

# Sun zi art of war and the organization marketing essay



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Sun Zi's famous Chinese literature is The Art of War, the oldest existing military piece in the world and often considered as the best one. This book has age of over 2400 years old and proves that the tactics use for successful warfare and have not changed over time. It is a rather short book of approximately 6000 Chinese characters that covered the principles of human behavior and rules of conduct for military leaders. It is divided into thirteen chapters, with each chapter treating a different topic, such as attacking with fire, the nine battlegrounds and so on.

The Art of War has been practiced for thousands of years by the Chinese and it will continue to be. This book has widely influenced on Chinese and Japanese military for many years. For example, it was the source for Mao Tse-tung's strategies and tactics on rural of China. After that, The Art of War has been popular in the West as well the in the early twentieth century due to the translation of English version. Until now, the strategies and principles are using widely in business worldwide as well.

The main idea of The Art of War is effective military strategy. Sun Zi emphasizes the importance of understanding the current situation before engaging in warfare. The tactics that he used vary on every war. He thought that the result of the war will be either the survival or the destruction of the nation. Every step must be well designed and all depend on the advantages of the citizens. All warfare is based on the belief that to be victorious you must thoroughly know yourself and your enemy, deception, adaption of the current conditions, the leadership of the general and uses of spies. Although specific wartime situations are sometimes mentioned in the book, they are treated generally. For example, Sun Zi discusses tactics to win the war rather

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than the history of him in winning the war. This is how The Art of War usable in many different situations.

## **1. 2 INTRODUCTION OF TOSHIBA COMPANY**

Toshiba Corporation is one of Japan's oldest and largest producers of consumer and industrial electric products. The company also ranks as the world's largest manufacturer of DRAM (dynamic random access memory) computer chips. Toshiba, a family of over 200 consolidated and affiliated businesses, is one of Japan's second-tier keiretsu or conglomerates. These corporate groups are linked through history and tradition, as well as cross-shareholdings, interlocking directorates, and personal contacts. With a history that dates back to the nineteenth century and a product line that extends from semiconductors to nuclear power plants, Toshiba has played an active role in Japan's rise to the forefront of international business.

Toshiba was formed through the 1939 union of two manufacturers of electrical equipment, Shibaura Seisakusho Works and Tokyo Electric Company, Ltd. While Toshiba Malaysia was founded on 19 April 1977, it gives us high quality of audio visual and home appliances products. The audio visual products include LCD TVs, plasma TVs, colour CRT TVs, DVD players and HD-DVD players while the home appliances products include refrigerators, washing machines, rice cookers and electric pots.

Toshiba Malaysia provides us with the leading technologically innovative products such as Meta Brain Pro technology. At the meantime, they provide us product with excellence functionality, reliability, durability and environmentally friendly features as outlined in their basic commitment, “

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Committed to People, Committed to the Future". In year 2006, Toshiba was awarded Gold Award by Reader Digest Malaysia for being the trusted brand in 2 categories, LCD TVs and washing machines.

Rapid economic growth in developing countries and sluggish growth in the developed world have led to major changes in economic and industrial paradigms in the 21st century. To succeed in crowded global competition transcending national borders, Toshiba continues to focus on restructuring businesses to reinforce their earnings base while seeking to transform its overall business structure by targeting growth sectors and emerging businesses. The aim is to become an even stronger global contender by pursuing the "concentration and selection" approach while creating world-first and world No. 1 products and services that are cost-competitive and captivate customers.

## **2. CONTENTS**

### **2. 1 CHAPTER 3: STRATEGIC ATTACKS**

From Chapter 3 in Sun Zi's Art of War, Sun Zi stated that "He who knows the other side (the enemy) and knows himself will not be defeated in a hundred battles."

Organization should know their strength and focus on their strength in order to win in the competition. At the same time, they should try to exploit competitor's weakness and strength. Some principle must keep in mind are to yield the enemy does not use hard attack and to conquer other country does not use prolonged strategy. The principle to win in the battle is based on well-planned strategies and the understanding of our enemy. By direct

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attack on competitor's weakness, it helps the organization to win the battle without causing injuries. For example, Malaysia Airline's ticket is pricy and this becomes a weakness for them. Air Asia uses this weakness and provides low fare to people. As a result, Air Asia is able to attract lots of people to purchase their ticket instead of Malaysia Airline. Besides, Air Asia also promotes a 10 cent Air Fare to compete Malaysia Airlines low fare promotion. In competitive market, every organization is facing uncertainty that nobody will always be a winner. They need to stay flexible to creates a better life cycle.

