

military campaigns was different from what I was doing in business, but how? I put a map and a picture of chess board side-by-side and started to look at them. What is it that made these maps useful?

The first, and most obvious thing, is that they are visual. If I was going to move a piece on a map then I could point to where it was and where it needed to go. Navigation was visual but that was normal. Except, I realised it wasn't. When people stopped me in their cars to find their way to the nearest petrol station — this was 2004 and GPS was still not everywhere — if they had no maps then I would give them directions. This invariably took the form of a story — “drive up the road, turn left, turn right, take the second turning at the roundabout” — along with equal amounts of guilt later on that I had sent them the wrong way. This use of storytelling has a long history and was the norm for navigation by Vikings. At some point, at various different times, cultures had found maps to be more effective. When I looked at our strategy documents, all I could see was a story.

The second thing to note with a map is it is context specific i.e. the battle at hand. You learn from that context and how pieces move in it, in much the same way you learn from games in chess. However, in order to do this you need to know the position of pieces on the map and where they can move to. But position is relative to something. In the case of a geographical map it is relative to the compass i.e. this piece is north of that. The compass acts as an anchor for the map. In the case of a chess board, the board itself is the anchor as in this piece is at position C1 or B3. This gave me six absolute basic elements for any map which are **visual representation, context**