

So how did I know that what I was copying would be right?

Furthermore, even if it was right then how did I know it would be right for my business? When you think about military history, there are many moves that have been learned over time from one battle to another e.g. flanking an opponent to suppressing fire. These are context specific as in relevant to the battle at hand. In other words you don't flank an opponent when an opponent isn't at the point you're flanking. But there are also many approaches that are not context specific but more universally useful. For example, training your soldiers to fire a rifle is universal. You never hear a General shout "Ok, we're going to use suppressing fire which means you all need to start learning how to fire a rifle". They already know.

These universal approaches are my standard ways of operating, the doctrine that we follow. But if I cannot see the landscape then how do I know whether an approach is universal or context specific? In one battle just because a general may have won by flanking an opponent then it doesn't mean ordering my troops to flank the opponent is going to work every time. This may be completely the wrong thing to do. I can't just simply copy others even if they are successful because I don't know if that success was due to them being wise or just plain luck nor whether our context is the same.

Unfortunately, copying the wise men and women of business who had been successful was all that I had done. I had even heard other people talk about how they had tried to copy this or that approach and it had failed and I had heard others say that it was their "execution that had failed". Well what if it wasn't? What if they had copied one context