



Strategies vs. Tactics: Which One Is Superior?

Three Month Vacation Podcast

Sean D.: Hi this is Sean D'Souza, from Psychotactics.com and you're listening to the three month vacation podcast. This podcast isn't some magic trick about working less. Instead it's about how to really enjoy your work and enjoy your vacation time. It's the new year and most of us are already thinking of not making new year resolutions so why do we hate new year resolutions so much? We hate it because it doesn't work and the reason why it doesn't work is because we're not doing it right. Today we're going to talk about strategy versus tactics. Your new year resolution so far has probably been a tactic, not a strategy.

Back in 2008, I decided I wanted to play badminton. I wanted to lose a bit of weight, but I also enjoy sport. You see, I don't really like to do any exercise, I don't like going to the gym, I can barely tolerate walking, I only do it because I'm listening to something and it helps me pass the time, but sport? You ask me to play some soccer, or as I call it, football, or cricket, or badminton, well that's more up my street. I go to play badminton every day at 9 o'clock and then by 12 o'clock I'd be back. Now I wasn't playing all the three hours, I was playing just a couple of hours, but as you can tell, that's quite a decent workout. What happened at the end of a couple of months?

I didn't lose any weight. How could that be the case? How can you run about like a crazy nut, for two hours, five days a week and not lose any weight? The problem was I was reading it as a tactic, not as a strategy. I'd go and play for those hours every day and then I'd get back and I'd eat a little of this and a little of that and pretty much I was consuming as many calories as I was burning and doing it every single day. After several months, I was exactly where I started, but not only did I goof up on the food, I was also goofing up on how I approached the game. After three months, I had so many aches and pains because I wasn't doing stuff right and I gave up the game.

Now I still have my racket with me, I still have my shoes, I still have the badminton shuttle I was playing with when I went from C player to B player which was quite difficult by the way.



That is what today's podcast is about. It's about the difference between strategies and tactics. You've probably figured out the difference between strategies and tactics anyway. Tactics are like a new year's resolution. You decide you want to stop smoking, you want to go on a diet, you want to do something and it's that instant moment of deciding that you want to do something and then you move in a different direction.

Tactics might seem like just that one moment and strategy might seem like a longer period of time, but there's more to strategy than just the period of time and that is that there are different elements that feed into that strategy.

When you look at something like what we're doing right now in podcasting, when I did podcasting back in 2010, I had what you call a tactic. I recorded a podcast and I put it up and people came there and they listened to it and that was it. However, this time around it's a strategy, so it's not just a podcast, it has different elements involved.

There is the podcast, there is the cartoon that goes with the podcast, there are the transcripts, there are the pages that have to be created for the podcast. There is the music that has to be put in, the music has to be bought obviously, it has to be tailored, it takes a couple of hours to put in all the music and then in this age of distraction, we have to get people to go there, to listen to the podcast, to subscribe, to download, to continue to listen to them on a regular basis. This is something that I plan to be doing for a long time and that's the difference between a strategy and a tactic.

You have to think about all of the elements that are going to make it work, just like in badminton. It didn't just involve me going there and playing for a couple of hours, it also involved what I was going to eat, how I would improve my game so I wasn't struggling all the time and also how to not injure myself, because I'm an expert at doing that. By simply showing up and playing badminton, that was a tactic. By this point, you're probably wondering, do tactics matter or does strategy matter? Which one is more important? That takes us to the second part of the podcast, where we figure out which one is more important.

The thing with tactics, is that it becomes a springboard. A lot of people think once they listen to the whole concept of strategy versus tactic, that tactics are not important. Tactics are very important, but they're important as the springboard, they're the thing that light your fire, that start everything going.

Once that is going, you suddenly get into a state of complete chaos. Page 2 of 7



That's what tactics often do, they lead to chaos. You figure out, "I have to do something. I have to maybe do more webinars, or I have to do more workshops or I have to get more clients" and immediately you're out of your comfort zone and you're wondering what should you do, how should I go about it? At that point, we enter into the new year resolution zone.

We decide we're going to do something and we don't have the strategy and the strategy becomes critical. Now that we have our tactic, now that we've decided we're going to go in a certain direction, we've changed paths, now we have to sit down and work out a strategy and one of the best ways to work out a strategy is to educate yourself.

Let's say you've decided to write some books on kindle. The first thing that you have to do is to be able to write really well. A tactic would be to just sit down and start writing. Nice, but quite difficult because there's a lot of editing that you end up doing, you end up wasting a lot of time.

