durden (2003) and incorporates a manoeuvrist paradigm. This framework follows a process where the planner is encouraged to make an assessment of the firm's capability and competencies; it then requires the development and operationalisation of senior management's vision and intent; it incorporates a

competitor analysis and encourages analytical assessment concerning competitor effects on the landscape, and finally it determines steps to be taken from initial planning and "war-gaming" through to final execution. The key manoeuvrist elements within this framework include anticipation of the unexpected, planning for that fourth response when competitors appear to have only three possible options, maintaining the elements of ingenious surprise and total flexibility within a methodically planned and well-organised operation, and finally, this framework encourages the use of initiative.

Uhle-Wettler (Hooker, 1993) argues that the ultimate source of battlefield efficiency is not courage, inborn combat ability, superior information or material, or managerial planning and execution. He draws an image of the battlefield as a place of uncertainty and chaos and argues that it is a combination of the two elements of effective tactics and initiative, having the freedom, the ability, and the intelligence to decide and act in the most appropriate manner. A variety of authors have compared the business landscape to a combat zone and/or business decision-making to military operations (Gluyas, 2000; Ho, 1997; McNeill, 1982; Shaker and Gembicki, 1999; Toffler and Toffler, 1993; de Wit and Meyer, 1998), emphasising the appropriateness of the military metaphor when discussing the volatility of the business landscape and the planned activities of business enterprises as they attempt to capture market share and profits.

The MAP framework
The MAP is an adaptation from the military appreciation process decision-making framework designed specifically for the purposes of logically assessing a battlefield situation and developing structured action to be taken. The adapted MAP version discussed here is specifically designed for non-military operations although its processes and flow functions may still be relevant to military as well as non-military contexts.

MAP is designed as a decision-making tool for both the individual operating alone on the competitive landscape and the executive group. The elements of time, resources, circumstances, and the size and intent of the mission will influence how MAP is used and who will be involved. MAP is a flexible, proactive planning process specifically designed for turbulent and unpredictable circumstances as would be expected in any military or paramilitary context. The increasing volatility and unpredictability of the business landscape (Day, 1990; Pech and Slade, 2003), suggests that MAP may be an appropriate decision-making framework for managers and decision makers operating in the business context, particularly where decision platforms have been ad hoc, intuitive or non-existent.

