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Prefatory Note

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"To be successful today, a company must become competitor-oriented. It must look for weak points in the positions of its competitors and then launch marketing attacks against those weak points. Companies will have to learn how to attack and to flank their competitors, how to defend their position, and how and when to wage guerilla warfare."

—Al Ries and Jack Trout

A revolutionary approach to marketing in today's competitive environment has been unveiled by Al Ries and Jack Trout, respectively CEO and President of Trout and Ries Advertising. The United States' foremost marketing strategists, Ries and Trout have applied more than 2,500 years of winning military strategies to today's marketing situations. In their book *Marketing Warfare*, they argue that successful marketing plans, strategies, and tactics outwit, outflank, outmaneuver, and overpower the competition.

The five articles presented in this issue of *Draftings* stem from papers written for my fall 1992 semester class "Marketing Strategy," during which Ries and Trout's military/marketing strategies were thoroughly examined. These papers draw on case histories of the athletic shoe, telephone, diet cola, tractor, and light beer marketing "wars."

Four warfare terms are employed in the articles and should be briefly explained for the reader of this first Department of Marketing *Draftings* publication:

In *Defensive Warfare*, the number 1 company in a specific industry "attacks itself" by introducing new products to make its old ones obsolete (and keep competitors on their toes).

In *Offensive Warfare*, the number 2 and 3 companies find a weakness in the leader's strength and attack at that narrow point—preferably with a single product.

In *Flanking Warfare*, the 4th-, 5th-, and 6th-ranked firms attack a segment of the market that is uncontested by the top 3 firms. Ideally, this attack comes as a complete surprise.

In *Guerilla Warfare*, firms in the remaining 94 percent of the industry seek to carve out niches in the marketplace for themselves. Such niches must be small enough to defend and usually involve specialized products.

The development of this volume provided a valuable learning experience for the writers, editor, and advisor. I hope that readers will enjoy reading about five different and fast-changing industries, be enlightened by the marketing strategies undertaken, be stimulated to learn more about marketing, and be surprised to learn the extent to which free enterprise truly is . . . marketing warfare.

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EDITORS NOTE: *In our current world, events in war progress much more rapidly than in the past. The same is true of marketing. Four years has elapsed since these essays were written. In that time, markets and products have changed. As such, while much of the writing remains valid, some suggestions are obsolete.*