# *Journal of*
# Business
# Strategy

## Arts-based learning for business

Guest Editors: Harvey Seifter and
Ted Buswick

Highlights:

CEO interview with McGraw-Hill

Unilever – catalyzing change through the arts

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# Editor's note

In recent years, there has been a remarkable growth in the use of arts programs by businesses to meet a wide range of their organizational learning and employee training needs. In the USA alone, dozens of *Fortune* 500 corporations and countless smaller firms employ arts-based learning to foster creative thinking, promote the development of new leadership models, and strengthen employee skills in critical areas such as collaboration, conflict resolution, change management, presentation/public performance, and intercultural communication.

We therefore believe that the time is right for a journal to dedicate a full issue to the strategic implications and practical dimensions of arts-based learning in business.

Recent surveys consistently identify imagination, inspiration, inventiveness, improvisational ability, collaborative and inter-cultural skills, spontaneity, adaptability, and presentation as among the most sought-after attributes of business leadership. These qualities are frequently summed up in a single word – creativity. Clearly, artists have profound insights into creativity, gained from years of hands-on experience, backed by specialized training and fostered by carefully honed skills. Their knowledge represents a formidable resource, waiting to be tapped by companies in search of creative solutions and managers striving to enable, empower and engage their employees' imaginative and inventive powers.

The growing use of arts-based learning reflects a dramatic shift in the boundaries that previously defined the limits of experience deemed relevant to the business world – a shift triggered by profound technological and social changes that transformed the culture of business over the past decade by favoring companies inventive enough to find their own ways forward, flexible enough to respond quickly (and competently) to the unexpected, and spontaneous enough to lead change effectively.

This issue features separate interviews with three corporate leaders who have concluded, from their own direct experience, that there are valuable business lessons to be learned from the insights and skills of artists: Harold G. (Terry) McGraw, Chairman and CEO of The McGraw-Hill Companies; George Stalk, Senior Vice President of The Boston Consulting Group, Inc.; and James Hill, Vice-President (Home and Personal Care, Western Europe) of Unilever. We have also included an interview with two leaders who have spent years integrating arts-based learning into corporations, Harvey Seifter and Tim Stockil, to give our readers insight into the design, implementation, and impact of a broad range of these programs.

We then move on to a more specific exploration of arts-based learning in action. Maxwell Anderson takes the reader into the art world for an investigation of visual literacy and a Quality Instinct, explaining how both can benefit businesses. Michael Gold and Steve Hirshfeld break jazz improvisation into five behaviors – passion, autonomy, listening, risk and innovation – that are also crucial to businesspeople, and explain how jazz can contribute to their development in business. Richard Stock and John Osburn explain how they use techniques drawn from dance, theater, and music to quantifiably improve the performance of engineering students. Robert Steed explains how, over the past 17 years, he has developed theatrical replicas of internal business situations to help leaders understand their behavior.

Finally, we have a series of articles to help put learning-oriented arts-business partnerships in a broader context. In a brief article, Lotte Darsø summarizes the profusion of worldwide opportunities for learning about arts-business relationships. Kevin Daum, a successful entrepreneur with a theatrical background, explores the value of arts-based learning for entrepreneurs through case studies of individuals who adapted their careers in different arts to start successful businesses in seemingly unrelated fields. Michael Spencer explores what business and the arts need to understand about each other before business brings in artists.

Following the articles is an annotated bibliography. We sought contributions from experts currently working in this area. They recommend the books and articles that have been especially worthwhile to them, and explain why.

We deeply thank the *Journal of Business Strategy* and its editor, Nanci Healy, for inviting us to produce this special issue. We also thank the Arts & Business Council of Americans for the Arts and its Executive Director Gary Steuer, who have provided invaluable support to our efforts. We hope many of the readers will be sufficiently inspired and intrigued by what they read to follow up with direct contacts with some of our authors.

Harvey Seifter and Ted Buswick
June, 2005

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# Surfacing creativity through the arts: a short interview with Terry McGraw

## Harvey Seifter

Harvey Seifter is president of Seifter Associates, New York, NY and founder and director of Creativity Connection, a program of the Arts & Busines Council of Americans for the Arts.

When asked about the value of art-based training, Harold G. (Terry) McGraw III, chairman, president and CEO of The McGraw-Hill Companies, stated ''Creativity is essential because it is at the heart of innovation, and innovation is a growth driver and, therefore, a business imperative. That is why, for several years, The McGraw-Hill Companies has been using arts-based learning as a training tool in several key leadership initiatives.''

For example, the corporation's premier leadership development programs have utilized small chamber ensembles and jazz quintets to demonstrate principles of vision, shared leadership, and individual empowerment. They have used Shakespeare to illustrate the principles of human motivation and innovation and used theater exercises to instill the corporation's values.

For The McGraw-Hill Companies, the arts have served as a complimentary vehicle to more traditional learning approaches. They have helped to change attitudes by letting employees confront their assumptions in a nontraditional and nonintimidating environment. In other cases these tools have helped to develop a variety of skills including communication skills.

As with all of the training programs employed by the corporation, results are measured in a variety of ways, with a focus on performance as well as leadership at the individual, team, and market level. According to Mr McGraw, ''The results of using arts-based learning and training have been very positive for The McGraw-Hill Companies. Employees have been encouraged to adopt new approaches to problem solving and personal growth.''

The McGraw-Hill Companies integrates the use of arts-based training and organizational development tools with its philanthropic support of the arts, including initiatives like Creativity Connection (the first national program in the USA designed to foster arts-based organizational learning for business). ''The common element is a deep appreciation of the arts and their role in helping people both understand and improve our world,'' says Mr McGraw. ''Arts-based training is part of an overall strategy and commitment of the corporation to help 'surface' creativity.''

In addition to incorporating arts-based learning in leadership training and talent development, the corporation's approach includes awards programs that recognize and reward innovation by employees; partnerships with cultural institutions that enable The McGraw-Hill Companies to better serve its customers and markets through programs including *The McGraw-Hill Companies' Young Artists Showcase* on 96.3 FM WQXR, Carnegie Hall's CarnegieKids program, Macmillan/McGraw-Hill's relationship with ''From the Top,'' the Columbus Symphony Orchestra's Music Educator Award; and partnerships with arts organizations that provide opportunities for employee volunteerism, learning, and enlightenment.

Mr McGraw has made a commitment to these efforts. ''An essential part of the CEO's job is to make sure that the enterprise is developing fully the talent and leadership skills of its workforce, and the arts provide a wonderful opportunity for the personal and professional growth of our employees.''

# The view from the trenches: an interview with Harvey Seifter and Tim Stockil

Lois Bartelme

Lois Bartelme has been involved in business and education for over 30 years. She is retired from Collins Divisions of Rockwell International where she was the director of culture change and organizational development in the mid-1990s. She has been a corporate trainer, chief Learning Officer and Director of a Corporate University, Vice President for Learning Services for LIVEware5, a start up Internet company, and the President of her own consulting firm. She is currently an adjunct faculty member of Capella University where she teaches graduate programs in Training and Performance Improvement. She has a BA in English from Mt Holyoke College, an MA in Anthropology from the University of Alabama, and a PhD in Post-Secondary and Continuing Education from the University of Iowa.

P icture the CEO of your company reading a poem to the senior management team as a stimulus to new ways of thinking. Imagine your senior executives performing company legends through dance, sculpture or short skits to help build employee pride in the company. Visualize yourself and your colleagues painting a wall mural to help define the company's new vision. Sound improbable? Ten years ago – yes. Today – still improbable, but less so. More and more frequently, organizations are offering new and unexpected approaches to solving old problems by connecting artistic skills and processes to workplace issues.

## Leaders in the field

Harvey Seifter and Tim Stockil, located in different parts of the globe, are recognized experts in building bridges between people in the arts and people in business organizations. Harvey Seifter is the Director of Creativity Connection, a program of the Arts & Business Council of Americans for the Arts, based in New York City. Harvey's background is in the arts – a classically trained musician, he's spent twenty years at the helm of distinguished cultural institutions including Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and Circle in the Square Theater on Broadway. He is also the author of a highly regarded business book about collaborative management, and has taught on the Senior Executive Faculty of the Columbia School of Business. His counterpart, Tim Stockil, was until recently the Director of Creative Development for Arts & Business in the UK and is now the Managing Director of a new company called Ci: Creative Intelligence.

In recent interviews, Harvey and Tim agreed that during the past decade, a major broadening in the relationship between arts and business has occurred. Traditionally, arts-business partnerships have been defined by the transfer of skills and resources from corporations to arts organizations in the form of philanthropy, sponsorship and (more recently) social investment. These activities have benefited corporations and artists, as well their employees and communities. Both the Arts & Business Council of Americans for the Arts, founded in 1965 (the first such organization and a model for the dozens of similar councils that now exist all over the world), and Arts & Business UK, which was founded in London in 1976 and is an independent organization, played primary roles in building and sustaining these relationships.

## A change in the arts-business relationship

Many business leaders today still pride themselves on donating money to arts endeavors and encouraging their executives to lend their expertise by sitting on boards of directors, finding a return on their investment in goodwill in the community, increased visibility and marketing opportunities. In recent years, however, a dynamic new element has been added to the arts/business relationship – people from the world of art have begun to share their

expertise in creativity and high performance with the leaders of business. Today, poets, performers, painters and creative artists of many genres can be found helping companies meet their organizational learning needs by sharing their skills and perspectives with executives, managers and employees.

This new model of arts/business partnership is built on the transfer of artistic knowledge and insight into the creative process to the solution of business problems, and it is not surprising then to learn that both the Arts & Business Council of Americans for the Arts, and Arts and Business UK have played significant roles in the transition to a new, more symbiotic kind of partnership between the two worlds.

The recognition that the art world has capabilities that can contribute to business success has profound implications for both arts and business and for society as a whole. The two organizations have become the catalysts and the promoters for many major new programs designed to foster these new two-way relationships. Harvey and Tim, and their colleagues, are offering training programs and consulting services to companies and business leaders who want to foster creativity and change in their organizations, as well as connecting the players, and offering professional development programs to artists who aspire to apply their know-how to business.

## How the change developed

Harvey and Tim both identify the technological revolution of the 1990s as the primary catalyst for this profound shift. To remain competitive as the IT revolution emerged, companies increasingly required their workers to learn new skills. As Harvey eloquently expressed it, ''The IT explosion accelerated the rate of change beyond the capacity of people and organizations, as they were then structured, to readily adapt to and cope with those changes. At the same time, IT smashed out levels of middle management – pushing nonmanagerial employees closer to the action. These changes dramatically favored corporate cultures that put power and responsibility in the hands of those doing the work.'' Tim noted that, ''Simultaneously, the leaders in the arts were broadening their understanding of the potential relationship between arts and the business world and recognizing that the creativity that was fundamental to the arts was of value to the business world. The skills of the artist were applicable and transferable to the creation of innovative and high-quality products and services.'' As businesses began to search for new ways to cope with the accelerated pace of change in organizations, people like Tim and Harvey were helping them make connections to the arts.

There were some differences in the developmental trajectory of the new paradigm between the UK and the US. According to Tim, the transition in Britain was largely driven by a desire for skill acquisition, and was fueled by business consultants such as John Kao, Peter Drucker, and Tom Peters in the USA and Charles Handy, who encouraged the use of an arts model as the future of business. Harvey describes a much more varied and fragmented market; the robust development of arts-based learning in US corporations was largely driven by individual artist-entrepreneurs and business visionaries who considered themselves revolutionaries. There was a countercultural aspect of their drive to bring artists into corporations as change agents. There were a few in the UK who were looking beyond skills. For example, Rick Haythornthwaite, now CEO of Invensys, introduced a major change program using the arts when he was chief executive of Blue Circle Cement in 1998.

## Facilitating cultural change

According to both Tim and Harvey, while business interest in arts-based learning initially centered on skill development (with artists used as trainers in basic workshops designed to improve employee communication, presentational skills, etc.), the field has diversified in recent years. Harvey described the evolution, ''Leaders began to successfully look at certain techniques that artists have developed through practice of their craft that could be applied to business. Over time, the scope of arts-based work has broadened. Today, there is a spectrum of practice. At one end of the spectrum, improvisational theater is used to teach lawyers how to think on their feet in the courtroom; this is essentially skill-based. At the other end, we are designing programs that explore the creative process itself and how it can lead to creative outcomes in business. Visual artists are working with senior corporate boards to create physical models that express vision and map out the future. Poets are helping senior managers understand their corporate contexts and develop narratives that articulate a sense of mission and direction. It is not uncommon today to find musical ensembles demonstrating high-performance teamwork and jazz groups helping leaders strengthen their capacity to manage change.''

Adapting and transferring artistic skills to business activities can accelerate and facilitate cultural change in complex organizations. According to Tim, ''Companies move from personal development issues such as communication skills to team development and then to creating scenarios that imagine a future which in turn becomes reality.'' As Harvey says, ''Artists help organizations create and communicate images of their company, its direction, and its future. Such images contribute to internal and external integration across cultural barriers.'' This is a critical point, since the management of cultural change is becoming a key factor in the successful implementation of business strategy. Artists are uniquely effective at communicating across cultures and subcultures because they have learned to be adaptable. Many of the processes and skills that artists use to help them adapt to change are replicable in the world of business.

## Exploding the stereotypes

As we examine the impact of the arts on business, it becomes obvious that numerous stereotypes about the arts world must be exploded. Though clichés tell us that artists are carefree, laid back, free spirits, business is beginning to learn that they have far greater depth. One element of this depth is discipline. As Tim observes, ''People think of the arts as unstructured – but that simply isn't true. On a simple level, think about an orchestra, where the second violin doesn't want to play the notes. That is not an option; the violinist has to follow the score. Orchestral music is rooted in discipline. Even the sculptor, chiseling his block of stone, has to be disciplined or he or she would have a pile of rubble. Art is structured and requires self-discipline.''

Another factor relevant to business is the way that artists have created environments and processes that achieve both speed and quality in product development. Contrary to popular opinion, artistic endeavors are rarely slow and meandering. Both Harvey and Tim emphasize that quality is an area of almost obsessive concern for most artists, and they usually have to achieve it while functioning within rigid time schedules, adhering to short turnaround times, and coping with very limited budgets. The stakes are high – if the curtain is due to go up at 8 p.m., the performers have no choice but to deliver on schedule, and failure to achieve quality in performance will be instantly apparent to the audience. Combining all these factors makes it easy to see why Harvey calls artists ''quintessential problem solvers.''

## High-performance teams

Helping companies build teams and other collaborative structures is one area where artists have been particularly active and successful. In recent years, businesses have increasingly turned to ''high-performance'' teams to help solve problems created by the fast-paced rate of change in the workplace. As a result, employees have had to learn to participate in decision making and assume responsibility for many aspects of work that had previously

been the domain of managers. This is radically unfamiliar terrain for many corporations, but very familiar ground to many artistic enterprises.

During this period, Harvey was the Executive Director of Orpheus, the only orchestra in the world that consistently rehearses, performs and records without a conductor, and he became interested in the potential of the orchestra's unique work process in serving as a business model for high-performance teamwork. As Harvey began to study high-performance teams, he learned that highly fluid and flexible team cultures – like that found in Orpheus – are best at confronting rapidly changing conditions and engaging the creativity of their members. Team members are effective at balancing the tension of opposites. They are able (and encouraged) to switch between the roles of leader and follower – and slip fluidly from one role to the other. They are also able to simultaneously function as specialists and generalists. For instance, members of Orpheus not only master their instruments but work from the full orchestral score and lead rehearsals when required.

Harvey developed highly successful corporate training modules for Orpheus, which led to partnerships between Orpheus and companies in the USA, Europe, and Asia (notably a global relationship with Morgan Stanley) and projects with MBA programs in universities such as the Haas School of Business at the University of California at Berkeley, Tokyo's Hitotsubashi University International Center for Corporate Strategy and the City University of New York's Baruch College Zicklin School of Business.

When Harvey first began talking about the Orpheus Process as a source of learning for high-performance teams in Japan, he was met with skepticism. After all, Japanese teamwork in business was groundbreaking and world renowned. His research, however, led him to conclude that classic Japanese teams ''are designed to harmonize points of contact across essentially linear processes. They are characterized by relatively rigid hierarchies, with each person mastering a particular set of functions. When confronting the challenge of the unexpected or the unknown, these teams tend to inhibit, rather than empower, individual creativity and innovation.'' The widespread interest in the Orpheus Process in Japan is evidenced by the huge wave of publicity accompanying the publication of a Japanese edition of his book, *Leadership Ensemble: Lesson in Collaborative Management from the World's Only Conductorless Orchestra* in 2002.

Other artistic models are also wonderful sources of learning about teams. An improvisational ensemble in jazz functions in many ways similarly to a flight crew on the deck of an aircraft carrier in a storm, Harvey suggested. The ability to make swift decisions, switch roles as necessary, and maintain a delicate balance between members are all critical to mission success for both groups.

Tim concurs that teamwork is an essential ingredient for many artistic endeavors. Art is often thought of as a solitary pursuit, but the performing arts are obviously a group endeavor. Since rehearsal periods tend to be short, artists that don't know each other often find themselves in situations where they need to quickly learn to trust one another and function collaboratively on a high level. They have a product to deliver and there is no such thing as late deliveries, Tim observes. How do theater troupes accomplish the creation of a high quality product over a short six-week time frame? Tim suggests that this feat closely resembles the challenges faced by companies trying to develop new products ahead of the competition, and speculates that success has much to do with organizational culture.

For example, in the theatrical world, feedback throughout the rehearsal process is critical, and skills in this area are highly developed. A rehearsal is based on the principle of the

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director using feedback to obtain behavior change and a great performance out of the players. Actors take it in stride. What's more, on a very direct and personal level, actors confront audience response every night. ''I've never seen this quality of feedback in the business world,'' Tim observed. Tim points out that in business meetings people talk and talk, seated around tables. ''If players just sat down at the beginning of a rehearsal and talked they would never get anywhere. They have to take risks and experiment with different ways of playing each scene. Actors don't just talk about the scene; they stand up and create it or 'walk it through,' trying out different approaches. The culture of the rehearsal room is about taking risks in a safe environment.'' Tim says that artists can help corporate leaders build environments that foster the constructive use of feedback and rehearsing in their organizations.

## Integration with strategic direction

Tim and Harvey have each built a repertoire of programs and arts-based workshops that can be adapted to many organizational needs, and they collaborate with artists who work in many different styles, genres and forms, to help them adapt their models to a business environment. They both believe that the effectiveness of these programs to corporations increases in direct proportion to the degree in which they are integrated into the company's overall strategic direction and cultural framework.

In trying to foster arts-based learning in business, Harvey and Tim have encountered many challenges, mostly in promoting an effective cross-cultural dialogue about the creative process between business leaders and artists. Common language needs to be found, common objectives and benchmarks agreed upon, and both parties need to transcend their preconceptions about the other. Typically, companies initially view the prospective introduction of artists into the workplace and the use of arts-based models for organizational learning as a risky proposition. This is why arts-based training must be championed at (or at least sanctioned by) the very top levels of management and corporate governance. Support from the CEO obviously helps to sell arts-based initiatives internally, but both Harvey and Tim cite cases where a CEO has initially been on board, but subsequently lost interest, dooming the project to failure.

Both Harvey and Tim note that in many cases, the easiest way to convince companies to introduce arts-based learning models is to sell them on using high-profile keynote-style presentations by artists for conferences and other major corporate events. Since these gatherings are often used by top management to convey a sense of organizational direction, these presentations may become valuable metaphoric springboards for the subsequent use of more substantive hands-on arts-based interventions. In many cases, however, arts-based learning stalls at event-driven ''edu-tainment,'' thereby failing to become integrated with the vision and strategies of the enterprise or to yield lasting value. Tim suggests that it is typical, though not necessarily best, to start small (at the micro level) with a program destined to succeed and then gradually move the organization into a greater understanding of the benefits and value of cultural change on a larger scale (the macro level). Harvey agrees that this is sometimes necessary, and adds that corporations are more likely to gain a competitive edge if they are ''willing to make a strategic choice to build their creative and innovative capacity through arts-based learning.'' Some organizations have been very successful starting at the macro level.

## Talking the language of business

Since corporate executives are primarily concerned with the bottom line, adapting a model drawn from artistic expression might seem too touchy-feely to many executives. Tim and Harvey realize that half the battle is convincing corporate clients of the basic value of arts-based learning in terms of return on investment, but it is rarely easy to quantify ROI in this field. Measurement is difficult to do as there are many variable and subjective factors when assessing innovation and creativity.

Harvey says, ''This is still a very new field of practice. Over time it won't be so hard – but first, time will have to lapse before companies that use arts-based models for in a sustained and

meaningful way will develop the cultural attributes that will in turn confer competitive advantage. Ultimately, it will become apparent through their superior performance in the market.'' Tim adds, ''It all comes down to budget and confidence. You can imagine heads of Human Resources asking themselves, 'Do I want to allocate a large part of my training and development budget to a couple of actors and a sculptor?' The role of the arts consultant is to persuade executives to take the risk. The rewards will follow.''

When data is elusive, as it often is, Harvey encourages CEOs to view arts programs in action. Good arts-based work makes a compelling case for itself, he believes; seeing Orpheus in action often had this effect on senior managers. By sitting in the middle of a roomful of strong-willed musicians struggling to resolve complex issues, in real time, under great pressure, without a conductor, managers discovered that this collaborative process led not to safe or middle-ground solutions, but rather to radical innovation and the highest levels of excellence in performance.

Tim's advice to business leaders is to be bold. ''The people who take the boldest steps get the biggest return.'' In one large organizational firm five separate teams were operating on five different aspects of the business in five different silos. Their new leader, needing to bring them together and standardize processes, sought help from Arts and Business UK. One of the goals was ''to scare the team members rigid.'' By the end of the two days, the group was embracing an uncertain future together and had created a 45 minute performance with dancing, drama, painting and sculpture. Behavioral changes were immediately obvious and relationships improved. A few months later, the team took a risk and created a ''race track'' scenario with pit stops explaining the newly adopted changes to the rest of the company. (Tim points out that the typical presentation format in the past had been ''Death by PowerPoint.'') Expecting a few hundred people to walk through their interactive presentation, they were overwhelmed that, as the word spread, several thousand people showed up. As the leader of the team said, ''We could never have done it like that if we had not spent the initial two days discovering that we too could be creative.'' Can one measure this kind of impact using an ROI formula? Probably not, but the impact and behavioral change that resulted from this arts-based experience is indisputable.

### Fostering new styles of thinking

Ultimately, advocates of building strong relationships between arts and business believe that the arts world can encourage and foster new styles of thinking. As Harvey says, ''Sometimes it's as simple as giving people the opportunity to flex and stimulate their creative impulses. Although some companies may be uncomfortable with that, it is an important area of practice. As business environments push decisions into the hands of more people, the quality of the decisions is going to be a driving force in corporate performance. People who can respond flexibly and creatively to unexpected circumstances will thrive and so will their businesses.''

Tim approaches the development of new ways of thinking from the vantage point of the tension of the opposites. The marriage of business and the arts could be viewed as a balance between imagination and pragmatism, Tim believes. ''We need to combine the two qualities. Programs that explore these tensions – such as the differing perspectives of art and business, the need for creativity and the need for structure, the will to take risks and the

desire for control, and the will to lead with the requirement for participative followers – will help leaders learn to think differently. The arts world is comfortable operating within the parameters of these tensions; the business world is uncomfortable and tends to avoid acknowledging they exist.''

Tim cites the application of ''Forum Theater'' as an example of confronting such tensions. In Forum Theater, a facilitator, several actors and representatives from the organization create a play describing the company's problems. The facilitator stops the action periodically and encourages the audience to discuss ''What's going wrong here?'' and offer solutions to the problems. The actors then improvise the suggested solutions. Through an iterative process, the scenes are replayed and the audience redefines the problem and refines the solutions. In essence, says Tim, they are training themselves to adopt new behaviors. They are learning to think differently – and creatively – as they confront their issues.

Considerable growth and change in the business community has increased the need and demand for creativity. Tim notes that the Japanese Nomura Institute has a unique description of the four stages of Western business development – agricultural, industrial, informational (or technological), and finally, creative. Tim predicts that if you want to know what the future of business looks like, look to the arts and the manifestation of creativity. Tim and Harvey believe that creativity can be learned – and therefore taught. Who better to teach this skill than master artists who, as Harvey says, ''spend their lives training themselves in the disciplines and techniques of creativity, and then applying their creative knowledge to the development and marketing of their products?''

Both Tim and Harvey discovered that as the creative revolution in business gathered force, people who weren't interested in traditional arts support models became interested in how artists do their work. Many however just didn't understand the nature of creativity and continued to recruit only logic-driven, quantitative-oriented left-brain thinkers. Linking creativity to Howard Gardner's well-known theory of multiple intelligences, Tim feels that ''if you look at all the intelligences, such as spatial and interpersonal, they are all parts of the creative intelligence. It is the combination of intelligences that lead to creativity. Analysis and logic depend on creativity and you can't be creative without being analytical.''

## The arts – a reservoir of creativity energy

Tim's image of the way that businesses come up with new ideas is that of ''a funnel that opens at the bottom of the page. Ideas filter through the funnel from boards and senior management and are delivered by middle management. The art world works other way. It is like a champagne flute. You pour large numbers of different ideas into the bowl of the glass and at the stem you come to a point where decisions have to be made about which direction you choose to follow. This filtering process is repeated over and over as, for instance, a play develops scene by scene and act by act. The idea is to pour in as many ideas as we can – then go with the best options. There is no one right answer but many answers that could be right. We need to try them out.''

As Harvey sees it, ''Creativity is the single most sought after attribute in the business world today – not surprisingly, since it is unquestionably the driving force behind today's global economy. I think of creativity as the petroleum of the twenty-first century economy, and artists represent an unparalleled source of creativity.'' The arts world has always recognized this ''fuel.'' It is encouraging and exciting to see it become the driver for many new business initiatives, too.

# Solving business problems through the creative power of the arts: catalyzing change at Unilever

## Mary-Ellen Boyle and Edward Ottensmeyer

Mary-Ellen Boyle is an associate professor of management at Clark University. A sociologist with expertise in managing change, she studies social phenomena in which boundaries often blur, such as the arts and business connection. Her publications include *The New Schoolhouse: Literacy, Managers, and Belief* (Praeger 2001), and articles on organizational aesthetics and university-community partnerships. Edward Ottensmeyer is dean of the Graduate School of Management at Clark University. His earlier publications focus on strategy implementation processes and on the links between organizations and the arts. In 1995, he organized one of the first international conferences on the aesthetic elements of organizations.

Leading organizational change requires creativity and invites experimentation. Top level managers and organizational scholars alike often note that the essence of leadership is the effective management of change. New, compelling realities such as globalization, aggressive innovative competitors, and rapidly redefined industry segments mean that developing creative, entrepreneurial, responsive, learning organizations may well be the most critical skill required of contemporary leaders. However, agreeing on the desired end does not readily translate into agreement on the means to reach that end; experimentation is often required.

The key questions then become: What are the best methods available to leaders to orchestrate effective change? How can creativity best be nurtured in a particular organization at a particular juncture?

