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THE ART OF

strategic marketing war

pearls of wisdom

Foreword by international journalist,
TV presenter and millennial leader
Charles Croucher.

PETE JEANS

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Pearls of Wardom.

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First Published in 2018

Printed and designed in Australia by CSU Print Bathurst.
www.csu.edu.au/csuprint



A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of Australia

ISBN: 978-0-646-9430-4-6

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foreword.

Insights by international journalist, TV presenter and millennial leader Charles Croucher.

It's hard to imagine what Sun Tzu would think of millennials.

My generation is more mobile, more connected, more adaptable than any of his armies. But we're also less loyal, less resilient and far less willing to accept orders.

This is the challenge facing business leaders today.

The lessons of that ancient text apply now more than ever.

In this Asian century, it seems right to turn to wisdom from the east. From loners to leadership, resistance to respect, culture and character.

As a generation we are often branded lazy and apathetic.

This book challenges that notion through understanding rather than dismissing millennials.

Every week in my travels I report on millennials doing things never thought possible. Some days it's triumphs - unthinkable just years ago. Occasionally it's failures and unspeakable atrocities.

This generation is complex and contradictory. But this generation can be harnessed.

Business and marketing remain a battlefield.

Conceptually, Pete Jeans has taken the most trusted playbook in history and turned it into a guide to maximising your results from millennials as consumers and employees.

As Sun Tzu said; "Victorious warriors win first and then go to war". This book puts you on the path to victory.

Charles Croucher



Acknowledgements

Thankyou so much to everyone who guided me and critiqued my drafts. In particular, thanks and love go to my family, colleagues, friends and mentors.

Congratulations also to the CSU Print team in Bathurst, Australia. Great job guys!

précis.

Have you agreed your vision, mission and strategic business and marketing objectives? If so, read on. The following chapters share a bunch of strategic insights which deliver direction and clarity.

If you need to review and develop new business goals, please call me in business hours.

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chapters.

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Hello. I'm Pete Jeans.

The chase for profitable growth is a business war. Continuous strategically-planned and executed revenue and profit growth campaigns must create value for customers in the context of considerable competition and change.

The prize is higher profit ratios, clear market leadership and more profitable share of customers' wallets.

The Art of Strategic Marketing War - Pearls of Wisdom exposes gems of strategic and operational insight which may be useful for you.

It mirrors and leads best-practice strategic processes; including key thinking and implementation issues that matter.

Please email me at petejans@smosydney.com.au if you need advice specific to your circumstances.



1

**analysing
and planning**

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- 1.1 Opportunities are still there for focused outfits
 - 1.2 How do you know when you need to transform your business?
 - 1.3 Compete! The only growth platform that matters
 - 1.4 The key to growth is confidence around clarity
 - 1.5 Don't accept mediocre strategy preparation and development
 - 1.6 Market research costs are a future investment that pays off in spades
 - 1.7 Are your hands tied often because information quality and delivery are poor?
 - 1.8 Consultants... who should you retain to drive clarity?
 - 1.9 How vulnerable are we to business risks?
 - 1.10 Is your new opportunity and idea generation momentum slowing?
 - 1.11 Tips for getting ready for a slowdown

1.1 OPPORTUNITIES ARE STILL THERE FOR FOCUSED OUTFITS

Often, growth opportunities are right under your nose. It all comes down to best-practice planning, appetite for success and clarity of strategy.

Anyone who can focus on being different and better, has a potential competitive advantage. They also have a head start on those who lethargically expect business volume to flow to them because of tradition, history, scale or market position.

It takes a fresh pair of independent strategic eyes, wide and deep industry sector experience and knowledge, lateral innovative thinking and best-practice processes and skillsets to identify and distil the options into realistic priorities.

This planning process could guide the development of your own approaches:

- » Analysing the market environment
- » Gaining market and customer insight
- » Understanding buyer purchase process preferences
- » Developing a marketing strategy to create value for customers
- » Creating the value propositions for each segment
- » Brand development and positioning
- » Managing the product and service portfolio
- » Pricing strategy and positioning
- » Distribution strategy
- » Promotional strategy
- » Selling strategy and resourcing
- » Budgeting and implementation programmes and KPI's
- » Communicating the intent and engaging stakeholders.

1.2 HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU NEED TO TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS?

Measuring key operating criteria provides the platform for assessing the health and performance of an organisation. If your business is unhealthy, transform!

Firstly however, there's a common issue. In my experience, organisations have inadequate key result area (KRA) definitions and key performance indicator (KPI) metrics. Financial ratios are common but they're largely only measuring history and some forecasts.

It's the qualitative measures around intangibles like competitive capability, brand equity and customer perceptions that are just as important...because these are lead indicators of your future survival.

