

## **MARKETING AS WAR**

In the good marketing plan, there is always a description of competitors. It can usually be found at the end of the plan, but the basic part of the plan is devoted to the further description of the market, its various segments and billions of the statistical data.

In the marketing plan of the future much more pages will be devoted to competition. It will contain careful "opening" of each rival on the market. There will be a list of strong and weak sides of competitors, and a plan of how to be protected from competitors and to attack others. Probably, this plan will contain the file on each of the key experts of each competitor's company.

It means that experts in marketing should be ready to wage war. More and more often, the successful marketing companies should be planned as military operations. The strategic planning will become more and more important. Companies should learn how to attack competitors and to bypass them from flanks, how to defend the positions, and know when and how to apply the "guerrilla tactics".

The main thing here is the correct choice of competitive strategy, which corresponds to your situation. The following principles form a very simple strategic model of the company's survival in the 21-st century:

Defensive wars are waged by the leaders of the markets. The most aggressive leaders are ready to attack themselves using fresh ideas.

As a classical strategy of defense, we will take "Gillete" company's example. Every two or three years, it produces new shaving systems to replace the old ones. At first, there were razors with two edges - "Atra". They were replaced by the "Sensor" – shaving system with a new high-tech element. The "Sensor" was replaced by razors with three edges - "Mach 3". The company goes forward; competitors have nothing to catch on.

The offensive war – the strategy for a company number 2 or 3 in a category. The first principle here is to avoid strong sides of a position of the market leader. The company must find a weak place of the leader and to aim its attack to this point.

“Papa John’s Pizza” became the most fast-growing network of pizzerias in America. This company attacked weak place of “Pizza Hut” – the components. John Schnatter, the founder of “Papa John’s” carried out the massed advertising campaign in which it was announced that his pizzas contained the best ingredients. They have the best tomato sauce, the most tasty cheese and so on. His concept “The components are better - the pizza is more tasty” brought wonderful results, because other pizzerias could not make their pizza from “the most qualitative components” any more.

New or smaller players, which try to be fixed in a category, wage flank war, avoiding large battles. This strategy usually means entering the non-mastered territory and assumes an element of surprise. Usually, it is a new idea, for example, popcorn for gourmets.

When the 19-years-old M. Dell found a small computer company he knew, that he could not compete with existing firms for a place on retail market. However, the rules of the branch of that time said, that computers should be sold in shops. Any firm did not believe, that buyers could entrust the delivery of such valuable goods to any post trade company. M. Dell broke this rule. He spent flank attack and in five years built the company with a 800-million dollars turnover.

The “guerrilla war” - a shelter for small firms. The main principle of this war is the necessity to find a market, which is small enough to be protected by the company.

The most interesting “guerrilla wars” occur on the islands of the Caribbean sea. All of these islands compete with each other for the right to receive as much tourists as possible. Grenada is one of the most southern Caribbean islands. It tries hard to win the share of tourist business. As the island was the last to join this game, it looks practically untouched. There are very few overflowed beaches and concrete structures on it. Actually, all the buildings are not much higher than a palm tree. All these permitted the authorities of Grenada to develop the strategy of “non-spoilt by a civilization island”, “the way the real island of the Caribbean sea should be”.

In order to achieve success, a company should start to effort toward competitors. It should search for weak places in their positions and carry out the marketing attacks, aimed at competitor’s weakness.