In this article, we examine one case in which a broad-gauged arts-based learning program has become deeply integrated into the workings of a business firm. Unilever, a global consumer products company, had begun to lose market share and recognized a need to improve its overall competitiveness by becoming more entrepreneurial. A corporate directive to create an ''Enterprise Culture'' was sent to all unit chairmen, giving them wide latitude to develop new, performance-improving initiatives. James Hill, then Chairman of Lever Brothers, might have chosen to bring in the reengineering experts, or to set up a consultant-led executive program on managing change. Instead, he turned to the arts, and started Catalyst, now widely regarded as one of the world's leading corporate arts-based learning programs.

We discussed Catalyst with James Hill, who until recently headed up Unilever Ice Cream and Frozen Food, one of the world's largest frozen food enterprises. We asked him specifically about his experience in drawing upon the arts to implement strategic change.

Mr Hill has a track record for delivering strong business results through an emphasis on innovation and creative marketing supported by tight cost control. He has become known for drawing upon the creative and motivational power of the arts and applying them in business. Mr Hill has served on the Board of the Royal National Theatre since 2002.

### Interview

#### How and why did you decide to implement Catalyst?

Hill – Lever Brothers was in good shape when I took over as CEO – it was a strong, profitable company. Nonetheless, I was looking for a way of helping them to improve their performance. I had a sense that, as strong as they were, the managers needed to open their minds to possibilities beyond what they were currently exploring. I wanted to bring more creativity into the organization.

*James Hill*, since April 2005, is Unilever Group Vice-President, Home and Personal Care, Western Europe, and is based in Rotterdam. He graduated from the University of Glasgow in 1980 with a Master of Arts in Social Sciences (Economics and Accountancy), and started his career with Unilever as a personnel trainee with Lever UK. In 1986, he switched to marketing, working as brand manager and senior brand manager in Lever UK. He has worked in Lever Spain, in Greece as Chairman of Lever Hellas, and in Belgium. He became Chairman of Lever UK in 1999, and, in 2001, moved to Birds Eye Wall's (now Unilever Ice Cream & Frozen Food), also as Chairman.

### What is Catalyst at Unilever?

Catalyst was created in 1999 specifically for Lever Brothers, just prior to its merger with Elida Fabergé, as a program aligned to Unilever's strategy shift and Enterprise Culture initiative. Subsequently, Catalyst helped define and embed a new culture within both companies as they merged to become Lever Fabergé.

The principle underlying Catalyst was the use of artists, arts organizations, and the artistic process as a means to solve business problems and explore critical issues. To date, Catalyst has created programs drawing upon the visual and performing arts, poetry, photography, playwriting, circus performance, design, and jazz. Unilever staff became involved voluntarily and the program has grown to include business topics such as creativity, consumer insight, communication, winning mindsets, behavioral change, and personal expression as well as providing tools and techniques for working in new ways.

In 2002 it doubled in size, moving into a second Unilever operating company, Unilever Ice Cream & Frozen Food. In early 2005, it opened a third program at Unilever's largest foods business, Unilever UK Foods. Catalyst has also managed a number of large projects for Unilever Corporate Center. It has a staff of five full time professionals. Since the beginning, Catalyst has worked closely with Arts & Business-UK, joining its Professional Development schemes and winning five New Partner Awards. It has also collaborated on events and research.

The program has received extensive media coverage, including a feature on BBC Radio 4's business program ''Nice Work.'' Most recently, Catalyst has been a case study in a Learning Lab Denmark book, *Artful Creation: Learning Tales of Arts in Business* by Lotte Darsø. She and her colleagues found Catalyst, among all the programs they studied, to be the best integrated and most extensive.

*Can you speak about the collision of factors that resulted in Catalyst?*

Hill – It's a long story, with three strands. First was that the Unilever group, of which I was managing one autonomous division, had decided to do a sponsorship program at the Tate Modern in London. That came to my attention, and made me think about how we could exploit the sponsorship for additional business reasons. I wondered whether our division could align itself with that corporate support for the art at the Tate.

Second was that there was a young manager in our organization, Oliver Lloyd, who had a personal interest in the arts and he spontaneously came to me with a proposal that we should buy a modern art collection with which to illuminate the building and stimulate the people.

And third, I met Alastair Creamer (now director of the Catalyst program). I was involved in an environmental project which Alastair had been running, and when that project ended I decided to give him transitional employment in Lever Brothers. One of the assignments that I had him undertake was an exploration of the arts idea. And then the various factors came together: Alastair proposed Catalyst; I decided to make available a budget to Oliver Lloyd; and the Tate sponsorship took off. Subsequently, a nucleus of like-minded people developed the concepts and sowed the seeds of future success in the organization.

*Was this an effort to create a more entrepreneurial spirit?*

Hill – Yes, I hoped I was encouraging creativity and risk taking in order to bring more radical product ideas to the market or to present them in a more radical manner. I saw the

opportunity to draw upon cultural and creative influences for our business purposes. I had in mind the trickle-down effect that arts have on society; ideas often begin in high art and culture, and then progressively become more mainstream.

We considered traditional culture-change options, such as training, but there was already a lot of that going on, and it was somewhat bureaucratic and not as radical as I thought we needed to be. I had a sense that our existing efforts were reinforcing the current ways of doing things, not changing them.

*Can you offer an example of your early success?*

Hill – The art collection that we purchased was one. We bought some very good works by leading British artists for very little money. Also, it was the way we went about it. Staff were able to choose the work, curate the hanging, and write captions about their favorites, which were then displayed next to the art work in public spaces in our building. These images provoked a lot of interesting conversation within the company quite quickly, about design and other artistic topics. We're a packaged goods marketing company, so the impact of art on design is not such a leap. The impact of theater and film and music on advertising is also plausible. And we were able to make connections. So the art was thought-provoking in terms of its design impact.

Also, one of our product development managers brought in a poet-in-residence for six months. She joined the team and offered emotional insight into its group dynamics. And it so happened that that particular unit, the innovation group for fabric softeners, was then establishing its reputation as being the most creative of all the different innovation groups that we have in the company. That team was going through what we call a ''purple patch,'' a period where everything seemed to go right for them. They were the focal point for our organizational learning. They were growing fast and continued to have very good results.

*How did your Board of Directors respond to Catalyst?*

Hill – I didn't have to railroad it through. There were enough – just enough – like-minded people to give it a try. Soon it became the beneficiary of its own success. Then it grew and other parts of the organization have embraced it.

*Could you tell us about the largest Catalyst program undertaken so far, called ''Live + Direct''?*

Hill – ''Live + Direct'' was about giving and receiving feedback. The HR people thought that one of the cultural changes we needed was to engender straightforward, honest, direct contact with colleagues, rather than the typically anodyne, bland feedback that had been customary. ''Live + Direct'' brought a team of actors into the company, who spent time with employees at all levels, and then used theater to enact the issues that they observed.

The highlight was a performance called ''The Live Report'' in which the actors put on a forty-minute-performance, in front of all the staff (hundreds of people). It was a series of sketches and the purpose was to illustrate behavior in the company. For example, how success is celebrated, how people became isolated, how aggressive behavior on the part of a few managers reduced the enthusiasm of their people, and so on. That was the pinnacle – everybody saw the actors were revealing a number of very human emotions relevant to our

work. Their performance encapsulated the frustrations felt by people lower down in the organization, especially their feelings of being put under pressure and blamed for things that weren't their fault. I think that gave our efforts a lot of extra credibility.

"Live + Direct" was not limited to the theater performance, but was linked to hands-on tips and employee workshops, for example, how to deal with a hard driving boss. These workshops used artistic themes – art was almost invariably used to provide the metaphor for the business problem. Most important, "Live + Direct" was voluntary, and that is one key to our success; it has all been voluntary. But it has had a very high level of participation. Over the course of a year, over sixty percent of the staff was involved in some way with the Catalyst program.

*Catalyst was instrumental, earlier on, in the merger of Lever Brothers and Elida Fabergé. Can you tell us more about that process?*

Hill – Yes, this is very important to understanding the business purpose that our arts-based programming served. All the evidence about mergers suggested that there would be cultural issues associated with bringing together two such large organizations. Each had more than a billion dollars in revenue; these were big companies by European standards, employing thousands of people and making lots of profit. Anyway, the notion was that Catalyst could assist in the merger by creating a new culture. We decided against having either the culture of unit A or unit B become dominant, because that would cause resentment from whichever was not chosen. We also realized that we could not simply hope that the merged organization would bring about the best of both units. Instead, we chose to use the arts to facilitate bringing these two organizations together in a new and different culture. I think that the two companies went through that transition very successfully and the group has continued to prosper.

*How exactly did Catalyst bring about this new culture?*

Hill – Both senior management teams were going into unknown territory together. Everyone was in the same place – outside their comfort zone. For example, theatrical workshops in the workplace were very different for all of us. But Catalyst events (which are open to everybody) compelled the different teams to mix and network. At the time we had no other relevant forum for this. I remember Catalyst staging a debate at a gallery about whether advertising was more potent than art and I saw members of staff from both sides of the business realizing they held common beliefs about this subject. In a different way, Catalyst would focus on a skills area, such as writing, and people came together over that because they wanted to be better writers. This, in turn, became a signal of our developing culture. Learning will be at its heart. Of course not every project brought people together in the anticipated way. Catalyst put up some risky high art photographs from the art collection that had everyone demanding they be taken down. We came together to push against Catalyst. That was important.

*You have since moved on to run the Unilever Ice Cream and Frozen Foods (UICF) division. Have you brought your commitment to arts-based intervention into your new position in this new industry setting?*

Hill – When I started here I considered whether or not it would be appropriate to bring something like Catalyst to this organization. It is a little bit tougher connection to make than at Lever Fabergé. The office location is further from London, and our people have less exposure to the London arts world. Second, the average age in this unit is perhaps eight to ten years on average older than in the London office. And the nature of the business is quite different. Three quarters of my current company is frozen food and the food industry is more traditional than the detergents and personal products industry. It is literally closer to the earth, linked to farming and to traditional influences in society, whereas perfume and personal care products are closer to the arts world because of the link to fashion and style. Finally, margins are tighter. They are simply different companies in different business environments.

I decided to sow the seeds with more caution. The first few arts interventions were not failures but they were derided. The first project was called "Watch This Space". Our office

space at that time was fairly sterile. Every department looked the same whether you were in sales, marketing, logistics or finance. Meeting rooms were identical.

''Watch This Space'' involved a week-long transformation of some of the main work and social areas of the company led by a group of young artists and designers. Huts were set up in the middle of the marketing department with a video diary feature. Meeting rooms were screened off and converted. The reception area was changed. The idea was to challenge people's perceptions about their working environment: how they work, how they meet, what stimulation they need around them.

Some of this did not work. The most controversial was when we took all the chairs and tables from the canteen and replaced them with turf and rocks. We created an outdoor picnic environment indoors. You can imagine the opportunity that gave the skeptics at a very early stage to deride the whole process. So, there was quite a long time when we needed deep conviction and courage to keep going and keep experimenting, when it would have been easier to throw in the towel. Of course, the real benefit of ''Watch This Space'' only came through about six months after the event. Gradually, people grasped the permission that had been presented and started to transform their own areas, be prouder and more explicit of who they were and what they were working on. This permission point is very important. People began to ask themselves, ''if Catalyst is allowed to do this, why can't I?'' So now we have an office environment that is much richer in its diversity and people are constantly thinking about how they can move it on yet again.

I think one of the beautiful things about the arts is that you are breaking new ground. And when you break new ground you have a lot of rocks to look under, if you like the analogy. You must have patience and give two or three different ideas the chance to succeed or fail before making a judgment about the overall value of the exercise.

### *Could you say more about the impact of Catalyst on the management group and its ability see the world more creatively?*

Hill – The management group has benefited from its participation in a mentoring program through the UK Arts & Business organization. One of their programs is a mentoring scheme whereby people in companies are assigned to arts institutions. The business people bring their commercial acumen to particular issues within an arts organization. Many of our managers have gotten involved, and this mentorship experience adds another strand to their capabilities, especially because they must operate outside the confines of a big business without all the support structures. They have to take decisions quickly, and get a chance to immerse themselves in the buzz of a small organization. This has been a developmental experience. These managers encounter very different ways of seeing when they interact with the people from the art world.

### *To what extent and at what stage is Catalyst involved in your strategic decisions?*

Hill – I cannot think of a major shift in company strategy that has been brought about by Catalyst. Rather, Catalyst has helped us to implement, to execute better. Certainly there have been a number of important inputs to product development and advertising which have had a material impact. But that's not strategic, per se. We have ongoing innovation processes and brand development processes and Catalyst has helped them to work better and with new insights.

We don't expect Catalyst to solve all of our business problems, but it is playing a central role in helping to move us forward, particularly in the area of marketing skills and in people's interaction, team dynamics. As it has continued to gain credibility and to be used more widely, I don't need to push it anymore, and I don't need to defend it. It has gained its own momentum; it is in the roots of the organization.

### *Please tell us about your background, your personal interest in or experience with the arts, and any prior connection to arts organizations?*

Hill – It's pretty straightforward. I'm a 43 year old businessman. I've been in a multinational company since I left university, about twenty years ago. I studied scientific and economic subjects there, and had virtually no contact with the arts world before Catalyst started up.

*What do you think made you, personally, open to this type of approach, given that you had no prior arts experience?*

I think I was at a point in my life when I was looking to explore new areas. I had followed an extremely conventional path that had been very productive for me and very successful in many ways, but I was at an age when I wanted to see whether there were other things in life that I could explore. And I was resentful, in a way, and felt that I had been cut off from the more creative sides of life. All of my educational development at a very young age had been rational, logical, numerate. I think people are pigeon-holed far too soon in life, and that generally you get a reputation and you become a caricature of your past, a prisoner of it, and almost a caricature of your job title. You come to recognize that just because you are an accountant, for example, it doesn't mean that you are boring and non-creative but people are expecting that; I suppose it gives them a clearer sense of your identity.

I personally wanted to see whether or not I was able to explore the creative and artistic areas in my own mind. I think this personal development has been one of the most rewarding aspects, as it turns out. Just because I am a hard-nosed businessman doesn't mean that I am not able to interpret these things in an interesting way or to stimulate people with my point of view on a performance or work of art. I think that has opened my eyes and has broadened my horizons. And it has been marvelous. It has opened up a whole new set of interests in my life. I guess above all I had thought I was not creative. I had accepted a label that was associated with my job title and my education, and I no longer believe that. I think that there is so much more in each of us that has yet to be realized or exploited – so much potential. That is a good feeling to have.

*What advice would you offer to other corporate leaders interested in arts-based management initiatives?*

Hill – I would say first of all, that I have done this for one simple reason, and that is for my division to become a better business. It has not been an altruistic motive. We have other budgets for philanthropy, but Catalyst has not been about that. Catalyst has been about helping us change faster – that's where it got its name. Catalyst has helped us develop by drawing on the energy and the creative power of the arts. It is my belief that it has worked, it has speeded up the change process, and made people more open minded, helped them embrace creativity.

It's easier if there is a direct connection between the nature of your company and the art form, and I would encourage companies to think in those terms if they are considering aligning themselves with art. For some businesses and business problems it is easier than others. But one of the biggest areas in which the arts can contribute to business is at the employee level – group dynamics, motivation, understanding others, giving feedback – and that transfers across all industries. There is so much in the arts which allows those topics to be interpreted, discussed, and for new ideas to come out. I cannot think of an organization where Catalyst would NOT add value. Because companies are run by people, and the arts gives you so many insights into the human condition, human behavior, team behavior, winning and losing, competitiveness.

I should also mention the effect that Catalyst has had on our younger employees. I know it is dangerous to generalize, but young people are not motivated simply by a

> "I saw the opportunity to draw upon cultural and creative influences for our business purposes. I had in mind the trickle-down effect that arts have on society; ideas often begin in high art and culture, and then progressively become more mainstream."

safe and secure job. They want a job with a difference, a job that contributes to their individual development. They want money and promotions, of course, but more. They want to work in an ethical environment, and in a highly stimulating environment. And Catalyst helps to fulfill that second purpose. People have said, ''I saw such and such happening in Catalyst. It seemed crazy but the fact that I saw that happening gave me license to push the boundaries in my area because I realized that I was working in the kind of company where you could do things that were different.'' So we can also say that Catalyst has helped support diversity of employment, and is assisting in recruiting and retaining the next generation. There are so many different ways that the arts add value.

You have to engage people's hearts as well as their minds, and the arts contribute to that.

I keep coming back to a question I was once asked, ''What would the shareholders think if they knew what you were doing?'' I think they would be delighted. We are not doing it for fun. We are doing it so that in the long run we will have better people working in the company, people making better products and advertising and working better as a team. And that is making money for the shareholders.

### *Any final words of wisdom?*

Hill – One warning. The support for arts-based initiatives must come from inside an organization. If it is just the toy of the CEO, then it has no enduring value. If I leave this company, and Catalyst ends, I will have failed. If I leave and it continues, then that is the acid test. Its continuation in my two previous business units, without my intervention, is a great source of encouragement.

We had numerous opportunities to kill it, and every time there is a budgetary crisis, it is in a possibility. I have questioned it openly, out of pure professionalism, but my board colleagues have said no, if we stop this it would send the wrong signal for our business; it IS adding value. It is better if they say it than if I say it. Catalyst has become part of our culture and is still expanding.

## Analysis and conclusions

From James Hill's perspective, the causal connections were clear. To increase profitability, change was necessary, and change starts with people. Employees who are inspired and stimulated, as is possible through the arts, can become open-minded, creative team members, more confident in expressing ideas and experimenting with new ways of thinking, which then leads to innovative products and imaginative marketing, and ultimately to improvements in business performance.

With a clear mandate for change and the flexibility to select the means to achieve it, Hill moved decisively. He had internal credibility, a growing interest in the arts, the insight to recognize the potential of a non-standard approach, and the courage to take a risk with Catalyst. Hill and his previously skeptical colleagues now view Catalyst, as its name implies, as the primary ingredient in achieving faster, more effective change. The company has come to appreciate the power of the arts to help solve real business problems; indeed, Catalyst now plays a prominent role in three Unilever business units

What else might interested managers learn from James Hill's experience with Catalyst? We see two sets of lessons: one that we believe are true of change management in general, and another that relates specifically to arts-based organizational interventions.

Lessons about change management:

- Do not allow major change initiatives to be seen as simply the ''pet'' or ''toy'' of a senior executive; ownership must be shared. Commitment and support from those at the top is essential, as is buy-in from employees at all levels.

- Tailor programs to the different needs of different units. Consider product, key functional areas, geography, employee experience and capabilities (for example, Lever-Fabergé is different from Ice Cream and Frozen Foods); don't become formulaic.

- Expect some failures, but strive for a few early successes.

- Evaluate the program regularly; though it may be difficult to measure the costs and benefits, with precision, it is possible to craft qualitative measures and to establish intrinsic benefits that enhance credibility.

- Allow time for an innovation (like Catalyst) to be appreciated. Look for tipping points at business and emotional levels, rather than immediate acceptance.

The Catalyst experience also suggests the following about arts-based organizational change:

- Focus on those functional areas tied most closely to the arts (for example, marketing or advertising) and on units that are already doing well as one way to find early successes.

- Acknowledge that some people may initially oppose the program through lack of knowledge and prejudice. Work to achieve acceptance by the quality of the work, but also recognize that controversy itself can bring about constructive dialogue.

- Consider employing permanent arts program staff. The availability of in-house resources sends powerful messages about commitment and support. To be effective, the arts program staff must be conversant in the languages of both business and the arts.

- Partnering with or hiring outside artists should be matched to the business problem at hand and done jointly with business units affected.

- Recognize that arts-based intervention is just one option among many for solving any particular set of business problems.

Arts-based approaches to leading organizational change are not new, though the scope of the endeavor at Unilever is exceptional. Our understanding of programs such as Catalyst is only in the early stages, and there is a great deal more to learn. Research is needed to further explore motivations on the personal and organizational levels, as well as the consequences for both individuals and companies. Longitudinal studies might discover still unanticipated consequences of arts-based interventions. Also deserving of scrutiny are the reactions of the artists who have gotten involved in corporate efforts: what are the effects on them, and their art, their art organizations? Most broadly, it will be important to consider the societal effects that result from bridging the worlds of art and commerce.

James Hill is more than an articulate champion of corporate arts-based programs; he's a true pioneer in his willingness to create such bridges. And, while his Unilever division clearly resides on one end of a broad continuum of arts-based initiatives (Darsø, 2004), he would be the first to admit that he is still exploring new territory. The challenges for Hill and others at Unilever will be not only how to make wise use of the arts to solve business problems of the future, but also how to keep Catalyst itself fresh and engaging. The challenges for other senior executives and management scholars will be to learn from Hill and Catalyst, and continue to advance our understanding of how the arts can broaden horizons, open minds, and solve business problems.

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# Seeing your audience through an actor's eyes: an interview with George Stalk

Ted Buswick

Ted Buswick is Director of Publications for The Strategy Institute of the Boston Consulting Group.

This interview with George Stalk of The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) shows how BCG began working with a theatre-based training organization to improve the quality of its consultants' presentations at conferences and benefited in more ways than they expected.

George Stalk is the author of *Hardball: Are You Playing to Play or Playing to Win* (with Rob Lachenauer and John Butman, Harvard Business School Press, 2004), *Competing Against Time: How Time-Based Competition is Reshaping Global Markets* (with Thomas Hout, Free Press, 1990, 2003), and several *Harvard Business Review* articles. Throughout his career, Stalk has been known for being innovative and being willing to take chances. The Actors Institute and TAI Resources of New York has being offering classes for actors, businesspeople, and students for 27 years.

**Buswick:** George, were you involved in the process by which BCG first started to work with The Actors Institute (TAI) ten years ago?

**Stalk:** I was the first person through. Paul Basile, who was the head of corporate communications, had us on a program of improving our conferences and making them more effective with the audience. He brought into question a large number of assumptions we had about what a good conference was, ranging from things that one might regard as trivial like food, location, seats, ambiance in the room, length of presentations, audience behavior, and then took the BCG audience behavior all the way to how speakers communicated with the audience, how effective they were.

Paul convinced me that some of the simplest things he was onto would make a huge difference to the conference programs. He told me he also thought The Actors Institute would make a big difference if we could get our presenters to work with them and wanted me to go through their process. This wasn't because he thought I needed a great deal of improvement, although as we'll get into this you'll see there was a great deal of improvement possible, but because he felt that if somebody like myself who was giving 70 speeches a year and getting great reviews went to The Actor's Institute, it would be harder for other people to say, ''It's not for me.'' So I said, ''That's a pretty good reason. I'll give it a try.''

**Buswick:** Do you know why he chose The Actors Institute? There are so many groups out there with a theatrical base doing things that at least on the surface look similar.

**Stalk:** He claimed that they were the most suited for a corporate setting. I tried to do a brief background check, and it's difficult to evaluate from the outside in corporate settings. They did have a great client list, people like CitiGroup, or CitiCorp, whatever they were called back then, for example. Pfizer was there. Johnson & Johnson. At the time, I didn't realize what the time commitment was. So I said, ''What the heck. I'll give it a try.''

**Buswick:** Did you have any specific expectations before you started?

Stalk: Well, I figured it was going to be about how to address the projector, moving around in front of the audience, vocal intonations, a lot of technical and mechanical things about speaking. I would say I didn't have low expectations. I didn't have high expectations. I just was doing it to get Basile off my back.

I knew other parts of Basile's program were working. I could see the differences in the ratings and reactions, and I figured this might make a difference as well.

Buswick: And what did they do?

Stalk: Well, the first thing they did is ask for either six or eight sessions at two hours a session. My assistant gave me this message, and I said, ''Call them back. Tell them I want this scheduled over a long weekend. I'll come down to New York and get it over with. I don't have a lot of time to play around here.''

They called back and said, ''You don't understand. This is two hours at most in one day.'' And so, I said, ''Okay. There's really no good time to do this.'' So to make it work, I took my wife, daughter, or one of my other kids with me every now and then for a long weekend in New York.

After the very first session I realized that two hours is probably too long for the first session because it was so emotionally draining, physically draining.

Buswick: Why? What did they do?

Stalk: It's just very stressful. It wasn't about addressing the projector. It was about treating the audience as a customer and as a guest and as somebody that I as a speaker wanted to have a relationship with. So there were exercises that tested one's self-confidence and self-awareness.

For me it was real interesting because I had been giving speeches on time-based competition for a couple of years by then and got it down to a great patter and could almost have background thoughts in my mind while I was giving it. But after the second session at TAI, it became clear to me that at best I was the equivalent of a VCR player. Might as well just push the button and sit back. There could be an audience there of one person or ten thousand. As far as the delivery went, I didn't care.

And what I became convinced of after the second meeting was, yeah, those may be good speeches that I was doing, and yeah, they may be better than everybody because the ratings reflected them being the first or second best speeches that people were hearing at the conferences, either BCG or non-BCG, but there was a huge opportunity being missed by not being able to connect with the audience at an emotional, personal level.

Buswick: I don't really see why it was so draining. Can you give an example of the types of exercises?

Stalk: Well, draining is the result of stress, concentration, exertion. Let's take them in reverse order. Exertion is being on stage for two hours.

Buswick: These are sessions just with you. You're the only one involved here.

Stalk: I'm the center of attention. So it's not like sitting in a classroom being able to tune in and tune out. I was on, and they also knew all the tricks for trying to check out, like how to waste time at the beginning. They were good at stopping that. So exertion was one. The message required concentration. The exercises were about trying to project into the minds of the audience.

One session was about managing transitions. They demonstrated it was possible to establish relationships with members of the audience and then lose and destroy the relationship just by changing topic and leaving the audience feeling like they've been dropped.

And then stress. They created stress by bringing in people from CitiCorp and J&J, who happened to be in other workshops, to listen to me and critique. So I've got total strangers in the room, no sense of what their background is, and a general uncomfortableness with the fact that they don't really care about the content. They're concentrating on the delivery,

whereas prior to that the audiences I spoke to were self-selected. They'd decided they wanted to come hear me. If they were BCG conferences, I pretty much knew a lot about the people and what was important to them, so I had some going-in knowledge. But with a bunch of people I don't know, I don't have the going-in knowledge.

**Buswick:** Why did they have so many sessions?

**Stalk:** Well, I wondered that too. What I found is that learning things like managing transitions takes a couple of hours. The first half hour to 45 minutes, was convincing me that I wasn't managing transitions, and then the next third was spent, ''Well, let's try concentrating not on what we're saying, but how we're going to get people from one subject to another.'' And then the last third was getting it to happen. There were three to five major modules in just about each session.

The first session was almost like Paris Island Marines or Harvard Business School; you've got to break them down before you can build them back up. I walked in and had my canned speech and said, ''Bring it on. I'm ready.'' And then got decimated. Fortunately, TAI is quite good at doing it in a way that makes sense and makes sure that I hear what they're saying. So I could be surprised if they didn't like my VCR speech, but when they gave me the reasons, they weren't reasons I could refute. I kept saying, ''Yeah, that's a good point.''

And they did it in a way that didn't make me feel little. They were quite skillful in convincing me, ''Yeah, that's an okay speech, probably a pretty good speech, but look at the opportunity you're missing.'' That's what convinced me.