“ Capturing an entire section intact is a better strategy; destroying it is a weaker option.”

The above statement by Sun Zi, means that before entering to a new market, local culture need to be understand first. The customer needs then need to be analyzed. These two factors are crucial success factors for organization. Meanwhile, the origin elements are maintained there. Besides, organization need to know own core value in the market so that they can enter the market successfully. For example, KFC which is the largest fast-food chain in Malaysia and Brunei, serving world famous Original Recipe fried chicken which contains secret blend of 11 herbs and spices. Apart from serving finger-licking good food, KFC continuously aim for high quality and are committed to ensure food safety by stringent control to maintain our standards.

Sun Zi said “ He who is able to unite himself with his officers and men as one mind, spirit and purpose will win.”

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The above statement is one of the ways to predict victories. This simply means that the company and all its employees need to be united in order to achieve their mission and vision. For example, Coca-cola company, which is the world's largest beverage company and also the No. 1 provider of sparkling beverages, ready-to-drink coffees, and juices. With an enduring environment to building sustainable communities, Coca Cola is focused on initiatives that reduce our environmental footprint, create a safe, inclusive work environment for their associates and enhance the economic development of the communities. The Coca-Cola Company is committed to upholding fundamental principles of international human and workplace rights everywhere they do business.

## **2. 2 CHAPTER 4: DISPOSITION OF THE ARMY**

Throughout our research and findings, there are some theories from Chapter 4 in Sun Zi's Art of War are applied by different organizations. Hence the concept like the need to build an invincible defense as a deterrent against any overly ambitious enemy is related in business strategies.

Sun Zi said: " In ancient times, those who were skilful in warfare ensured that they would not be defeated and when waited for opportunities to defect the enemy."

The statement above which applied in business world simply means that to enhance our strength and be able to change and adapt to changing market nowadays. This is especially for the leader or top management who must have a prediction on future market trend so that organization can grow and control the market only if the implementation is in the right timing. Future

development and improvement are the most important elements to let organization grow. For example, Apple Inc which has launched a few products in the market such as i-Phone, i-Pod and i-Pad. Apple Inc did very well in enhancing their strength in the market which not just following the market trend, Apple Inc creating the trend which brings growth and profit to the organization.

“ Those who are skilful in warfare can ensure that they will not be defeated by the enemy, but will not be able to ensure victory over the enemy.”

In business application, all products have their own life cycle. Moreover, creative, innovative and continuous improvement enable origin product to continue its life span and sales. This indicates that old products will eventually be replaced. A firm must do some innovative changes on existing product to extend the product life cycle and increase number of customers. McDonald's did this by keep updating its menu. After a certain period, it will come out with new products and this attracts existing and new consumers too. The seasonal products such as Prosperity Burger that introduced during Chinese New Year only and Grilled Chicken Burger (GCB) that sold for limited period were the innovations of McDonald's.

As stated by Sun Zi, “ Those who cannot win must defend; those who can win must attack. Defend when one's forces are inadequate; attack when one's forces are abundant.”

This stresses on the importance in taking initiative to prepare ourselves in battles. Those who cannot win must prepare their defense while those who are capable of winning must strike first. In this case, Digi has to come out <https://assignbuster.com/sun-zi-art-of-war-and-the-organization-marketing-essay/>

with various pricing strategy to compete with the other telecommunication companies included Celcom and Maxis. Thus Digi came out with price strategies in which new plans such as the latest Easy plan that allow users to send SMS and make free calls to three of his or her friends which make Digi Easy plan more attractive compare to other telecommunication companies. Hence, Digi will be able to compete and gain their market whenever a telecommunication company provides a lower rate services.

## **2. 3 CHAPTER 7: MILITARY MANOEUVRES**

Sun Zi states that “ An army without sufficient food and grain will die.”

This quotation in business perspective means that profit as a food and grain which is the most important for the organization to survive. If an organization cannot obtain good profit and income, it will be difficult to survive in the market for long period of time. Since the capital is the basic condition to start a business, the organizer should be ensured that the financial rolling is sufficient in order to operate their business and to use in urgent moment. If the organizer doesn't have the sufficient back up of capital to support the business, the organization may face bankruptcy situation or merge with other organization. For example, Lehman Brothers Holdings was a global financial services firm and was the fourth largest investment bank in the USA before declaring bankruptcy in 2008. The businesses of the organization included investment banking, equity and fixed-income sales and trading, investment management, private equity and private banking. However, the organization went bankrupt in 2008 due to the subprime mortgage crisis.



