



Call 708.460.6686 or visit: [www.lechnerlaw.com](http://www.lechnerlaw.com)

Paul,

## The Backbone of Results

Sun Tzu famously wrote, "To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill." Sixteen centuries later, Genghis Khan led his hordes halfway around the globe and nearly conquered the known world. No army could match the speed of his entirely horse mounted forces, nor match his use of communications. Rommel (the Desert Fox) advocated fast moving decentralized force, deeply penetrating the enemy's rear area *to disrupt* balance and prevent use of reserve forces.

The pressure to make sound and timely decisions in business is greater than it has ever been. Here are some principles you might consider:

**Understand Vulnerabilities:** In the Story of Achilles, Thetis' meant her son Achilles to become immortal by dipping him in the sacred waters of the river Styx. She did not realize that his heel (by which she held him) was not touched by the waters, thus leaving that spot vulnerable. Where are your weak spots? One of the benefits of self identification of weaknesses is discovering there are others that are really great at something you're not! Self examination leads to understanding and taking appropriate steps to remedy short comings. Encourage top down and bottom up thinking. Use intuition, experience and introspection. Then take action.

**Act Boldly:** Boldness seeks a breakthrough rather than incremental results. It requires weighing risk reward trade-offs. If the potential benefits are sufficiently high and you can 'cover' your downside risk, ***act*** (even in the face of limited information). Warren Buffet sticks to his principled investing approach, investing only in companies he understands, those that generate positive cash flow, enjoy strong brand recognition, and command respect from consumers and the general public. He has clear measures of success but *always* asks, 'what's the downside?' Then he acts.

**Surprise!:** Surprise is achieved through stealth, ambiguity and deception. Trump has the seventh President's portrait (Andrew Jackson) hanging in the Oval Office. Jackson was a former military officer and U.S. senator who was known for his fiery temper and bombastic rhetoric. "Always mystify, mislead, and surprise the enemy." Stealth denies the opposition knowledge of impending action. It means acting in such a way that the opposition does not know what to expect. It involves sending signals that confuse. Deception convinces the opposition you are going to do something other than what you actually intend. Forcing your

competition to respond to numerous threats, all plausible, but only some real, causes resources to be spread thinly. It creates opportunities.

**Focus:** The opportunities created by surprise allow you to focus your resources at a particular time and place. This provides advantage when and where it matters most. *Napoleon Bonaparte correctly observed*, "The essence of strategy is to always have more force at a crucial point than the opposition." The corollary? Avoid the strengths of your competitors. Focus where they are not, on the 'blue ocean'. Competing in overcrowded industries is difficult. The real opportunity lies in uncontested market spaces.

**Decentralize Decision Making:** Those closest to the action should have the latitude to take advantage of on-the-spot information unavailable to their superiors. The ability to exercise initiative without having to wait for approval. *General George Patton's directions?* "Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity." Reaping the full rewards of delegation creates the ability to exploit opportunities as they arise. You must be willing to trust the capabilities of your subordinates, relinquish some degree of control, and resist the temptation to intervene when execution is not as precise as you would like.

**Speed:** Speed requires efficient identification of opportunities and a sense of urgency in decision making. Acting faster than your opponent forces them into a constant state of reaction. *Abraham Lincoln* said: "Things may come to those who wait, but only things left by those who hustle." Seizing the initiative allows you to dictate the time, place, and nature of competitive encounters. If an opponent is struggling to cope with the situation at hand and you are already targeting an entirely new situation, effective response becomes increasingly difficult.

**Resources:** Integrating all your resources and capabilities increases their collective effectiveness. *Vince Lombardi correctly observed* "The challenge for every organization is to build a feeling of oneness, of dependence on one another". The question is usually not how well each person works, but how well they work together. Benefits are maximized by understanding and applying tactics simultaneously. They are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

**The backbone of results?** Strategies, tactics, and teamwork. Know yourself and seek self-improvement. Set the example. Accept responsibility for results.

So what are you going to do? Being proactive is the best way. Some say the future cannot be predicted. I say, **the way to predict your future is to create it.**

Paul Lechner Esq., CPA  
Office: 708.460.6686  
[www.lechnerlaw.com](http://www.lechnerlaw.com)