Figure 1 shows the macro elements of MAP from the development stage of the initial "mission". It should be borne in mind that the intent of MAP is to vary and increase the number, frequency and magnitude of responses that an opponent, or opponents on the competitive landscape can reasonably respond to within the available time and space available for a critical decision. This reinforces the argument posited by Pech and Slade (2003) regarding the nature of critical events, the decision cycle and decision time and space. Map argues that it may be appropriate to develop multiple thrusts, or only one. The mission is not limited to simply one CoA. This stage of the mission development process also includes the creation of multiple alternative scenarios and possible competitor responses, as well as identification of obstacles to the mission implementation and execution methods. Pech and Durden (2003) and Pech
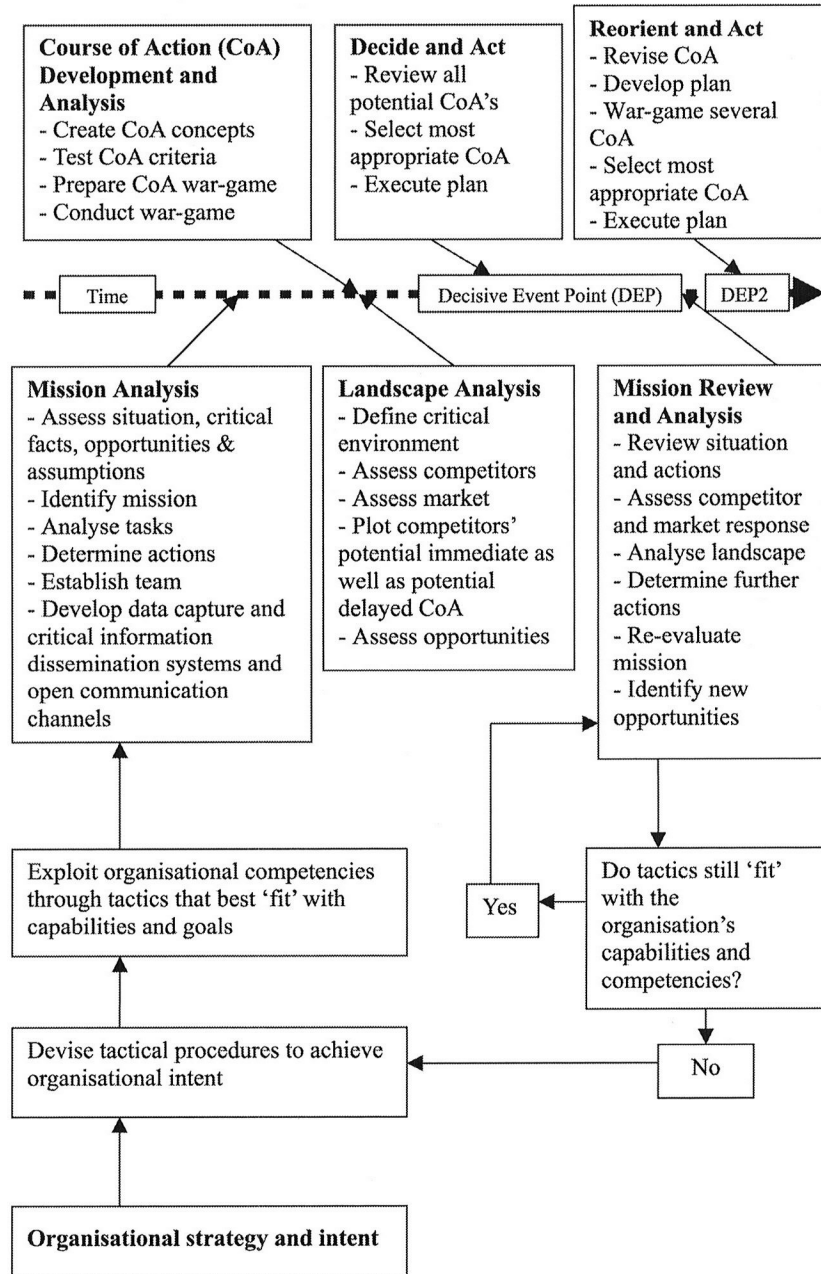
Course of Action (CoA) Development and Analysis
- Create CoA concepts
- Test CoA criteria
- Prepare CoA war-game
- Conduct war-game

Decide and Act
- Review all potential CoA's
- Select most appropriate CoA
- Execute plan

Reorient and Act
- Revise CoA
- Develop plan
- War-game several CoA
- Select most appropriate CoA
- Execute plan

Time | Decisive Event Point (DEP) | DEP2

Mission Analysis
- Assess situation, critical facts, opportunities & assumptions
- Identify mission
- Analyse tasks
- Determine actions
- Establish team
- Develop data capture and critical information dissemination systems and open communication channels

Landscape Analysis
- Define critical environment
- Assess competitors
- Assess market
- Plot competitors' potential immediate as well as potential delayed CoA
- Assess opportunities

Mission Review and Analysis
- Review situation and actions
- Assess competitor and market response
- Analyse landscape
- Determine further actions
- Re-evaluate mission
- Identify new opportunities

Exploit organisational competencies through tactics that best 'fit' with capabilities and goals

Yes

Do tactics still 'fit' with the organisation's capabilities and competencies?

Devise tactical procedures to achieve organisational intent

No

Organisational strategy and intent

Figure 1.
Mission analysis process

and Slade (2003) have described some weaknesses of linear planning methods and from a chronological perspective MAP may appear to be a linear process. The portrayal of MAP in Figure 1 is an attempt to describe the order of priorities; it differs from standard linear planning methods as it is a porous process that constantly absorbs and analyses critical information at every stage and allows and encourages questioning of plans and the addition of new planning elements. It is designed to facilitate and encourage the use of initiative and the making of changes throughout the planning process from the initial mission analysis stage to the final determining decisive event point (DEP).