I looked at them and said, ''I'm going to fly back to New York next week. I'm going to give a 55-minute speech. It's going to take me a day and a half to pull it off. I'm going to rush home. I'm going to be exhausted. BCG is going to spend thousands of dollars for me to do this. I ought to do a really good job. If I do an okay job and I get an 8 out of 10 rating I'm usually satisfied.'' They convinced me that my 8 out of 10 would've been by force of argument and delivery, and that I could move closer to a 9 or 9.5 or a 10.

The nice thing about them is they don't do things to make people uncomfortable. They do things to try to make people comfortable because presenting naturally takes people out of the comfort zone.

In the end, of all the programs we had in place to help officers at BCG, this got the highest rating.

**Buswick:** What other types of things do we have?

**Stalk:** We've got relationship management and body language, and large account sales. This is good stuff, but I saw the data for a long time and TAI's training was always the highest rated. The flipside is it's always the most expensive per impression, too. We're talking thousands of dollars per impression, not hundreds of dollars. But also, I don't recall ever seeing a negative review by a BCG officer who went. And one of the things that we were careful of was making sure that the first group had a high probability of feeling it was a worthwhile effort. So Carl Stern, the CEO at the time, and I were very careful about picking the people to go the first time.

**Buswick:** Do you see what they do as more skills training, or is it a form of developmental coaching?

**Stalk:** I think it's developmental coaching.

**Buswick:** But from what you said so far, it's not clear why it's developmental more than skills because if you're really improving your ability to give a speech, that could at least be considered a skill.

**Stalk:** I call it developmental because it widens people's repertoire. One might say, ''It's actor's training for presentations,'' but a lot of us actually got more out of it for dealing in client situations, how to work a meeting, how to give a presentation to a Board. Most people don't regard that as the equivalent of a conference speech, it actually has higher stakes than a conference speech.

To be able to develop an empathy with the audience to me is more than a skill. Skills are addressing the projector, body language, the voice projection. Those are actually all relevant, and indeed at times they go to the top of the list of what good sessions are about.

I used to do the introductions to the subsequent group sessions that we did, and I just told people it's going to change the way they interact with their clients, and change the way they interact with large group meetings. And it's even going to affect their personal rapport.

**Buswick:** I heard somebody say that it gets at your inner creativity, really getting you to express what's best and most creative about you. Does that fit?

**Stalk:** Well, I think it does because what people try to do in making the connection to the audience is to say the audience needs to hear from the speaker those things that the speaker believes are the most important messages, and transitions are all built around making sure the messages don't get lost in the shift from one topic to another. And so the creativity aspect says, ''Well, what am I saying here that's really so damn important? And how do I make sure that when I'm talking to this group about it, they really know when it's important and don't get lost?''

It's very easy for me to get lost in my own knowledge and not know how the audience needs to be exposed to the topic. I have to keep in mind the fact that they probably can't carry more than two or three ideas out of the meeting, just like I probably can't if I sit in a meeting about genomics. Since I'm not an expert on genomics, I'll be lucky to get three things out of it.

I think the creativity is around managing the message. Now when people walk out of the room, are they likely to discover the new way to compete because of TAI? I don't think so. That's not what they're asked to do. But I think they're likely to have a stronger understanding of the dynamics of any meeting or conference they go into.

**Buswick:** In your recent writings about your hardball manifesto, you discuss the need for organizations and individual leaders to maintain laser-like focus on the heart of the matter and flexibility in adapting to ever-changing business landscapes. Does this type of coaching help leaders enhance those capabilities?

**Stalk:** Well, I would say, yes, but not in the absence of other things. I think if a leader has an agenda, it generally reflects the heart of the matter, issues that a corporation needs to deal with for its long-term success and viability and health. Then the mission becomes convincing the organization to have the same level of commitment to the heart of the matter that their leader does. So this is about the communications that create that kind of commitment.

And I remember talking to Chuck Miller, who was the CEO of Avery-Dennison, makes labels and stuff, a very successful company, a company that actually exploited time in its strategy quite well. He and I did a speech together in New York on time-based competition, and we were chatting over lunch.

In response to a question about his strongest lessons from becoming a time-based competitor he said, ''Just when I got sick of talking about time, I found I was only halfway through.'' The tail that's associated with communication is a very long tail; it's not sitting you down and telling you the same thing seven times. If I want you to change the way you're doing things, I'm going to have to tell you probably six or seven times, six or seven different

ways, and I'm going to have to interpret his six or seven different responses to get you to change. And I think that's where the two connect.

I'm sure they sometimes bring in guys in that just can't connect. One of our key speakers has never gone. His review of this whole thing was, ''George, you go. You come back and tell me the few things that count. I can take it from there. Thank you very much.'' I sat in a speech by him last week, and he hasn't changed in ten years. Compared to most speakers, he does a good job. But he misses this huge opportunity.

Buswick: I was very surprised recently when I called TAI and was told ''George is here today.'' This is ten years after your initial training. What kind of follow-up things do they do? Why do you go back occasionally?

Stalk: Usually it's because of a shift of venue. When Paul asked me to go the first time, it was about conference presentations. My meeting last week was about how to handle interviews with the press and the media. It was about how to distill the essence of a message and how to reinforce it. Actually their coach said, ''You know, we're here to make sure I, George Stalk, control the interview not the reporter,'' and how to field questions in a way that does that.

I had a message called, ''Help the Customer and Hurt the Competitor.'' And you could tell by her body language that she didn't like the notion of ''hurt.'' So we talked about that for a while. She acknowledged that ''hurt'' would accomplish what I wanted to do, which is to stop people in their tracks and say, ''Where is this guy coming from?'' But I also had to acknowledge that hurt wasn't enough. That was too flip. I had to get down what I mean by hurt. I don't mean leave them bloody, or turned over in a ditch or something, but having them surprised, befuddled, confused, ignorant.

Buswick: TAI used to go through BCG officers directly, but now they've almost stopped working with BCG. They've pretty much stopped because they were assigned to training and no longer have the direct relationship with officers, and it's been very difficult for them to work that way.

Stalk: That would indicate though that BCG, like many corporations, would prefer a solution where they can fire and forget. By fire and forget I mean, hire somebody, write a check, and assume everything gets taken care of. How many companies have the CEO picking their people for going to classes? And then in our next wave, the practice area leaders picked the people, because quite a few of them went through the first wave. And then after that, it was regional coordinators who picked the people. So it was very high-level stuff. And it's an ambiguous and vapor-like sale. It's hard to tell you what you're going to get from whatever the number is, $5,000 or $10,000 per impression, until people have been through it.

I've been through a few other courses, like large account selling. I felt like the guy who was teaching the course sold Xerox copiers. That's not the same as selling turnaround strategy to a successful company. And it's not a Xerox copier sale. And I probably couldn't sell a Xerox copier as well as a Xerox copy guy could, but I do have a different sales process, and it was clear the guy didn't have an in-depth understanding of our sales process, as if I did either. I mean that's why I was there.

Buswick: Okay, the company goes alternatively by The Actors Institute or by TAI. When you're working with them, do you sense the theatrical roots in what they're doing? They do acting training as well.

> **"Given that senior people tend to be the most expensive, not in terms of dollars but in terms of time available to work with their colleagues and subordinates, they need to have the maximum impact in the time they have available."**

Stalk: Well, as you recall, early on I said they had an understanding of the needs of corporations. That was my assumption based on their client list. My interest in them wasn't as a drama setting. It was people that could help a corporation like BCG deal with an issue they want to deal with. The fact that they have theatrical roots, I frankly don't even know what the theatrical – I know their theatrical backgrounds as individuals. I don't know to what extent the mix of business is non-corporate. I didn't worry about it for very long because they quickly started to satisfy our particular needs.

They've learned how to both be honest with and work with your audience through their skills with live theatre. My intuition says I should be much more comfortable knowing they're continuing to get their skills reinforced by doing real professional acting development, not simply corporate development. If they became 100% corporate, I'd worry about them a bit.

I recall Allen Schoer's introductory speech. He's TAI's CEO. He talked about Shakespearean acting being much more what they were trying to develop. I don't know if I have this right. In Shakespearian days, the audience didn't pay close attention to the actors. They ate and talked on their cell phones, and they threw food at the actors if they were unhappy. The actors performed on a stage that was surrounded by the audience on all sides.

They had minimal props, and it was all about getting the attention, keeping the attention of the audience. And that's where this skill of connecting with the audience became so critical, because if you didn't they talked to their neighbors and when they finally paid attention, they threw their tomatoes at you.

I think acting itself has evolved to the point where we have guys who perform on a TV screen and have no relationship with me sitting there. I could be sitting in my underwear. It's the same performance. So I think having acting roots counts.

Buswick: I think some people in TAI prefer to use the acronym instead of the full name because they feel that some corporate people are turned off by the idea of The *Actors* Institute.

Stalk: I'm not. TAI is just faster and easier to say. I am inclined to recommend that they stick with The Actors Institute, force people to question what they're doing while they're there and why they picked this particular organization. If you're going to think TAI, it's like ADP, payroll processing; or ADT, a security firm.

Buswick: Is there any particular type or level of business person who'd benefit most from this type of developmental coaching?

Stalk: I think if senior people have the time, they could benefit because what we're talking about is how much power by the hour can people provide and communicate. Given that senior people tend to be the most expensive, not in terms of dollars but in terms of time available to work with their colleagues and subordinates, they need to have the maximum impact in the time they have available. And this is good for them. So, I don't think we should be sending 20-year-old new hires to this thing. Although having said that, it's probably easier to change the behavioral patterns of a 28- or a 32-year-old than it is a 42-year-old or a 52-year-old.

Buswick: You mentioned before we began the interview that one of BCG's other most prolific speakers, Philip Evans, benefited from this type of coaching. Can you say how he changed?

Stalk: It's the relationship. I felt that he was connecting with me in the audience. Before, he was a great thing to watch, but he could have been a hologram for all I knew. Given the nature of the things I managed at that time, I saw him many, many times. So I'd say, ''Here it comes. He's gonna do that. And they're going to giggle on this one.'' But it was my job to sit there and look interested and enthused. Afterwards, it was much different. I mean, he knew how to bring the audience in, and he was slower. He was more careful of his choice and his management of transitions. It was a much more relaxing, engaging experience.

Buswick: Is there any anecdote about your sessions at TAI that would make a good conclusion?

Stalk: I remember the end of the first conference we worked on. I was one of the speakers. I can still picture us reading our survey scores and looking like schoolkids who had just gotten their best grades ever. We were smirking, laughing, and waving our papers in the air. When I saw Allen Schoer smiling at us from across the room, I crooked my finger at him, telling him to come over.

I don't know what he expected me to say, but my first words were, ''You never told us the whole truth!'' All done very dramatically while trying to keep a straight face. ''Oh really?'' he replied. I went on. ''You said this would help us with conferences, but you didn't tell us it would be the best professional development training we've ever had.'' Everyone cracked up and starting talking about how the TAI approach should be invaluable in many areas of the firm.

I hope my audiences and those of others in BCG, after TAI, come away feeling relaxed, comfortable, engaged. ''It was a great party, wasn't it?'' If we come back to the beginning, we have Basile's notion that conferences are for friends. You invite people into your home. You don't read the newspaper when you're sitting at the table with your guests.

# The quality instinct: how an eye for art can save your business

Maxwell Anderson

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## Defining the quality instinct

The quality instinct is a learned reflex to sort out the best from the very good. If used properly, it can be a vital asset in making key decisions in business and in life – from directing product design to successfully navigating the sea of consumer choices we face daily. A quality instinct can be developed only after achieving visual literacy – the ability to interpret design intention from extensive and intensive looking. Although developing it begins with a focus on art, the instinct is applicable to anything visual – anything designed, manufactured, displayed, or sold.

After 30 years of studying, acquiring, displaying, and teaching about some of the world's greatest works of art, I believe that there are practical lessons, far afield from history, to be extracted from learning to look at artworks. It's obvious that in a world increasingly striving for design excellence, there is no better place to develop an instinct for visual quality than through learning to look at art. It is also clear that those with such an instinct will have a competitive advantage in business over those who leave design excellence to others.

## Why it's important to develop a quality instinct

Every year, more adults (over 80 million) go to art museums in the USA than go to sporting events. Not a bad customer base of visually curious people. The quality instinct can help you connect what they are seeking in art with what you provide in business.

Can you exercise the same judgment regarding every aspect of branding, from product design to your corporate offices? If not, you risk being overtaken by a stealthier competitor who is learning how to stay in step with or even anticipate changes in the look and feel of our times. A successful corporate brand can spell the difference between a first-tier company and a runner-up.

The explosive success of IKEA is not explained by price and convenience alone, nor can the wild success of reality television shows about home decor be explained by mere curiosity. These trends are functions of the appetite of modern consumers to live in settings marked by fine design. Consumers everywhere are benefiting from a revolution in visual sophistication, spawned over the last generation. When all typewriters had the same font, no one thought to look for individual taste adorning typewritten expression. What was once simply mass-produced and functional must today have visual flair, be customized and evoke a sense of quality. If you can't describe what makes an IKEA table more desirable than a lesser mass-produced one, it may be that you are missing out on a range of business opportunities by offering goods and services that fall short of consumer expectation for the best – even if it only approximates the best.

Today, consumers increasingly demand the ability to tailor every visual experience to suit their fickle preferences. Can your business provide them with the metaphorical equivalent of

an iPod – an elegant method of promoting individual choice? Does your business allow the consumer to select from among features of product design, as do more and more manufacturers of goods and services promoting customization – in products ranging from jeans to cars?

Do you have any doubts that an ability to discern visual quality is indispensable to business survival? From DVD jewel boxes to faux designer handbags, multi-billion dollar piracy is threatening the world's leading brands, sapping billions of dollars of profit each year. Can you instantly pick out the authentic from the knockoff? If your company is involved in manufacturing, can you be certain that you're not the victim of fraudulent imitation?

In short, any business lacking a quality instinct is putting itself at risk of being picked off by competitors who have invested in tuning the visual messages encoded in their products and services. As consumers and competitors grow increasingly sophisticated in their understanding of design – and its strategic implications–demand for high-quality concepts, services, and products will only increase. Those businesses lacking a quality instinct are likelier to be left behind as informed consumers flock to the latest and the best in design.

### Starting with visual literacy

With artists at the heart of transformations in media, advertising, communications, design, manufacturing, retailing, architecture, fashion, and almost every other field of human endeavor that invites visual quality comparisons, it's not surprising that examining their work enhances your ability to stay ahead in your field.

Acquiring visual literacy is the first step towards developing a quality instinct. By discovering how to judge quality in art, you and your employees will be able to judge quality in every visual arena – from graphic and 3D design to product development, marketing campaigns, and even the general look and feel of your company. Being visually literate means being able to look at a man-made object and ''read'' it, but reading an object is different from reading a book or a magazine in that there is rarely a simple path from beginning to middle to end. Reading a book, like talking, and listening, is a linear experience, but when you look at a work of art, it's non-linear. Your eye jumps around; so does your mind. You have to be able to experience improvisationally, and think holistically. And there are few rules!

That is why looking at art helps you look at circumstances, situations and problems differently. Once you're equipped with some of the basics of visual literacy, it will become an experience you look forward to, and the exhilaration you may feel from being in the presence of great art can continue to inspire you at your desk, drafting board, or board table.

Visual literacy is achieved through a combination of study and practice. Let's take as an example one of the classic subjects of European art – the Madonna and Child. Artists wrestle with the same problem in different ways, just as people do in business, and artists have approached the Madonna and Child very differently over the centuries, moving from intimate to harmonious to glorious over the four hundred years between the Middle Ages and the baroque periods. One approach isn't better than another: the intimate religious picture encourages contemplation, the harmonious picture allows us to project ourselves into a scene, and the glorious religious picture encourages inspiration. Picking out versions of the Madonna and Child during your next museum visit, you can begin to distinguish how those works reach you in different ways. Some make the pair into doll-like apparitions, others make them like a mother and child of today, and still others make them seem like superheroes.

**" A quality instinct can be developed only after achieving visual literacy – the ability to interpret design intention from extensive and intensive looking. "**

Seeing past the different ways artists tackle the same subject to discover both their intention and your reaction can train you to look at mass-manufactured goods with a discerning eye. What is it, exactly, about certain cars that make our hearts skip a beat, and what is it about other cars that make them fade into a parking lot? The differences are all to do with design excellence, stemming from the sophisticated eye of the maker, the use of high-quality materials, and their intuition about contemporary taste.

Achieving visual literacy means learning to judge art on its own terms, not through a simple lens of realism. Go to an art museum and begin to train yourself to look at landscape paintings not to admire the most realistic, naturalistic examples, but to pick out those pictures that embroider, reduce, or dispense with representation–and nevertheless succeed in making nature come alive. From here, it's a short step to learning to judge design on its own terms. Minimal design requires one kind of response, and opulent design another. Neither is better in and of itself – the key is to discover how each example is successful on its own terms.

Visual communication cuts across cultures, unlike the spoken word. It's immediate and visceral. Expanding visual literacy is necessary for effective communication in a global marketplace, and gives you an advantage in a market where competitors may come up short. Sometimes the best ideas aren't as simple as we'd like; in landscape paintings, it isn't important that the image is photographically accurate. What matters is that you can almost smell the flowers because the artist has found a way to express something that reaches your senses. By developing visual literacy from spending time looking at art and learning about it, you'll improve your instincts in making visual judgments – about product design, marketing strategies, business environments, and your company's overall image.

## From visual literacy to a quality instinct

Why does one piece of canvas sell for over $100 million while another is used as a drop cloth? Valuations in the billion-dollar art market are just as real – and just as emotional – as valuations in the stock and real estate markets. By learning to make judgments about works of art, you'll be on your way to developing a quality instinct that will guide you in evaluating everything visual, and help you judge other things that are difficult to quantify.

When an art expert approaches a work of art, it's with a hard-won instinct to discover four things: its subject, who made it, its condition, and how it stacks up against other similar works of art. Not coincidentally, these four questions are the same we must ask in evaluating a business:

- What is the subject (the needs being filled by the company's products and services)?
- Who made it (the company's mission/reputation/capacity)?
- What is its condition (how well does the business perform)?
- How good is it (what are its underlying strengths and how can they be enhanced)?

The quality instinct can strengthen your competitive position in business by helping you to:

- identify and articulate your goals concisely and persuasively;
- recognize authenticity in your ideas and those of others;
- distill the essence of a product or concept; and
- create a business culture that identifies, embraces, and rewards originality.

## How to develop your quality instinct

Let's start with a quick test to gauge the degree to which you've already developed your quality instinct. Jot down your answers to the following four questions in 60 seconds each, and don't worry about getting anything wrong:

1. Choose three adjectives to describe your company's graphic identity.

2. If the design of your products or services inspires imitation, cite an instance of that flattery.
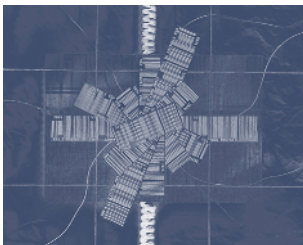
3. Are your ads in or out of step with your corporate culture? If so, use three adjectives they share. If not, use three adjectives describing your corporate culture that you'd like to see in your ads.

4. Use three words to describe the atmosphere of your offices/physical plant.

If you have a well-developed quality instinct, you will instantly know the answers to these questions, and, what's more, you will be actively engaged in transforming your corporate culture accordingly. If not, here are some steps that can help.

### 1. Identify and articulate your business goals concisely but persuasively

Practice describing the goals of works of art. Then re-approach your business the way an art historian approaches a work of art. To repeat:

- What is the subject (the needs being filled by the company's products and services)?
- Who made it (the company's mission/reputation/capacity)?
- What is its condition (how well does the business perform)?
- How good is it (what are its underlying strengths and how can they be enhanced)?

### 2. Recognize authenticity in your ideas and those of others

Authentic ideas are those that are trustworthy and genuine. In art, recognizing authenticity means being able to go beyond mere observation and knowing how to sniff out forgeries. In business, recognizing authenticity means identifying the best solution for the problem you are trying to solve. Think critically. Look for the version of a business solution that radiates confidence – and that seizes our imagination.

### 3. Distill the essence of a product or concept

Look at it from several points of view. Find the intended/unintended message of your product or package design, or another feature of your business. Practice by looking at a work of art that easily encourages multiple points of view.

*What is the essence of Andy Warhol's depictions of Marilyn Monroe?*

Marilyn's sensuality? Her beauty? Her blondeness? The fact that her image is more real to us than the person? The fact that repetition makes her image abstract?

*Now examine the design of a set of real soup cans – not Warhol's versions of same.*

Does the typeface match the contents? How many competing fonts are there – are they in harmony? Can the product's identity be spotted from a distance? Is the shape of the container elegant, nondescript, or clunky; does it reflect the contents? If the packaging design hasn't changed in decades, has it passed from being new to old to campy to classic, or is it stuck at old? Is a consistent story being told through the design, or is it the clumsy work of a committee?

### 4. Create a business culture that embraces originality

Encourage people to test your willingness to take risks. Stage regular sessions with creative leaders to share how they think. Harness ingenuity in service of business achievement**.** Ingenious people in your company, like artists, tend to be ill-at-ease with self-promotion. Flesh them out from your workforce by staging problem-solving exercises; then reward them with assignments to promote innovation.

*Your assignments in developing visual literacy and a quality instinct are the following:*

- *become a corporate member of your local art museum and schedule tours and events;*
- *review the quality of your brand;*
- *regularly invite creative people in to test your innovations; and*
- *share your new passion with family and friends.*

# Playing to the technical audience: evaluating the impact of arts-based training for engineers

John Osburn and Richard Stock

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Since 1997, the CONNECT Program in the Engineering School of The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art has served as a laboratory for testing the effectiveness of arts based learning for technical trainees[1]. The underlying concept of CONNECT is that most communication breakdowns involving engineers happen because they focus on the details of their subject matter *and expect others to do the same*.

Engineers spend a great deal of time ensuring that their work is accurate and that their solutions to engineering problems are workable, comply with regulations, are environmentally sound, and so on. *They* are persuaded by technical detail and probative content. Others may not be. CONNECT is perhaps unique among efforts to teach communication and other soft skills to students pursuing technical degrees, in that:

- it is workshop based and ongoing, a lifelong learning model rather than an academic course;
- its facilitators are mostly working performing artists rather than academics;
- it is co-directed by an engineering professor and a performance specialist;
- it is based in an engineering school and directed only at engineering students; and
- its approach to assessment emphasizes practical results instead of rote outcomes.

## Addressing the dangers of poor communication

Communicating with an audience is essentially a social skill, behavioral in basis, a fact that becomes all too apparent when one's audience has a divergent set of expectations. The importance of behavior is widely recognized in the business world. Terry Bacon of Lore International Institute writes: ''Customers don't believe what you tell them. They believe what you do. It is the purest form of expression of your intent, your priorities and your feelings.'' Bacon concludes that ''behavioral differentiation'' is key to the success of customer relations in businesses including travel, hospitality, and even motorcycle marketing. He advocates the use of behavioral criteria in hiring and firing, as well as in training (Bacon, 2004).

However, customers are not the only audiences upon which behavior has an impact. The primary audience for technical personnel may be internal: middle managers, legal advisers, sales personnel, or executives. A gap with an internal audience can have consequences even more serious than with an external audience. The Morton Thiokol engineers trying to persuade managers not to launch the space shuttle Challenger made their case technically, but not in a way that persuaded the decision-makers. Conversely, the decision-makers seemed unable to adjust their expectations in a way that allowed them to see the bottom line warning provided by the engineers. Behavior matters, but content does too.

Failing to meet an audience's expectations opens up what we call an ''audience gap.'' To give Cooper Union's engineering graduates the tools to close this gap, CONNECT turned to

the theater. Performing artists specialize in the effective communication of *any* content – good, bad, or indifferent – through vocal, physical and socially appropriate behaviors keyed to a particular audience. Performers who address their audiences directly, in live performances rather than on film or video exclusively, develop a special sensitivity to the diverse expectations of multiple audiences. Even during the run of a single play, actors adjust their behaviors from night to night in response to different audience reactions. Performance theorists from Erving Goffman to Richard Schechner have long recognized behavior as fundamental to performance, whether it occurs in the theater, everyday life, or the workplace (see, for example, Goffman, 1959; Schechner, 1985).

CONNECT unites the fields of engineering and performance, endorsing the need for engineers to master content and adding training in behaviors necessary to reach an audience:

$$CONNECT = Engineering + Performance.$$

This model adapts performance techniques to situations relevant to a technical career. We apply stage movement analysis to client relations, employee interaction, meetings, and job interviews. Practical audition tools, vocal and physical exercises, and directing techniques are applied to the everyday communication challenges faced by technical personnel, as well as to formal presentation. Theatrical scenarios allow workshop participants to explore the power relations encountered in the professional world.

## Results of the CONNECT model

Attending workshops based on the Engineering + Performance model results in observably improved behaviors. In a survey of corporate recruiters, potential employees who had taken one or more CONNECT workshops were rated higher overall in areas such as confidence and maturity than those who had not participated in CONNECT. Those who had taken a range of workshops that included one in advanced non-verbal behavior were rated even higher (see Figure 1).

In fact, attending even one workshop can result in a greater understanding of the role played by behavioral factors in effective communication. An analysis by external raters of comments taken from pre- and post-workshop participant surveys over a three-year period found that behavioral awareness more than doubled after participation in their very first CONNECT workshop. These results were achieved after mixed early assessment results led us to significantly refine our methods starting in the program's second year (see Figure 2).

## Crafting a successful program

The structure we arrived at resembles a mini-conservatory of the performing arts: an introductory workshop followed by a four-workshop module addressing the elements of expressive behavior – vocal, physical, group, and content. Upper level workshops were reconceived to emphasize the practice of these behaviors in professional situations such as video presentation, the delivery of prepared remarks on short notice, memo writing, conflict resolution, decision-making, brainstorming, and interviewing.

Just as important to the improvements we saw after the first year was an adjustment to how we approached the students in the workshops themselves. We needed to practice what we

**No CONNECT Workshops**

Positive

Strongly
Positive

Poor,
Neutral

**CONNECT Workshops but not "Movement Counts"**

Strongly
Positive

Positive

Poor,
Neutral

**CONNECT Workshops including "Movement Counts"**

Strongly
Positive

Positive

Poor,
Neutral

**Note:** In a survey conducted in 1999-2000, job recruiters who interviewed graduating seniors rated CONNECT participants more highly than non-participants in several behavioral categories. The figure summarizes results for the behavioral category of "maturity." "Movement Counts" is a workshop in advanced non-verbal behavior

preached, and that meant understanding our *own* audience of young engineers. We ourselves needed to behave in ways that would get through to them.

Coming to this point involved two key realizations. First, performers and technical trainees have something in common. They are not the oil-and-water mix that may come to mind. Second, performers and technical trainees have different expectations *as* audiences.

It has been striking to us just how well engineers and performing artists get along. To be sure, television viewers have a natural interest in people who have actually appeared in *Law and Order,* as have more than one of our facilitators. However, there appears to be a deeper *affinity* between theater people and technical people that contributes to the success of performance-based training. This affinity has been noted before. Theater scholar Shannon Jackson has pointed out that the rise of professional theater training in the United States was directly linked to its resemblance to a technical field, including the establishment of the first college theater program at Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie Mellon University) in 1914. It was precisely the ''technical elements'' of theatrical *production* that made it attractive to Carnegie Tech as a way of introducing the humanities into an industrial curriculum (Jackson, 2004).