If you can institute measures around customer satisfaction and brand preference, these will help you deliver strategies for share protection and growth; margin optimisation and ultimately EBIT and free cash.

***I think weak performers attract predators.
Strong performers keep aggressors at bay.***

Transforming from underperformance to best-of-breed takes a cultural shift towards customer-centric operations.

Considering the overall performance of your organisation...

- » Do your customers think your performance is superior to major competitors in key markets?
- » Is your competitive advantage strong enough to leverage more customers; and more business from existing customers going forward?
- » Are you throwing off adequate free cash to reinvest in opportunities as customer needs evolve?
- » What do the transformation pathways and timeframes look like to get from where you are...to where you want to be...ahead of the competitors?
- » Is profit growth this year better compared with the average of the last 3 years?

-
- » Is growth in the number of new customers stronger compared to last year?
 - » Is nett customer dilution under control?
 - » Are contract or tender win rates better than last year?
 - » Is the ratio of sales to employees increasing versus last year?
 - » Is the reduction in costs better than last year?
 - » Is reduction in staff turnover better than last year?
 - » Is the regular introduction of new products strong enough?
 - » Is the introduction of innovative services on target?
 - » Is customer satisfaction and loyalty better than last year?
 - » Is the quality of relationships with stakeholders better?
 - » Is the effectiveness of promotional activities to generate leads on track?
 - » Is the quality of marketing support adding value to customers?

1.3 COMPETE! THE ONLY GROWTH PLATFORM THAT MATTERS

To survive, an organisation has to grow profitably. And act pro-actively and competitively.

Be prepared to compete! It is the only viable growth platform; which must be visible to all stakeholders...customers, staff, shareholders, suppliers, media and industry.

Competing effectively inspires confidence and support; which are key desired outcomes that are essential for successful organisations.

Competing effectively for the benefit of customers should be your only reason for being! Give them what they want at better value than your competitors.

To achieve this, there are a few fundamental imperatives:

- » research your current and potential customers to understand their perceptions of your value proposition strengths and weaknesses relative to competitors.

-
- » create innovative products and services to deliver value that exceeds their expectations.
 - » engage your priority markets with fantastic people and “easiest-to-deal-with” processes.
 - » promote creatively to stand out from the crowd.

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1.4 THE KEY TO GROWTH IS CONFIDENCE AROUND CLARITY

My view is that you get on the start-line with a clear view of the racetrack, the market climate and headwinds; your own fitness, the competitors' strengths and weaknesses; the landscape through to the finish line, the number of laps involved and the prize. That's clarity.

On a few occasions at business planning conferences, I've seen growth strategy emerge inadequately defined; largely due to poor preparation. This scenario forces future strategy refinement on the run. Not good.

These poor planning outcomes do not create confidence; particularly in dynamic markets where new competitors are emerging or customer needs are changing shape.

Defensible customer-needs research, continuous effective customer engagement and a commitment to compete...deliver clarity and thus confidence for your mission.

1.5 DON'T ACCEPT MEDIOCRE STRATEGY PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Expectations and quality standards are best set-up, up-front. A mediocre strategic plan is not what Boards want to see.

It's commonplace for organizations to embark on strategy reviews and preparation; with processes and programmes that are just updates of previous periods.

This can be relevant; but often mask circumstantial changes in the market; and may not leverage new opportunities for your business.

Will your strategy development processes and timeframes adequately harness the intellectual horsepower required to drive out clarity?

In my opinion, the Board first needs to review the processes (upon advice from the CEO) and endorse that approach.

Strategy preparation must include:

- » board consensus on strategic direction (preferred markets and return on net assets (RONA) benchmarks).
- » adoption of agreed strategic planning processes (thorough and robust).
- » adequate timeframes for strategy reviews and development (less than 8 weeks is generally unrealistic).
- » agreement that the strategy developers will be the strategy implementers.
- » final draft strategy critiques by independent commentators (not expensive).
- » selecting and defining appropriate strategic plan and market share measures and metrics.

1.6 MARKET RESEARCH COSTS ARE A FUTURE INVESTMENT THAT PAYS OFF IN SPADES

Market entry research improves the probability of returns on your capital. It's a payoff that the Board will understand.

There's a paradigm that exists in many lead teams. The team member that leads market engagement is often deferred to by others in terms of assumed superior knowledge around market opportunity.

That's often not the case. Markets are variable. Leaders' knowledge is often just as incomplete as their team members. Unless market intelligence systems are comprehensive, real-time and evidence-based, the knowledge around your lead-team table will be historical, probably anecdotal and therefore risky.

Market research, qualitative and quantitative, regular and trackable, provides all lead-team members with evidence to review future investment opportunities.

Understanding potential value propositions are what you get from researching whether your proposed products and services are wanted by customers.

Can you make superior growing returns by entering a new market or reinforcing your position in current segments...compared to the status of your current product and service portfolio?

