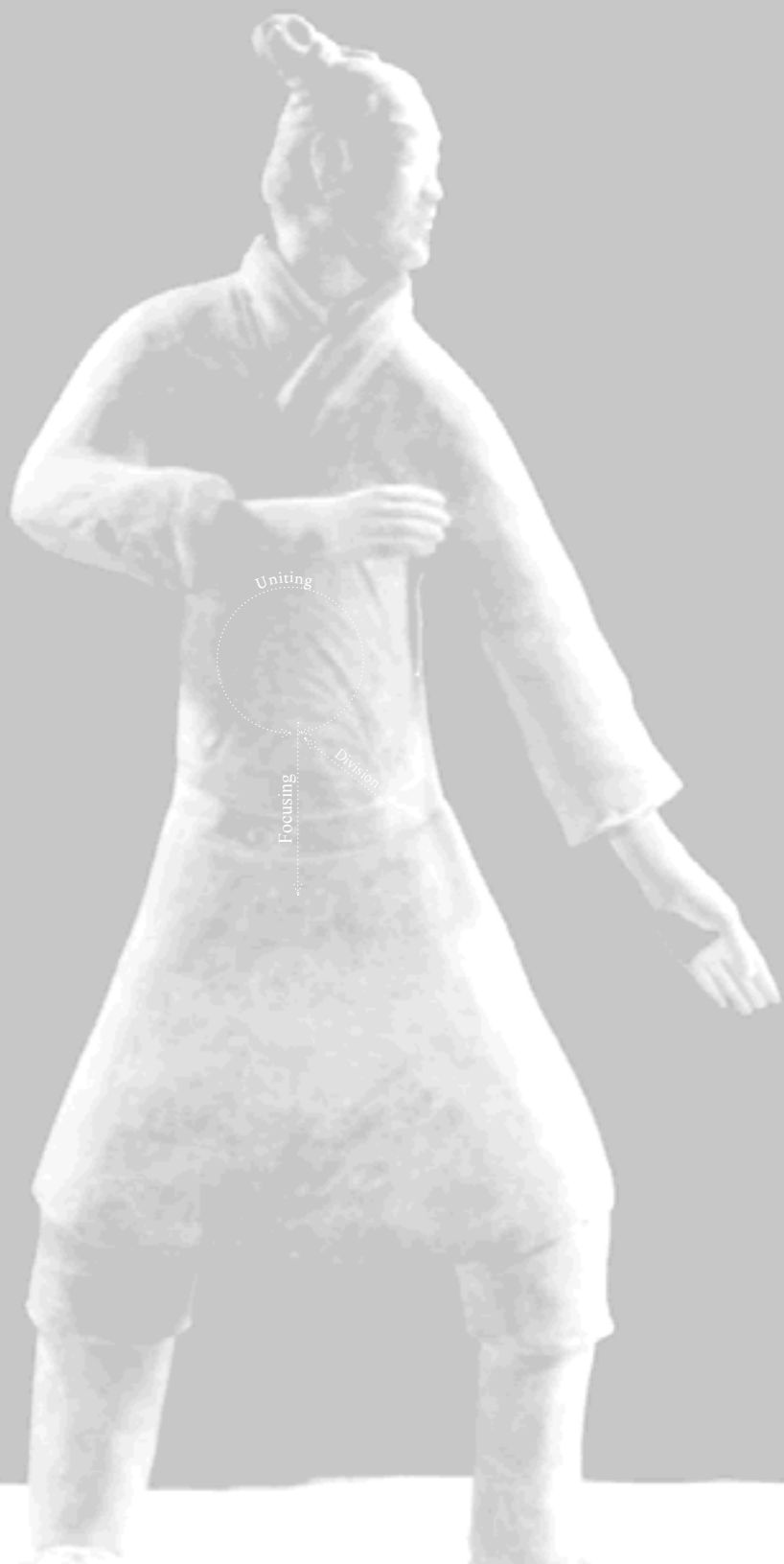


Sun Tzu's
THE
ART
OF
WAR

Plus

The Art of Management

孫
子
兵
法



Uniting

Focusing

Division

Chapter 3

謀攻

Planning an Attack (Attacking Problems)

The central topic of this chapter is unity and focus and their effect on the relative strength of an organization. As a manager, you can use these lessons in attacking problems within your organization.

