



# Option generation

## 1: To Catch Something, First Let It Go

Do not attack, rather let them go and follow close behind.

*What would happen if you let your competitor go?*

## 2: Exchange a "Brick" for a "Jade"

Give something on which you place relatively little value in exchange for something you value much more.

*What "brick" can you give away?*

## 3: Invite them Onto your Roof, Then Remove the Ladder

Entice them to enter your domain and remove their escape route. This moves the competition into your domain.

*How can you invite your adversary into your domain and remove their means of escape?*

## 4: Stay Out of Their stronghold

Purposefully avoid entering their stronghold. This will preempt resistance or, if they come out of their stronghold to attack, will give you an advantage.

*What is your adversary's stronghold and what would it mean to stay out of it?*

## 5: Partner with Someone Unexpected

Ask yourself "who else benefits if I win" to see how you might partner with "competitors" or with others outside of current consideration.

*Who else benefits if you win?*

## 6: Find a Third Party Influence

Figure out who else could influence your target and have them do so to your advantage.

*What third party can influence your adversary?*

## 7: Launch a Two-Front Battle

Join forces with an ally in such a way that it forces a two-front, or multi-front battle.

*With whom can you launch a two-front battle?*

## 8: Replace Resistant Relationships with a Supportive One

Find out what critical relationships resistance depends on and work on that relationship to turn it into your favor.

*What critical dependency (relationship) can you remove?*

## 9: Bundle or Disaggregate

Combine things or separate things into their parts so as to alter how they perceive you and to remove yourself from direct comparison.

*What can you combine or disconnect to confuse your adversary?*

## 10: Lock up Resources

Rather than engage in a head-on confrontation, analyze what is fueling resistance and lock up its supply.

*What inputs can you control?*

## 11: Close the Exits

When you enjoy a moment of influence, take full advantage of it and prolong it.

*What moments of power can you capitalize on?*

## 12: Remove Key Support Structures

Do not take on resistance head-on but rather focus on the key supports which provide the integrity on which resistance depends.

*What are the "structural beams" of resistance and how can you attack them?*

## 13: Appeal to a Key Weakness or Desire

Identify on a high-priority need or weakness and appeal to this to remove resistance.

*What strong need or desire if adversary's can you capitalize on?*

## 14: Beat the Grass to Startle the Snake

Launch a "false" or small-scale advance to understand what response a real advance would trigger.

*What small incursion could launch to gather information about your competition?*

## 15: Seize Opportunity Out of Trouble

When trouble strikes, others may freeze or retreat. Capitalize on this by advancing.

*Where is there trouble and what would happen if you advanced where others retreated?*

## 16: Retreat to Advance Later or Elsewhere

Rather than persisting with your current fight, retreat to preserve your strength and apply it somewhere else or at some other time.

*From where can you retreat in order to win later?*

## 17: Seize the "Deer in the Headlights" Moment

Look for a moment when resistance is stopped by a conflicting agenda or its distracted and move forward in the face of inaction.

*What will your competition not do or defend?*

## 18: Appear Crazy

In order to avoid being perceived as a threat, appear to be following an unrealistic plan or appear incapable of fulfilling it.

*How can you appear "crazy"?*

## 19: Let Them Fight

When your adversaries are engaged in conflict, refrain from acting as this might unify resistance. Stay out of the fray, let them fight, and move in later.

*What would happen if you did not push forward?*



## Option generation (cont.)

### 20: Sacrifice One Front to Win Another

Allow your adversary a victory on one front to preserve, even strengthen, your competitiveness on another front.

*What can you sacrifice?*

### 21: Reveal your Strategy

Openly reveal your strength, weakness, or strategy to encourage your adversary to call off his attack (e.g., because he fears your strength or no longer considers you a threat).

*What would happen if you revealed your strategy in the open?*

### 22: Move Early to the Next Battle Ground

Identify the next battleground, set up a defensible position there, and wait for the others. When they arrive, use your superior position to win.

*Where is the next battle ground?*

### 23: Exchange the Role of Guest for That of Host

Take an unthreatening stance then incrementally build trust and influence.

*How can you move up the decision-making chain of your customers' adversary?*

### 24: Borrow a Road

Look for someone who has better access to your objective, create an alliance with them to gain passage.

*Whose road could you borrow?*

### 25: Create a Façade then Move the Action

Create a façade and that appears to be the real thing, then move the action somewhere else.

*If your current activity were an empty shell, to where could you move the action?*

### 26: Injure Yourself

Injure yourself to either (1) win trust or (2) avoid appearing a threat.

*How would the competition respond if you injured yourself?*

### 27: Embrace What Others Abandoned

Adopt a forgotten or abandoned model, idea, or technology to differentiate yourself and build power.

*What has been abandoned?*

### 28: Send a Covert Message

Rather than attack directly, aim your effort at a different target. This will send a covert message to your real target that that will alter his behavior.

*What "covert message" could you send?*

### 29: Clamor in the East; Attack to the West

Feign an approach the defense of which exposes your target to a different (true) attack. Fake left, move right.

*What fake attack could you launch; would this expose them to an alternative attack?*

### 30: Take the Unorthodox Path

When others are focused on the direct, orthodox approach, use an indirect, unorthodox path to them by surprise.

*What is the obvious path; what if you took the unorthodox path?*

### 31: Hide in the Open

Make your actions appear normal (i.e., that appear to be everyday actions) so that others will not see something new is coming.

*What are the every day activities in which you could hide your actions?*

### 32: Create Something Out of Nothing

When the direct approach (i.e., one using existing players) is ineffective, create a new player or entity "out of nothing" to change the dynamic in your favor.

*What player do you wish was in the game?*

### 33: Smile

Because a threat will generate resistance, choose an approach that is, or appears to be, friendly. You thereby transform resistance into pull.

*How could you appear or truly be helpful?*

### 34: Coordinate the Uncoordinated

Combine and coordinate independent elements within your environment to orchestrate much greater power.

*Who could you coordinate?*

### 35: Focus Influence on the Leader

Rather than influence the entire organization, identify and incent just the leader(s). This is like leading a horse by directing its head.

*What unique needs does your adversary's leader hold?*

### 36: Link Strategies

Rather than execute one strategy, execute multiple (simultaneously or in succession). If one strategy is not effective, the next one is. If the next one is not effective, the following one is.

*What strategies could you combine?*