Worth thinking about.

1.7 ARE YOUR HANDS TIED OFTEN BECAUSE INFORMATION QUALITY AND DELIVERY IS POOR?

An effective market intelligence system (MIS) will deliver critical market, competitor, customer and industry information.

When information quality and delivery is prejudicing your capability to act, re-organise your market intelligence system.

A market intelligence system is only as good as the objectives for which it was established; and the agility that it demonstrates when called on to provide information.

It's best to start with the information users. Ask them to prescribe the "must have's" and "would like to have's". For example, "must-have's" might be pricing anniversary or new price rollover dates and data for all competitors; or specification data and installation sheets (hard and soft copy versions) for all competitor products and services.

“Would-like-to-have’s” might include career profiles of important competitor managers; or inventory mix of competitor’s distribution centres.

Collate the required new specification and turn it over to a systems expert to translate it into a new market information system which is easily searchable, intuitive and updated regularly. Now your hands are not tied to cumbersome legacy systems.

Then implement quickly. And, review and refine.

Watch out for soft data. Soft or unchecked information that flows out of daily market engagement can be patchy; possibly out of context or just plain unrepresentative.

Validate it. *Soft market data gets hard and useful after validation.* Only then can it be applied to your efforts to leverage stronger competitive advantage.

1.8 CONSULTANTS...WHO SHOULD YOU RETAIN TO DRIVE CLARITY?

When it's clear that external resources are needed, where do you go to develop a shortlist of options?

There's a corporate c-suite acceptance that consultants add some process and speed value; but the insight that's delivered is probably at about the same standard as a senior team could achieve with well-controlled professional project management.

Usually, it's all about who's worked with whom previously. That can work fine; depending on who's recommending the consultant. It can also be a disaster.

It is worth developing a clear comprehensive confidential brief and putting it to limited tender; if the project value is considerable or requires Board assent.

My view is that hands-on leaders with deep industry knowledge who have experienced a similar project journey previously...will

understand the issues that matter... and
know how to plan the approach and develop
solutions for the challenges ahead.

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1.9 HOW VULNERABLE ARE WE TO BUSINESS RISKS?

We are most vulnerable when we're not fully aware of the risks; and when risk assessment is incomplete or sloppy. Your auditors and OH&S team will give you an opinion on your risk status.

Boards are ultimately responsible for governance policy frameworks. Risk assessment is one of the mechanisms typically used.

Hundreds of pieces of legislation regulate what we can and cannot do.

The solution is defining and expediting risk assessment processes that can be applied relevantly across operational practices.

There is no substitute for expert stewardship and leadership in this space. The risks are too high for errors and amateurism.

But there is a pecking order of risk; usually driven by penalties. Monetary and personal.

*Key result areas are critically important.
Stay-in-business regulatory frameworks
get my priority vote first.*

Assessment of risks around maintenance of licenses to operate or similar compliance-based issues should be foremost.

Risk reduction audits should be prioritised in the key result assessment areas...as well as OH&S, environmental, corporate social responsibility areas and security and privacy... which are now key board agenda items.

1.10 IS YOUR NEW OPPORTUNITY AND IDEA GENERATION MOMENTUM SLOWING?

If your processes ain't generating a dozen good ideas on a long list at any one time; it's time to boost incentives through the company to get the ball rolling faster.

Insight and ideas are the lifeblood of a healthy business.

Opportunities are about improving the customer-experience mostly. Growth, cost-reductions, improved processes, territory penetration, supply chain efficiency, business model re-alignment... all exist to get and keep more profitable customers.

Opportunity development could sit in the space of an ideas council...perhaps a sub-committee of your senior management team or maybe the Board itself.

Organisations should be regularly reviewing at least three researched opportunities every quarter to add value to the business.

The bottom-line is if your senior team is not feeding you enough quality business proposals for growth, it's time to get a fresh approach to drive the examination for new opportunities.

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ABOUT PETE JEANS

IN MY TWENTIES, I started my career in corporate communications; and moved through marketing leadership to general management pretty quickly.

For the last 25 years, I've been a GM for hire on contract. I identify and deliver profitable growth opportunities; and develop new value propositions that profitably switches more customer volume to ***you***.

“The Art of Strategic Marketing War - Pearls of Wardom” attempts to solve two problems:

Re-accelerate your professional development after a career interruption; through business thought-leadership. Target markets are Millennials and Gen X leaders.

Slow down your staff churn by investing in business education through speaking engagements, forums and workshops led by Pete Jeans (target markets are CEO's/GM's/ HR leads)

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There's plenty of room! And, it's a fast read!

I work inside the business...on the business... with the teams...to deliver cut-through strategic clarity to create value for the organisation...in the eyes of their customers.

PAPERBACK RRP:
Australia \$19.99

Ebook Online