In the chapter's first section, Sun Tzu says that unity and focus are required at every level of an organization. The goal of unity is not to win battles, but to succeed without battle.


Sun Tzu then lists the basic forms of attack in descending order of importance. The text warns against the worst of these: laying siege to another's strong position.

In the third section, Sun Tzu suggests an incremental approach to success: fighting small, focused battles where you have the clear advantage. He explains how the relative strength of competitive forces determines your basic tactics.

The text then warns against political divisions within an organization and how these divisions weaken its competitive strength.

Sun Tzu then details the five areas of knowledge that determine your ability to unite and concentrate your forces.

He ends with a warning about the dangers in miscalculating the relative strength of your organization of facing competition.



Planning an Attack

SUN TZU SAID:

Everyone relies on the arts of war. **1**

A united nation is strong.

A divided nation is weak.

A united army is strong.

A divided army is weak.

A united force is strong.

A divided force is weak.

United men are strong.

Divided men are weak.

A united unit is strong.

A divided unit is weak.

¹²Unity works because it enables you to win every battle you fight.

Still, this is the foolish goal of a weak leader.

Avoid battle and make the enemy's men surrender.

This is the right goal for a superior leader.

The best policy is to attack while the enemy is still planning. **2**

The next best is to disrupt alliances.

The next best is to attack the opposing army.

The worst is to attack the enemy's cities.

Attacking Problems

1Your organization requires management.

A united organization is successful.

A divided organization is unsuccessful.

A united department is effective.

A divided department is ineffective.

A united team is productive.

A divided team is wasteful.

Devoted employees are dependable.

Indifferent employees are undependable.

A united effort is exciting.

A divided effort is painful.

Unity works because it enables your organization to solve the problems it encounters.

This still doesn't make you a great manager.

Avoid creating problems, and accomplish your goals.

This is the right goal for a good manager.

2It's best to solve problems before they are created.

The next best is to untangle procedures.

The next best is to invest in solutions.

The worst is to try a complete reorganization.

⁵This is what happens when you attack a city.
You can attempt it, but you can't finish it.
First you must make siege engines.
You need the right equipment and machinery.
It takes three months and still you cannot win.
Then you try to encircle the area.
You use three more months without making progress.
Your command still doesn't succeed and this angers you.
You then try to swarm the city.
This kills a third of your officers and men.
You are still unable to draw the enemy out of the city.
This attack is a disaster.

Make good use of war. **3**
Make the enemy's troops surrender.
You can do this fighting only minor battles.
You can draw their men out of their cities.
You can do it with small attacks.
You can destroy the men of a nation.
You must keep your campaign short.

⁸You must use total war, fighting with everything you have.
Never stop fighting when at war.
You can gain complete advantage.
To do this, you must plan your strategy of attack.

Look what happens when you completely reorganize.
It looks great as a plan, but it will not succeed.
First, you must reinvent the processes needed.
You need the right people and resources.
This can take months and creates more problems.
You try to work around the problems.
After more months of work, you still won't make progress.
Everyone involved gets impatient for results.
You then try to throw money at the problems.
This undermines your credibility and effectiveness.
You are still unable to make progress.
This approach is a disaster.

3 Make good use of your management time.
Let your people abandon poor practices.
You can solve problems with minor changes.
You must lure people away from their entrenched positions.
You do this gradually, a little at a time.
You can overcome any opposition.
You must keep your goals simple.

Once committed to a solution, throw everything at it.
Never give up when tackling a problem.
You can always find a competitive advantage.
To do this, you must plan your approach to problems.