Mission analysis

Figure 1 shows an iterative decision process that commences with the greater organizational strategy and intent (shown at the bottom of Figure 1). Incorporating the organization's competencies and historical advantages (if any) the planning process commences with the mission analysis. Paraphrasing the words of Uhle-Wettler (Hooker, 1993), he warns that it is critical to know and obey higher strategic intent. At no point should the tactical mission be in conflict with the greater strategic intent and the mission must be flexible to facilitate rapid variation from the intended plan, in case new opportunities or threats should arise during the implementation phase. The implementers should be involved at the mission analysis stage in order to secure mission buy-in and acceptance. This also ensures that organizational knowledge is not wasted while encouraging continual learning at every level within the organization. According to Senge (1990) such multi-level involvement will foster a culture of confidence, trust, and learning which will translate into decisive and informed decision-making when the operations commence and the "chaos of war" forces are rapid and sometimes unplanned-for and independent actions from lower-level managers are confronted with the fluid operational issues of the mission. Bartlett and Ghoshal (1994) argue that the creation of momentum, capturing employee attention and interest, and fostering individual initiative will shape the organizational purpose and improve its ability to cope with the changing business landscape.

Further for rapid goal achievement under conditions of increasing tempo, the concept of parallel planning should be initiated through the sharing of information and multilevel decision-making involvement. From the very outset decision-making requires input from a highly coordinated team where staff flexibility and involvement are high priorities, however rapid mission attainment remains the focal point. At no point can the decision-makers afford to become isolated from the realities and dynamics of the business terrain. Information flows and analysis must be judicious, timely, and ongoing. Information collection, storage, analysis, and dissemination systems are established at the very earliest stages of the mission preparation process. Mintzberg (1994) warns of weaknesses and pitfalls in strategic planning processes that include the elements of inflexibility, lack of commitment from staff, short-term thinking, and maintaining an illusion that the future (which is unknown) can be controlled. These concerns should be moderated to some extent by the ongoing involvement of staff at all relevant levels, the ongoing collection, analysis, and dissemination of information and knowledge, and the shaping process that occurs on the decision landscape through proactive advances and an action orientation.

CoA development and analysis

At this stage information on the market, distribution, delivery, production, competitors and their strengths and weaknesses must be collected, analysed and compiled into a workable format for scenario and CoA planning. Various CoA's should be considered including those CoA's that could be taken in response to competitors' possible retaliatory behaviours. The analogy of the chess master may be appropriate where the opponent's possible moves are recognised and assessed many moves ahead of the current gameplay. Casti (2000, p. 133) describes chess playing as the recognition of overall patterns and structures of the pieces, the exploration of a relatively small number of possible moves and countermoves correlated with responses experienced in the past. Similarly MAP planners must use their initiative, experience, fact, logic, and even speculation and intuition where there is a dearth of hard information and previous experience to devise a CoA. Crucial within the CoA stage is the ability to predict a range of potential repercussions from the initial action ranging from possible market reactions, supplier behaviours, new substitutes and stakeholder impacts, to possible competitor retaliations. As Day (1990) points out, there is no place for complacency, competitors will react, the best defence is a strong offence (p. 212). Day argues that an explicit defensive strategy will complement the offensive strategy by making the business more difficult to attack. Such defensive strategies must be formulated long before they are needed.

"War-gaming" is the devising of most likely impacts, repercussions, reactions, competitor responses, costs, and benefits. War-gaming determines the success potential of a variety of approaches ranging from do-nothing through to the most audacious and high risk tactics that may involve gambling the family silver. Best guess predictions and analysis of such details as market penetration, competitor responses, counter moves, production costs, attrition costs for prolonged "warfare" etc. are all factored into the war-game in order to arrive at the best CoA. The war-game criteria and parameters are constructed in parallel with the landscape analysis.

