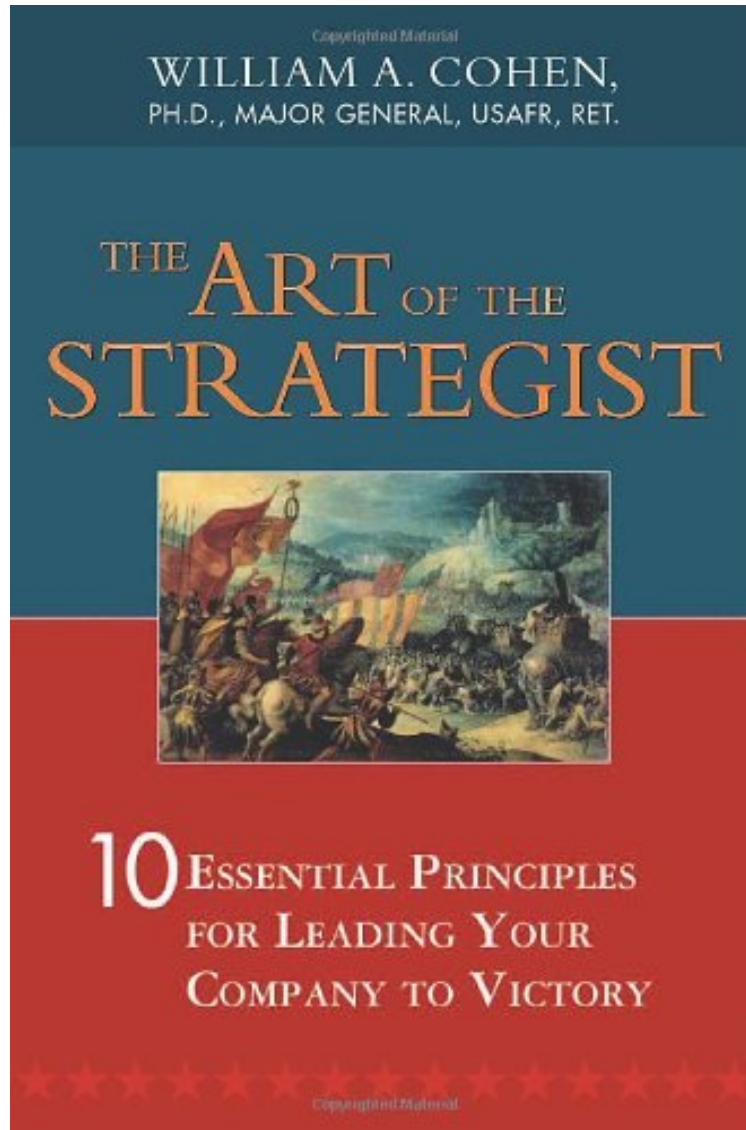


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The Art of the Strategist: 10 Essential Principles for Leading Your Company to Victory

William A. Cohen Ph.D.

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William A. Cohen Ph.D. : The Art of the Strategist: 10 Essential Principles for Leading Your Company to Victory before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Art of the Strategist: 10 Essential Principles for Leading Your Company to Victory:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. SuperficialBy M. S. LevyStarted off interesting but faded fast.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A journey to "the other side" of strategy's complexityBy Robert MorrisWilliam Cohen's wide range of interests is explained by the variety of positions he has held throughout his

