

HUBBARD COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE  
Saint Hill Manor, East Grinstead, Sussex

HCO POLICY LETTER OF 22 AUGUST 1982

Remimeo  
All Orgs  
All Management  
Personnel  
All Executives  
All Staff

BATTLE PLANS

A "Battle Plan" is defined as:

A list of targets for the coming day or week which forward the strategic planning and handle the immediate actions and outnesses which impede it.

Some people write "Battle Plans" as just a series of actions which they hope to get done in the coming day or week. This is fine and better than nothing and does give some orientation to one's actions. In fact someone who does not do this is quite likely to get far less done and be considerably more harassed and "busy" than one who does. An orderly planning of what one intends to do in the coming day or week and then getting it done is an excellent way to achieve production. But this is using "Battle Planning" in an irreducible minimum form as a tool.

Let us take up definitions. Why is this called a "Battle Plan" in the first place? It seems a very harsh military term to apply to the work-a-day world of admin. I did not select this term, it sort of grew up by itself amongst Sea Org executives. But it is a very apt term.

A war is something that happens over a long period of time. The fate of everything depends on it. A battle is something which occurs in a short unit of time. One can lose several battles and still win a war. Thus one in essence is talking about short periods of time when one is talking about a Battle Plan.

This goes further. When one is talking about a war, one is talking about a series of events which will take place over a long period of time. No General or Captain, for that matter, ever won a war unless he did some strategic planning. This would concern an overall conduct of a war or a sector of it. This is the big upper level idea sector. It is posed in high generalities, has definite purposes and applies at the top of the Admin Scale. (Ref: HCO PL 6 Dec 70, Personnel Series 13, Org Series 18, THIRD DYNAMIC DE-ABERRATION.)

Below strategic planning one has tactical. In order to carry out a strategic plan one must have the plan of movement and actions necessary to carry it out. Tactical planning normally occurs down the org board in an Army and is normally used to implement strategic planning. Tactical planning can go down to a point as low as "Private Joe is to keep his machine gun pointed on clump of trees 10 and fire if anything moves in it."

"Middle-management" -- the heads of regiments right on down to the Corporals are covered by this term -- is concerned with the implementation of strategic planning.

The upper planning body turns out a strategic plan. Middle-management turns this strategic plan into tactical orders. They do this on a long term basis and a short term basis. When you get on down to the short term basis you have Battle Plans.

A Battle Plan therefore means turning strategic planning into exact doable targets which are then executed in terms of motion and action for the immediate period being worked on. Thus one gets a situation whereby a good strategic plan, turned into good tactical targets and then executed, results in forward progress. Enough of these sequences carried out successfully gives one the war.

This should give you a grip on what a Battle Plan really is. It is the list of targets to be executed in the immediate short term future that will implement and bring into reality some portion of the strategic plan.

One can see then that management is at its best when there is a strategic plan and when it is known at least down to the level of tactical planners. And tactical planners are simply those people putting strategic plans into targets which are then known to and executed from middle-management on down. This is very successful management when it is done.

Of course the worthwhileness of any evolution depends on the soundness of the strategic plan.

But the strategic plan is dependent upon programs and projects being written in target form and which are doable within the resources available.

What we speak of as "compliance" is really a done target. The person doing the target might not be aware of the overall strategic plan or how it fits into it but I assure you that it is very poor management indeed whose targets do not all implement to one degree or another, the overall strategic plan.

When we speak of coordination (Ref: HCO PL 1 July 82, MANAGEMENT COORDINATION), we are really talking about conceiving or overseeing a strategic plan into the tactical version and at the lower echelon coordinating the actions of those who will do the actual things necessary to carry it out so that they all align in one direction.

All this comes under the heading of alignment. As an example, if you put a number of people in a large hall facing in various directions and then suddenly yelled at them to start running they would, of course, collide with one another and you would have a complete confusion. This is the picture one gets when strategic planning is not turned into smooth tactical planning and is not executed within that framework. These people running in this hall could get very busy, even frantic, and one could say that they were on the job and producing but that would certainly be a very large lie. Their actions are not coordinated. Now if we were to take these same people in the same hall and have them do something useful such as clean up the hall, we are dealing with specific actions of specific individuals having to do with brooms and mops -- who gets them, who empties the trash and so forth. The strategic plan of "Get the hall ready for the convention" is turned into a tactical plan which says exactly who does what and where. That would be the tactical plan. The result would be a clean hall ready for the convention.

But "Clean up the hall for the convention" by simple inspection can be seen to be what would be only a small portion of an overall strategic plan. In other words the strategic plan itself has to be broken down into smaller sectors.

One can see then that a Battle Plan could exist for the ED or CO of an org which would have a number of elements in it which in their turn were turned over to sub-executives who would write Battle Plans for their own sectors which would be far more specific. Thus we have a gradient scale of the grand overall plan broken down into segments and these segments broken down even further.

The test of all of this is whether or not it results in worthwhile accomplishments which forward the general overall strategic plan.

If you understand all the above (it would be a good thing to do it in clay) you will have mastered the elements of coordination.

Feasibility enters into such planning. This depends upon the resources available. Thus a certain number of targets and Battle Plans, to an organization which is expanding or attempting big projects, must include organizational planning and targets and Battle Plans so that the organization stays together as it expands.

One writes a Battle Plan, not on the basis of "What am I going to do tomorrow?" or "What am I going to do next week?" (which is fine in its own way and better than nothing), but on the overall question, "What exact actions do I have to do to carry out this strategic plan to achieve the exact results necessary for this stage of the strategic plan within the limits of available resources?" Then one would have the Battle Plan for the next day or the next week.

There is one thing to beware of in doing Battle Plans. One can write a great many targets which have little or nothing to do with the strategic plan and which keep people terribly busy and which accomplish no part of the overall strategic plan. Thus a Battle Plan can become a liability since it is not pushing any overall strategic plan and is not accomplishing any tactical objective.

So what is a "Battle Plan"? It is the doable targets in written form which accomplish a desirable part of an overall strategic plan.

When one is talking about "Mini-programs" in an org, one is actually talking about small Battle Plans at the lowest tactical levels. These must be based upon a middle-management tactical plan and this in turn must be based on a strategic plan.

The understanding and competent use of targeting in Battle Plans is vital to the overall accomplishment that raises production, income, delivery or anything else that is a desirable end.

It is a test of an executive whether or not he can competently battle plan and then get his Battle Plan executed.

L. RON HUBBARD  
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