Landscape analysis

When devising plans for battle, knowledge of the ground is crucial. Understanding the business landscape is similarly important. It includes the potential market and its behaviour, social changes, the impact of government policies, the impact of innovations, the behaviours of competitors, technological changes, and the possible dynamism and interactions between all of these terrain "contours"; all of which may impact on decisions made by the mission planners. Creative thinking is also crucial at this stage as potential competitor reactions are conceived, their possible impacts gauged, and pre-emptive tactics are devised through what-if scenarios. Of particular importance is the ability to see the unexpected and to plan unexpected responses.

Hambrick *et al.* (1993) found evidence that executives who remained in the same industry for a long period, came to rely on industry "recipes" for their successes, applying the same strategies over and over. Edward de Bono (1990) warns that:

> Today more than ever there is a danger in the very excellence of available management techniques and training. As soon as something has proved its worth, management everywhere adopts it. The advantage of superior techniques is obvious, and one would hardly want to revert to the hazardous seat-of-the-pants approach of hunch management. On the other hand the sheer uniformity of management techniques and attitudes puts creativity at an

even higher value than before. Without creativity, everyone will find himself looking at the situation in the same way and reacting in the same way. The competitive advantage will go to the person who is capable of supplementing the available management techniques with enough creativity to be able to see the situation in a unique way (p. 187).

Day (1990, pp. 7-8) describes three trends that make use of recipes and set procedures for planning almost ineffectual:

(1) there is increasing market fragmentation resulting in ever-increasing product diversity and the subsequent obsolescence of mass markets;

(2) traditional business boundaries are disappearing as new competitors leapfrog across older, more established players, and these boundaries crumple under the onslaught of diversifying competitors who stray from one product into another; and

(3) the most compelling trend, globalisation of markets has undermined self-contained national businesses.

Day attributes this to deregulation and technology changes making it feasible to co-ordinate far-flung operations and making it easier to communicate with customers across national boundaries.

In other words, businesses are experiencing a rapid increase in pace, dissolving boundaries, and greater diversity of both customers' demands and the competitors in the field. Business decision processes designed on historic principles, continuity, and an urge to conform, struggle to cope and deal with such landscape dynamism.

Decide and act
The war-gaming stage would have produced modifications and sometimes a complete rewrite of the CoA. The importance of the functions of prediction and anticipation cannot be overstated, but planners should always keep in mind the words of Napoleon:

> If I always appear prepared, it is because before entering on an undertaking, I have meditated for long and foreseen what may occur (Bonaparte, 1823).

Although Napoleon's military genius is undisputed, even his powerful foresight could not have predicted the complex configuration of events that would lead to his final demise. For this reason the plan must remain flexible, resources should be available in reserve, logistics should be prepared for all contingencies, timely information and its analysis must continue to reach decision-makers throughout the duration of the "campaign", and most important, decision-makers must be empowered to make rapid moves without the encumbrance of hierarchical decision speed bumps that are so often the affliction of the larger organization. Delegation of power is often discussed in the literature but the evidence suggests that few firms are comfortable with the concept of devolved decision-making. Campbell and Goold (1988) researched 16 multi-business companies in the UK to analyse their management systems and philosophies. They discuss strategic management styles describing strategic venturing as a style in which central managers decentralise strategy development to the business units and react flexibly to annual financial performance. The authors conclude by stating that none of the companies in their research sample used this style exclusively, as major industrial companies were not comfortable with such a hands-off management style for the bulk of their portfolios. They do however point out that British Petroleum

and United Breweries, particularly in newer businesses, where the centre has less detailed knowledge of the key issues, were willing to delegate substantial authority to local management to build businesses for the long-term future. More recent research by Balkema and Molleman (1999) supports Campbell and Goold's findings by identifying that one of the greatest barriers to the development of self-organising teams appeared to be an inability or unwillingness to delegate, particularly with more sophisticated tasks. Such well-known authors as Argyris (1964, 1994), Likert (1967), McGregor (1960), and Mintzberg (1989) have for many years argued the value of powersharing, mutual trust, and participative decision-making, and yet senior management seems unable to trust the abilities of those further down the hierarchy. Akio Morita of Sony Corporation is quoted as saying the following:

