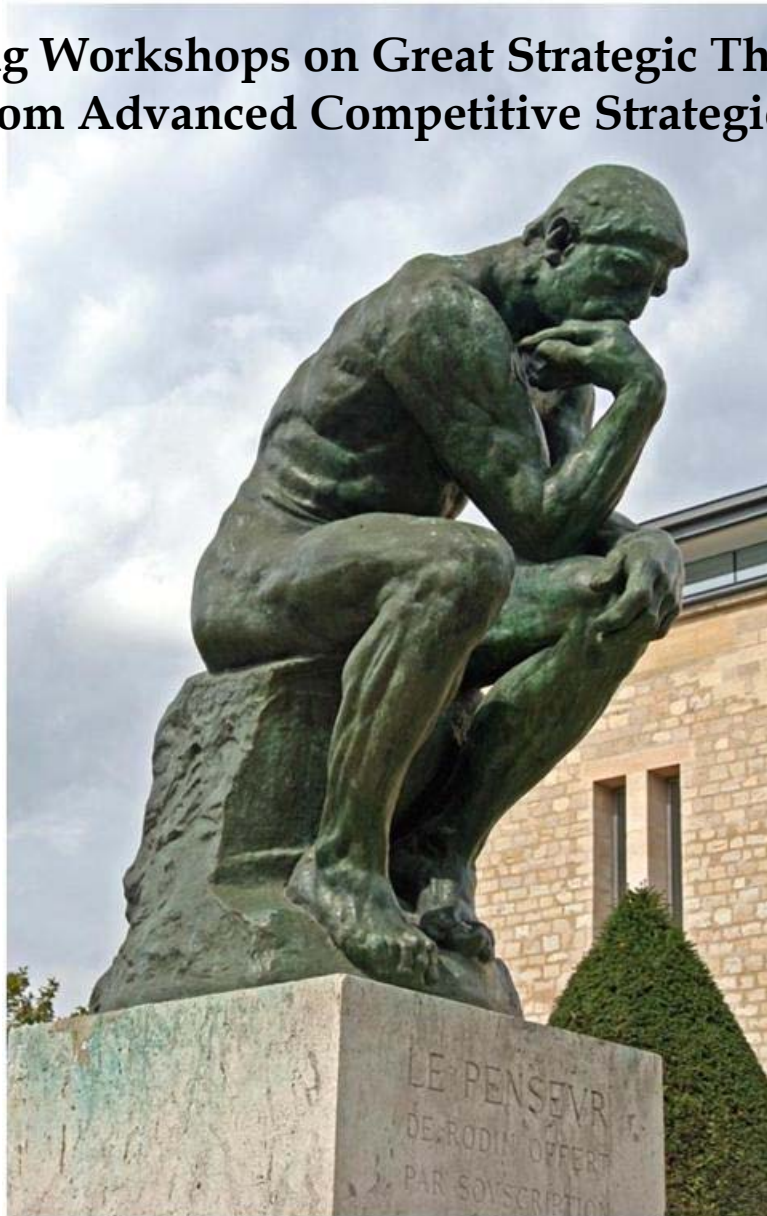


# How to Think Better

Exciting Workshops on Great Strategic Thinking  
from Advanced Competitive Strategies



**Advanced Competitive Strategies**  
Whatifyourstrategy.com

# How to Think Better

## Exciting Workshops on Great Strategic Thinking

Ordinary thinking leads to ordinary decisions and produces ordinary results.

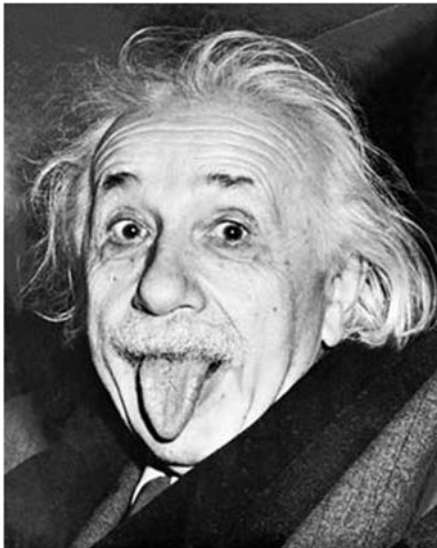
Great thinking leads to great decisions and produces great results.

