

# **THE ART OF BUSINESS WARS**

## **Battle-Tested Lessons for Leaders and Entrepreneurs From History's Greatest Rivalries**

**DAVID BROWN**

**DAVID BROWN** is the host of the award winning *Business Wars* and *Business Wars Daily* podcasts. He formerly anchored the public radio business show *Marketplace*, and has worked as a radio journalist for more than 30 years. He is an experienced public speaker, and a contributor to shows including NPR's *Morning Edition* and CNBC's *Power Lunch*. He is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, and the Washington and Lee University of Law.

The Business Wars podcast website is at: [www.wonderly.fm/businesswars](http://www.wonderly.fm/businesswars).

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**MAIN IDEA**

Pepsi vs. Coca-Cola. McDonalds vs. Burger King. Pizza Hut vs. Dominos. Starbucks vs. Dunkin' Donuts. Uber vs. Lyft. Who doesn't love a great business war? When two big brands go to battle, some great stories emerge. Business wars are battles, every bit as intense as when nation goes against nation.



What's really interesting about business wars, however, is the fact the same strategies which military leaders have used for centuries, work in business wars as well. In particular, military strategists have long studied the Chinese general Sun Tzu, who lived and waged war sometime around 500 B.C. Even though he included tips about chariot-fighting which might not be all that relevant or useful today, much of what he wrote applies to business wars.

Experience is the greatest teacher. If you want to wage and win a business war, look to the valuable strategic lessons of history's greatest military strategists. You might be fighting for market share rather than your life, but careers and livelihoods are on the line.

*"The longer you can look back, the farther you can look forward."*  
 – Winston Churchill

*"Move not unless you see an advantage; use not your troops unless there is something to be gained; fight not unless the position is critical."*  
 – Sun Tzu, The Art of War



THE 9 PRINCIPLES OF BUSINESS WARS		THE SUN TZU PRINCIPLE	
1	Never expect a warm welcome from other players when you start a war	"The general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his mind before that battle is fought."	Page 2
2	Being first to market is not as key as striking at the right moment	"In war, let your great object be victory, not lengthy campaigns."	Pages 2 - 3
3	It's logistics and the strength of your supply chain that wins wars, not rousing speeches or great leaders	"To fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting."	Page 3
4	Positioning your business in the spot that matters most is very important	"The skillful fighter puts himself in a position which makes defeat impossible."	Page 4
5	Be nimble, and ready to change whenever and wherever the market goes: nothing is forever	"Take advantage of the enemy's unreadiness, make your way by unexpected routes, and attack unguarded spots."	Pages 4 - 5
6	Look for a single, timely stroke which makes competitors irrelevant	"In war, avoid what is strong and strike at what is weak."	Page 5
7	Be willing to be ruthlessly deceptive if that's what it takes to win	"There is a proper season for making attacks with fire, and special days for starting a conflagration."	Page 6
8	The best marketing is to give your customers a product they believe in	"He will win whose army is animated by the same spirit throughout all its ranks."	Pages 6 - 7
9	There is always business to be done – even in the worst of times	"Just as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions."	Pages 7 - 8