> The best way to train a person is to give him authority...We tell our young people: don't be afraid to make a mistake, but don't make the same mistake twice. If you think it is good for the company, do it. If something is wrong, I'm the man who should be accused. As CEO it's my job to take on the critics from the outside. For example, this year our profits are down, I tell my management, don't you worry about that, just do your job right...Sony motivates executives not with special compensation systems but by giving them joy in achievement, challenge, pride, and a sense of recognition (Mintzberg and Quinn, 1991, p. 851).

Manoeuvre warfare demands rapid and wide dissemination of information and an intelligent response by employees to the threats and opportunities that it announces. The pre-21st century military command methods of command-by-plan and command-by-direction demanded unquestioning obedience from subordinates. Autocratic and task-oriented management reflect a similar climate of authority and obedience. While this style of management should not be completely disregarded (it may be appropriate in some crisis situations, or where the workforce is inexperienced), it is not appropriate within the context of this discussion where decentralised and devolved decision-making employing intelligent and experienced organizational members making crucial tactical decisions take precedence. If the organization is unable to devolve decision making and is unable to apply Fayol's principle of maintaining balance between authority and responsibility (Breeze, 1983), it will unquestionably fail at attempts to implement a MAP decision framework.

Pech and Durden (2003) and Pech and Slade (2003) emphasised that manoeuvre warfare will focus on speed, on the enemy's vulnerabilities, element of surprise, sustainability, and ultimately on decisive action and the disorientation of the enemy's C^2. MAP is a complex, semi-structured, and flexible procedure of information gathering, analysis and preparation, delegation, and execution, all designed to work within the manoeuvre context. Some may see the apparent irony in such a seemingly complex planning procedure to support manoeuvre theory, which is based on speed and surprise. Uhle-Wettler (Hooker, 1993) argues that the underpinning basis for a procedure such as MAP is to build readiness to act independently and the capability to do so sensibly. In other words, MAP is a procedure for individual and organizational learning. MAP should not be seen solely as a planning and analysis process, it is in fact a learning mechanism for understanding concepts of relevance that involve analysis and action.

At this stage the CoA has been determined, a risk assessment has been completed, goals are set, systems have been established, budgets are prepared, and the plan is

executed. Refer Pech and Durden (2003) for a description of issues related to manoeuvre theory and its methods of execution.

Mission review and analysis
Review of the mission should be timely and ongoing. Competitor behaviour must be observed and appropriate responses devised and rapidly executed, or even pre-empted where ever possible. Market data must be analysed and the organization must react effectively to exploit opportunities and continue to build on the momentum that has been generated. The German military, highly regarded as competent practitioners of manoeuvre warfare and the Military Appreciation Process (auftragstaktik), subscribed to the Elder Moltke's dictum that no operational plan should extend with any certainty beyond the first encounter with the main body of the enemy (von Moltke, 1891; Hajo in Paret, 1986). While operational plans must exist for the preparation of resources, budgets, and personnel, the actual tactical execution beyond the first DEP (Figure 1) cannot be detailed and set in concrete. This is the purpose of the review and analysis stage in order to collect and analyse data, identify new opportunities and threats, and reformulate the CoA to incorporate and respond to evolving dynamics on the landscape. Mintzberg (1994) has derided elements of planning and has rightly called the belief in the superiority of plans as the Grand Fallacy (p. 321). He argues that planners lack synthesis and that they are unable to forecast discontinuities. For this reason, participants in MAP must be representative of the implementers, the analysts, and the strategists. Although complete knowledge is often an impossible ideal for which decision-makers strive, they must attempt to make the best decisions with accurate (although often incomplete) and timely information.