The highest-leverage investment you can make is in the quality of your company's thinking. That's [what ACS workshops help you achieve.](#)

We offer a variety of provocative, interactive, downright entertaining programs. Adjustable to fit time slots from an hour to several days, customizable for your audience and situation, these programs open eyes, challenge brains, enhance skills, and build teams.

### **Brain Food: How to Get Out of the Box, Think Strategically, and Amaze Your Friends**

*Ideal for general business audiences  
and non-specialists*



### **Strategy Gone Tame: Why Smart Strategists Choose Bad Strategies**

*Ideal for strategists, decision-makers, and  
advanced audiences*



**Winning: A Hands-On, Live-Fire**  
**Introduction to Business War Games**

*Ideal for strategists, decision-makers, and  
internal subject-matter experts*



**Why Strategies Fail**  
**Human Strategists, Biased Tools**

*Ideal for strategists, decision-makers, and  
general business audiences*



**Customization and Capabilities**

*Customization options to make your workshop yours*



*How to Become  
a Strategy Superstar*



*Putting Your Strategy  
to the Test*



*Uh-oh.  
How We Get into Trouble*

**ACS workshops are not death by PowerPoint or the same old, same old.** They're highly interactive. They include case studies, lively exercises, and the same simulation technologies we use to conduct advanced business war games for *Fortune* 500 companies. And they're fun! That's why participants give our workshops superb ratings. See [Praise for ACS Workshops](#) and [About the Facilitator](#).

Of course, ACS workshops are non-commercial.

# Brain Food

## How to Get Out of the Box, Think Strategically, and Amaze Your Friends

*Ideal for general business audiences and non-specialists. Brain Food works for people with little business experience while still being challenging for those who have been around for a while. It's a great way to build a common culture of strategic thinking.*

**Brain Food** is not about cheerleading, unsubstantiated magic, miracle-diet strategies, brow-beating, or some mysterious secret that can only now be revealed. It is not about uncovering an obscure factoid or prescribing a one-size-fits-all strategy. It is not about improving the bottom line by 0.0371 percent. It is not a lecture.

**Brain Food** is about improving strategic-thinking skills, applicable every day and starting right away. It combines competitive dynamics, deep experience, psychological research, world-class simulation technology, and learning-by-doing.

In this workshop:

- You will see, and experience, how common errors in thinking lead to, shall we say, unintended consequences.
- You will learn about the competitive-strategy equivalent of financial fundamentals.
- You will combine your expertise and imagination with techniques such as competitive role-playing to gain surprising new insight into businesses you thought you knew well.
- You will leave this thought-provoking, action-packed workshop energized with powerful new perspectives on the decisions you make.

# Strategy Gone Tame

## Why Smart Strategists Choose Bad Strategies

*Ideal for strategists, decision-makers, and advanced audiences. Strategy Gone Tame takes a rigorous, provocative look at competitive strategy and business success. It helps those in senior positions challenge conventional wisdom and make much better strategy decisions.*

People trigger crises and price wars; people buy high and then can't sell low; people due-diligence strategies only to watch a competitor swoop in from left field. Glorious companies suffer, shrivel, and die. Surely that's not what their strategies called for.

In **Strategy Gone Tame** you'll see how human biases and flawed tools lead smart, dedicated strategists to make strategy mistakes. You'll see why companies can get better results by upgrading their thinking than by upbraiding their personnel.

We cover topics including these:

- How the conventional tools you've seen many times can cause, rather than cure, bad strategy decisions.
- Garbage-out does not result only from garbage-in. See how precision-in can do the same thing.
- Why do upstarts beat incumbents? How well do we predict competitors? How do we fall into groupthink, and how can we prevent it?
- Business war games and strategy simulations produce actionable surprises. If we know our businesses so well, why does that happen? And what do those actionable surprises look like? You'll see, because you'll experience them.

# Winning

## A Hands-On, Live-Fire Introduction to Business War Games

*Ideal for strategists, decision-makers, and internal subject-matter experts. Winning immerses participants in an actual business war game. It teaches the technology of war-gaming and brings your competitive-strategy skills to a new level.*

Business war games sound cool. That's because they are. Business war games are more than a way to escape the tedium of gigabyte spreadsheets and death by PowerPoint. They are a way to put your knowledge of your business to better use.

