ABSTRACT

A missing dimension in the formal education of a construction project manager is in the understanding of politics and its role in project management. This dissertation is intended as a primer to fill the gap left from the more formal university curriculum in construction project management.

War is equated with politics since both activities relate to conflict. A project manager and a war general share a common goal, i.e., to succeed in their respective fields through the use of tactics and strategies. This study contends that when the project tasks are many, when the resources are stretched and when victory is urgent, expert use of politics often tips the balance between winning or losing.

A survey of construction industry experts was conducted to ascertain their perceptions regarding Sun Tzu's war management principles and their applicability to construction politics. Employing a Delphi poll technique, a cross impact study concluded that:

(a) politics is a controlling criterion in project management worthy of being ranked with the traditional cardinal criteria of time, cost and quality, and
(b) Sun Tzu's school of project management has been evolved from this research through a device of strategy building.