**Figure 2** Fine-tuned workshops increase awareness of effective behaviors

**Note:** External raters conducted a blind comparison of comments about effective communication written by engineering students before and after their first CONNECT workshop. This figure compares the positive results we obtained after a comprehensive revamping of the program starting in its second year with indifferent results that the raters found in the program's first year. (a) Post-workshop comments from the first year indicated no increase in behavioral awareness relative to *some* communication issues. In the result pictured, raters found no additional understanding of the behavioral characteristics of an effective communicator. This was one of several indifferent results reversed after the program was modified. (b) Post-workshop responses collected over a three-year period were more than twice as likely to recognize the importance of behavior to effective communication. The result pictured is from the program's third year, and encompasses student comments about a number of communication issues, including the characteristics of an effective communicator

This interesting history aside, we believe that performers and technical trainees have three main things in common:

1. *Practicing collective problem solving under pressure.* Imagine what it involves to put on a play. There's a deadline – opening night – by which time the production's component parts must function with machinelike efficiency: acting, costuming, lighting, sets, sound, dialogue, movement, music and dance. These must be tested collaboratively in rehearsals, very much like experiments in an engineering project. No wonder that Shannon Jackson, at a conference on theater and technology in 2001, approvingly quoted a phrase she had heard from an engineer, that ''theater is the engineering of the humanities'' (Jackson, 2001). The difference between a performing artist and a literary artist is analogous to that between a scientist and an engineer, the theorist versus the practical problem solver who works first and foremost in a team.

2. *Understanding the value of lifelong learning.* Lifelong learning has been widely recognized as a necessity for technical professionals in a changing world. Criteria for engineering degree accreditation lists it as one of several key professional skills (Engineering Accreditation Commission, 2004), and business has long understood the need for such learning in both hard and soft skills. Similarly, performing artists take workshops and classes throughout their careers, exercising old skills and acquiring new ones as time goes on.

3. *Freely acknowledging the differences between them.* Even though performing artists hold many of the same values as engineers, they are not, obviously, engineers. As a result, they can relate to technical trainees while avoiding specialized debates about content. We've found the disclaimer, ''I'm not an engineer'' or ''I'm just an actor, what do I know?'', to be disarmingly effective in getting engineers to concentrate on what works behaviorally – which actors *do* know – rather than on content and analysis – the importance of which engineers already understand. Performers can also stand in for the

kinds of non-technical audiences that technical trainees will have to address in the professional world.

Building on these affinities presented a challenge in our early workshops. Relying on what engineers and performing artists have in common produced real but *limited* benefits; too often, our performer-facilitators assumed that what performers respond to positively in theatrical training would play equally well to a technical audience. Technical audiences need to be understood on their own terms if arts-based training in communication and other soft skills is to achieve its full potential.

Researchers have found that engineers in particular prefer to absorb information individually, and want it to be verbally taught and tested (Seat *et al.*, 2001). This is how most technical subjects are taught in a traditional curriculum, and a technical audience tends to expect the same in other situations. An experiential workshop can seem repetitive and overstated. To be effective, CONNECT's performing artists must play to the expectations of this audience, while guiding it to understand that behavioral tools cannot be taught like math or fluid dynamics.

Adjusting our approach to achieve this balance was key to the improvement in results that we saw starting in the program's second year. Changing how *we* behaved toward our own audience of young engineers required real sensitivity to what was happening in the workshops and to how our facilitators related to the students.

## Maximizing the impact of arts-based training

While the similarities between performers and engineers provided a foundation on which to build, we found that our facilitators had to adjust their own behaviors to account for the differences. What we learned during this process can be distilled into four ''rules'' for maximizing the effectiveness of performing-arts-based training in a technical field.

1. *Don't follow a script – customize from moment to moment.* Sensitivity to different audiences is second nature to performing artists. What works on Friday night may not work at the Sunday matinee. Similarly, what is effective in training chemical engineers may not work for their civil engineering or electrical engineering colleagues. And what works for engineers in general will *certainly* not work for each individual engineer. We have recognized the value of individualized attention, even in workshops involving teams or groups, and our facilitators send each participant away with something specific to his or her needs.

2. *Don't go ''touchy feely'' – unless you connect the dots.* Most actors don't think twice about standing in a circle and ''passing a ball of energy'' from person to person, or closing their eyes and imagining themselves at a ''favorite place,'' or taking a deep breath and ''letting it all out'' in a sigh or a yawn. They understand that these traditional ''warm-ups'' will have a positive effect on the performance they are about to give. When we first started doing workshops, most of our facilitators assumed that engineers would respond in the same way. But, we found that most engineers simply did not believe that a shoulder massage at six o'clock in the evening would positively affect an impromptu speech delivered at seven-thirty. Consequently, they often felt that the first part of the workshop was a ''waste of time.'' And nothing – *nothing* – is more counterproductive when it comes to coaching technical trainees. However, when the value of such activities is clearly related to the stated purpose of the workshop – if, as it were, a cause and effect relationship is established, few people will get the point more quickly than does an engineer. In our workshops we still stand in circles, and close our eyes, and take deep breaths, but only in response to a specific issue related to a specific person doing a specific task. Activities that might otherwise come off as extraneously ''touchy feely'' are transformed into proven tools for reaching an audience.

3. *Don't just prescribe – demonstrate.* There are at least three approaches possible for facilitating a workshop. The *prescriptive* approach tells trainees what is necessary (''speak up, make eye contact, emphasize that point''). The *experiential* approach lets them personally experience what happens when a new element is added to a situation (''keep your shoulders relaxed, make your point again''). The *demonstrative* approach

asks them to observe the effectiveness of a certain way of doing things (''watch this, and see the difference''). Any effective training program is bound to include all three approaches. We have found, however, that prescription is by far the least effective, even though engineers tend to expect it. Similarly, the experiential approach can meet resistance because the purpose of the exercise may not be immediately obvious. Demonstration, by contrast, jibes with the way technical work is accomplished, which is to solve problems through testing and observation. For this reason, we emphasize the observation of effective and ineffective communication behaviors in others as a way of demonstrating the options available to everyone. In post-workshop surveys, a majority of trainees say they have *observed* the effectiveness of workshop activities in improving each other's communication skills (see Figure 3). Seeing a colleague become more effective as result of a behavioral adjustment opens other participants to the possibility that a similar adjustment might benefit them as well. As a result, there is no need to offer simplistic prescriptions, and the participants are more willing to give themselves over to experiential approaches.

4. *Be intensive and specific – but not judgmental.* People with technical backgrounds have an ability to absorb demonstrated principles quickly and comprehensively. We have found that a great deal of understanding can be gained in a relatively short time, and that effective training avoids dwelling on ''the basics.'' Yet that is exactly what many technical students have experienced in the past, often in cookie cutter classes that fail to acknowledge either the technical audience as a whole or the individuals that make it up. Repetition works only if the basics are built on in an increasingly complex fashion. The continual addition of new elements keeps the interest of engineers and demonstrates that what is basic in one situation, or to one person, is not necessarily basic to another.

Effective training is about exploring the tools that each individual already possesses for reaching an audience or working productively as a team. A ''flaw'' can be a virtue if channeled in the right direction. Properly coached, a nervous habit transforms into an expressive gesture. In an intensive environment there is less time for judgment and more time for personal discovery. The discoveries made in an intense situation are likely to be more deeply felt and imprinted on each and every trainee, especially if the discoveries are distilled into tools that can be used in actual situations. It is important to be patient and non-judgmental, and our data demonstrates that, while not every engineer is likely to become a *great* communicator, almost all engineers are capable of becoming *better* communicators (see Figure 4).

These ''rules'' are, of course, only a starting point. We have learned to apply them both rigorously and with flexibility. At the Engineering School of the The Cooper Union,

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**Figure 3** Peer observations validate effectiveness of workshop activities



Note: CONNECT workshops encourage precise observation of communication behaviors. In post-workshop feedback from the most recent graduating class (2005), participants' observed improvement in the communication behaviors of their peers as a result of workshop activities since the freshman year
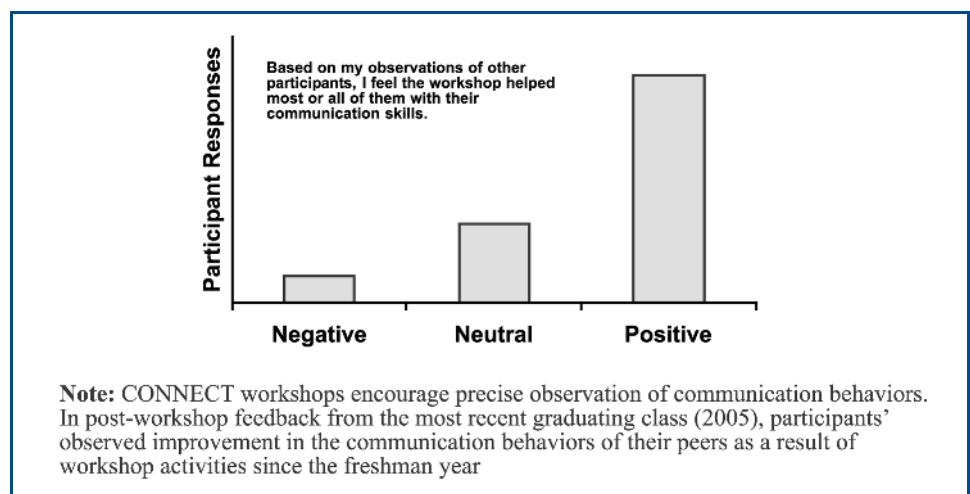
**Figure 4** All levels appear to benefit from workshop participation



**Strongly Negative**   **Negative**   **Acceptable**   **Positive**

☐ Pre-CONNECT ☐ Post-CONNECT

**Note:** Not all improvements happen at the top end of the scale. In a blind comparison, external raters reviewed archival videotapes of freshman presentations before and after the full implementation of CONNECT. Strongly negative ratings of the young speakers' ability to "connect with an audience" were virtually eliminated, replaced by a comparable increase in those rated "acceptable."
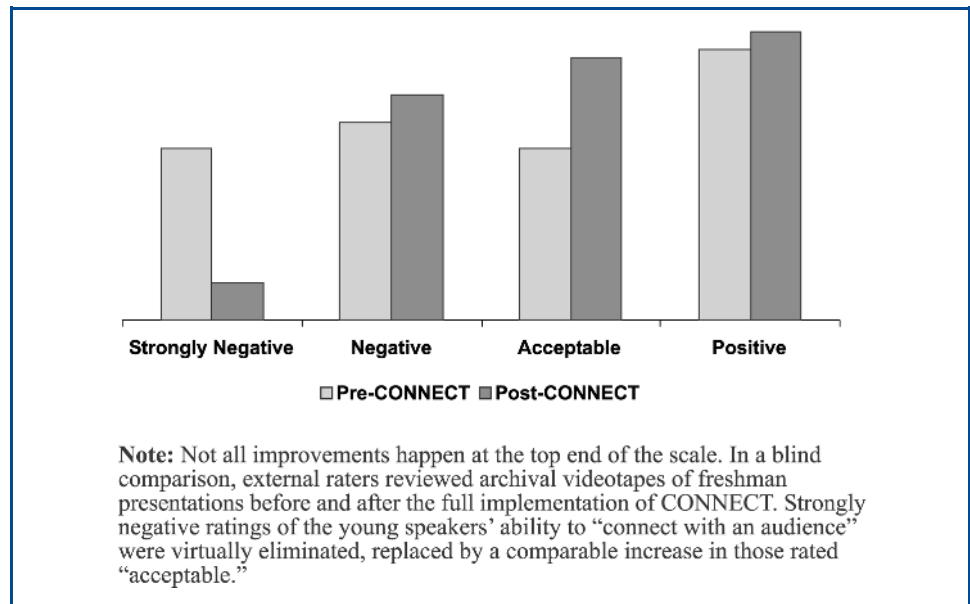
customization meant establishing a mini-conservatory. We have learned that you can't close someone else's audience gap without first closing your own. In another setting, playing to the technical audience might require a completely different sort of customization and a subtly different set of training behaviors. What CONNECT has shown is that knowing one's audience – and knowing it specifically rather than generally – is fundamental. A training model that combines engineering with performance is uniquely positioned to build on this basic insight.

### Note

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# The behaviors of jazz as a catalyst for strategic renewal and growth

Michael Gold and Steve Hirshfeld

Michael Gold is the president of Jazz Impact. He also spent two decades as an executive in financial services and commercial real estate management. He is a veteran of New York City jazz as a bassist from 1975-1996, and he ran the jazz department at Vassar College from 1993-1995 (Michael@jazz-impact.com). Steve Hirshfeld is a founder and managing director of the Managing Uncertainty Strategy Team (MUST), a group of futurists, consumer trends experts, and business strategists who help businesses understand critical external drivers of change and translate them into game changing strategies. Steve previously was the Vice President of Corporate Strategy and Business Development for Honeywell (hirshfeld@msn.com).

Lucent world headquarters in Murray Hill, New Jersey, called a three-day conference in 1998 to work towards understanding the difficulty they were having managing workforces in cultures different from that of mainstream America. We were asked to present the model of jazz as a way of providing an experiential metaphor for collaborative improvisation in management that the multinational group of managers would be able to draw from over the next several days – ideas and techniques that would help them deal with high velocity change and the extraordinary cultural differences they were encountering in nonwestern markets and work environments of the late 1990s.

The presentation employed the performance of five highly skilled jazz musicians who had never met one another before. Spontaneously improvised jazz was interspersed with explanations about the how and why of what we were doing. The immediate response was an overwhelming onslaught of questions about how we managed to remain so lucid and attentive to one another in a collaborative process that had so few rules and limitations. The electricity of the performance, and the suggestion of the relationship of improvisation to management, stimulated many new thoughts on how old problems of collaborative process could be approached in different ways.

The model of jazz proved highly effective in giving Lucent a way to talk about making the kinds of changes that would grant more flexibility and creative freedom to people. In the debrief session that followed, comments ranged from seeing and understanding the ways our different roles fused together in the rapidly changing process of improvisation to the importance of seeing, hearing and actively listening to the way in which we constantly and spontaneously shifted between leading and supporting one another in our collaborative effort. These managers immediately sensed a connection between the challenges we faced as improvisers working to sustain collaborative innovation in the ambiguous context of the ensemble, and the demands they faced leading their company through chaotically changing conditions in the rapidly emerging markets of the global digital revolution.

The question most frequently asked following that initial performance was ''when and where will you be doing this again?'' That was all the impetus Michael Gold needed to create the program Jazz Impact, which over the years has evolved as a dynamic program for process innovation and change management.

Since 1998 much has changed in the macro environment surrounding Lucent and other leading corporations. The pace and complexity of change has only intensified and today, all organizations find themselves trying to manage uncertainty. But disruptive change is not new to business or to music. In the world of music, the appearance of jazz was as upsetting to the traditional hierarchy as the ascendancy of Apple, Intel and Microsoft were to the rule of the giants like IBM (and perhaps, in the future, as open source will be to Microsoft). In 2004 Michael Gold and Steve Hirshfeld, a founder of the Managing Uncertainty Strategy Team (MUST) and former Vice President of Corporate Strategy and Business development for

Honeywell, began their dialogue about how the jazz metaphor could be extended further into the strategy development and implementation process, as well as serve as a catalyst for organizational change.

### Jazz as a metaphor for ''scoring'' twenty-first century business success

What Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five did in the early 1920s was to fuse the traditionally separated roles of composer, instrumental interpreter and conductor into a new role in the world of music: the role of the improviser. This fusion of roles took the vertical chain of command, in which the composer created the ideas then gave the score to the conductor who single handedly led the regimented orchestra through a very controlled interpretation of those ideas, and turned the process into a horizontal network in which all members bore equal responsibility for the creation, production and delivery of the musical experience. Unlike the completely scripted performance of a symphony, the underlying structure in jazz is a minimal set of boundaries that coordinates the organization in time and purpose, but leaves the responsibility for creative choices up to the individual. A core element in the process of perpetual renewal in jazz is the constant introduction of new ideas and perspectives.

Business in the twenty-first century faces a very similar challenge to its structural identity. Ideas and inventors can be matched over the internet with eBay-like ease through start-ups such as InnoCentive. Small entrepreneurial start-ups can work in collaboration with large companies and universities in loosely connected innovation clusters that propel discovery and offer unprecedented commercial opportunity. It is often the case now that a Silicon Valley start-up company establishes a one- or two-person office in India or China before its ''corporate headcount'' reaches 20. These dynamic and innovative interactions and organizational approaches must address the same challenges Lucent faced in the Jazz Impact discovery workshop.

So one might say we are in a time of apparent paradox and competing forces and business models. The ability to grow organically from within and through new forms of collaboration is at the top of everyone's priority list. Companies are focused on finding new ways to tap into the customer in the innovation process, to create new products, to do so faster, and to do so in a more jazz-like manner. IBM has held a series of ''World Jam'' sessions to engage employees in mass collaboration.

### The five behaviors of jazz

How does the jazz ensemble sustain itself night after night, year after year through a constant churn of personnel while maintaining an extremely high level of creative interaction, resulting in a constant stream of new ideas and new processes? There are five behaviors that empower jazz improvisation: passion, listening, autonomy, risk and improvisation. We will discuss each of these behaviors as they relate to both the art of jazz and the conduct of business. Then we'll examine several case studies involving the integration of the behaviors of jazz into specific corporate cultures.

#### *Passion*

One of the fundamental drivers of jazz has always been passion, feeding the constant renewal of the ensemble's emotional commitment to the creative process. Passion is at the core of what is called swing – the perpetual motion that drives collaborative thinking and

invention in jazz. One of Duke Ellington's most famous compositions is entitled, *It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing*. Given that Duke was in many respects the Peter Drucker of the jazz world, it was, in essence, a directive to his musicians that if the passion for constant invention wasn't there, it mattered not what level of expertise they were bringing to the table. In the realtime process of jazz, clarity and economy of ideas are critical to the rapid integration of diverse styles and approaches. The fusion of passion and expertise can best be achieved when one is able to simplify even the most complex ideas – no easy task in any medium. Passion serves to connect and catalyze important shifts in process that may be unfamiliar or discontinuous.

In jazz, we cannot separate what a person knows from how a person acts. The same situation pertains in a business environment where there is a constant need for creative interpretation and collaborative problem solving. So often in business, however, we prioritize expertise over passion and belief in purposeful visions. If we place passion low on the list of priorities, thinking of it as a separate entity from the creative expertise we demand from ourselves and our employees, we will soon find that the very core of the organization – its energy, its spirit for the process – has dissipated. Passion for collaborative improvisation becomes a critical resource for strategic renewal.

To swing as an individual and as an organization requires a balance between expertise and passion such that one never loses the connection to the other. They continuously renew each other as externalities change and their form of response, be it anticipatory or reactive, drives new strategies and behaviors. This dynamic is delicate. As jazz musicians, we cannot ''make'' it swing; we can only ''let'' it swing. The most important behavior in this dynamic is the act of listening.

### Listening

In high performance jazz improvisation, everything begins with the act of listening. The ability to spontaneously shift back and forth between the dual roles of soloing (leading) and supporting is the core behavior that enables great jazz. Everyone is given the responsibility of soloing and the opportunity to develop original ideas. But it really is the act of support – ''comping,'' short for accompanying – that makes jazz so unique among art forms. Comping is a form of interactive listening that requires musicians to identify with the soloist's ideas at a very deep level in order to facilitate their process without hindering it. This is called empathic listening. It is the ability to suspend any assumption about what is coming next in order to allow whatever it is that emerges to evolve in the direction that it needs to go; it is the ability to listen with an open mind and no predetermined agenda.

Capturing this behavior in a business context, where action is value and listening and observation are often viewed as ''non-value added,'' is vital but not easy. Why is this important? Empathic listening is a tool for creating a dynamic of leaders and supporters rather than one of leaders and followers.

As important as empathic listening is, it also poses a serious challenge to the vertical hierarchies of most corporate cultures. To listen empathically means to approach each interaction from a perspective that good ideas can and will come from all levels of the organization regardless of position in hierarchy, or from outside the confines of the company itself.

For example, Procter & Gamble, through its ''Connect and Develop'' initiative, described in the June 8, 2005 *Financial Times*, has set a goal of 50 percent of its new product ideas coming from outside the company; it has 50 technology searchers scanning the radar for new ideas and innovations to supplement its own endeavors. P&G is a leading advocate for open innovation. It also has its own ''consumer village'' with a ''supermarket'' and kitchen where consumers come in to shop or use its various products. Trained people observe and learn from consumer selections and insights as a major source of new ideas from products to processes to packaging and promotion. It expands its core brands by serving broader consumer needs and growing, for example, from a leader in toothpaste and toothbrushes to

''share of mouth'' through whiteners and spinbrushes, often capitalizing on technology and processes from other businesses.

### Autonomy

In jazz, autonomy has always been defined as an act of sharing. Autonomy in jazz means having the freedom to take whatever action may be needed in the moment to achieve a particular goal, but at the same time having the responsibility and the awareness to assure that the integrity of one's own ideas as well as the integrity of the other's ideas is not compromised. What looks like magic to the laymen as they observe jazz musicians spontaneously creating new ideas is actually a very highly structured process of interaction that fosters successful collaboration, requiring trust and a very high level of cross-functional understanding. Above all, autonomy in jazz has always been defined as an act of sharing, in the context of empowerment.

Business in the twenty-first century is like a highly skilled orchestra that has suddenly had its conductor and its scores removed – immense expertise but very little empowerment for self actualization. The only way forward is through interactive creative collaboration – what is known as open source innovation. There can be no such thing as one's success at the expense of another's, because when everything is interconnected such an approach is self destructive. In this context, autonomy must be based on the principal of inclusivity.

Reuters created an internal venture capital activity to nurture start ups and called it the Reuters Greenhouse. They commission projects from small companies. Instead of telling the start-ups what to do, the Greenhouse observes and follows them, in essence allowing creative autonomy before translating the new ideas into what is comfortable for Reuters' core business. The Greenhouse then determines how to introduce the new ideas into the larger organization in an incremental manner that allows adjustments and is minimally disruptive.

Success in both jazz and in business depends on the ability to create organizations where the structured hierarchy, roles and rules serve the development of ideas and the people creating them – not the other way around.

### Improvisation

The challenge to people trying to sustain innovative collaboration in both jazz and business is improvisational – the immediate absorption and rapid integration of new and different ideas. Principles of improvisation include:

- acceptance of a new idea or approach with an attitude of ''yes and;''
- attentive listening to the partners with whom one is co-creating;
- temporary suspension of critical judgment while in the option-finding mode;
- an attitude of relaxed openness to new ideas, moving further into the realm of imagination;
- reframing situations to explore creative possibilities;
- a willingness to take chances and to risk making mistakes; and
- an understanding that no choice is absolutely right or wrong and this can only be discovered through trial and error.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter describes improvisational strategy as experimenting in areas of uncertainty, moving fast and learning through action, creating new possibilities, integrating the audience as a source of input and creative energy, and relying more on empowered

> **" A core element in the process of perpetual renewal in jazz is the constant introduction of new ideas and perspectives. "**

> **"The fusion of passion and expertise can best be achieved when one is able to simplify even the most complex ideas – no easy task in any medium."**

actors closer to the audience than decrees from above (*European Business Forum*, Issue 8, Winter 2001/02).

In *What To Listen for in Jazz* (Yale University Press, 1997), Barry Kornfield quotes bassist Chuck Israels as saying, ''musical decisions that take place during improvisation are made instantly, but the work behind those decisions takes place over long periods of time – hours, days, weeks, months and years – spent considering all the musical possibilities.'' Exploration in jazz implies the careful exploitation of the capital one has built through hard work in the pursuit of continual learning.

Successful collaborative improvisation is directly linked to the level of permission that a group is able to confer on itself – permission to explore and make mistakes. Improvisation is not possible in an environment where there is fear of failure. For the jazz improviser, the act of doing cannot be separated from the process of transformation. Jazz is essentially a learning culture whose existence depends on the continual transformation of each of its constituents, expressed through improvisation. In the 1996 book *The Leader of the Future*, Peter Senge addressed this for business: ''The basic assumption that only top management can cause significant change is deeply disempowering. Why then in the 'age of empowerment,' do we accept it so unquestioningly? Isn't it odd that we would seek to bring about less hierarchical and authoritarian organizational cultures through recourse to hierarchical authority?''

### Risk taking

Jazz recordings are, in a sense, oxymoronic in nature because they capture, in a static way, an art form whose entire purpose is the continuous evolution of the interactive creative process. A jazz recording might be likened to an annual report reflecting everything that happened in a very successful year, but to appreciate the true nature of jazz, it has to be experienced live in performance. The driving force behind a century of evolution in jazz is its ability to move beyond the pull of its past success, to constantly resist the temptation to fall back on what has worked in the past – in other words, to take risks. Success in both business and jazz requires constant movement into uncharted territory, rather than trying to adhere to the ideas that earned success in the past.

This is not to imply that jazz musicians ignore past success. Their challenge is to create flexible strategies that build on but go beyond what's worked in the past. Accomplishing this requires acceptance of a level of uncertainty and risk that lies well beyond the typical corporate comfort zone and a better understanding of the larger dynamic environment and context in which the business operates. What is often forgotten by business leaders is that inaction in many situations is the most risky alternative of all.

The next section contains examples of companies that have used the jazz metaphor and the five behaviors to address changing needs in their markets and to move their organizations toward the next level of success. These behaviors become much easier to remember when thought of as the acronym APRIL: Autonomy, Passion, Risk taking, Improvisation and Listening.

### Fenwick & West

The goal of Fenwick & West, a Silicon Valley-centered intellectual property law firm, was to renew the human aspects of their employees' interrelationships. For example, it wanted to

help its attorneys recognize that non-technical matters are vital to the success of the overall organization and, while technical personnel and support staff may work separately from each other around particular projects, there is a great deal they can learn from each other, and transferring those insights can strengthen the entire organization. Their focus was on developing teamwork in ways that went beyond the traditional methodology applied by most organizational development facilitators.

Without an experiential activity the employees could not understand the ''logic'' of what the Fenwick & West leadership was trying to introduce into the firm. The challenge was to help patent attorneys and scientists to recognize how art and jazz, in particular, can be a powerful tool capable of helping them become more responsive to their clients' needs.

Jazz Impact worked with Fenwick & West to come up with an integrated set of experiences for the 250 attendees that would demand their creative participation even at the planning stage. Each individual was asked to spend some time in advance creating their own rhythm instruments. We sent them each an email with the following directive:

> Rhythm Band. You will need to create (or purchase) and bring your own rhythm instrument to the workshop. If your birthday falls in winter, bring #1 below. Spring, #2; Summer, #3, and Fall, #4.
>
> 1. Shakers. **Containers**: Plastic jars, film canisters, wooden and metal containers, smaller sized coffee cans with a plastic lid (can be used for shakers, scrapers, and drums all at once). **Filler**: beads from a hobby store, copper-jacketed lead shot, dried beans, or popcorn (unpopped!).
> 2. Rhythm Sticks and woodblocks: The harder the wood the better.
> 3. Scrapers: A length of PVC pipe works great, or take a piece of bamboo 25-30 cm long, and the thicker the better. Make sawcuts along one side of it, about 1 cm apart, then use a rasp or a file to make the cuts into more of a ''V'' shape. Hold it in one hand and scrape it with a chopstick, stick or piece of wire.
> 4. Cowbells: You need something to produce a muffled ''clank'' rather than a ringing bell tone. Try some stainless steel mixing bowls at a thrift shop.