Reorient and act
Three of the key elements of manoeuvre theory concern speed, surprise, and action. The next phase of MAP requires reorientation and further action, whether that action is simply a continuation of what has gone before or the rapid execution of a completely new set of tactics. Speed is crucial to sustain the momentum already generated thus far. Antal (Hooker, 1993, p. 398) quotes the words of a letter from the renowned military theorist Sir Basil Liddell Hart, who inspired blitzkrieg warfare, to the former German tank commander General Heinz Guderian, the acknowledged blitzkrieg practitioner:

> The secret of the blitzkrieg lay...above all in the follow through – the way that a breakthrough (the tactical penetration of the front) was exploited by a deep strategic penetration...

Antal (Hooker, 1993, p. 392) places this in the context of the German's lightning attack on Yugoslavia on 6 April 1941, which was completed in 12 days with only 151 killed and 407 wounded during the entire campaign. The German general staff were under immense pressure to devise a plan of attack within 24 hours to maximise the element of surprise. According to Strawson (1972) the key was a never-ending flow of mixed Panzer groups constantly supported and supplied by fire power and transport aircraft of the Luftwaffe. Strawson argued that if the thrust halted at any time prior to complete victory, it would be checked and attacked. To maintain momentum, night and day, was everything (p. 11). This is a useful example for business decision-makers. For example, in the context of an attempt at market penetration the lessons are clear. A surprise

campaign (if competitor retaliation is expected to be an issue) underpinned by detailed but flexible planning, reliable communication, excellent support and logistics, speed, and follow through are all essential.

Sustainability will provide a challenge to planners. Decision-makers must seek to quantify how long the campaign can be sustained at such velocity; the uncertainty related to the investment of funding such a campaign; and the organizational resource commitment for protracted activity that may degenerate into a campaign of attrition. Although decision-makers should have tentative answers to such questions, the reorientation and act stage will be the DEP where the campaign has either achieved its primary objectives or has arrived at a point that may require further planning. Such planning may simply involve the design of tactics for addressing the conclusion of the campaign in a best case scenario, a reformulation of plans to match unexpected market or competitor reactions if things do not go completely according to plan, a tactical retreat, or strategic withdrawal in a worst case scenario.

Limitations and further research

MAP has been advanced as a means for improving organizational decision-making. The business context has been introduced as the new "front" for manoeuvre theory. Although the theoretical content of this discussion has been relatively high, the concept of manoeuvre is growing rapidly and across a variety of contexts (for example, refer Wilmot, (2004), where the manoeuvre mindset is applied to the fire service). A quick search on the World Wide Web on the day of writing in April 2004 produced 26,766 results for the term manoeuvre warfare. It is only a matter of time before its principles and techniques are applied to the business landscape. It is predicted that business decision-makers who fail to make the transition from a mindset of attrition to one of manoeuvre will find themselves rapidly outmatched on the increasingly competitive business landscape. From an academic perspective a theory based on speculation is deemed to be inadequate. The authors have attempted to resolve this limitation by transposing lessons from military examples into a business context. Both landscapes feature similar characteristics of aggressive competition, unpredictability, high stakes, sudden surprises, deployment of resources under conditions of uncertainty and high risk, and decision processes that may be distorted through stress, time pressures, and incomplete and/or inaccurate information. Suggestions for further research include the following questions that have as yet not been empirically proven or resolved.

(1) Does MAP address some, most, or all of the strategic planning concerns raised by Mintzberg (1994)?

(2) Does MAP provide the vehicle for organizational efficiency and effectiveness as has been argued by the authors?

(3) Does MAP's application result in a whole new set of organizational problems?

(4) Does MAP's utilisation by two or more competing firms operating on the same landscape result in a return to a "war of attrition"?

(5) To what extent have organizations unconsciously adopted behaviours that emulate elements of MAP following Mintzberg's (1973) concepts of pattern, ploy, position and perspective?

These questions can only be answered once firms experiment with manoeuvre warfare and the MAP framework. This opens a whole new field of research for practitioners and academics alike. The military have been perfecting the concept of manoeuvre for a number of years. While business decision-makers can draw on these lessons, many of the problems they face will be unique to the contexts in which they operate. This should generate exciting results for decision-makers and researchers for many years to come.