career thus far. Currently, he is founder and president of The Institute of Leader Arts. He is also a retired major general from the U.S. Air Force Reserve. After graduating from West Point, Cohen flew 174 combat missions in A-26 aircraft in the Vietnam War. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross with three oak leaf clusters, and the Air Medal with eleven oak leaf clusters. He has written 53 books, including *The Stuff of Heroes*, *The New Art of Leader* and *The Art of the Strategist*. His latest is *A Class with Drucker*. He also has an M.B.A. from the University of Chicago and M.A., and Ph.D. degrees from Claremont Graduate University. In this volume, Cohen responds to questions such as these: 1. Why is strategy the key to success in any enterprise? 2. What are the essential principles of strategy? 3. Why and how must strategy be tailored to the given competitive environment? 4. How to seize a decisive advantage and then sustain it? 5. How to use strategic positioning? 6. How to formulate multiple, simultaneous alternatives prior to a major initiative? 7. How to practice timing and sequencing? 8. How to respond to a crisis? 9. How can the essential principles of strategy be applied most effectively? 10. To what extent are these principles universal? To Cohen's substantial credit, he devotes relatively little attention to the "what" of organizational effectiveness and concentrates almost entirely on how to achieve it. In the Preface, he asserts that "tactical implementation should be directed toward implementing the right thing - a good strategy. Good implementation of a bad strategy is doing the wrong thing in the right way. It is optimizing the kind of approach that will eventually lead to defeat, not to triumph." In the business world, an inappropriate strategy (however effectively it may be implemented) will eventually lead to failure, not success. In this context, I am again reminded of what Cohen's graduate school professor and mentor, Peter Drucker, observed in 1963: "There is surely nothing quite so useless as doing with great efficiency what should not be done at all." I especially appreciate Cohen's provision throughout his narrative of dozens of real-world examples to illustrate his key points. Within each chapter devoted to a specific essential principle, he includes a list of suggested action steps to achieve a specific objective. In Chapter 2, for example, here is what he recommends to ensure that an organization gains, and keeps, its competitive advantage: 1. Analyze the situation carefully. 2. Seek hidden opportunities and new solutions. 3. Act now! 4. Act boldly. 5. Keep the pressure on. Granted, none is a head-snapping revelation. Cohen is a pragmatist who places greatest emphasis on achieving the desired result(s). He explains each of the previously listed five points within a context and cites a specific situation that illustrates the importance of that point. Each chapter begins with one or more appropriate quotations. In Chapter 7 in which he explains how to prepare multiple, simultaneous alternatives (i.e. a scenario of contingencies), he offers these quotes: From Genesis 13:9: "If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right, then I will go to the left." Mao Tse-Tung: "To achieve victory we must as far as possible make the enemy blind and deaf by sealing his eyes and ears, and drive his commanders to distraction by creating confusion in their minds." Obviously, Mao Tse-Tung had read Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, one of Cohen's favorite sources. To assist his reader's understanding, he also concludes each chapter with a "Strategist's Log" section that serves as a summary of those points and thus facilitates a review of them later. From the beginning, Cohen establishes a personal rapport with his reader, functioning as a tutor whose approach is informal and supportive rather than highly structured and pedantic. He prefers to identify options and suggest possibilities rather than insist or even assert. As I read this book and others he has written, I view him as a companion on my journey of discovery. Without ever being intrusive, Cohen proceeds from one chapter to the next, connecting ideas and refining insights with both rigor and sensitivity. He believes (and I agree) that effective leadership is both an art and a science. What he refers to as the "art" of the strategist suggests a level of thinking that can only be reached after formal training in both induction and deduction as well as mastery of various skills such as situation analysis and problem solving. The analytical process becomes art only when it has formulated and then transcends meticulous craftsmanship. In this context, I am again reminded of an observation by Oliver Wendell Holmes: "I would not give a fig for the simplicity this side of complexity, but I would give my life for the simplicity on the other side of complexity." Cohen's purpose in this brilliant volume is to accompany his reader during a journey of exploration within the dimensions of strategy. The ultimate destination? The other side of strategy's complexity. Bon voyage!

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Valuable Resource for Strategic Thinking By DrBopStrategy (like leadership) might well be typified in the same way Mark Twain described the weather: Everybody's talking about it, no one is doing anything about it. While there is already a bountiful harvest of materials covering the strategy landscape, retired Air Force Major General William A. Cohen, Ph.D., has made a valuable, highly readable, and practical addition to the strategist's arsenal. Perhaps surprisingly, General Cohen is an avid contrarian; very early in the book he rightfully takes on the silly notion of likening business to war. (A topic I also wrote about in 1996.) And he rails against the folly of trying to divine strategy from either statistical analysis or simplistic market stratification. While there *are* fascinating accounts of military history in this general's book, they appear alongside equally well-researched tales from the contemporary business world (with some personal and historical political tales as well). The anecdotes serve to illustrate instructive strategic brilliance and stupidity, not as blueprints of strategies to imitate. As Cohen relates early in the book, he "researched the greatest strategists and strategic thinkers of the millenia [including] strategists from both East and West over a period spanning more than 7,000 years of recorded history, in almost every country on earth...." Well, the "almost every country on earth" part does seem to be a stretch, but beyond this hyperbole the book is well grounded in

a wide variety of useful examples from many fields, places and times. DECEPTIVE SIMPLICITY As I remind my own clients, the critical part of strategy is to do strategic *thinking* before undertaking strategic planning. And Dr. Cohen's ten universal principles prime the strategic thinking pump. Admittedly, a quick skimming of these principles might well elicit a ho-hum response. After all, 'Keep Things Simple' and 'Exploit Your Success' just don't scream "ground breaking." But to dismiss these principles as either obvious or old hat would be a mistake. As with most clearly stated principles, Cohen's are easy to grasp superficially, more difficult to appreciate at a deeper level of meaning, and far more challenging to actually put into faithful practice. Fortunately, Cohen puts substantial meat on these little bones. He offers bountiful food for thought in a book that is engaging, frank, wide ranging and highly digestible. Read this book to gain valuable and useful against-the-norm insights into forming and applying strategy. Don Blohowiak author, Strategy Clarified And Simplified, available exclusively on .com (ISBN: B00008OHT1)

"The Art of the Strategist" shows clearly how superior strategy trumps other factors in almost every competitive arena. Renowned strategy expert William A. Cohen, whose considerable experience in the military, corporate, and academic sectors forms the basis for "The Art of the Strategist", presents the timeless lessons of: Commitment to objectives; Seizing and maintaining initiative; Economization and massing of resources; Surprise; The indirect approach; Simplicity; Multiple alternatives; Security; and Exploitation of success.

"His[Cohen's]abridged versions of famous military campaigns and battles are the book's greatest appeal". -- Cecil Johnson, syndicated columnist Cecil Johnson, syndicated columnist: "His [Cohen's] abridged versions of famous military campaigns and battles are the book's greatest appeal. History buffs particularly will be delighted by his interpretations." About the Author William A. Cohen (Pasadena, CA) is an authority on leadership and strategy formulation and deployment. He gives speeches and seminars for the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, the Air War College, the FBI Academy, all four armed services, and corporations from Boeing to The Cheesecake Factory. He is the author of The New Art of the Leader, The Wisdom of the Generals, and How to Make it Big as a Consultant.