

THE ART OF ONLINE WAR

Sun-Tzu wrote his classic, "The Art of War" over 2000 years ago. Since then, his lessons have been applied to many areas of endeavor including leadership and business.

Now it's time to take a look at how 6 of these lessons apply to the online world today...

"OPPORTUNITIES MULTIPLY AS THEY ARE SEIZED"

The more of a presence your business has online, the more opportunities will come your way.

Bottom-line: your business must have an online presence or you're letting opportunity pass you by.

"STRATEGY WITHOUT TACTICS IS THE SLOWEST ROUTE TO VICTORY. TACTICS WITHOUT STRATEGY IS THE NOISE BEFORE DEFEAT"

You can't just jump online and take action - first you need to understand what you need to do. On the other hand, you can't devise a strategy and not then execute or you'll never achieve your goals!

The key to success online is knowing what your business needs to do to reach its goals and then using that knowledge to drive both your strategies and tactics.

"THE CONTROL OF A LARGE FORCE IS THE SAME PRINCIPLE AS THE CONTROL OF A FEW MEN: IT IS MERELY A QUESTION OF DIVIDING UP THEIR NUMBERS"

Don't let yourself get overwhelmed by the sheer number of online solutions and the cacophony of online advice.

To make the web more manageable, first break it down into its four primary business functions: marketing, selling your products and services, running your business and managing your professional relationships.

Next, use your business goals as a filter to determine the exact actions you need to take online in order to reach those goals.

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**"TREAT YOUR MEN AS YOU WOULD YOUR OWN
BELOVED SONS. AND THEY WILL FOLLOW YOU
INTO THE DEEPEST VALLEY"**

On the web, your customers are your men; the people who support you and enable your business to thrive.

In order to keep your customers, and make them happy enough to purchase more and refer others to you, you need to treat them as well as you can.

Do this online by making it as easy as possible for customers to contact you, by enabling 24x7 support (via customer self-service) and by creating pre-sales content that helps them make buying decisions and post-sales content that helps them make the most of their purchases.

**"OF ALL THOSE IN THE ARMY CLOSE TO
THE COMMANDER NONE IS MORE INTIMATE
THAN THE SECRET AGENT"**

Online, your secret agent is data and you have a number of handy tools available for gathering and analyzing it including: analytics that allow you to measure your website's effectiveness, SEO keyword reports that allow you to get the most from your marketing campaigns and competitive research tools that allow you to "spy" on the strategies and tactics of others.

While your business goals should drive what actions you take online, the data you collect will help you measure the effectiveness of your those actions and should drive changes that will make your efforts more effective.

**"THE GENERAL WHO ADVANCES WITHOUT COVETING
FAME AND RETREATS WITHOUT FEARING DISGRACE,
WHOSE ONLY THOUGHT IS TO PROTECT HIS COUNTRY
AND DO GOOD SERVICE FOR HIS SOVEREIGN, IS THE
JEWEL OF THE KINGDOM"**

We outsource a lot of functions these days, but no function is more critical than the relationships your business has with customers, vendors and the media.

Therefore, when outsourcing communications to a social media manager, advertising firm or PR agency, make sure that they have your interests in mind and act accordingly.

A good tipoff: if they brag about how many followers or fans their customers have, that's good; if they brag about how many they have, watch out.

Source: <http://www.mattaboutbusiness.com/the-art-of-online-war-infographic/>

Thanks to <http://sacredlies.deviantart.com/> for the Chinese characters and to <http://dusteramaranth.deviantart.com/> for the dragons!