With business war games strategists can achieve surprising new insights into businesses they know well. And by the way, business war games are not about war.

In **Winning** you will participate in an actual business war game. You will be a strategist for a company in the automobile or hotel industry (or perhaps your own industry), and with your teammates you will do your best to win. Oh, there's one complication: other participants will strategize for your competitors, and they'll do their best to win too.

In this workshop you will learn:

- Why business war games work where conventional strategy development doesn't.
- What business war games are good for.
- The essential elements of successful business war games.
- How to design or select a business war game for your company.
- What strategists — including you — have learned from business war games.

# Why Strategies Fail

## Human Strategists, Biased Tools

*Ideal for strategists, decision-makers, and general business audiences. Why Strategies Fail investigates why the most-sophisticated strategists in the history of industry choose strategies that fail. It demonstrates how fallible humans wielding biased analyses unintentionally cause problems, and how those same humans can consciously fix those problems.*

Many of the world's largest, most-respected companies have gone bankrupt. Why? It's not because they were stupid, careless, or complacent; on the contrary, it's in spite of them being smart, careful, and dedicated. Countless other companies lose ground, miss targets, and hobble careers.

It doesn't have to be that way.

**Why Strategies Fail** is thought-provoking. It doesn't tell horror stories of how some poor strategist messed up, leaving everyone glad not to be him or her. Rather, it gently, interactively, and good-humoredly demonstrates how our common human foibles and accepted conventional tools put all of us at risk for choosing strategies that fail. Best of all, it shows how to avoid the traps.

In this workshop you will learn:

- How analytic tools deceive us with rosy pictures of the future.
- How virtues like accountability and precision can be counterproductive.
- Why being human is a curable risk factor.
- Why looking at results isn't enough to know whether a strategy "worked."
- How to do better, painlessly.

# Customization and Capabilities

## Making Your Workshop Yours

We have a great deal of flexibility to make your workshop fit your needs.

### **Audiences**

We have delivered workshops on six continents to audiences from 10 to 600 people. Audiences from a single company or from many. Audiences of senior executives, middle management, or business-school students. Audiences speaking English, audiences needing simultaneous translation.

### **Length**

Our workshops can be adjusted to fit time slots from an hour to a day or two. That means you can use a workshop as an energetic, provocative event in a company meeting; you can insert a workshop in a management-development program at a corporate university; you can make a workshop an out-of-the-box experience for your department.

### **Aim the spotlight**

Getting out of the box. Competitors. Customers. Pricing. Consensus and team-building. Conventional wisdom. Decision-making. What-if scenarios. Etc. In your workshop we can aim the spotlight on those or other top-priority objectives.

### **Tailored to your industry**

We can customize a workshop simulation, including a war game, for your industry. We can make that customization merely have the “look and feel” of your industry or we can even calibrate a war game so that the workshop tackles a real problem you face.

### **The Top Pricer Tournament**

ACS has developed groundbreaking *Strategy Decision Test*<sup>™</sup> technology (patent pending) that we use in a contest called the Top Pricer Tournament. You and your colleagues can test your pricing-strategy skills against hundreds of other strategists. Are you the Top Pricer? Besides being fun, the tournament sets the stage for fascinating discussion about how to think better about competition, pricing, luck, and achieving success.

# Praise for ACS Workshops

ACS workshops get superb ratings, typically 4.5 or above on a 1-5 scale.

*"I interacted with Mark Chussil during a war game and strategy workshop he ran for our company in November 2011. I was extremely impressed by his personality, quality of thinking and preparation. This was the first time that he was visiting India and showed a great degree of cultural sensitivity which endeared him to the group. His focus on the task at hand and the outcomes needed were always sharp and he worked tirelessly to keep us all focused. I wish him all the best and hope to interact with him regularly."*

Arunabh Das Sharma, Executive President & Advisor Strategic Initiatives,  
Bennett Coleman and Co. Ltd.

