

TACTICS OR STRATEGY: A HOMAGE TO MARIO BENEDETTI



SABIN AZUA
Partner and CEO
B+I Strategy
sazua@bmasi.net

www.bmasi.net

Despite the immortality of his magnificent body of work, I did not want to miss the opportunity to pay a modest tribute in honour of the poet Mario Benedetti following his recent death. His poetry has accompanied me throughout my own life, having served as a permanent source of inspiration. His position as a “social poet” never ceases to overawe me, which stemming from a profound solidarity with others and dedicated to their happiness, led even to the creation of forums for the exchange of differing views. Indeed, his markedly farsighted writings, rooted in heartfelt simplicity and warmth, not only are a compendium of love and commitment, but are a force for change as well.

Aside from his vast contribution to other notable fields, I should like to apply some of his poetry to the field of business management. From his infinite transformational humanism, I hope that the Master will forgive me for committing this immense sacrilege.

There are few manifestations so clear, simple and yet humane, as the concept of the strategic proposition set forth in Benedetti’s poem entitled *Táctica y Estrategia*. **“My tactic is to observe you, learn about you and love you as you are. My tactic is to talk to you and listen to you, and with words erect an indestructible bridge....My strategy instead, is even deeper and simpler. My strategy is that some day, I know not how, nor why, but that you finally come to need me”**. As with all profound business strategy, this poem, by way of tactics, gives direction to love and creates innovative and solid mechanisms to achieve the end goal.

We need to salvage the concepts of solidarity, community-mindedness and transformation for organizations as Benedetti embodies in his poems. **“If I love you, it is because you are my love, my accomplice and my everything. Out in the street, shoulder to shoulder, we are much more than just the two of us”**. Benedetti effectively synthesizes the commitment we are striving to promote amongst all people in our respective organizations in realizing a shared project. By building with the people around us, we must create a solid foundation from a place of love and cooperation in order to encourage development. By doing so, the quality of human interaction, the collective commitment and joint responsibility, all confer greater sustainability to our business projects far into the future.

The search for differentiation based on the design of a unique management model is one of the fundamental strategic requirements of an entrepreneurial project. **“I know that for the first time I shall be strong enough to forge a bond of friendship with you so breathtaking, that the neighbouring territory of love, so desperate itself, shall look upon us with envy and there shall be excursions organized to come and ask us how we managed it”**. The uniqueness of an organization’s business model is what enables continuous enhancement of competitiveness.

I am convinced that we must guarantee the exploratory spirit in our organizations, a spirit advocated by Benedetti in his poems. **“Some things from the past disappeared, but others open a gap into the future and those are the ones I wish to highlight”**, or **“When we believed that we finally had all the answers, suddenly, all the questions changed”**. These two thought-provoking contributions alert us to be awake and aware of the momentous changes taking place around us and to be unceasingly curious enough to explore new paths and new future possibilities that perhaps we are unable to see today.

In these times of uncertainty, let us be guided by Benedetti and act with enthusiasm and conviction to be able to face the future of our organizations. It is now time to renew our hopes and steadily move forward with our strategic plans. **“Propaganda is a formidable seller of dreams. I do not wish to be sold someone else’s dreams; I simply wish to fulfil my own”**. We ought to heed the poet and keep true to our business project, adapting our tactics and rhythms to conditions as they present themselves, while ever-mindful of our project’s future development.

Personally, and despite the ever-increasing bad news swirling around us, I espouse Benedetti’s optimism when he declared: **“If the heart should tire of loving, then what use is it?”** The poet reminds us that there is no antidote for optimism. May we renew our commitment to the future with enthusiasm, fortifying connections between people and organizations



Mario Benedetti
(Paso de los Toros, Tacuarembó-Uruguay 14 de septiembre de 1920
Montevideo-Uruguay, 17 de mayo de 2009)