This was the only clue people had about what the day would hold for them. We offered detailed instructions to assure that their instruments would be satisfactory and to give them a sense of how thoroughly we had planned their activity. For our ideas to receive a proper reception, our seriousness of intent had to be clear.

We began at 9.00 a.m. on Saturday with the 70-minute seminar that presented the five APRIL behavioral concepts outlined above, interspersed with musical demonstrations of these behaviors. When the seminar finished, they broke off into teams, went out into the surrounding community of Monterey, California, and worked on assigned tasks that involved finding and using resources to create specific scenarios for presentation to the entire group later in the day. The assignments were loosely structured with certain minimal guidelines (one of the main precepts in jazz). Each team was given tools such as VCRs or sound recording devices. The teams were charged with finding resources and coming up with their own ideas, in real time, rehearsing them and presenting – a sort of cross between the work of a trial lawyer and the work of a jazz musician. Throughout this part of the process, the concepts we had just presented acted as a guide when teams encountered creative friction or faced difficult choices that threatened to take up valuable time needed to prepare the presentation.

Fenwick & West people were so used to working and thinking within the highly structured hierarchy of the firm that they needed a model to give them permission to improvise, and to develop a context where each individual's contribution was paramount, regardless of whether they worked as a receptionist or as a senior partner. Jazz springs from a dynamic of leading and support (rather than leading and following), actualized through constant rotation in which the leadership role is shared by all members. This was a key point made during the seminar and one the participants were urged to practice in the ensuing exercises.

Once the four-hour preparation period was complete, each team had ten minutes to present to the group. The presentations were characterized by an unusual level of enthusiasm, particularly because most of the participants had never before performed under such

circumstances. Many stated they would never forget the feeling of authenticity and energy they experienced while presenting original ideas they had just created.

Early that evening, the Jazz Impact ensemble came back and presented a one-hour concert. This was an opportunity for the participants to hear the world class musicians they had worked with earlier give it their all; an opportunity that most people could only have by visiting such famous jazz clubs as The Village Vanguard or The Blue Note. The purpose was to build a higher level to give the participants a chance to experience world-class jazz improvisation from a new position of understanding of both the music and of how the dynamics at work on stage might apply to their own lives.

Following dinner, the group was reassembled and the interactive portion of the day began. Participants were asked to bring their rhythm instruments. Working with our vocalist, Brian Tate, the group was divided into four sections. We began teaching, in real time, very simple yet highly swinging four-part pieces to the group. Participation was mandatory. For the next hour everyone created their own music, using rhythm and voice, to the accompaniment of the ensemble and under our facilitation. Very few of these people had any musical training, yet by 15 minutes into the process, everyone was engaged in the challenge.

Our intention was to involve the participants in the behaviors of organized improvisation at the intellectual, physical and emotional levels, and to steep them in the experience in a way that would hold. This was about Fenwick & West learning to literally swing together. Over the hour, our entire group performance ranged from learning to sing four-part simple jazz mantras to improvising a symphony with the instruments they had created.

Ralph Pais, a senior partner in the firm, stated that ''The use of music was highly effective in translating fascinating concepts from another world that have relevant application in ours.'' Two months later, Pais reported that the experience of the evening's interactive activity had driven the behaviors of jazz deeply into the organizational consciousness – employees were still referring to them on a daily basis. Pais also stated that one of the most valuable takeaways for them was an organizational understanding of how to approach the hard work of integrating structure and creativity without compromising either.
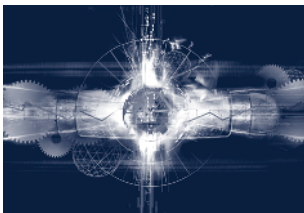
## McGraw-Hill

Jazz Impact's work for McGraw-Hill was predicated on their need to translate their successful twentieth-century operating process into a form that would yield the same success in a world where culture, distance and time no longer act as barriers. Jazz Impact engaged 45 of their top executives involved in sales and marketing, creative development, human resources and strategic planning, in a 90-minute session that included and allowed for questions and discussion.

In planning for the program we worked closely with Chuck Presbury, senior director of Leadership Development at McGraw-Hill. We determined that two specific jazz behaviors – empathic listening and passion – would be most relevant in terms of their overall learning for the three-day seminar.

For empathic listening, we developed an exercise where each person would pair off to work on the ability to listen to something with no agenda or preconceived expectation. The exercise worked like this: a piece of music was played by the ensemble, in this instance it was a rendition of *A Flower Is a Lovesome Thing*, a spectacular ballad written by Billy Strayhorn, Duke Ellington's protégé. It was played by our trombonist Art Baron, who played with the Ellington band in the early 1970s – quite an evocative performance. When the piece finished, one person was to describe to the other what it was they had heard. As they described their listening experience, they were to trust that the listener was deeply interested in what they were saying. The listener in turn was to try and notice what prejudice or agenda they were bringing to the act of listening. If they could identify any, they were to do their best to suspend those assumptions or expectations in order to really understand the reality the other was reporting.

The participants were astounded at the differences in perception that each reported to the other, and quickly made the connection between this type of listening and the skills needed to achieve market penetration in cultures different from our own, particularly nonwestern cultures.

The experience spurred discussion on how easy it is to make erroneous assumptions about another's intent or meaning by letting our own assumptions interfere with our perceptions. Although this all may sound quite obvious, people rarely stop to examine how they listen and how their listening may differ from others. The learning had multifaceted applications.

We also engaged the executives in an interactive four-part singing exercise. Initially there was a great reluctance to commit to such an activity due to inhibitions and cultural protocols regarding appropriate corporate behavior. But, after a few people volunteered to take on the individual parts, the entire group soon sided with one of the four instruments to participate in the exercise. All that was required to make it work was the willingness to take a risk and the passion to carry it out.

We discussed the critical importance of passion in the cultural transition that McGraw-Hill is attempting to make – to grow beyond the success the company has achieved with its existing products in tried-and-true markets, by penetrating new, culturally diverse markets where new products will need to be invented or existing ones retooled. Such a transition will require change, risk and the possibility of failure, such that a very high level of anxiety and fear cannot be avoided.

Through the process of jazz, we were able to demonstrate a ''new idea process'' that gave the executives a model for envisioning their – and their company's – transformation. The role of passion as a driver for these functions was clear. In discussion, the point was made that in both jazz and in business, passion is how we overcome the fear of error in order to focus on real work.

A further point was made during discussion. In jazz the creative hierarchy is horizontal, resulting in a level of ownership and responsibility that would be impossible in the typical vertical chain of command that was such a strong part of McGraw-Hill's cultural history. This aspect of jazz behavior was very productive for the executives in coming to terms with the broad changes they need to make to this aspect of their culture.

Jazz Impact was able to convey the idea that real innovation comes through constant strategic renewal, which is in fact the very process of collaborative jazz improvisation. The forces at work in jazz are the forces needed to establish business cultures capable of organizational improvisation.

- *Discovery:* leveraging the creative potential of every individual in your organization at every level of hierarchy.

- *Interpretation:* understanding and embracing diverse ways of thinking so that you never miss valuable connections.

- *Integration:* building relationships able to work with the uncertainty and ambiguity that are part of the problem-solving process in any global business.

These are the behaviors of jazz, and also the tools for organizational development, value-added growth and competitive differentiation in business.

# The play's the thing: using interactive drama in leadership development

Robert Steed

Pioneers in theatre-based training, Nancy and Bob Steed founded Performance Plus... in 1988. Before that, Bob had been a lawyer with Cravath, Swaine & Moore in New York City and had a 20-year career at Time Incorporated, first as Director of Labor Relations and then for 12 years as Corporate Vice President for Human Resources. He has also been an executive search and human resources consultant. In its 17 years, Performance Plus... has worked with over 100 clients and has presented thousands of business-related interactive dramas.

About 400 years ago, when Shakespeare wrote the play-within-a-play in *Hamlet*, he held a dramatic mirror in front of Hamlet's mother and his uncle, to enable them to see, and even experience, their own actions. For the past 17 years, my partner, Nancy Steed, and I have used the same process (with positive rather than tragic outcomes) in training programs for leaders and staff in a wide range of industries. We start with a short (4- to 15-minute) dramatization on a subject of importance to our client, like teamwork or culture change. The scenario is positioned in the client's company and industry, using its unique vocabulary and culture – so it reflects the organization and will be fully recognizable to participants in the program.

As in *Hamlet*, the use of drama as a training tool creates a mirror in which managers can see reflected their own behaviors and begin to see how those behaviors can be changed to achieve more positive results. At the same time it creates a window through which they can examine their own organization and the behaviors of those around them – again with a view to developing ways to change those behaviors to achieve better results. The ''window/mirror'' result of theatre-based training provides a uniquely powerful way to affect the learning of program participants.

The newly recruited Chief Accounting Officer of one of our clients used this approach in an especially inventive way. For an offsite involving herself and her five direct reports, she asked us to portray a staff meeting of herself and those five people – giving our players different names but the same points of view, personality characteristics, conflicts, verbal mannerisms, etc., as the real people who were our small audience. In this way, she hoped they would understand deeply how their own (and others') behaviors were affecting their ability to work together as a cohesive team.

## The audience is part of the play

They did understand, not just because of the dramatization itself, but even more because of the second, critical step in the in the use of interactive theatre as a training tool. At the end of the dramatization the audience remains (unlike Gertrude and Claudius) and is invited to engage in a dialogue with the players in the scenario, *who remain in character*. In the above example, this process enabled participants to explore the situation and subject matter in great depth and, in effect, to engage in a dialogue with their own colleagues – with our players as ''stand-ins'' for those colleagues. In that program, the dialogue between audience and players lasted over an hour.

The interactive nature of that dialogue is a powerful tool for learning because the players continue to challenge the audience at every turn. For instance, in this program, one of the characters was resisting teamwork and sharing information because he perceived it as undermining or usurping his power. That was the position our player maintained throughout the dialogue – to enable the participants not only to understand the resistance but also to develop effective strategies for addressing it (and for the participant who *was* the resister to

understand its impact). During the dialogue, our players also stay in the present tense – they don't intellectually analyze what had happened in the scenario (''I thought'' or ''I felt''); instead they deal in the here and now (''I think'' or ''I feel''), which forces the audience to stay in the moment as well. Their other primary tool is to ask follow up questions of the audience (e.g., ''what should I do when I am attacked that way?'').

The dialogue, led by a facilitator, is open-ended but sufficiently structured to ensure that all the key issues embedded in the scenario are raised and addressed. It can also yield valuable different perspectives among participants on both diagnoses and solutions, as they search for the most effective approach to dynamic, human situations. For example, one four-minute vignette on sexual harassment yielded a 30 minute dialogue wherein participants were equally divided – one-third thought the scene showed harassment, another one-third thought it didn't, and the last third wasn't sure. Illustrating those shades of gray, where most important issues in business are ''played,'' can best be done by the creative use of realistic, interactive drama. (We should note that other forms of theatre-based training that do not incorporate this interactive element can also provide valuable training tools in corporate settings.)

## The play reflects reality

To create dramatizations that are realistic enough to be credible to the very audience they are representing requires a deep familiarity with business in general and a great deal of background on the particular company involved. This comes from generally available resources like annual reports, marketing and/or new employee materials, organization charts and the like. But we need to go much deeper than that – to understand how the business works, the basic business model, the role of the business unit or department we are working with, and some of the politics of the company or industry. That is derived from conversations with key managers. We also need to get direction from the client contact about what s/he perceives the situation to be and what s/he wants the program to accomplish. Lastly, we test a lot of that information against the views of half a dozen (plus or minus) employees who would be likely to attend the program – to get a feel for language, culture, and their views of the issues.

The material is then synthesized into a one-page, two-person vignette (though we often do multi-person, multi-scene scenarios, especially in programs on teamwork and diversity). This is not a traditional verbatim ''script,'' but rather a series of points for each person to make, because scripted dialogue of business interactions can often be stilted and unrealistic. We want to give our players leeway to make the points in a natural way, as long as they stay within the framework of the vignette (e.g., we don't want someone in the middle of a time management vignette to incorporate alcoholism issues). The vignette is given to the client for comments – and is revised as often as is necessary until the client is satisfied that it is substantively on target and reflects the reality of the client's organization.

The players, as well as the dramatization, must be realistic. To start with, insofar as possible, they should mirror the demographics of the organization and, besides being talented actors, they should have enough of a business background to know the language of business and to avoid faux pas (e.g. you don't shake hands with your boss when you go in his/her office for a performance appraisal). In addition, they need to be briefed on the basics of the client situation – business, competitors, culture, language, and the objective of the program – so they can engage in a seamless, credible dialogue with the audience after the scenario has been played out.

## Plays affect everyone

Drama is a vibrant development tool from the boardroom to the street. For example, at the end of a program on managing change for the senior management team of a 7,500-person subsidiary of a major company, each person on the team was asked to *privately* identify three changes s/he would make in the way each dealt with change. After doing so, the CEO was moved to publicly declare his three changes and to tell his colleagues to call him on them if he did not ''walk the talk.'' On the other hand, in a program on how to manage angry

customers, presented for unionized staff of a public utility whose job was to shut off the utilities of people who had not paid their bills, one participant said (after being threatened with a baseball bat), ''Man, this is my life. It's what I face every day. And it helps me find new ways to deal with these kinds of problem customers.''

Interactive dramas, where program participants point out to the role-players how to solve a problem, also enable participants to learn from each other, as different ideas are tested. The power of a drama which realistically reflects their own situations and in which they can actively engage unlocks the ideas and wisdom that are inside each participant (sometimes hidden there). The role of the facilitator, then, becomes not to *tell* people what they ''should'' do (or what the ''right'' answers are), but to *reinforce* and build on the sound answers as they emerge from participants. The facilitator can also ask the players to take those suggestions from participants and re-play the situation a ''better'' way – to double that reinforcement. The interactive process enables the program to belong to *the participants*, not the leader or even the company, and the learning becomes much more meaningful and memorable.

Drama is not only ideally suited to illustrating the ''look and feel'' of issues in a particular organizational setting, it is also memorable. We all know how we remember a great play or movie, for its message and meaning. But when you can put yourself into the play and see how it relates to your *own* life and work, it is even *more* memorable. This was brought home particularly well when my partner and spouse, Nancy, was in a client's ladies' room (like men's rooms, these are excellent places to learn people's candid thoughts and reactions). She overheard two managers talking about a colleague. ''Dealing with Sara is just like Ed and Gary from that program last year,'' one said. And the other responded, ''You're right, Sara and Gary are two of a kind – financial geniuses with no people skills. And in the program we identified several ways to deal with Gary. Let's figure out which of those approaches would work best with Sara''. Those two women took an issue raised in a training program over a year earlier and applied it to a current situation. But they did it based on intuition or analogy, rather than data.

In his small but powerful book, *A Guide for the Perplexed*, the philosopher E. F. Schumacher notes that there are two axes by which learning occurs – the horizontal and the vertical. The horizontal axis is dominated by data and is the province of mathematics, physics, market research, etc. It is quantitative. But neither the most powerful mathematics or physics nor mountains of market data can answer the qualitative questions which are on the vertical axis – questions like ''how can I be an effective leader of this group at this time in this organization.''

Training in business occupies both these axes. A lot of very important training occurs on the data-driven horizontal axis. A would-be programmer can be trained to follow a specific, universally applicable series of steps and protocols in order to produce high-quality code. But for that person to become an effective manager of other programmers, s/he must move to the vertical axis where there is no data-driven road map to success. There are a range of possibilities, which may vary depending on the company, the staff, the situation, and innumerable other factors. The capacity to recognize those possibilities and apply them can be learned or developed – and training has a major role to play in doing that. However, that development is the result of insight and awareness, not of the accumulation of data. Drama is particularly well suited to helping individuals develop that insight and awareness, because one can experience the drama both objectively and subjectively.

## The play reaches minds and hearts

Drama educates on two levels – it is intellectually stimulating and emotionally challenging. Take a subject as (apparently) simple and straightforward as customer service. Of course there are many ''rules'' for good customer service. And volumes have been written on the subject of how to deliver ''world class customer service.'' But it is very hard to do that every day in every situation when, as Ortega y Gasset once remarked, ''life is fired at us point blank'' and we can't say ''wait a minute, I need to look up the data.'' Instead, we rely on higher levels of awareness and insight, often garnered through experience. Effective interactive dramatizations of real world customer service situations, where you can talk with the ''customer'' and explore what would have worked, can provide precisely that kind of experience.

Another way to use interactive dramas is to provide ''practice sessions'' for company personnel. This has long been used in training physicians – where actors are engaged to portray patients, to help doctors understand ''the human side of medicine.'' But it's equally valuable on subjects like customer service, sales, giving feedback, and the like. Instead of having program participants role-play with each other, organizations using interactive theatre can provide a more realistic and controlled practice situation by using trained actors to portray customers, prospects, or other employees. In using this approach, we put participants into groups of two to four, give one of them time to study a brief description of a situation derived from real-life occurrences in their business, and then send one of our players (armed with her/his objectives and version of the situation) to role-play that situation. Afterwards, the participant who does the role-play is given feedback by both his/her colleagues and by the player (still in character), so the participant gets a clear sense of the impact of what had transpired.

As our work at Performance Plus over the past 17 years has demonstrated, interactive theatre is extremely well suited to dealing with leadership development and training issues involving human relations issues – or those on the ''vertical'' dimension to use Schumacher's terminology. Schumacher also postulates that there are two kinds of problems – ''convergent'' and ''divergent.'' Convergent problems can be solved through the application of logic, quantification, cost/benefit analysis and the like (in other words, the horizontal axis of data). Most worldly problems are convergent, even problems as yet unsolved. All we need to do is collect enough of the right data.

But there are some problems where, no matter how much data you collect, the answers are increasingly divergent – until eventually they can appear as polar opposites. Schumacher's example is instructive – how do we educate our children? Some will say ''those who have knowledge and experience teach; those without knowledge and experience learn.'' So education requires ''the establishment of authority for the teachers and discipline and obedience for the pupils.'' Others will say that education is ''the provision of a facility'' to enable pupils to learn based on their own needs and their own inner beings. Therefore, education requires ''the establishment ... of freedom – the greatest possible freedom.'' Defining ''leadership'' and developing business leaders poses a similar dichotomy. Is the ''leader'' the one who decides while others execute? Or is s/he the one who empowers others to lead?

### The play's an and/also tool

In this context, the concepts of discipline and freedom, decision-making and empowerment are opposites – and the problem is divergent. Solving this problem and developing the ideal system doesn't yield to logical solutions or to the accumulation of data, because life is bigger than logic or data. Logic and data present us with either/or choices – or, in the language of the computer, a one or a zero. That's all. But life postulates a third choice, an *and/also* choice. To achieve that choice does not mean one needs to square the circle. Instead, one needs to reframe the issue: It is not ''discipline *or* freedom,'' nor ''decision-making *or* empowerment,'' *rather* those are *and/also* choices.

To take that step, though, requires moving onto the vertical axis and using concepts like emotion, empathy, and self-awareness to combine, in the most effective way for the particular school and child, those concepts of freedom and discipline. The groundbreaking work of Daniel Goleman in *Emotional Intelligence* and *Working with Emotional Intelligence* (the subject of several of our programs) rests on many of these same ''and/also'' concepts. Goleman discovered that the majority of the leadership competencies sought by businesses are based not on intellectual or technical abilities, but on how we manage ourselves, and our relationships with others – in other words the qualities of Emotional Intelligence, like self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy and social skills. These qualities are found on the vertical axis of learning and help people in business find ''and/also'' solutions to negotiating problems, managing organizations, dealing with conflict, and other central issues of leadership.

Thus, we would suggest that business problems like leadership, teamwork, innovation and a wide range of other vital subjects and issues are *divergent* problems. They do not have, or

admit to, straightforward, logical solutions. If they did, all the brilliant minds that have addressed these issues over the years would have yielded fully formed convergent answers. Instead we have to turn to the inner life of leaders and the inner life of organizations (which are, themselves, living organisms).

Let us take one more simple example – the subject of numerous ''training'' programs over the last couple of decades: Diversity. If there were one universally applicable ''diversity solution,'' surely it would have been found by now, given the amount of data that has been developed and the power of the intellects who have focused on the subject. But even looking at our own client base, it is clear that a ''universal solution'' doesn't exist, in part because a universal definition doesn't exist. We've done diversity programs for a couple of dozen organizations. One engineering organization said ''our problem is we all think alike''; another financial services company said ''it's only about race and sex''; a publishing company said ''it's a broad concern encompassing all the differences that make us different.'' And so it goes. Even if we could get to a universal definition, that definition would apply differently in different organizations. Is ''diversity'' really the same in a cosmopolitan university setting as it is in a manufacturing plant in a small town? Clearly not.

So, in order to define the subject and apply it to the daily life of an organization and the diverse people who comprise the organization we turn to the medium of drama. Often we use the tool of a ''meeting'' of four to six people of different races, backgrounds, sexes, ages, points of view, etc. And we put them into a discussion of the meaning of ''diversity'' in their organization. They become the proponents of a wide range of points of view about diversity – from the notion that ''it has nothing to do with business and is simply a warmed over version of affirmative action'' to ''it's a way to take the business into the new century and utilize all the manifold talents of 100 percent of the workforce.'' And all points in between. This vignette simply ''sets the table'' for the ensuing discussion between players and audience, wherein the audience confronts the various attitudes about diversity played out in the vignette – and in so doing confronts their own attitudes. To dig down one more layer, we will often assign each of the players to a small group of participants – and ask the participants to coach the player about how s/he can be a better proponent of the company's diversity policies.

## The play creates involvement and understanding

In looking at interactive theatre as a training tool, the skeptic might ask ''Sounds great, but how do we know it works.'' The candid answer is that, at this level of *divergent* problems (which are, we would argue, the most important problems), it is very difficult to quantify the answer, for there are many variables. Divergent problems, by definition, are beyond easy, yes/no, either/or solutions. Whether something ''works'' is based on whether the minds of participants in a program are opened to new ways of thinking, whether they can experience their reality in a new way, whether they can incorporate both head and heart, both mind and feelings, in resolving issues. Indeed, whether they can find the ''and/also'' solution that lies within their grasp.

The answers to those questions lie within individuals. Simply changing the ''system'' only rearranges the deck chairs on the *Titanic*. The ship still sinks. Only by changing the individuals who are at the center (in this case, the center of a particular business organization) can we hope to change the whole of the organization. The best way to do that is by *involving* those individuals in the process of change, by engaging all parts of them, both head and heart, in that process.

Interactive theatre-based training provides an extraordinarily powerful way to get individuals involved in that process by opening the minds and hearts of participants to a fuller understanding. And as the Chinese proverb says:

> Tell me and I'll forget
> Show me and I may remember
> *But involve me and I'll understand.*

Theatre-based training is, at its core, a compelling modality that *involves* participants and opens the way to understanding.

# Entrepreneurs: the artists of the business world

Kevin Daum

Kevin Daum is a theatre graduate, entrepreneur and author. He is CEO of Stratford Financial an INC 500 Company and the author of What the Banks Won't Tell You (Grady Parsons) and Building Your Home For Dummies (Wiley) Mr. Daum directs business development for Americans For The Arts' Creativity Connection and regularly splits his time between New York and San Francisco. He can be reached at kevin@stratfordfinancial.com

W hat do a performance artist/sculptor and a heavy metal rock musician have in common? They are both entrepreneurs who have used specific, practical techniques from their artistic backgrounds to successfully advance their multi-million dollar enterprises. Is this a coincidence, or does an arts background provide distinct advantages to entrepreneurs?

Many have extolled the metaphorical relationship of the arts (and the humanities) with the world of business. Much that has been written on the ''experience economy'' includes references to Mr Shakespeare's famous line ''All the world's a stage . . .'' Arts-based learning has entered the lexicon of modern management consulting, featuring creativity expansion, role-play and other easily relatable ''soft'' approaches in a business environment. But what of the many practical business lessons that can be learned in the arts world? Are there tactical, operational advantages that entrepreneurs with backgrounds in the arts have when building a start-up or managing a fast-growth company?

What follows are two examples of entrepreneurs who have systematically applied operational techniques they developed in the arts to their businesses. Their success in adapting these processes suggests that the answer is ''yes.''

## Measure twice, cut once!

When Christina Harbridge Law founded her credit collection agency she did so with the intention of bringing humanity to an otherwise dehumanizing field. The experience of dealing with medical collections associated with her father's terminal illness drove Christina to open her own medical collections agency in 1994. Christina believed that collections could be done in a non-aggressive friendly manner with positive results, and she founded her company, Bridgeport Financial, on a unique approach that focuses on long-term business relationships with the debtors, rather than on the debt itself.

Christina's background includes 15 years of involvement in San Francisco's underground performance art community. She has created public art as a metal sculptor and taught numerous classes in the metal shop as well. With no formal business training and a fast-growth company at her command, Christina looks to her arts background for guidance in managing the company's processes and twenty-five employees. Highly creative, she has infused Bridgeport with her own sense of fun and creativity in promotion and employee rewards, gaining her loyalty from customers and staff alike. Her approach of using marshmallow fights to defuse conflict and public Hula Hoop contests with competitors are distinctive attention getters and differentiators in an otherwise dour industry. Christina's unique approach has brought her company a successful collection rate nearly three times that of her traditional ''unfeeling'' and ''uncreative'' competitors. Bridgeport, which quickly grew to nearly $2 million in annual revenues, has been listed in *The San Francisco Business*

*Times* as one of the fastest growing privately owned companies in San Francisco four years in a row.

But despite distinct advantages her creativity gave her in dealing with the interpersonal elements of running a company, it's the nuts and bolts operations that required her focus as the company grew quickly. Christina had succeeded in attracting clients; now her company needed to perform at a professional level while building an infrastructure to support the growth. Like many fast-growth entrepreneurs facing systemic problems stemming from inadequate resources and razor-thin margins of error, she found solutions in her artistic background.

As a sculptor, Christina had mastered the challenge of creating ambitious large-scale art installations with tiny budgets, by developing a highly efficient methodology which she summarizes as ''measure twice, cut once.'' In the metal shop, ''measure twice, cut once'' was born out of the frustration she experienced destroying much-needed material by moving too quickly. Christina carried into her new work environment the lessons she learned about the importance of double-checking her marks. ''Measure twice, cut once'' became the inspiration for Bridgeport's organizational culture and is thoroughly integrated into Bridgeport's core values. Used as a regular mantra in all of Bridgeport's corporate meetings, the phrase can be found in company documents and even written in marker on the glass windows/walls throughout the office. New employees are given rulers with the words ''measure twice, cut once'' imprinted, to remind them of Bridgeport's approach. It is the indispensable checkpoint that must be passed prior to the execution of tasks in the company.