In addition, malfeasance and short-selling allegations also cause the organization went bankrupt. The organization already had the financial problem initially but the addition problems have happened one after another. Eventually, the organization did not have sufficient capital to cover the problems. Hence, the organization forced to declare bankruptcy in 2008 and some businesses of the organization forced to sell to other organizations such as Barclays. In summary, money is the most important property for the organization to operate, maintain the business and help to cover some financial problems sometimes.

### **3. DISCUSSIONS**

#### **3.1 CHAPTER 1: DETIALED ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING**

Sun Zi said: “ The conduct of war is a matter of vital importance to the nation.”

It is a matter of life and death to the country, the people and the ruler. It is a road either to prosperity or to being destroyed. Therefore, it is a subject which must not be neglected. Initial planning and assessment are essential.

There are five constant factors to consider, namely, moral influence, the weather, terrain, generalship and doctrine and law. Compare with those of the enemy. Then one will get a clearer view of the situation and assess one’s chances of victory.

Moral influence means policies which will make the people fiercely loyal to the ruler. They will follow him even to death. Weather refers to the contrasting changes of day and night and the four seasons of the  
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battleground. Terrain assesses the route and its condition whether it is far, dangerous with open ground or with narrow passes. The ground can determine defeat or victory. Generalship of a commander refers to his qualities of wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, courage and discipline. Doctrine and law refer to army organization and control. This is to ensure that roads are maintained in order that supplies may reach the army and military expenditure is controlled.

There are also seven other considerations to compare with the enemy. This can determine the outcome of the war . They are (1) the moral influence of the ruler over his subjects (2) the capability of the generals (3) better ability to take advantage of weather and terrain (4) who has better effective and efficient execution of orders (5) whose army is better equipped and larger (6) the training level of the army (7) the administration of rewards and punishment.

The final strategy is to pretend in order to deceive the enemy. Attack when he is least prepared. Plan well before attacking. If the odds are highly against you, wait for another time.

Similarly in business, in order to succeed, the company has to consider the following factors (1) the ability of the employer to motivate everyone to work towards the company's goals (2) the capabilities of the managers to lead the team (3) the ability to adapt to government regulations and market conditions (4) whether the business systems of the company can be improved so that there will be increased efficiency (5) the technology available to the staff in order to improve productivity (6) the training given to

staff and their level of skills acquired (7) the administration of rewards and punishment.

### **3. 2 CHAPTER 5: FORCES**

“ When forces are concentrated to attack the enemy, it must be like solid stones hurled against eggs.”

This quotation is applying the principle of using strengths to strike weaknesses. Firstly, creative and innovation is one of the important principles to compete with competitors in the same market. For instance, there are many challenge and competitive in the market of electronic devices such as Toshiba, Sony, Mitsubishi and so on. However, Toshiba is more innovative and spend more time in research and develop the technologies. As a result, a lot of new technologies that were the first in the world or the first in Japan such as the first Japanese word processor, the first 3D LCD TV which not requiring dedicated glasses in the world, etc.

Secondly, the organization should change their form, culture, structure, product base or others when there are any changes happen. For instance, Toshiba pioneered the development of electrical equipment in Japan. However, the organization entered new fields which are medical equipment and radio devices when the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 happened. Many employees of the organization were lost in this earthquake. Therefore, the vice-president of the organization decided to start new field.

Thirdly, changes have to follow the trend. If an organization can create the trend, the possibility to win will be high. For example, more and more

multimedia such as movie requires 3D effect nowadays. Hence, Toshiba  
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invents the first 3D LCD TV which not requiring dedicated glasses in the world. Other competitors such as Sony also manufacture the 3D LCD TV to occupy the market. In summary, Toshiba creates the trend of 3D LCD TV and win the market due to the requiring dedicated glasses would not be worn.

Lastly, the organizations have to analyze their strength and weaknesses all the time when compete with others. For instance, Toshiba has established the corporate research and development center to improve production technology maintain high qualities and creates new products. The corporate research and development center can analyze the strength and weaknesses of the organization in order to manufacture higher quality products and hence the products of the organization can be competed with other organizations in the intense market. As a result, higher profits can be obtained by the organization.

