

DR. LOIS FRANKEL

Get and keep the job you want.

This month I asked Jim Egerton, president and founder of Chess-Now, Ltd., a provider of corporate training programs, to give clients and friends of Corporate Coaching International insight into his concepts for using chess as a vehicle to practice strategic decision-making. His seminar, *Winning in Business with Chess-NowSM*, uses chess to help business people practice and improve their decision making. I've often coached people - both men *and* women - to learn to play chess as a means of honing their strategic thinking skills. I think you'll find Jim's coaching tips useful.

Life and business can require complicated decision making. Chess is an excellent tool for evaluating complex decisions because it requires the ability to look at an opportunity, visualize an outcome and assess the value in making a decision. A typical game of chess could produce any one of an estimated 10^{120} possible positions which is more than the 10^{79} electrons in the universe. There's no way you can prepare for or predict every move, but thinking strategically can help you win *any* game you play.

Here are a few ideas for how you can use chess to help you make better business decisions.

Know the strengths and weakness of your associates. In chess, each piece has a unique function. At work, employees, co-workers, or competitors have unique skills and abilities. Take time to understand how they work so that you can maximize your interactions with them, allowing you (and your employees and co-workers) to achieve peak performance.

Rely on your experience. Most chess games are won by having a material advantage - or experience. This allows players to decide which pieces to keep or exchange, thereby increasing chances for victory. The same is true in the workplace. When making decisions, take into consideration what worked in the past, what didn't, and what are considered "best practices" in your field.

Know about and be alert to competitive threats. Chess tactics such as pins, double attacks, overworked pieces, decoying and clearance are threats to winning a game. In business, threats include changes in consumer preferences (think automakers), new technology, and new businesses. These are detrimental to you winning at *your* game if you don't see them coming. The best corporate strategy can often be destroyed by overlooking a simple tactic of your opponent.

Look for repeating patterns that the champions use. The best business leaders (and chess players) follow the moves of champions. In chess, two pieces that move alike lined up on the chessboard is a powerful "battery." In business, when two people think alike they can exert considerable power or control over a project or idea. "Removing the defender" in chess leaves you vulnerable to attack. In business, change at the CEO level means all direct reports lose key support.

Figure out the phase of the game. Every business and chess game goes through different phases (opening, middlegame, or endgame). If you think your company is still in the opening (startup phase) when you have been in business for years, you are probably following the wrong strategy. Starbucks and United Airlines are examples of companies confused about the phase of their business game and therefore not applying strategies that match the phase.

If you have questions for Jim or would like to learn more about his unique seminars, visit his website www.chess-now.com.

Until next month, stay well.

Lois

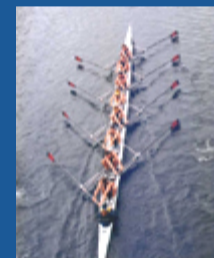
Lois P. Frankel, Ph.D.



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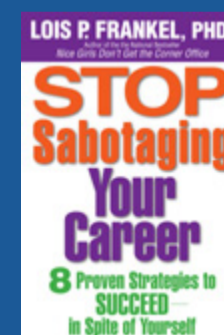
Corporate Coaching International is preparing a cost-effective interactive webinar series facilitated by its team of subject-matter-experts. Watch this space next month for more information.



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