Recently Bridgeport signed on to install an all-new software system at a considerable cost. Grounded in the ''measure twice, cut once'' philosophy, at the last minute Bridgeport's management forced the vendor to install an additional test run of the system to identify bugs *prior* to permanent change. Although the vendor would normally have installed first and cleaned up problems later, Bridgeport's management held their ground, recognizing that system problems could cost the company tens of thousands of dollars in down time and inefficiency. By executing an extra trial run, the vendor could resolve the issues prior to taking the old system offline, without disrupting the normal work process for the Bridgeport staff. Ultimately the vendor ran the test before permanent installation; debugging was executed without disruption of the everyday workflow saving time, money, and – of course – the relationship.

Christina believes that the practical application of tactical processes she learned in the arts gives her the capacity to stretch for the high bar, that working in a structured environment gives her the freedom to think creatively, and that working in a secure environment allows her to take the risks needed for innovation. By allowing routine and alignment to take care of the predictable, Christina and her management team are able to focus on responding to unexpected occurrences and taking advantage of new opportunities.

## The benefits of heavy metal

Unlike Christina, Scott Peloquin's relationship with metal came in the form of leading a 1980s heavy metal rock band in New Jersey. Back in Scott's days of tight pants and long Breck-girl hair his aspiration was to change the world with his songs. These days, his talent for communicating life-changing information has led him to success as the founder and CEO of

benefEx benefit consulting, a fast-growth employee-benefit consulting company Scott founded in 2000. A finance graduate of Seton Hall University, Scott worked in the benefits industry identifying tax and benefit trends. Since going out on his own, Scott has grown benefEx to $9 million in revenue and 47 employees.

A big challenge in any financial services company is the need to constantly assess the commitment level of its commissioned sales consultants. Although committed to one company, these consultants function as independent contractors and tend towards a freelance mentality. Consultants who love their work will build and maintain a steady clientele for years on end, while unhappy consultants can destroy client relationships and cost a business like benefEx hundreds of thousands of dollars. Ultimately the success (and value) of a financial consultant depends on the desire factor, but assessing the consultants' desire can be difficult since they naturally exude confidence and can often project a positive attitude in the face of darkness. Training new consultants that lack desire can be an exercise in futility and a colossal waste of time and money, so Scott sought methods to eliminate halfhearted people from his sales team. To help him, he turned to his band experience.

Working with freelancers is nothing new in the arts world. Most professional artists function as self-employed independent contractors, and even among America's largest artistic enterprises, independent contractors make up a significant percentage of the arts workforce. The practice is widespread in Europe as well. For example, according to Britain's Department of Culture, Media and Sport, of the roughly 500,000 creative industries jobs in the United Kingdom, over 50 percent are self-employed. For details, consult their web site (www.artsadvice.com/knowledge). Like financial sales consultants, independent artists learn to survive and flourish in environments where the availability of work can be erratic.

Scott experienced this freelance mentality first-hand in his heavy metal band. Club band musicians are notoriously unreliable. They tend to follow their own drummer, so to speak. Often they lose interest in the band, turning in indifferent performances until they can find another gig. As leader of his band, Scott was constantly faced with this problem, making it difficult to maintain consistent quality. In response, he identified a set of tell tale signs to help him identify band members who were starting to lose interest: unwillingness to collaborate, resistance to change or new ideas, being late for rehearsals and performances, verbal disrespect, disruption of band hierarchy, etc. By itself, any one of these behaviors might be an isolated incident, but the appearance of several of the signs was a clear warning that desire was lacking and a band member change was imminent.

Scott quickly found that he could use the same behavioral criteria to assess his sales consultants' performance at benefEx. By applying the signs he learned from his rock band experiences in a business context, Scott was able to eliminate consultants who were marking time while looking for a better opportunity, and focus his resources on players who were truly committed to the benefEx culture and clientele. As a result, benefEx was able to reduce its training budget by 50 percent and shorten the financial independence curve for the consultants by several months, allowing the company to efficiently generate revenues with a smaller, more dedicated sales force.

### The arts/entrepreneur connection

Is it just a coincidence that these two entrepreneurs found practical solutions to their business problems by applying lessons learned from their artistic endeavors, or is there a

> "Consultants who love their work will build and maintain a steady clientele for years on end, while unhappy consultants can destroy client relationships and cost a business like benefEx hundreds of thousands of dollars."

broader connection between the process of creating art and the entrepreneurial mind? Certainly, the arts/entrepreneur connection is not limited to Christina and Scott. My own 2005 survey of several chapters of the Young Entrepreneurs' Organization (an international organization of 6,500 entrepreneurs under the age of 47, who have started businesses that have revenues of greater than $1 million) revealed that 15 percent of the members surveyed have training in the arts, or a hands-on artistic track record.

Do these entrepreneurs have an advantage over the classically business-trained entrepreneurs? Or is the entrepreneurial process merely a natural fit that attracts people with a right-brain approach? Much research will have to be done before we can answer this question with confidence, but when examining the requirements for successful entrepreneurship, several obvious parallels can be seen with the arts world:

- Artists spend their lives exploring their unique and individual perspectives on the human experience; inevitably, they often approach the world in an unorthodox manner and exhibit unconventional behavior they consider necessary to unleash the creative flow. Managers, on the other hand, function within corporate environments designed for predictability and built on conformity. An employee exhibiting unorthodox behavior is cause for concern, and uniformity is considered to create efficiency in large organizations. A manager visiting an acting class will be treated to sounds and sights not seen in a normal office environment, but I know from experience that many entrepreneurs will feel right at home. This is because entrepreneurs tend to prefer – and create – working environments that allow for uninhibited behavior and big picture thinking. Their unorthodox viewpoints are often what drive them to create; their frustration with the status quo inspires them to attempt a better approach, often with minimal resources.

- Artists and entrepreneurs alike must take a practical approach to the management and development of their enterprises. Both utilize extreme creativity and flexibility to shape raw materials into a communicative entity that creates value out of what may appear to be mere nothingness. Within that process they will attract and align supporters, helpers and consumers to give sustaining life to their creations. Often they will facilitate unique methods of achieving previously unattainable goals without manuals or precedent to guide their way.

- The business start-up process has much in common with arts production, particularly the performance process. In both cases an idea is formed and must be researched in detail. The artist/entrepreneur must extrapolate and explore all the possibilities that can stem from the original idea. Once the idea is developed and articulated, the artist/entrepreneur must recruit a team of helpers to mold the idea into a physical reality. The execution process must be done with extreme frugality and efficiency, since both artists and start-up entrepreneurs typically begin with limited resources. This makes philosophical alignment and effective internal communication critical in the transformation of vision to creation. A shared culture and vocabulary plays a big part in the success of the endeavor.

### The education factor

Arts education in universities uniquely focuses on repetition of practical skills, preparing artists to focus on the creative opportunities while relying on solid technical training. Many artists turned entrepreneurs can tap into these transferable learned skills in their business

practices. Business schools teach many of the skills of entrepreneurship and innovation on a theoretical level, but generally lack the opportunities for practical application necessary to hone these skills through repetition. This forces employers to provide on-the-job training, making for longer management transition times. Although some business school entrepreneurship programs are beginning to form practical laboratories, they only occasionally tap into the arts-based expertise available close at hand. Stanford's Graduate School of Business and its drama department are literally next door to one another, yet neither the faculty nor the students engage one another on any level.

Recently, some refreshing examples of the arts melding with entrepreneurship have begun to appear at the university level. The Tippie School of Business at the University of Iowa, ranked among the top 30 entrepreneurial schools by *US News and World Report*, has developed an entrepreneurship program specifically connected with their Theatre Department, and has sponsored learning seminars with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra.

Also significant is interdisciplinary work between the Baylor University Theatre Department and the school's Entrepreneur Program, also ranked among the top 30 in the nation by *US News and World Report*. Baylor has created a program where business and theatre undergraduates work together, as if consultants, with local entrepreneurs, helping them with business plan development and the practical execution of start-up enterprises. In addition, Baylor recently created a unique portfolio study allowing both business students and theatre students to develop skills in arts/business/entrepreneurship through a series of core courses combined with internships. Ironically, the development of these programs led to the surprising discovery that both of the faculty heads in entrepreneurship have been active in community theatre for decades.

## Breaking barriers

Successful entrepreneurs are pragmatists. They tend to respond to experiences gained from practical environments and move quickly to embrace problem-solving solutions that they have learned through doing. It's not their risk-taking instincts that attract entrepreneurs to arts-based management techniques; it's the fact that the project management methods routinely used in the performing arts are among the most effective, efficient and sustainable the world has ever seen. What's more, these systems are so uniform that any theatre person or musician can quickly and easily adapt in any foreign theatre environment or orchestra worldwide.

Unfortunately, the general public perception (however clichéd) is that artists are "flaky," "impractical" and "poor at business." Among entrepreneurs, this perception is frequently reinforced by a misunderstanding of the fact that most arts organizations function on a not-for-profit basis and virtually all arts organizations – not-for-profit and commercial alike – are constantly fundraising for capital. Although most successful artists achieved their success in part by agile entrepreneurship, it is a stretch for many business people – even ardent arts supporters – to overcome this prejudice and derive peer-to-peer education from arts/business practitioners.

While the corporate world is beginning to waken to the opportunities that incorporating arts practices presents, a great opportunity exists for entrepreneurs to draw upon specific practices from the performance world and gain efficiencies. Considering both endeavors thrive upon strong skills in collaboration, communication and resource management, the common ground deserves additional exploration. Certainly the greater business community can benefit by further exploring the interrelationship between the worlds of the entrepreneur and the artist.

# International opportunities for artful learning

Lotte Darsø

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T he interest in creative alliances among artists, businesspeople and researchers is growing. One indication of interest from a business perspective was seen at a workshop at the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2004: ''What if an artist ran your business?'' This workshop attracted a standing room only crowd, and its attendees were among the first to register for the Forum. What makes this topic so interesting to economic leaders? Partly, I think, because it takes a provocative stance towards ''business as usual,'' and partly because people intuitively sense that business today needs ''an artistic touch.''

At present, the most influential approaches to business build on measurement, productivity, efficiency, planning and training, but today's most talented young people are attracted to companies that focus on creativity, offer exciting challenges and have developed an ''enterprise culture.'' Thus the question that companies need to ask themselves is whether they will survive in the long run if they stick to business as usual. One way to modify business as usual is through the artistic touch, through artful creation. There are many reasons for integrating artistic processes and products within a business, the most common being to increase creativity, improve innovation, foster an acceptance of ambiguity and risk, develop increased sensitivity to other individuals and their ideas, and transform culture.

Practical arts-based learning and experimental opportunities are rapidly gaining in acceptance and application. As research for my recent book, *Artful Creation*, I undertook 50 interviews around the globe with artists, business people and researchers bringing arts and business together. Through these travels I've been exposed to a wide range of English-language programs that I can draw from for this article, which will briefly explain some of the better known learning opportunities. For ease of discussion, I've divided them into three categories:

1. the arts in business (practical applications for business);

2. the arts and business in academia (mostly management professors who see great value in the arts); and

3. the collaboration of arts, business, and academia (where all three are brought together for mutual exploration).

## The arts in business

Two of the best known programs for arts in business are discussed elsewhere in this issue, in Lois Bartelme's article, ''The view from the trenches.'' She discusses the roles of the Arts & Business Council of Americans for the Arts in the US, and Arts and Business in the UK in interviews with their arts-business champions, Harvey Seifter and Tim Stockil. Their activities are unique because they do not represent a single artist or organization. They work to provide the arts experiences that best match the needs of a business. They also offer training to artists to prepare them for working in a business setting. Both arts and business

groups also offer many other programs for their markets, too, such as marketing courses, training to serve on arts boards, matching corporate volunteers to arts programs, and facilitating sponsorships. Recently, Seifter and Stockil have each formed organizations specifically for the matchmaking task. Seifter, in conjunction with the Arts & Business Council, has started the Creativity Connection, while Stockil has formed his own company, Ci: Creative Intelligence.

The NyX Forum for Arts and Business was the primary coordinator in 2004 for a series of innovation alliances in Denmark. 20 artists were paired with 20 companies for 20 days. NyX asked the companies to formulate a challenge (for example, improving design, quality, service, or company identity), then matched each company with an artist (painters, sculptors, actors, writers and photographers). Evaluations, both qualitative and quantitative, showed mixed results, but all the top-performing alliances resulted in significant business benefits. A formal evaluation report provides useful advice for other such alliances.

There are also many individuals and groups representing themselves who take their arts backgrounds into businesses in programs ranging from developing specific skills to transforming cultures. Judging from my interviews, it appears that a new generation of consultancies is emerging. In some cases the consultant's role is to bridge the communication gap between arts and business by helping artists meet the specific needs of organizations, in other cases the artists themselves have acquired the skills needed to translate their artistic process into effective methods for improving and developing organizations.

## The arts and business in academia

Arts and business have begun to flourish in academia also, as seen in a new network (AACORN) and new types of conferences; for example, the Art of Management & Organisation conferences in Europe and the Academy of Management in North America have opened up space for new artful learning approaches.

AACORN stands for Arts, Aesthetics, Creativity, and Organization Research Network and consists of close to two hundred researchers (in organization, management, and work-life) united by a common interest in creatively advancing research into aesthetics, creativity, and arts-based learning in organizational settings. So far, it is primarily a supportive online network of like-minded individuals, providing resources and advice when needed. AACORN began entirely as an academic group, but over the past year has added many artists and businesspeople. The emphasis, however, remains on research and networking. Members of the group have also joined together to promote the use of aesthetics and the arts at conferences, such as the Academy of Management.

At the conferences mentioned above, research involving arts and aesthetics has emerged throughout the last decade along with organizational drama created for an academic audience. Sessions giving voice to alternative forms of expressing research findings are being launched, from dance and movement to poetry and storytelling as well as music, singing, paintings, installations, collages, photographs, and weavings. Here the artistic media are applied both as research methods and as research communication tools.

Plays developed by academics, for example, *Ties that Bind* by Steve Taylor and *Ex(f)iles in Paris* by Daniel Hjorth and Chris Steyaert, raise important topics from the academic world and business. The plays, performed during a conference, engage people emotionally and are meant to be reflected upon and form the basis for continuous dialog throughout the

conference. The learning that takes place here is experiential, and the sessions are entirely different from the formal academic presentations with questions and critiques from peers.

The Art of Management & Organisation conferences are held every other year, with the third one scheduled for Prague in 2006. The Academy of Management hosts a yearly international conference, primarily for management professors. For several years, AACORN members have given papers and sponsored a track called the Fringe Café, offering presentations on topics related to arts, aesthetics, and other topics many would consider ''fringe'' at a mainstream management conference. As of this writing, it's not known if the Fringe Café will continue.

A recent trend has been the increasing integration of arts-based learning into business school curricula. Perhaps the most radical instance is the Orpheus Residency at Baruch College of the City University of New York. Between 1999 and 2003, Baruch invited the conductorless Orpheus Chamber Orchestra to teach more than one hundred classes at its Zicklin School of Business, in subjects ranging from the psychology of leadership, to management, to industrial organization. For over ten years, Babson College in Massachusetts has required all incoming two-year MBA students to take an intensive course in a single art, taught by artists, in their first semester on campus.

More recently, the Columbia University Graduate School of Business has used artistic processes to demonstrate leadership and teach high performance teamwork in its Senior Executive Program (CSEP). In 2001, Morgan Stanley, in partnership with the Haas School of Business at the University of California/Berkeley and Hitotsubashi University's Center for Corporate Strategy in Tokyo, brought senior leaders from many companies together with graduate students to examine and learn from arts-based models for organizational development in business. Furthermore arts-based cases have been integrated into business school curricula at such leading institutions as Harvard University, University of Pennsylvania, McGill, The Banff Centre, New York University and the University of Chicago, among others.

In Europe arts-based learning has also become prominent during the last decade. Examples are the Cranfield School of Management in the UK, Nyenrode University in The Netherlands, BI Norwegian School of Management in Oslo, Copenhagen Business School and Learning Lab Denmark, and Bled School of Management in Slovenia, collaborating with Miha Pogacnik on the ''Synergy between Arts and Business.''

## The collaboration of arts, business, and academia

Working to bring together all three – the arts, business, and academia – in collaborative situations are the Art & Business conferences (since 1984) by Miha Pogacnik, virtuoso violinist and cultural ambassador for Slovenia, and the CoLLabs at Learning Lab Denmark.

In 1981 Miha Pogacnik started the IDRIART movement (Initiative for Development of Intercultural & Interdisciplinary Relations through the Arts). The premise is that the arts have healing forces and should play a more social role. Their goal is to build a creative environment where a wide range of people can meet in an atmosphere of arts. One of the main events sponsored by IDRIART is the Art & Business conference at Castle Borl in Slovenia, which draws a large network of artists, business people, and academics. September 2005 will be the eighth such conference.

Learning Lab Denmark is a four-year-old laboratory for research on learning at the Danish University of Education. Among its seven research consortia is The Creative Alliance, which has the goal of accentuating the learning potential of the interplay between arts and business, and advancing the understanding of how artful approaches can contribute to organizational and societal change. One of the Alliance's newer activities is CoLLabs.

A CoLLab is a learning partnership between companies, researchers, and artists that allows collaborative research without pressure to affect the bottom line, all the while producing results that are intended eventually to affect the bottom line, either directly or indirectly. In a CoLLab, learning, exploration, creative thinking and artful approaches are key. The rationale for working in CoLLab partnerships is the present lack of creative laboratories for advancing *human* technologies. ''We have well tested, scientific methods for developing and refining manufactured goods—methods that date back to the industrial laboratories of Thomas

Edison—but many of them don't seem applicable to the world of services,'' Stefan Thomke stated in *Harvard Business Review* in April 2003 (Thornke, 2003).

In the industrial society the focus of innovation was on research and development for creating and testing new products. In today's Knowledge Society or Experience Economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999)[1], we don't find many corresponding social laboratories, in which experiments are carried out with customers and clients to promote relations and interactions, to test new meeting forms, to identify new types of experiences and new types of informal learning processes – even though many corporations do realize that this kind of innovation could be paramount to their success.

These are some prominent examples of arts-in-business programs and artful learning opportunities. The main value-added is the emotional and experiential learning that arts-related approaches can evoke, which, if sustained, can gradually transform organizational culture into becoming more creative and more effective.

## Web sites for organizations discussed

The Arts and Business Council of Americans for the Arts
www.artsandbusiness.org/home.htm and http://artsusa.org

Arts and Business UK
www.aandb.org.uk/render.aspx?siteID = 1&navIDs = 1,2

The Creativity Connection
http://ww3.artsusa.org/private_sector_affairs/arts_and_business_council/programs/creativity_connection/default.asp

Ci: Creative Intelligence
www.creativeintelligence.uk.com/

NyX Forum
www.nyxforum.dk/default.asp?kategori1 = 8h&id1 = 173&id2 = 292

NyX Evaluation
www.**nyx**forum.dk/gfx/brugerupload/evalu.doc

AACORN
http://aacorn.net/

The Art of Management and Organisation
www.essex.ac.uk/AFM/emc/second_art_of_management_and_org.shtm

The Academy of Management
www.aomonline.org/

The Orpheus Residence at Baruch College, City University of New York
www.baruch.cuny.edu/wsas/artists_in_residence/orpheus/

The Art and Business Conference (IDRIART)
www.borl.org/eng/index.php

The Creative Alliance (Learning Lab Denmark)
www.lld.dk/consortia/thecreativealliance/en

## Note

1. The authors claim that what people want to pay for, on top of commodities, products and services, will be experiences, either in connection to a product or a service or simply as ''experience ''.

## References

Thomke, S. (2003), ''R&D comes to services. Bank of America's pathbreaking experiments'', *Harvard Business Review*, April pp. 71-9.

Pine, J. and Gilmore, J. (1999), *The Experience Economy*, Harvard Business School Press, Cambridge, MA.

# It takes two to tango

Michael Spencer

Michael Spencer was a member of the London Symphony Orchestra for 14 years, performing with a wide range of artists from Leonard Bernstein to Pierre Boulez, Paul McCartney to Elton John. He became Head of Education at the Royal Opera House and is currently advisor to the Association of Japanese Symphony Orchestras on arts education policy. His company, Creative Arts Net, specializes in using the arts as a learning tool across a broad spectrum of clients including Unilever, the British Museum and M&C Saatchi.

"I want you to help my teams become better listeners, after all that is your stock in trade," said the executive to the musician.

Well yes, in part it is. But is the meaning behind the word "listening" the same for each party to the discussion? What are we listening to? What are we listening for? Are they the same things, and how might we apply this information?

As we peer deeper into the divide between the executive and the musician, turning up the resolution on our telescope we see an apparently straightforward exchange opening up a much more fundamental and wider set of issues. What is the nature of the land each inhabits? What is the view across the valley from their respective sides? How is this best bridged? Where does the dialogue begin? How can the ground be best prepared?

We know that there are advantages to be gained from bringing the worlds of business and the arts together, and that there is a growing weight of evidence to support this, particularly around concepts of emotional intelligence which, by implication, support the case for involvement with the arts. This was reinforced by key educational thinkers such as Sir Ken Robinson, senior advisor on education to the president of the J. Paul Getty Trust, and architect of the government review of creativity and education in the UK, when he wrote:

> These are times when we are immersed in something that completely engages our creative capabilities and draws equally from our knowledge, feelings and intuitive powers . . . We need languages of feeling to express these perceptions, and this is one of the functions of the arts . . . Arts techniques can be powerful ways of unlocking creative capacities and of engaging the whole person (Robinson, K., *Out of Our Minds,* Capstone Publishing Ltd. (UK) 2001).

Feelings and emotions are delicate areas, and to involve people in activity which may take them out of their comfort zones gives all the more reason for laying the foundations of any arts-based training session with care from the earliest exchanges.

So what is the territory? How do business people feel about artists and conversely what do artists know about people in business? What are their perceptions and what are the realities?

## "Take your partners," a square dance call

A straw poll of both camps maps out some of the basic misconceptions:

- Business people regarded artists as: unrealistic, penniless, gifted, touchy-feely, existing in an impenetrable and mysterious world of emotion
- Artists regarded business people as: intolerant, profit/goal driven, emotionless, lacking in creativity, bonus and "perks" driven.

Any thinking person should recognize these as stereotypes, although it is surprising the number of times I have been asked as I packed up my violin, "but what do you do for your

real job?'' To become known, a stereotype usually needs a core of truth, and in reality these terms apply to a minority of the business people and artists. Artists vary just as broadly as do business people, and the variations are due just as much to the particular art involved as to individual personalities.

There remain, however, distinct lines of demarcation that separate these two worlds, and in fact I recall how such a difference in perceptions led to a near rift between two prominent organizations, one in the arts and one in business, where the arts organization felt that accommodating the suggestions of its potential business ally was akin to dealing with the devil, assuming the company to have purely profit-driven motives.. In turn, the business organization saw an extremely practical opportunity for augmenting its corporate social responsibility policies but could not articulate its case effectively. In reality they were singing from the same songbook but perceptual differences prevented a genuinely satisfactory outcome. These were differences in philosophical outlook. It is rare to find an arts group or person working with a business that has not made an effort to understand and appreciate the business perspective. The more common divides are over emotions versus logic, degrees of risk, and differences in context and vocabulary.

Neither artists nor businesspeople can be categorized as a single group. So there is a strong need for a mutual understanding of both policy and practice.

## ''You say eether and I say eyether ... Let's call the whole thing off!,'' Ira Gershwin

All areas of life come with their own specific languages and sometimes impenetrable jargon. At times language can serve as a smokescreen behind which a speaker hides, promoting a false air of mystery and scholarship. There was a time, not entirely forgotten, when practitioners involved in arts education and outreach work suffered from a preponderance of ''edu-speak,'' where talk of ''*animateur*,'' ''*engagement*,'' ''*sharing*,'' or ''*thought showers*'' were often and understandably considered fanciful and alienating by those participating. Coming from the business side, mention of ''*sonic brand triggers*,'' ''*product guardianship*'' and ''*M&A*'' could be equally as mystifying.

So in order to explore these linguistic divergences a little further let us return to the opening scenario between the executive and the musician and explore further some of the differences in the use of terminology which are unconnected with jargon and more to do with comparative definition.

''Now with my team,'' said the executive, ''I want you to focus on improving their internal dynamics.''

''I'm not sure that altering how loud or quiet they are is going to help,'' said the rather bemused musician.

To a business person, the first thought that springs to mind with the word ''dynamic'' has perhaps more to do with relationships, and the vigor and energy with which they are characterized. To the musician however it has to do quite specifically with how loud or soft one is playing and how it might balance with other instrumental or vocal lines. You may think this a simplistic and fanciful example, but it is based on fact, only in this case the musician facilitator was asking a number of business people collaborating in a group composition task to consider changing their dynamic! So even at this rather obvious level we recognize that there is a call for developing a shared terminology.

Let's look a little further at the act of listening itself. Musicians tend to be concerned with the ''properties'' of what they are listening to when performing on the concert platform, all of it very much to do with creating a sense of good ensemble – coming in too early, too late, etc. Conversely business people focus on the ''content'' of what they are listening to when performing in the negotiation room. This opens up a completely different level of emotional and experiential difference. I would suggest that the natural context within which the musician ''listens'' is far more of a visceral experience, whereas for the business person it is more part of a process of analysis. For the musician, too, listening is not just a matter of focusing with one specific sense but with an accumulation of receptors including eyes,

> **" Feelings and emotions are delicate areas, and to involve people in activity which may take them out of their comfort zones gives all the more reason for laying the foundations of any arts-based training session with care from the earliest exchanges. "**

touch and an almost indefinable sixth sense of awareness. It is the potential that this potent combination of sensibilities offers for the improvement of communication skills that prompts the need for assuring that both sides clearly understand each other when they talk.

### "I'm gonna build a mountain, from a little hill," The Monkees

The differences lie not only in terminology but in context and culture. The great German dance pioneer Rudolf Laban said that "the first condition of my collaboration is that you must grant me the privilege to try and err, because trial and error is the basis of all healthy development." A superficial take on this could cause some initial conflicts with current business practice and its tolerance level for mistakes. The world of the arts is founded upon a trajectory of exploration and questioning that accommodates risk and a significant degree of ambiguity. How can one help bottom-line driven businesses develop or enhance a similar atmosphere of exploration that extends beyond R&D?

Again, this is where preparation is paramount and success lies very much within the planning processes and the creation of supportive environments of exploration for the participants. The seemingly most trivial of tasks that can be introduced within a workshop situation can throw the participant into a most unhealthy tailspin if not approached in a systematic and sensitive manner. I remember two very similar music-based training sessions that looked at a better understanding of group support strategies. One was with a group of executives drawn from different companies within the City of London, and the other with a number of corporate trainers. With the trainers, however, there was one small and inadvertent omission in the preparatory stage which seemed insignificant at the time but proved to be crucial.

The purpose of the session was to look in greater depth at how one develops supportive relationships. The method of investigation was to explore and create a piece of samba, a musical style where the simple rhythmic responsibilities for each player have to blend with and augment the common pulse.

For the trainers, as soon as the underlying rhythmic pulse became disturbed and each person tried to impose an increasingly louder contribution on the others in an attempt to re-establish a common "feel," the ensemble became even more erratic until it fell apart completely.