### **3. 3 CHAPTER 6: WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS**

Toshiba applied the many theories from Sun Zi's Art of War in implementing and deploying its business strategies which similar to our business world today. Our business world today is in a changing environment. Sun Zi's Art of War helps the organization adapts in uncertainty and changing environment. Therefore, we have identified few theories from Sun Zi's Art of War that can be applied by Toshiba into their business.

Firstly, in Chapter 6 of the Art of War, Sun Zi provides some very interesting and fascinating concepts that are relevant in business world. For example, concepts like first mover advantage, to dictate rather than be dictated, to achieve relative superiority, to be flexible and to manage change and

uncertainty. In addition, Sun Zi also explains how your opportunities come from the openings in the environment caused by the relative weakness of your competitors in a given area.

Sun Zi said: “ Those who arrive first at the battleground will have sufficient time to rest and prepare against the enemy” and “ Those who arrive late at the battleground will have to rush into battle when they are already exhausted.”

According to the quotation above, Sun Zi has pointed out the meaning of early bird get the first worm. In business world, it can be meant by it is better to be first than it is to be better. In current market, there is no more battle for the product but the perceptions of product. Besides, the timing of launching a product is important. By being the first to enter the market a product or service, a firm may need to capture greatest market share. Toshiba created the first mover category when its company produced Japan's first electric fan, refrigerators, washing machines, electric vacuum cleaner and electric rice cookers. This allows Toshiba to strengthen their position in this market and handle the competitions from rivals after that. Being the world's 9th largest integrated manufacturer of electric and electronic equipment, Toshiba already have support from their loyal customers and they are already well known when their rival enter this market.

“ Superiority or strength in number means that enemy will have to prepare against you.”

This statement stated by Sun Zi means that by having large forces or allies working together with us, our enemy will have fear. In business world, the more partners we have in the business means that the more stable we are in the marketplace. Hence, our competitors will have to prepare a lot of strategies in order to defeat us or to replace our place in the market. Therefore, it is always better to form partners with other company into becoming partner and not afraid in competing with completers in business world. So, it is clear that why Yahoo announced a brand new partnership with Toshiba to feature Yahoo Connected TV on several models of Toshiba's latest 46"-55" HDTVs. This is because with Toshiba, users can enjoy Yahoo Connected TV on TVs.

Sun Zi said: " Thus, the expert in offence attacks places where the enemy does not know how to defend." and " The expert in defence protects places where the enemy does not know how to attack."

In business world, we always set for highly innovation to create the marketing advantages. We just continue produce products which are strengthen and will gain profit in the market, but have to do some innovation or improvement on it in order to enhance its position in the market. For low profile products, we may make some changes and let it enter a new market but must in a niche market. Hence the concept we should keep in mind is that we should understand very well about our competitor's product strength and weakness so that we can attack accordingly to survive in competitive business world. As well as developing pioneering technology for its own products, Toshiba invented the DVD, the TFT screen and the lithium ion battery in addition to designing the graphics processor for the Sony

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Playstation II. The launch of the Qosmio series in 2004 saw Toshiba demonstrating once again its position as a market innovator. Toshiba embraced the market for digitally converged products for home and personal entertainment, by launching the first notebook to offer instant-on TV/DVD functionality.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Toshiba as nations one of the leading companies in manufacturer of computer and accessories, electrical appliances, electrics and electronics held the responsibility to continuously serve the customers and cater their needs and demands that grows over a period of time. This is necessary for Toshiba to emerge as the top manufacturer in the country and to outlast many competitors in the market. The quality exist should not limit to the products produced but must extend to the services provided. Such practicing will ensure Toshiba is recognized being capable of inventing valued products and offering the best services which others yet to make available. Therefore, to achieve such objective in the future, Toshiba needs to make consideration on the issue that required some improvement where necessary. The following are few suggestions which Toshiba can implement.

To start with, Toshiba might introduce a detailed job assessment and evaluation. The evaluation must comprise in term of product manufacture and services.

Sun Zi said: “ To manage a large force is similar to managing a small force.”

“ It is a matter of organization and structure.”