*The war game designed and facilitated by ACS delivered two game-changing results. First, we were able to arrive at a decision on a very tricky and challenging subject where such a decision had eluded us for months. Second, we created a new cross-functional internal experience that is so groundbreaking that it has unleashed new energies in our team.*

C-level executive, multi-billion-dollar global company  
(names withheld by request for competitive reasons)

*Mark Chussil conducted a workshop on the strategic planning process at our company in April 2010. The workshop was designed to get participants to realize inherent human biases that have a deep impact on the outcome of strategic planning. Mark used numerous examples and engaged the participants in role-playing. Feedback from my team members was excellent. I recommend Mark's workshop to anyone interested in improving a strategic planning process.*

Cyrille Michel, Senior Vice President, Blount, Inc.

*This entertaining and thought-provoking workshop will change your strategic thinking in ways you will never expect.*

Bruce Hamilton, Director, Navigant Consulting

*"Mark Chussil challenges conventional wisdom, turns the status quo on its head, provokes the best 'what if' thinking, and makes sense out of nonsense! Engaging with Mark is evidence of one's wisdom and commitment to winning."*

Professor Nancy Kymn Rutigliano, MBA program at Empire State College  
(The State University of New York)

**(ACS Workshops) How to Think Better**

*Mark took a unique approach that really grabbed my attention. In addition to enlightening lectures, he made effective use of small group exercises that energized and focused our management group in ways I've never seen before. After just one day we made tangible progress planning a new direction for our company. It was a refreshing "outside the box" experience!*

Marketing executive, non-profit organization

*One of the best, most informative workshops I have attended.*

Strategist, manufacturing company

*Mark has a rare skill of being able to communicate complex topics clearly and simply. His talk to my MBA class for professionals on pricing strategy was the highlight of the term. These bright and demanding students learned more in one evening from Mark than they could have learned from reading a whole text book on the topic. Mark's intelligence, experience and wit combined to produce a fun and effective learning experience.*

Ed Warnock, award-winning MBA professor,  
the Atkinson Graduate School of Management, Willamette University

*Mark's webinar was fantastic. The most interesting part (to me) was the compare/contrast of war gaming with other types of analysis. Many thanks!*

Marc DiPaolo, Policy Advisor at Office of the Secretary of Defense (USA)

*Mark's approach is refreshingly different from the infotainment we typically see. Mark takes you right to the core of what strategy is all about. Rather than explaining SWOT, Ansoff, and Blue Ocean for yet another time, he makes you think about how you think. It is about mental models, groupthink, and pre-conceived ideas rather than the tools you already know. His approach is not about him giving you the "right" strategy, it is about ensuring that you choose a strategy option that will achieve what you set out to achieve. As far as I am concerned, that makes much more sense than the mainstream approach. You will have to activate all your brain cells to get the maximum out of this.*

Torsten Dahlöfer, Talent Development, Credit Suisse AG

*We got real insight into how our leaders perform as a team while simulating the pressures and conditions we face on a daily basis.*

Rick Marzolf, Vice President Manufacturing – EMEA, Kennametal Europe GmbH

# About the Facilitator

Mark Chussil is Founder and CEO of [Advanced Competitive Strategies, Inc.](#), a Founder of [Crisis Simulations International, LLC](#), Director of Research and a faculty member in the Strategy department at the [Boston Graduate School of Business](#), and a member of the visiting faculty at the [Indian School of Business](#).

A pioneer in business war-gaming and strategy simulation and a 35-year veteran of competitive strategy, Mark's technologies have won a patent and a best-in-class industry award. He has designed strategy simulations and conducted business war games for dozens of *Fortune 500* companies, in many industries, around the world.

Mark's business war games and simulations have helped ACS clients make or save billions of dollars. He was named one of 2010's [Top 100 Thought Leaders in Trustworthy Business Behavior](#) by [Trust Across America](#).

A highly rated and entertaining speaker who can run 20 million simulations before breakfast, Mark speaks about strategic thinking at conferences and in corporate workshops. He has written three books, chapters for five others, and numerous articles. (See many of Mark's articles and essays on [ACS' blog](#).) He has been quoted in *Fast Company*, *Harvard Management Update*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and other publications.

Mark earned his B.A. at Yale University and his M.B.A. at Harvard University.

**Advanced Competitive Strategies, Inc.**

1673A SW Montgomery Drive

Portland, Oregon 97201 USA

[info@whatifyourstrategy.com](mailto:info@whatifyourstrategy.com)

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Whatifyourstrategy.com