

We had five factors from purpose to landscape to climate to doctrine to leadership and somehow I had been jumping from purpose to leadership and missing three of them. Despite what I had read, there existed two very different forms of why that mattered — purpose and movement — and we weren't even considering movement. We had no maps of the environment, no visual means of describing the battle at hand and hence no understanding of our context. Without maps, I didn't seem to have any effective mechanism of learning from one encounter to the next or even a mechanism of effective communication. The tools that I was using were woefully inadequate in all regards. Whilst situational awareness might be critical in combat, for some reason it seemed absent in almost all business literature that I had read.

I knew we had been making decisions in a vacuum, I knew a lot was gut feel, I knew we had communication issues and finally I knew our learning was haphazard at best. But did situational awareness really matter in business? We were doing well, and maybe just copying lessons from those greats would suffice? I'd also heard others talk about how execution was more important than strategy and execution was something we were good at. Maybe strategy just wasn't important? Maybe I was worrying about nothing? Our results were positive, we were growing and we were making a profit.

I started to imagine what it would be like if there was a landscape but somehow I was unaware of it. I decided to use the analogy of chess to make this comparison since the common perception of CEOs in business publications is one of grand masters playing a complex game.