A group consist of a leader and few members can be assigned to the departments exist in the company to assess the employees performances. The team should not only scout on the way they carry out their job but at the same time, list the problems and challenges that the employees encounter while performing their job. If the trouble discovered is with the working environment, equipment or system, then the team should report to the unit responsible to solve the issue raised to the ground. However, if the problem is rise from the employee itself, whether the particular employee is lack of skills and training or is not competence enough for the job, then a replacement or further training is necessary. Through this approach, the company is able to deal any management issues effectively in relatively shorter time.

One of the important aspects of business is the customer. As manufacture of electrical related goods, Toshiba's job does not end at point of selling the products to the customer, but the real job begins when customer need the assistants of the manufacturer. So, to shorten the gap between the customer and the manufacturer, Toshiba probably can organize a session with customers in many regions yet more frequently. This session is expected to take place in any events such as electrical fair, PC fair or independently organized Toshiba fair. This session is aimed to listen to the customer's complaints, products reviews, expectations, suggestions and feedbacks. This creates a better understanding between the customer and the company, the appointed staff able to hear from the customer itself, which later can be redirected to the company for better outcome.



According to Sun Zi, “ An army without sufficient stockpiles and reserves will not survive.”

The organization culture is also an asset or a weapon to compete in the market. Customers always ‘ TRUST’ the big company which have good reputation and corporate culture.

Advertising is very crucial for the information and the message to reach the intended customers. In Sun Zi’s Art of War, Communicating ground refers to markets that are equally accessible to both of you and your competitor.

There are no natural barriers to entry and it is not difficult to get the consumer’s attention as they are not committed to any one product.

Therefore, definite advertising strategies are needed to market the goods or the services. Toshiba may have utilized all known methods to publicize, from pamphlets to online advertisements but that does not guarantees the information has reached to and comprehends by everyone. So to maximize the spread of the info, the company may come up with advertisement in different languages, widely from printed materials to online sources. Those who are unaware of Toshiba’s products and services will now have a brief news and latest update about the company.

“ Those who are skillful in warfare can ensure that they will not be defeated by the enemy, but will not be able to ensure victory over the enemy.”

This is Sun Zi’s quote from the Sun Zi’s Art of War which simply means those who understand and recognize their own as well as their competitors’ strength and weakness will not suffer a lost or bankruptcy. Once any

feedback from customers is received, the company can review it to find out <https://assignbuster.com/sun-zi-art-of-war-and-the-organization-marketing-essay/>

any flaws or weakness in their products or services right away. Once the defect is indentified, immediate action must exercise to tackle the issue. Next, improving on own weakness is not sufficient to stay longer in the market but identify others flaw and work on it, will secure a stable position on the long run. If Toshiba is the first to solve the flaw in other competitors' product in term of structure, design, capability and function, then Toshiba will be noticed and become word of mouth that indirectly advertise Toshiba.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This assignment helps us to emphasize on application of The Art of War in today business war. The studies of Sun Zi have proved to be useful until today since many companies applied the theories from the Sun Zi Art of War in their management. For instance, different strategies can be used by the company to beat their competitors in the niche market. Sun Zi Art of war is important because it helps organization to adapt in changing and we need to be flexible to changes in order to survive. Besides, we have to take suitable actions so that we can adapt the environment because inappropriate actions can lead us to failure.

Through this assignment, there are several key success factors of Toshiba Company. First of all, innovative of Toshiba invented wide range of products such electrical applicants, computers, TV and more that win the customers long term supports. As Toshiba scope of services and products can offer many varieties so they are able to dominate different ventures in the market. Also, Toshiba are leading the market for years because of good management skill and strong structure of the company. Well communication between the top level management and lower manage including the first line

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staff enable them to be clear about their missions and visions of the company. This will stimulate passionate behavior of the staffs in their working life.

Furthermore, the quality of the products is also one of the key factors of success in Toshiba Company. Toshiba has invested resources on research and development that gives improvement on their current products and technologies accordingly. So, Toshiba could not be easily attacked by competitors and always ahead of them. “ Committed to People, Committed to the Future”, is one of the slogan of the company. This shows that they emphasize on the services to the customer which meet the customer needs.

As a conclusion, Toshiba is one of the leading manufacturers in Malaysia. They offer variety of high technology of products to satisfy customers need in a more convenient way. Moreover, Toshiba Company implements Sun Zi Art of War strategies to make its management more effective and efficient. Thus, Sun Zi Art of War is very useful in today's business world to success.