Conclusion

This has been the third paper in the manoeuvre series. Military thinkers have over the last decade produced mountains of volumes and manuals describing manoeuvre warfare. In light of such prolific theory and practice development it must be stated that these three papers have only served as an introduction to competitive business behaviour using the manoeuvre paradigm. The concept of manoeuvre is complex and at times seemingly contradictory. The diagram in Figure 1 suggests a linear planning path; MAP does not however follow conventional planning principles. The diagram attempts to relate events in a chronological order but the activities more accurately form the basis of a decision cycle. Once the reorientation and act stage has been completed, the cycle returns to the mission analysis stage. It is the pace and the velocity with which decisions are made and actions are executed that will overwhelm competitors and force them to consider or enact a retreat from the competitive landscape. Craig Barrett, CEO of Intel, states that 80-90 per cent of their revenue in December is generated from products that did not exist in January of that same year. He points out that unless his company is constantly creating new products, new capability and new technology, they cannot exist in their ecosystem (Florian, 2004). Intel's experience and military examples suggest that as long as this pace can be sustained, the MAP practitioner will retain a strong advantage over the "enemy".

There is always a risk that a competitor's reaction is quicker or different from what has been planned, and also a risk that weakness in the firm's product or production process may create unforeseen circumstances. Markets can be fickle; competitors can be unpredictable. Little is ever certain. Conquering Roman armies used a principle termed the "Golden Bridges Principle" in which a defeated army was offered one narrow line of retreat. Roman military decision-makers had learned from long experience that an encircled army would fight to the death, that it would become unpredictable, unmanageable, and costly to defeat, while providing a narrow line of retreat encouraged the enemy to drop their weapons and withdraw in shame and disarray. Similarly, a competitor who feels encircled may become unpredictable, even opting for a pyrrhic victory rather than an uncontested defeat. These are some of the dynamics that complicate the planning process, but an awareness of such possibilities and an expectation for the unexpected will better arm decision-makers for the ensuing conflict than a sense of smug, confidence and ignorance of what may be possible. As Sullivan and Harper (1997) so succinctly state in the title of their book, "Hope is not a method!"

MAP has been proposed as a porous planning method for proactive business activities upon the highly volatile business landscape. It is not recommended as a universal one-best-way approach. It demands input from skilled, intelligent, and experienced decision-makers. It cannot operate in organizations with an autocratic

and closed culture. MAP will not succeed in organizations that lack competent staff or in organizations that have indecisive decision-makers. The German Yugoslavian campaign provides an example where success was determined through the combined and competent actions of the "teeth" and the "tail" of the attacking force.

It has been argued that MAP facilitates a means of instilling continual learning within the organization. Its successful implementation requires training, practice, and a high degree of trust. As with all planning methods, its application has some elements of risk; it is argued however that risk can be better managed through preparation and the careful attention to detail as demanded by a process such as MAP. The element of risk is increased when decision-makers leave the future of the firm in the hands of weak and uncoordinated planning processes, reactive management, wishful thinking, and when the firm is left to the mercy of a turbulent and unforgiving business landscape.

It has been argued that practitioners will find the MAP framework a useful guide when planning a new thrust or countering the moves of a competitor. Its strengths lie in its persistent demands for relevant and timely information, for the application of initiative, and in its flexibility. MAP demands analysis before action and it prompts the user in the right direction ensuring that most, if not all possible, contingencies are included, as well as preparing decision-makers for the "inevitable" unexpected. Finally, MAP reinforces the need for cooperation between the organization's teeth and tail as well as reminding decision-makers of the need for urgency of action. These elements have been identified as drivers for success in numerous decisive military, as well as business campaigns.

The application of planning methods such as MAP, when combined with elements of manoeuvre theory, may further increase the turbulence of the business landscape. It is speculated that change will occur more often and more rapidly, but it is also argued that efficiency levels will increase significantly for manoeuvre practitioners, reducing the duration and costs of their "campaigns". Such savings must surely serve in the long-term interests of all stakeholders.

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