A strategy would be, how am I going to make this more fun and less stress and you know you're actually in the middle of a strategy when you end up with a little more stress. You'd have to probably do something like a story telling course or an article writing course or a fiction writing course because that's what you're ending up doing, right? You're physically [inaudible 00:07:38] a book, so you need to know how you're going to sell the book, how you're going to write the book and you're educating yourself. This is what you do with your kids. You wouldn't say, "Okay let's get some books and learn some stuff and then we're done." No, you have a long term strategy. You send them to school for a duration, you teach them stuff on field trips, you educate them all the time and that becomes a long term strategy and the parents that have a better strategy end up with smarter kids and the parents that don't have a strategy end up with kids that are always trouble and struggling all along the way.

There are many definitions for tactics versus strategy and one of the definitions is tactics is the how and strategy is the what. For me, the difference is just that tactics are quick, there's stuff that you have to do right now, and strategy is the long term journey. It's all the stuff that you have to do to get to that destination. Both of them are equally important in their own way, but without the strategy it's unlikely that you're going to get there.



For the third part of this podcast, let's talk about real examples. Let's say you've got situations and they're not working out too well for you, how would you execute tactics and strategy? Many years ago, around 2004, I was at this internet conference and I was selling from the podium, I don't do a lot of that anymore, but that's what I was doing and I noticed that a lot of people were making these offers and there was a stampede to the back of the room. I didn't have a strategy for that day. I just showed up on the podium and I used a couple of tactics and it didn't work at all. In fact it failed miserably, so I had to come back to New Zealand and then work out what did I do wrong? How should I have gone about it?

I created a strategy. In 2008 we went to Chicago and when I spoke from the podium, there were 250 people in that audience and that day we earned 20,000 dollars.

If you sat there in the audience, you would have thought, how did he do it? How did he sell more than all the other speakers? If you were just looking at that one piece, that pitch that was done at the end of the speech, you'd have thought that there was some magic in that pitch.

But it wasn't. A lot of the planning had gone into what we had done before the speech, before we even got to that podium, before I even started to say a single word. There was a whole strategy. There was the stuff that we sent in advance, there was the stuff that we gave at the event itself, including a handout that the participants got the previous night. There was the video when the presentation actually started and what the video was supposed to do, there were the breaks in the middle of the speech where I just took a break for five minutes and what I did on that break and this was all part of the strategy.

A tactic would be just to make that pitch, a strategy would be all of the points that were required for that pitch to work. This brings up a very important point and that is anticipation, anticipation of chaos. When we execute a tactic, we're just doing what the situation requires at that point in time. When we go through a strategy, we're anticipating that things will go wrong, and how do we fix it? How do we recover and how do we recover quickly?

Over the years at Psycho Tactics, things have gone wrong and have gone badly wrong. Through most of 2013 and part of 2014, we had several hacker attacks on our website.



I don't know why, maybe it's because it's quite popular. It's in the top 100,000 in the Alexa rating and maybe that's why, but nonetheless, we didn't have a strategy in place and so we had to put a strategy in place and that involved moving all the websites from one type of system which was [Joomla 00:12:08] over to Wordpress and reinforcing everything. As part of our strategy, we now have to redesign the whole look because times have changed.

We also have to look at the text and whether it reflects who we are right now. Our tactic was to make sure we were no longer in the blacklist and that clients were not compromised in any way, but our strategy was longer term, our strategy would take several months, probably over a year to execute and that is the core difference between a strategy and a tactic. To come full circle, I am now walking every day. I don't go for badminton and maybe I will at some point in time, but I walk every day and I walk for an hour, hour and twenty minutes, every single day.

The strategy is very simple, I have all my audio whether it's music or podcasts or languages and then at the end of that walk I get rewarded with a coffee. Then I turn around and come back. A part of that system is also to anticipate when things are wrong. Some days I don't feel like it or I have too much work to do in the morning and so I get my wife Renuka to call me at the office and disconnect the phone and so then I have to go back home and we go for a walk. You may not have a companion, you may not have a situation, you may not have this and that. The point is that you have to work out a strategy that is going to work for you without excuses.

This takes us to our action plan and you really have to do just one thing. You have to figure out what you're going to do in the new year. What are the three things you're going to do this year? What strategies are you going to follow? Is it just going to be another tactic where you go out there and find someone who says, "I can bring you 10,000 new customers," or you can get to the top of Google instantly? That's not the way to go. The way to go is to go step by step, implementing your strategy and that's how you meet with success. That is how you get to your three month vacation. As you can figure out, once you start taking long vacations, even that requires a strategy, or you just come back more tired than ever before.

Get your three points, what are you going to cover this year and then what are the strategies?

Start with one, work out the strategy, move to the next and the next. Start executing your strategy and not giving up. With that, we come to the end of this episode. To get more information, go to psychotactics.com/podcast. You want to subscribe to that newsletter because we send it out only twice a month, but you get a notification when we have any goodies and we do have goodies. You also get notifications of the new podcast, just in case you haven't been following it for a while, or something's happened.

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