The executives were given two very simple instructions. "*Close your eyes and become aware of the sounds in the room,*" and "*Feel free to stop or start whenever you feel uncertain.*" These directions were designed to accomplish two things. Firstly they suggested a point of focus, and secondly they allowed the participants to feel free about experimenting in an environment of trust, dipping in and out of their personal "comfort zones" until they came to a much more satisfactory and mutual solution. Because the trainers had more experience in training situations, the facilitators had not prepared them as thoroughly for the exercise, assuming that with their backgrounds they would know how to recover if the process broke down. Had the trainers been given the same preparatory instructions as the executives, in all likelihood the outcome would have been dramatically different.

The arts do provide effective tools for exploring the territory surrounding emotional functioning and one would expect that in pushing back the boundaries things might become a little edgy. ''To stay within one's comfort zone is to miss the adventure'' (Benjamin, A., *Making an Entrance – Theory and Practice for Disabled and Non-disabled Dancers,* Routledge (UK) 2002). But it is possible to reach the arts-based learning goal by progressing along structured and nurturing pathways.

In closing this section I would suggest that there is a another basic but important issue that should be considered in the preparation of any training session and that is with regard to its workspace/s. Dancers require an unimpeded and hazard-free floor space, musicians need environments where they can isolate themselves from invasive and external sounds, visual artists an appropriate workspace for the medium in which they are working. Just as there are practical minimum requirements needed in order to build a good working environment in the office, so too is it essential to create an appropriate work space for those participating in a training session. If dance is to be part of the session it is simply a matter of health and safety that there is a suitable floor covering. A visual artist may need unimpeded table top space and access to appropriate materials, and as it is often the case that music sessions require groups to work on separate tasks, these can't take place in the same aural space so separate rooms are needed, preferably with a degree of sound insulation.

### ''Anything you can do I can do better,'' Irving Berlin

One specific and fundamental area seems often to throw up a challenge to the perceptions of the business person who is to work with the arts for the first time. How can the participant develop the confidence to use the materials and broach the skills that have taken the artist many years to acquire without spending hours in a practice room or studio? There are epic stories of the time an artist spends in developing and maintaining the practical skills to express themselves, so how can the busy executive hope to access these in the time available? And is it really necessary?

This in some way highlights the ''process'' versus ''product'' dilemma. Most of the learning that takes place within these artistic encounters relates more to the exploration of underlying processes and how to apply them than to the quality of a final outcome. Business people understand the importance of refining the process to create an optimal product, but they need to realize that, in most arts-based learning, if an arts product is produced by the attendee, the arts product is decidedly secondary to the process.

For participants to savor most arts processes fully they need to develop a degree of proficiency, but this need not be an overwhelming challenge, and if there is residual skill from earlier times all the better. In fact, sometimes all it requires is for the participant to take the risk and ''throw the clay on the wheel.'' It is then for the artist to help fashion it into a tangible form which will provide a basic toolkit for the participant to use for reference or advancement at a later date.

I frequently draw upon one of my own learning experiences when engaged with a group of participants for whom working within a particular art form is a new and sometimes challenging experience. Some years ago I went to New Orleans to check out the music scene. I also decided that I wanted to increase my culinary abilities and learn about Cajun food and so enrolled in a morning's exposure to the intricacies of the ''trinity'' (bell pepper, celery, and onion) and the basic roux. Similar to the experience of a first-time arts participant, the skills I acquired in the class would not ensure me a place in a Southern kitchen, but they have given me three touch points upon which I can expand: the knowledge of the principles that underlie this type of cooking, a range of adaptable templates (in this case, the recipes), and a way to further enrich and extend my personal process and practice with confidence.

### ''Tain't what you do it's the way that you do it,'' Sy Oliver and Trummy Young

It might be useful at this point to step back and examine some of the fundamental differences between arts processes that will in turn determine the nature of an arts based training program.

There are occasional differences in preparation and presentation between the performing and nonperforming arts that can be relevant when deciding upon the most appropriate art form for a specific training initiative. All art forms require an element of isolation during their processes of preparation, whether it is the concerto player in a practice room or the painter in a studio. There is, however, an intensity and rigor about the manner in which a sculptor, poet or author applies the depth of self-reflection that is often not found to the same extent in the performing arts. This is why contemporary composers such as Sir Peter Maxwell Davies or James Macmillan take to remote Scottish islands for seclusion, and the theatre poet Tony Harrison says, ''it is very good for me to spend time alone writing'' (John Tusa, *On Creativity,* Methuen (UK) 2003). When business people work with such artists, there is the potential for gaining special insight on the intimate process of developing ideas alone.

For example, one of the elements integral to the solitary artist's process is the ability to determine the limitations or boundaries within which they intend to create. Access to an infinite variety of means of expression is essential, however the artist must define the territory for exploration and find a pathway through, whilst still retaining an openness to outside stimuli. This process offers an intriguing opportunity for developing learning opportunities that explore matters of choice and association.

It is generally the case for a writer or composer that once the final manuscript or composition has been submitted there is little direct contact with those who may enjoy it. So in some ways the maximum potential for extracting learning opportunities for the business person may relate more to the preparatory process than the presentation.

In the performing arts, however, there is a different emphasis that focuses upon presentation. Undoubtedly there is great potential in exploring the methods of preparation, however it is the performance process itself that opens up a radically different learning opportunity which has more to do with presentation, team work, and responsiveness – a completely different dynamic from the form of presentation made by a solitary creator.

It is important to be aware also of the differences that exist not only between the performing and nonperforming arts, but within different disciplines of the same art form. Take music, for example. There are few classically trained players who have the flexibility to play convincingly in other genres such as jazz or traditional styles, and vice versa. Also, the requirements of each style can differ radically in the intensity of listening focus, the degree of responsiveness and empathetic sharing of responsibility, and the emotional commitment. Although there have been many parallels drawn between the corporation and the symphony orchestra perhaps there are more relevant comparisons to be drawn from the chamber ensemble and the jazz combo. After all, the symphony orchestra as we know it is a nineteenth-century creation and comes from a tradition of hierarchy. Smaller, less formally organized ensembles tend to work with more subtle and egalitarian communication methods which are perhaps more appropriate to current business practice, where the concern is to build flatter, more organic corporate structures with information channels that are more sophisticated than those found in a ''top-down'' management style.

Looking at some of the less immediately obvious areas for exploration, such as the performers who have apparently lesser roles or the craftsmen who make the picture frames, can be of value, too. Recently I attended a magnificent presentation to a room full of executives by one of the world's great baritones that explored better and different listening practices. By way of illustration he took a number of young singers through their paces.

To become a singer is to enter a profession that requires enormous flexibility in levels and focus of attention: to colleagues on stage, to the orchestra some considerable distance away, and more importantly to yourself (by way of experiment try singing to yourself first with your ears uncovered, and then with your hands over your ears. A major dilemma for singers is how to focus clearly on the sound coming from within them and adjust their intonation accordingly.). All of this whilst sometimes indulging in the most extreme of physical activities.

Impressive as this was in many ways, the most striking example of active listening came not from the master or his pupils but from the accompanist. For flexibility, responsiveness, subtlety, support, team work . . . and musicality, he was unsurpassed. But when it came to

the general post mortem and discussion at the end of the session his contribution was left to one side. Had his opinion been sought I know that there would have been some interesting insights forthcoming. With the current trend for using orchestras as an exemplar for effective corporate structuring, just imagine the conversations that could be had with the musicians at the back of the string sections rather than with the concertmaster or the conductor, and the parallels that may be drawn with regard to respect for personal contribution shown by all members of a team, regardless of prominence.

There was one particular occasion when graduates from one of the London business schools were invited to attend the rehearsal of an extremely eminent symphony orchestra, with an accompanying debriefing session to follow that would examine group functioning. Great importance was placed on the roles of the conductor and section leaders, and their creative contributions towards making a cohesive ensemble. But there was no mention made about the part played by the section players, largely in the strings, who make up more than 50 percent of the membership and deliver the bulk of the workload in any concert. An interesting comment indeed about management opinion.

There are subtle differences too between arts practitioners in different forms in the way they perceive the world around them. It was particularly highlighted for me recently when I worked with a team of artists from different disciplines in an area of social deprivation outside London. They were asked to describe their impression of the community within which they were working. What was striking was the tendency for the descriptions to draw from their art forms: the painters described in color, the actors, perhaps drawing upon Stanislavsky, in terms of situation. But they were all still describing the same experience. It could be rewarding to investigate the differences in perspective that are formed by variances in business backgrounds. The arts situation could be a metaphor to stimulate such analysis.

An executive from one of the major European car manufacturers gave me an interesting insight into their system of brand identification that resonates strongly with this same process of focusing on the same subject in different ways. In establishing the properties of a specific product, they would imagine it as a person and ask themselves what would it wear? What would it eat? What music would it listen to? Where would it go on holiday? Recently too there has been a re-emergence in the advertising industry of the principle of sensory branding, where not only the appearance of the product is taken into account, but also its inherent smell, touch, taste and sound. This multi-faceted and organic process of exploration is central to artistic practice and gives an example of how natural alliances can be formed between arts and business.

By looking closely at the extension of the functions that lie behind each artistic process, whether practical, perceptual or cognitive, it is possible to identify which art form might have the most to offer depending upon the specific needs of one's business environment. The solution may not necessarily be the most obvious. For example, creative writing courses can help with the construction of a brief, but so can learning to write songs or poetry.

## ''The boy would be a businessman, And he signs the bottom line,'' James Taylor

As a final thought (and you may consider it a rather obvious comment to make), I feel that there are useful conversations to be had with regard to bottom line significance when an artist starts to plan a session. This is not to say that every workshop activity should have a corresponding entry on the balance sheet, but having an eye as to where the business person's ultimate focus has to be, and being able to address related issues can encourage a significant level of commitment that can spread throughout a company.

Recently I created a training initiative for the brand teams at one of the big multinationals. It was driven very much by their concern for creating more effective marketing campaigns and focused in particular on how music and sound can be used more effectively to promote a brand, an area which can have major budgetary and promotional implications. Throughout the two-day exploration the participants danced, sang, and composed their own music. They went through more formalized processes of reflection, and contextualized their newly found knowledge whilst at the same time becoming more proficient at working in artistic

teams. Throughout the fun and games, there was a constant reinforcement of the bottom line significance and how to get ''more bang for their buck.''

The careful preparation and bottom-line focus for this initiative paid off. As a consequence of the rigor of the preparatory research, the artistic and creatively based processes that were followed in its deployment, and the conversations that took place throughout the project between the principle stakeholders, the project is now being promoted throughout the company's European marketing teams by the brand mangers themselves, and consequently it has been modified into a range of different delivery models. As one participant commented after the project ''I learned that music is part of life, and not just an add-on.''

### ''Children, go where I send thee,'' old spiritual

The subject of this article was prompted to an extent by a meeting I had with an executive from one of the largest commercial property companies in the UK. He turned out to be a fanatical and knowledgeable blues guitarist and most of our initial meeting was spent discussing players such as Son House, B.B. King, and the differences between the different blues scales and modes. The time spent establishing this common ground eventually led on to a business discussion, looking at a more effective use of space in shopping malls from both a common point of understanding and with the potential for exploring areas that would not have been picked up on the radar but for our initial and important exchanges.

The relationships between the arts and business are still developing and I hope that this article will serve as a springboard for further discussion. The arts have at their core the principle of interaction and the world in which we interact is in a constant state of flux. Consequently arts processes must be responsive to this. More study is needed, for instance, in the role that the arts could play in the new context of communication where the majority of exchanges take place via the keyboard and the Internet, across time zones and cultures. The psychology of optimal experience as conceived by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (*Flow,* Rider & Co. (UK) 2002), where he examines the periods of effortlessness we experience when we become truly engrossed in a task, is another area that warrants more investigation than it has received.

A great many artists possess a delightful childlike quality with a tremendous spirit of fun and more often than not it is through playful involvement that some of the best exchanges of skill sets take place, even though at times the activity may seem obscure and even frivolous. So I encourage you to enter this arena with a lightness of step even though the subject for exploration may be portentous and emotionally deep seated. All the more reason for relevant and informed discussion between the ''inhabitants of each side of the valley.'' A place abundant in opportunities for creative, fulfilling and sustainable experiences.

It takes two to tango and ''*opportunity dances with those already on the dance floor*'' (Jackson Brown Jr. H., *Life's Little Instruction Book,* Rutledge Hill Press (US) 2000).

# Annotated bibliography

## Ted Buswick and Harvey Seifter

R ealizing that most readers of this special issue would have minimal experience in applying arts-based learning within business, we decided that a broad-based and annotated bibliography would be of more value than an in-depth review of several books. Rather than select the works ourselves, we decided to request submissions from many experts in the field and to ask them to explain why they've made their recommendations.

This resulting ''Annotated bibliography'' is divided into two sections: ''Books'' and ''Articles, reports, and videos.'' Both are alphabetical by title, which we believe is best for skimming the entries. This bibliography includes a wide range of viewpoints: some practical, some theoretical; some current, some classic texts; some talking about the arts, some exemplifying the arts; and many from related fields that the selectors believe have carryover value to the world of business. By skimming titles and descriptions, every reader should be able to find several titles of interest and value. The contributors are identified in parentheses at the end of each entry and in more detail at the end of the bibliography.

### Books

*Art & Physics: Parallel Visions in Space, Time & Light*
Shlain, L. (1991: Quill William Morrow, New York). This book is a real eye-opener concerning how and when ideas first manifest in the world. The thesis, carefully documented and entertainingly described, is that the biggest and best ideas to appear in the world throughout recorded history have appeared first in the art world and only later in science. Engaging writing and scintillating intellectual argument make this one of my favorite books, not to mention how it provides a great retort to those who favor science over art. (Mary Jo Hatch)

*The Art and Science of Portraiture*
Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. and Hoffman-Davis, J. (1997: Jossey-Bass, San Francsico). Offers a detailed explanation of how artistic processes are similar to and can work with rigorous social science processes. Although it is not specifically about business, it does address a lot of philosophical and practical issues about the usefulness of arts-based practices. (Steve Taylor)

*Art as Experience*
Dewey, J. (2005 orig. 1934: Perigree, New York). I will go old school because I think this was a much richer time for thought about art. It wasn't apologetic for its presence (because there was no contemporary capitalism to be apologetic towards); it just laid out a pragmatic approach to the aesthetic life. Rooted in pragmatism, he privileged the art experience over the art object. (Hans Hansen)

*The Art Firm: Aesthetic Management and Metaphysical Marketing*
Guillet de Monthoux, P. (2004: Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA). This is an excellent book, challenging the reader to position himself or herself in art organization contexts, to experience how far managerial techniques are there in use; and, in doing so, to also notice how much the managing of non-art enterprises is imbued with artistic understanding. (Antonio Strati) On the surface the notion of the *art firm* is an oxymoron: how can an artistic process be managed and incorporated? However, Pierre Guillet de Monthoux demonstrates the relationship between the production and marketing of art in a text that is part economic theory, part art history and part aesthetic philosophy. (Ralph Bathurst)

*Art for Work: The New Renaissance in Corporate Collecting*
Jacobson, M. (1993: Harvard Business School Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts). This is an excellent overview of the ways businesses integrate their corporate art collecting into their business strategies. For example, HPI Capital, the US division of a Swiss real estate firm, is profiled for its innovative use of works of art in a commercial real estate development in North Carolina. With the highest quality of art integrated into all public areas of the

building, and a staff curator available to conduct employee and visitor tours, the building achieved considerable cache and appeal to tenants and as a result a significant premium over prevailing rent per square foot. (Gary P. Steuer)

*The Art of Design Management: Design in American Business*
Hoving, W., O'Brien, G., Kahn, L. and Sir Black, M. (1975: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia). When it comes to pondering the relationship between business and design, the best book on the subject is a little volume reprinting the *Tiffany Lectures* given at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania in 1975. What this book lacks in pages (it has just 110), it makes up for in titles. It is called by various names, including: *The Uneasy Coalition: Design in Corporate America,* and *The Tiffany/Wharton Lectures on Corporate Design Management.* (Steve Kroeter)

*The Art of Innovation: Lessons in Creativity from IDEO, America's Leading Design Firm*
Kelley, T. and Littman, J. (2001) (Currency, New York). This is a fast read and important because of the recognizable similarities between IDEO's very successful business approach and approaches to innovation in the arts. (Rob Austin)

*The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life*
Zander, R.S. and Zander, B. (2000: Penguin Books, New York). Rosamund Stone Zander has been an executive coach and family systems therapist, while Benjamin Zander has been conductor of the Boston Philharmonic. Together they create an insightful, inspiring, and playfully engaging examination of leverage points to uplift the human spirit and to artfully transform social/organizational endeavors. Their commentary is well grounded in examples, which illuminate core ideas as well as implementation considerations. Coverage includes topics such as the constructive framing of situations as possibilities, enabling leadership in all situations, not taking oneself too seriously, evoking passion, and creating frameworks that give rise to unconstrained thinking. (David A. Cowan)

*Artful Creation. Learning-Tales of Arts-in-Business*
Darsø, L. (2004: Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur). *Artful Creation* provides a wonderful overview of how arts-based practices are used in business, as well as a nice theoretical model for how the use of arts within business works. (Steve Taylor) Based on 50 interviews with artists and business people, four options to use the arts in business are widely explored and critically ''voiced'' from diverse points of view. (Antonio Strati) The book provides an up-beat, enticing picture of the field, a way of categorizing some of the many efforts in this area, and useful contact points for those interested in pursuing arts-based development. (David Barry) Really the only book of weight that is specifically about how arts interventions can have an impact on businesses. (Tim Stockil)

*Artful Making: What Managers Need to Know About How Artists Work*
Austin, R. and Devin, L. (2003: Financial Times Prentice Hall, New York). A book with one idea, namely that the iterative process of theatre rehearsal would be of enormous value if applied in certain types of business. The idea is theoretical, as they have no practical examples, but one of the authors is a professor at Harvard Business School, so it has some credibility. (Tim Stockil)

*The Artist's Way at Work*
Bryan, M.A., Cameron, J. and Allen, C. (1998: William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York) This book addresses issues of change in the workplace. The authors discuss the importance of adapting to change and finding creative ways to take advantage of change. The book is focused on helping individuals find ways to use their imagination, creativity, intuition and curiosity as keys to their success at work and in life. Rooted in management theory and group dynamics, the book addresses a wide range of issues including competitive environments, accepting criticism, and dealing with workaholism. (Ramona Baker)

*The Arts and the Creation of Mind*
Eisner, E. (2002: Yale University Press, New Haven, CT). Eisner advocates for arts education in schools, both for its own sake, and to support and enhance other types of learning. However, the astute business reader will find the connection between arts processes that are valuable for children's learning and for organizational learning. The business world and the

education world are actually quite similar, and the arts are one way to connect the two. After all, education is all about learning – Peter Senge would argue that business is also about learning. Education is also about people – Peter Vaill said management is also all about people. (John Churchley)

*Certain Places*
Clift, W. (1987: William Clift Editions, P.O. Box 6035, Santa Fe, NM 87502). Each of its 21 perfectly reproduced black-and-white plates repays a steady contemplation. Subjects range from the Saint Louis Arch, to the cathedral at Mount Saint Michel, to a macramé swing lifted into flight by a sudden breeze. ''In each,'' Clift writes, ''I took on something wild and foreign and tried to tame it.'' This book is especially well-suited for business people who are not susceptible to the easy attractions of too-pretty landscape photographs, trendy pictures meant mostly to shock, or photographs infected by some preachy agenda. (Michael More)

*Connections*
Burke, J. (1995: Little Brown & Co, New York). Years ago, I moved from my training as a theoretical mathematician and a cognitive psychologist to become a business strategist. *Connections* helped me by describing how very often throughout history major advances and breakthroughs happen through connections among seemingly unrelated and independent events: technology breakthroughs, failures in one form of another, and activities scattered across the globe. It is the person or organization that sees the patterns early and makes the connections that often derives the benefits. This book was the basis for a major BBC and PBS series. (Steve Hirshfeld)

*Corporate Mentality*
Mir, A. (2003: Lukas and Sternberg, New York). An archive documenting the emergence of recent practices within a cultural sphere occupied by both business and art. A lavishly illustrated compilation of articles and interviews written by artists and business people, Mir's book presents actual projects which have been conducted in the corporate sphere. Looking beyond ubiquitous trite sloganizing and connections between art, branding and Madison Avenue marketing, Mir's collection of artistic and business voices investigates the way in which conversations between artists and corporations can enhance the ultimate product whilst leaving artistic integrity unscathed. (Ruth Bereson)

*Creating Minds: An Anatomy of Creativity Seen Through the Lives of Freud, Einstein, Picasso, Stravinsky, Eliot, Graham, and Gandhi*
Gardner, H. (1994: Basic Books, New York). Based on case studies of seven creative geniuses, Gardner analyzes what creativity looks like in each of the seven intelligences he has identified in his earlier work. He shows us how creativity is not a general trait but exists within a domain. Creativity in visual-spatial skills (as exemplified by Picasso), for example, differs in significant ways from creativity in linguistic skills (as exemplified by T.S. Eliot). Gardner also shows us how creators in all seven domains are similar to one another, despite using different kinds of intelligences to achieve their creative breakthroughs. (Ellen Winner)

*The Creative Habit: Learn It and Use It For Life*
Tharp, T. (2003: Simon & Schuster, New York). Twyla Tharp has written a practical guide to nurture creativity. The rules and regimen the author suggests require discipline and time, but at the same time encourage the readers to find their own patterns and habits. Tharp brings a range of examples across all arts disciplines resulting in a deeply personal book, not just a how-to guide. (Celeste Wilson)

*Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*
Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997: Perennial, New York). This book is based on interviews with 91 creative individuals. The author analyzes the characteristics that distinguish highly creative individuals, including the capacity for concentrated attention. (Ellen Winner)

*The Creativity Toolkit: Provoking Creativity in Individuals and Organizations*
Harrington, H.J., Hoffherr, G.D. and Reid, R.P. Jr (1998: McGraw-Hill, New York). This book is designed to help organizations solve their challenges, make unwieldy processes more user-friendly, open new marketplaces, and increase innovative business strategies through more creative thinking in the workplace. It presents a wide variety of tools and exercises to

help individuals and teams go beyond the usual thinking to find unique solutions. The book discusses different types and styles of creativity as well as best practices to eliminate internal barriers within the office and to support differently creative people working well together. (Ramona Baker)

*Disturbing the Peace*
Havel, V. (1990: Knopf, New York). Those who are skeptical about the capacity of insights drawn from the ''idealized'' world of art to transform the ''practical'' world of business might consider the story of Vaclav Havel, the *avant garde* playwright who led the revolution that overthrew communism in Czechoslovakia, and went on to serve as president of his country for more than a decade. This remarkable memoir, written by one of the twentieth century's moral giants, bears witness, in highly personal terms, to the profound links between art and work. (Harvey Seifter)

*Einstein's Dreams*
Lightman, A. (1994: Warner Books, New York). If one purpose of art is to open us to new ways of seeing and thinking about everyday phenomena, Lightman's book is a gem. Lightman teaches physics and writing at MIT. The book is beautifully written and reads like a series of short lyric poems. It is also short, and each ''dream'' can be read as a separate story or fable. Managers will find the book engaging, enlightening, and aesthetically pleasing. By imagining worlds where time is constructed differently, it makes everyday realities – including workplace realities – a bit less familiar and a lot more interesting. (Michael Elmes)

*The Empty Space*
Brook, P. (1995: Touchstone, New York, Reprint edition). This is a seminal work on the power, potential and impact of the theatre. (Allen Schoer)

*Erfolgreich Führen durch die Bilder Strategie*
Löhrer, F-J. (2004: Kunst Verlag, Köln). This book is on Picture Strategy for business people. It contains 90 photos of spectacular artworks that have been selected in order to demonstrate different ways of showing vision, leadership, organizational culture. The point is that one picture can sometimes show more about leadership than any number of written pages. The book is in German and for those who don't read German be assured that the book has more pictures than text. (Lotte Darsø)

Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth (Essential Works of Michel Foucault)
Foucault, M., and Rabinow, P. (Ed.). (1997: New Press, New York). Especially recommended: Technologies of the Self, On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress, and The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom. Foucault focuses squarely on work within in his later philosophical inquiries, in particular with the concepts of care of the self and aesthetics of existence (exercises of the self on the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain to a certain mode of being). (Pedro David Pérez)

*The Everyday Work of Art: How Artistic Experience Can Transform Your Life*
Booth, E. (1997: Sourcebooks, Inc., Naperville, Illinois). Eric Booth is simply the most insightful and accessible spokesperson for the arts in America today and this book is Eric Booth at his best. The work of art is not for artists alone, it is something we all do as we craft our ideas and give shape and meaning to all aspects of our lives. Eric breaks down the process of art so we can identify with it and grasp it clearly as our own. He also shows how to apply it practically to sharpen our intuition, acquire new perspectives, and reintroduce a sense of wonder into our daily lives. (John Cimino)

*Experimentation Matters: Unlocking the Potential of New Technologies for Innovation*
Thomke, S.H. (2003: Harvard Business School Press, Cambridge, MA). The author uses a scientific metaphor rather than an arts metaphor, but nevertheless describes many art-like processes. Without ever mentioning art, the book points to the underlying economics that make iterative art-like approaches viable and beneficial where they were not before. (Rob Austin)

*The Fifth Discipline*
Senge, P.M. (1990: Doubleday, New York City). This extraordinary book introduced the concept of the ''learning organization.'' These are organizations that go beyond mere

survival achieved through adaptive learning, to reach the point of being able to engage in "generative learning", i.e., learning that enhances the capacity to create. Senge links the organizational capacity to foster this level of innovation and self-renewal to the development of five disciplines: systems thinking (the cornerstone), personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning. His insights into leading and sustaining organizational creativity are breathtaking. (Harvey Seifter)

*Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*
Gardner, H. (1993: Basic Books, New York, 10th anniversary edition). Gardner was one of the first (if not the first) educational psychologists to identify the multiple ways in which human beings learn. *Frames of Mind* not only reminds us that there are many ways to perceive and make sense of "reality," a valuable lesson in and of itself; it also encourages us to try on or tap into some of those alternative modes of sense-making, and one of the best ways to do that, of course, is via the arts. (Nan Stone)

*Games for Actors and Non-Actors*
Boal, A. (2002: Routledge, London, 2nd Edition). The book is full of simple games and exercises, many of which deliver surprising insights into how we interact with one another in normal life. Some of the exercises can provide the basis for work that develops rapport and personal insight into how we communicate, and the barriers we put up to free and frank communication in all contexts. Boal's work is at heart political and transformational. He is fascinating on the subject of the theatre of everyday life, the oppressions that we daily experience at the hands of hierarchies, and he is lucid on the techniques for liberating ourselves from these oppressions. (Piers Ibbotson)

*The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul in Corporate America*
Whyte, D. (1994: Currency Doubleday, New York). This book is written, says the author, ". . . for those who have chosen to live out their lives as managers and employees of a postmodern Corporate America, and who struggle to keep their humanity in the process." Whyte believes that the creativity unleashed by the poetic imagination can be helpful to businesspeople wending their way ". . . through the present whirligig of change . . . ." He draws upon a number of poets – Frost, Neruda, Coleridge – and his own experiences using Beowulf in corporate seminars to make the case that the whole person can survive and thrive in the confines of the business world. (Ed Ottensmeyer)

*Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes From and Why*
Dissanayake, E. (1996: University of Washington Press, Seattle). Ethologist Ellen Dissanayake, whose multidisciplinary research delves into evolution and human behavior, sees human expression through the arts as an innate part of what makes us human. She explains how all primitive cultures find it important to make something special, whether by music, dance, poetry, color, or some other means. (Ted Buswick)

*How to Mind Map*
Buzan, T. (1991: Penguin, New York). A very simple book based on fairly recent discoveries in brain functioning, but as with many simple concepts quite profound in its possible extensions. An effective, flexible and reassuring tool that can sit in anyone's back pocket and that will provoke your drawing skills. (Michael Spencer)

*Impro: Improvisaton and the Theatre*
Johnstone, K. (1979, 1981:Theatre Arts Books, New York; Methuen, London). This personal memoir and practical manual describes in detail the work that Johnstone was doing in the 1970s at The Royal Court Theatre in London and is a profound exploration of the techniques of improvisation and creativity in the theatre. It is full of detailed practical accounts of what goes on in the rehearsal room and contains some revelatory insights about the nature of status, spontaneity, creativity and improvisation. It is also a personal reflection on the creative process and the blocks to creativity in the artist, both self-imposed and generated by education and culture. I have used it as basis for much of my work with business and industry. (Piers Ibbotson)

*The Ingenuity Gap: Facing the Economic, Environmental, and Other Challenges of an Increasingly Complex and Unpredictable World*
Homer-Dixon, T. (2000, Vantage Books, New York). This is a closely reasoned book of immense power and breadth, exactly researched and engagingly written. The "ingenuity

gap'' – the space between problems that arise and our ability to solve them – is growing today at an alarming rate. ''As ingenuity gaps widen the gulfs of wealth and power among us, we need imagination, metaphor and empathy more than ever, to help us remember each other's essential humanity.'' This is a clarion call for social as well as intellectual creativity, for thinking which opens our hearts as well as our eyes. (John Cimino)

*The Intelligent Eye: Learning to Think by Looking at Art*
Perkins, D.N. (1994: The Getty Center for Education in the Arts, Los Angeles). Perkins of Harvard's Project Zero explains how viewing visual arts can improve your thinking, then discusses what must be done to facilitate that transfer. To him, the two essential conditions are: ''abundant and diverse practice,'' and ''reflective awareness of principles and deliberate mindful connection making.'' (Ted Buswick)

*Jamming*
Kao, J. (1996: Harper Business, New York). A small book, but an interesting one, about how businesses can learn from jazz. John was Professor of Creativity at Harvard Business School – now who wouldn't want a title like that? (Tim Stockil) *Jamming* is a seminal work and showed me how the arts really can be used to unlock the creativity of business. Kao was very much a pioneer in this new thinking. I was then determined to meet John Kao and invited him to give our inaugural Arts & Business Week lecture. John led my management team in a day-long creativity workshop and started A&B off on our own UK version of creativity in business. (Colin Tweedy)

*Leadership Ensemble: Lessons in Collaborative Management from the World's Only Conductorless Orchestera*
Seifter, H. and Economy, P. (2001: Holt/Times Books, New York). This book breaks the management processes of Orpheus, a conductorless orchestra, down to eight principles, then discusses each as it applies to Orpheus and as it is and should be used in corporations and nonprofits. A superb case study for collaborative management. (Ted Buswick)

Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature
Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life
Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions
Nussbaum, M.C. (1992: Oxford University Press, New York) (1997: Beacon Press, Boston) (2001: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England). Many of philosopher Martha Nussbaum's works discuss how our institutions should ''embody and . . . protect the insights of the compassionate imagination.'' She offers rich food for thought to those working in our burgeoning field. (Ted Buswick)

*Looking at Photographs*
Szarkowski, J. (1999, orig 1973: Bullfinch Press, New York). For the business person seeking a comprehensive understanding of the art of photography, *Looking at Photographs* remains the best introduction to the skill its title describes. It presents 100 black-and-white prints from the collection of The Museum of Modern Art, where Szarkowski directed the photography department from 1971-92. Even when the photographs don't look especially remarkable, Szarkowski persuades us of their significance through brief, jargon-free evaluations that point out aspects of the pictures most of us would overlook. (Michael More)

*Managing as a Performing Art*
Vaill, P. (1989: Jossey-Bass, San Francisco). Vaill approaches management as a bodily, concrete, uncodifiable set of activities more akin to performing arts and Taoist Wu-wei than to the tools of the scientific method; thus handling environmental uncertainty and the roles of human intention and spirit in management. (Pedro David Pérez)

*Managing Britannia: Culture and Management in Modern Britain*
Protherough, R. and Pick, J. (2003: Imprint Academic, Exeter, UK). The authors of this provocative little book argue that the modern belief in the power of ''management'' to solve all kinds of human problems is itself a symptom of cultural decadence. They examine the ways in which Britain's ''New Labour'' government has adopted both the language and practices of modern corporate management without fully understanding either, and then examine the harm this has wrought to the arts, universities, schools and faiths of modern Britain. Their

argument is illustrated with anecdotal evidence of cultural failures ranging from the disastrous Millennium Dome to the imposition of a ''national curriculum'' in schools. (Ruth Bereson)

*The Medici Effeci: Breakthrough Insights at the Intersection of Ideas, Concepts, and Cultures*
Johansson, F., 2004: Harvard Business School Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts). The concept of the ''intersection'' is a new take on interdisciplinary thinking: bring science and art or art and business into the same idea space and the associative possibilities and value propositions multiply like rabbits. If we would be innovative, ideational and cultural intersections are the place to be. ''In every arena, whether in the sciences or the humanities, business or politics, there is a growing need to combine concepts from disparate fields.'' Johansson chronicles many such innovations and clarifies the special challenges which await us there. (John Cimino)

*Merit, Aesthetic and Ethical*
Eaton, M.M. (2001: Oxford University Press, Oxford). Eaton, a philosopher at the University of Minnesota, often focuses on the benefits of aesthetic perception. One of the many worthwhile ideas here is that a sense of separation has often been sought by artists in an effort to create a distinctive niche for the aesthetic. But this attempt at purity has led to an artificial separation causing many people to erroneously see the arts as a thing apart from everyday reality, while the opposite is true. (Ted Buswick)

*The Music of Management: Applying Organization Theory*
Young, D.R. (2004: Ashgate, Aldershot, UK). Dennis Young's recent publication is a timely examination of how the process of music-making can help organizational leaders better understand the process of team work and of coordinating groups with varying abilities around a common task. Noting that ''music has the power to evoke . . .'' he draws lessons from the musical ensemble around the themes of coordination, motivation, developing a niche, and managing change. Young strengthens his insights with case studies that apply musical knowledge to organizational outcomes, thereby offering a comprehensive management tool. (Ralph Bathurst)

*The Necessary Theatre*
Hall, P. (2001: Nick Hern Books, London). Set in an environment of decreasing public funding of the arts in the UK, Hall makes an impassioned plea for governments to reexamine funding policies. Hall writes of the rise of the dramatic arts in post-World War II Britain. However, in recent years with a rise of the market as the sole determinant of artistic quality, the arts have been ''dumbed down'' in order to turn a profit. Hall claims there is a social cost to this diminishment, that ''we now run the risk of killing originality.'' (Ralph Bathurst)

*On Writing*
King, S. (2002: Pocket Books, New York). Stephen King's book is a candid, comprehensive, and beautifully written account of the craft of writing by a master. It suggests how the craft of management ought to be described. (Pedro David Pérez)

*The Only Sustainable Edge: Why Business Strategy Depends On Productive Friction and Dynamic Specialization*
Hagel III, J., and Brown, J.S. (2005: Harvard Business School Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts). This book is for any business leader trying to understand how to respond to the demands of globalization. In *The World Is Flat* Thomas Friedman sites this book as one of the most important business books of the decade. It is important because it highlights the imperative for business to prioritize creative thinking and to create cultures that leverage the creative capital in the organization at every level of hierarchy. The book reinforces this idea from a business perspective and in so doing begins to talk about business as an art form and not a rational science. (Michael Gold)

*Orchestrating Collaboration at Work: Using Music, Improv, Storytelling, and Other Arts to Improve Teamwork*
VanGundy, A.B and Naiman, L. (2003: Jossey-Bass, San Francisco). The book provides seventy training exercises for groups, uniquely offering arts-based learning approaches as a basis for improving collaboration at work. You don't have to be a professional artist or trainer to facilitate the activities outlined in this book. (Nick Nissley) It's broken down by art

form and would provide a good resource for anyone who wants to start using the arts within business. (Steve Taylor) The second chapter (downloadable from www.creativityatwork.com) acts as an apologia for using arts in business, quoting many authors, practitioners and sages. (Tim Stockil)

*Organizational Improvisation*
Kamoche K.N., Cunha, M.P.E. and Da Cunha, J.V. (2001: Brunner-Routledge, London). This is a compilation of the most important thinking and research on jazz as a model for organizational improvisation conducted by organizational psychologists and organization development experts over the past twenty years. Of particular importance is the piece written by Frank Barrett, PhD. (Michael Gold)

*Out of Our Minds: Learning to be Creative*
Robinson, K. (2001: Capstone Wiley, New York). Professor Sir Ken Robinson, now education adviser to the Getty Foundation, writes more articulately and more tellingly than anyone else I know about creativity. He is also very amusing. (Tim Stockil) This book charts the territory of creativity. Sir Ken was an academic at the University of Warwick and was put in charge of the Government think tank that produced the UK government ''All Our Futures'' report. This in turn influenced the thinking around the position of the arts and creativity within education. He is now Senior Advisor to the President (Education) for the J. Paul Getty Trust. An absolutely cracking speaker too. (Michael Spencer)

*Outside Lies Magic: Regaining History and Awareness in Everyday Places*
Stilgoe, J.R. (1998: Walker and Company, New York). Harvard Landscape History Professor John Stilgoe, who has taught courses on the art of exploration for over twenty years, has provided an engaging and accessible book for anyone, managers included, who want to see the world through fresh eyes. An outspoken proponent of visual literacy, Stilgoe urges his readers to ''Go outside and walk a bit . . .'', and he helps them in their explorations by providing lively explanations of how the things we take for granted in our daily lives, like interstate highways or post offices, got to be that way. (Ed Ottensmeyer)

*Path of Least Resistance: Learning to Become the Creative Force in Your Own Life*
Fritz, R. (1989: Ballantine, Revised/Expanded edition). This focuses on creativity and identifies some of the barriers to entry and offers some strategies for dealing with them. It was a pleasant surprise to find that Fritz is an accomplished musician, although this is not immediately obvious. (Michael Spencer)

*Player Piano*
Vonnegut, K. (1999, orig. 1952: Delta, New York). Written in 1952, but set in the future, this satire serves might serve as contemporary social commentary on the blind pursuit of efficiency and modernist thought. *The Player Piano* signifies one of the earliest automations to replace the no-longer-required human touch. For our purposes, we might say it removes aesthetics in the pursuit of efficiency. The novel laments the erosion of the middle class and hands-on skill. Managers become the only valued members in society, but they do nothing to contribute. The tale's protagonist is a member of the elite who grapples with these modernist changes and revolts. (Hans Hansen)

*Positive Turbulence: Developing Climates for Creativity, Innovation and Renewal*
Gryskiewicz, S.S. (1999: Jossey-Bass, San Francisco). ''Positive turbulence'': a disturbance of the status quo which results in new thinking, new perspectives and learning. Gryskiewicz describes a proactive process for bringing new ideas into organizations. Among his strongest recommendations: the arts, innovative experiences of the arts which can shift our perspectives, move us emotionally, and bring to the surface our tacit assumptions. *Positive Turbulence* is thoughtful, telling research, rich in corporate storytelling and brave, sensible thinking. (John Cimino)

*Pragmatism and the Meaning of Truth*
James, W. (1978: Harvard University Press, Cambridge). I would really focus on ''Pragmatism'' out of this two-part collection. It was written in 1907, yes, but demonstrates alternative yet ''unobstructed'' thinking as it had the benefit of not having to play against industrial thinking as fully developed. It means for instance, that it presented a view of reality

that did not have to contrast itself against themes developed in Fordist and post-Fordist thinking. So, I think of this work as ''purer'' somehow. It will lay out pragmatism and the primacy of experience. (Hans Hansen)

*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*
*Frame Analysis: An Essay in the Organization of Experience*
Goffman, E. (1999, orig. 1959: Peter Smith Publisher, Magnolia, Masssachusetts); (1986, orig. 1974: Northeastern University Press, Boston). These works of sociology, which have been enormously influential in performance studies, examine how everyday activity is determined by the parts we play and how we play them. In *Presentation of Self*, Goffman uses theatrical concepts to examine the importance of how we present ourselves in roles that range from the professional to the social. In *Frame Analysis*, he uses the musical analogy of ''keying.'' Each role we play or activity we perform must be presented in the appropriate ''key'' to be effective. Goffman's approach leads naturally and logically to a recognition of the potential value of arts-based training. (John Osburn)

*The Psychology of Art*
Vygotsky, L. (1971, orig. 1925: MIT Press, Cambridge, MA). Vygotsky's ideas on cognitive development emphasize the relationship among thought, language, and culture. He analyzes the role of language as a symbolic tool used by society. Looking at the complex role art has, he postulates how through art we express or come to understand thoughts that cannot be expressed in ordinary language; understanding art requires skills that are of universal importance; and our understanding of art influences our understanding of the world. (Abigail Housen)

*Re-Imagine!*
Peters, T. (2003: Dorling Kindersley Limited, London). In this book, Peters addresses profound shifts in the business community, and his passionate belief that business must re-invent itself in a more creative way. His statements are perceptive and provocative. He writes about new ways of thinking, new kinds of customer service and new business models. He discusses the importance of a workplace that is focused on creativity, growth and service, and the avoidance of what he perceives as organizational barriers to innovation and change. Peters, co-author of *In Search of Excellence*, proclaims in this book that ''it is the foremost task – and responsibility – of our generation to re-imagine . . .'' (Ramona Baker)

*The Road to Mecca*
Fugard, A. (1985: Theater Communications Group Inc.). This is a wonderful play about the creative mandate within all of us and the need to respond to it despite all personal and societal constraints. (Allen Schoer)

*The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*
Florida, R. (2002: Basic Books, New York). The book that prompted the governor of Michigan to don sunglasses and vow to launch a creative economy has provoked much debate in urban policy. Florida presents evidence of a correlation between business innovation in a geographic region and cultural sophistication. (Rob Austin)

*The School and Society and the Child and the Curriculum*
Dewey, J. (1991: Centennial Publications of The University of Chicago Press, Chicago). *The School and Society* was first published in 1899. One cornerstone of education for Dewey is that we learn by doing. This theory was in sharp contrast to the practice at the time, which advocated rote learning and dogmatic instruction. Just as he expands learning beyond the 3R's, he moves outside the classroom into the workplace to include learning about the broader concerns of society. (Abigail Housen)

*Socrates Café*
Phillips, C. (2002: W.W. Norton & Company, New York). This is a wonderful exploration of the creative search for meaning. Arts-based learning starts with inquiry. Art reveals the character of the artist as well as makes a statement to the world. When you help an individual access their own inner wisdom and understand the unique way he/she sees the world, you

grow an artist. Phillips' encourages questions that reveal soul, which, to me, is the seat of all artistic endeavors. (Allen Schoer)

*The Spooky Art: Some Thoughts on Writing*
Mailer, N. (2003: Random House, New York). Another memoir of writing, but centered around the attitudes and sets of interests that shape a writer's life. Where King emphasizes the craft, Mailer gives a view of the required attitude. A manager reader will find it most suggestive. (Pedro David Pérez)

*The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, and Persuasion Through the Arts of Storytelling*
Simmons, A. (2001: Perseus Publishing, New York). We are all storytellers, but only those of us who do it well can empower, uplift, and effectively change the lives of our companies, organizations, and communities. This is the quintessential art form, the oldest tool of influence and the most powerful. Simmons' book is well researched and Simmons is herself a master storyteller. She showcases dozens of examples from the frontlines of business and government as well as myths, fables, and parables around the world, showing how stories can be used to persuade, motivate, and inspire in ways that cold facts, bullet points, and directives can't. (John Cimino)

*Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*
Berliner, P.F. (1994: University of Chicago Press, Chicago). A very thorough work about the culture, methodology, pedagogy and history of jazz as told by individual practitioners. Berliner is an anthropologist and this book gives the culture of jazz its long awaited legitimate examination. (Michael Gold)

*The Three Faces of Leadership: Manager, Artist, Priest*
Hatch, M.J., Kostera, M. and Kozminski, A. (2004: Blackwell, Oxford & Malden, MA). By analyzing *Harvard Business Review* interviews with leading CEOs, Hatch et al create a vision of the executive as the creator of a reality, with its own aesthetic value. (Pedro David Pérez) The authors demonstrate how business leaders use storytelling, dramatizing, and mythmaking, to lead their companies successfully. They examine how these leaders inspire organizations through their creativity, virtue, and faith, and thus show the faces of the artist and priest alongside the technical and rational face of the manager. (Philip Mirvis) The authors clearly link aesthetic leadership practices to organizational culture, change, vision, ethics/values, and identity. This encourages the reader to look beyond the managerial face of business leadership to consider more artful ways of leading. (Nick Nissley)

*To the Desert and Back: The Story of One of the Most Dramatic Business Transformations on Record*
Mirvis, P.H., Ayas, K. and Roth, G. (2003: Jossey-Bass/Wiley, San Francisco). A foods division in Unilever is in deep trouble and close to being sold off. Then a new chairman orchestrates a dramatic series of events, from waking up cynical workers with a field trip to a warehouse stacked floor-to-ceiling with rotten products, to shaking up the hierarchy by putting young leaders in charge, to taking 200 team leaders on unforgettable journeys to the mountains and the desert, to getting 2,000 employees to share their life stories with each other, to gathering 50,000 customers in a football stadium to talk products and their purpose in life. (Mary Jo Hatch)

*Truth in Photography*
Thompson, J. (2003: Ivan R. Dee, Chicago). Based on my work at Kodak, I know that businesseople may ask, ''What possible significance could there be to photographs of a Lake George porch in mid-summer, a rock by the roadside in Ireland, or cars parked on a city street in the rain back in 1931?'' Thompson considers such photographs and reveals their deceptive magnificence, leading one to consider the significance of well-ordered simplicity and how it may apply to other areas of our lives. Thompson's own subtle photographs of New York City young people are here too, along with an essay that describes how he makes such penetrating portraits. (Michael More)

*26 Letters: Illuminating the Alphabet*
Sack, F., Simmons, J. and Rich, T. (Eds) (2004: Cyan Books, London). This is the record of a creative collaboration between business writers and typographic designers. Each pair was

given a letter of the alphabet and asked to create an artwork for exhibition at the British Library as part of the London Design Festival. The book shows the results (all interesting, many beautiful) and records the diaries of the process. Read the book particularly for the diaries: they contain insights into creativity (and the many paths towards it), the triumphs and the barriers that creative collaborations encounter in the world where arts and business meet. (John Simmons)

*The Ugly Duckling Goes to Work: Wisdom for the Workplace from the Classic Tales of Hans Christian Andersen*
Norgaard, M. (2005: AMACOM, New York). This book takes its point of departure in narrating six fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen. From each fairy tale parallels are drawn to qualities of individual life as well as life in organizations. Mette Norgaard interprets and reflects on the organizational implications of each fairy tale, which is followed by suggestions for topics or questions that can guide important conversations with colleagues. (Lotte Darsø)

*Variations on a Blue Guitar: The Lincoln Center Institute Lectures on Aesthetic Education*
Greene, M. (2001: Lincoln Center Institute, New York). This collection of Maxine Greene's summer lectures to teachers at the Lincoln Center is both inspiring and thought-provoking. Full of poetry examples and thoughts on the arts in education, this book really addresses why the arts are important to all of society: education, business, and the rest of our ''petrified world.'' (John Churchley)

*Visual Thinking*
Arnheim, R. (1969: University of California Press, Los Angeles). Arnheim illustrates the ways in which our perception is intelligent, thereby questioning common distinctions between thinking and perceiving, and intellect and intuition. Using findings from science, he contends that ''all perceiving is also thinking, all reasoning is also intuition, all observation is also invention.'' (Abigail Housen)

*We, Me, Them, and It*
*The Invisible Grail*
*Dark Angels: How Writing Releases Creativity at Work*
Simmons, J. (2002: Texere, London); (2003: *Texere, London);* (2005: Cyan, London). Anyone who is seriously interested in how creative writing can enhance both brands and the quality of life of any workforce should read the books of John Simmons. He argues the case for language being one of our greatest resources and by using it creatively in the business place we can truly bring our personality to bear in the uniform corporate environment, and he examines the efficacy of training in creative writing within the business environment. (Stuart Delves)

*A Whole New Mind: Moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age*
Pink, D.H. (2005: Riverhead, New York). A new book on the block that resonates with the current emphasis towards more right-brain-centred thinking, but without the encumbrance of pseudo-scientific links. It makes a strong case for the development of more artistic and empathetic thinking and supports its case with the latest medical research into brain functioning. It draws on a wide range of examples, from drawing classes to ''laughing clubs'' in Mumbai. A well reasoned and optimistic book which offers possibilities for advancing beyond the edge of the Information Age and the knowledge economy. (Michael Spencer)

*The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*
Friedman, T.L. (2005: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York). Friedman does a brilliant job of connecting the dots, providing us with a neat and elegant synthesis of the trends, forces and key events that have led to today's radically unpredictable business environment. This book helps us understand the power of the imagination – nurtured by story, myth and narrative – to drive our economy and shape our global destiny. (Harvey Seifter)

*The Year of the King*
Sher, A. (1987: Limelight Editions, Pompton Plains, NJ). In 1985 Anthony Sher played Richard III at the RSC. This is his journal of the rehearsal process. It is an excellent behind the scenes study of an actor's creative process. (Allen Schoer)

## Articles, studies, reports, and a video

''The aesthetic imperative: why the creative shall inherit the economy''
Postrel, V. (2003) *Wired* magazine, July, Issue 11.07. Postrel is also the author of *The Substance of Style* (Harper Collins, 2003) and in this article looks at the trend of competition pushing quality so high and prices so low that manufacturers can no longer survive on just performance and price. Citing Richard Florida's ''Rise of the Creative Class'' which has now become a bible for those promoting the value of the arts in community and workforce development, she writes of the growing role of design, aesthetics and creativity in the economy. (Gary P. Steuer)

''The arts and academic achievement: what the evidence shows''
Hetland, L. and Winner, E. (2001) *Arts Education Policy Review* (Vol. 102 No. 5, pp. 3-6). This article summarizes work that statistically synthesizes the studies testing the claim that studying the arts improves academic achievement. The authors found most of the claims for this to not be supported by the evidence and argue that we need to justify the arts in terms of their intrinsic benefits – in terms of what they can do for students that other areas of the curriculum cannot. (Howard Gardner)

''Arts-based learning in management education''
Nissley, N. (2002) in Wankel, C. and DeFillippi, R. (Eds), *Rethinking Management Education for the 21st Century* (Information Age Publishing, Inc., Greenwich, CT). This article is a thorough overview of the use of arts in business and management education. Nissley explains the use of the metaphor of the arts for business, and then goes on to describe how each art form (music, drama, literature, visual art, and movement/dance) has been used in business both as a metaphor and in other ways. He cites many of the key works in each of these areas, listing websites and dozens of articles. This article is an excellent place to start a journey into the world of arts and business. (John Churchley)

*Celebrate What's Right with the World*
Jones, D. (2001) (Star Thrower Distribution, St. Paul, MN). Through a beautifully-constructed and visually-impactful video, Dewitt Jones takes the viewer on a journey into the world of a *National Geographic* photographer. Along the way, we learn about the power of vision, the choice to frame our work through lenses of possibility, ways to unleash human energy and to confront change enthusiastically. Each step of the way is grounded in examples that align Jones's work assignments with creative processes and results. For example, we learn the difference between ordinary and extraordinary photographs, and how to employ timing and positioning to favor the latter. (David A. Cowan)

*Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*
Fiske, E. (Ed.) (1999) Washington: Arts Education Partnership (http://artsedge. kennedycenter.org/champions/index.html). This is a national US report on a wide variety of research studies on the arts and education. Individual articles address different studies that indicate ''... that learners can attain higher levels of achievement through their engagement with the arts.'' Fiske also summarizes the research in points on why and how the arts change the learning experience. (John Churchley)

''Finding form: looking at the field of organizational aesthetics''
Taylor, S. and Hansen, H. *Journal of Management Studies*, forthcoming. This highly engaging and informative work is one of the foundational articles in the field of organizational aesthetics. It's a ''must read'' for anyone interested doing research in the area. It not only provides an comprehensive review of the literature to date, but does a very nice job of organizing it along theoretically persuasive grounds. (David Barry, Mary-Ellen Boyle)

*Human Relations*
Strati, A. and Guillet de Montoux, P. (Eds) (2002), Vol. 55 No. 7. Five articles compose the Special Issue on ''Organising aesthetics''. The first one – by Steyaert and Hjorth – addresses directly the issue of art and work, since it is constituted by the script of the art performance realized by the two authors for the conference on aesthetics and organizations in Siena (Italy). The other four articles focus on the relationships between organizational life and the design of workspace: aesthetics, morality, and power (George Cairns); the issue of

aesthetic muteness (Steven Taylor); the experience of disgust (Peter Pelzer); and the ''spirit of a place,'' including the residential organizations for the elderly that she re-studied adopting an aesthetic approach (Patricia Martin). (Michael Elmes)

''Leadership as aesthetic process''
Smith, R.A. (1996). *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 30 No. 4, 39-52. This issue of the *Journal of Aesthetic Education* is devoted to ''the aesthetic face of leadership.'' Journal editor Ralph Smith presents an article that suggests that leadership itself is an aesthetic process. He defines leadership and creativity and then reframes leadership as that creative process. He, as with many scholars, affirms the importance of the arts for their own sake as well as the value of aesthetic education for leadership development. (John Churchley)

''London Underground – past, present and future''
O'Sullivan, L. (2005) *(Art & Architecture Journal,* February). London Underground has a long history of supporting the arts. The tradition continues with the Platform for Art program. Here, the program's head writes about the history, recent projects and objectives of Platform for Art. The Tube platforms become temporary exhibition spaces, displaying work by artists like Cindy Sherman and David Shrigley. With new commissions and community programs, Platform for Art embeds art into the fabric of the business and reaches the widest possible audiences, in particular commuters on their work journeys. (John Simmons)

*Managing the Creative – Engaging New Audiences: A Dialogue between For-Profit and Non-Profit Leaders in the Arts and Creative Sectors*
Ellis, A. and Mishra, S. (2004), published on the Getty Leadership Institute website: www.getty.edu/leadership/downloads/ellis_mishra.pdf It is a curious and troubling fact that large publicly-held corporations are far more likely use artists as a resource for organizational creativity and learning than are large non-profit arts institutions. This concise paper, a background note for a seminar conducted by the authors at the Getty Leadership Institute, is the single best exploration I have seen of the factors that lie behind this seeming paradox. (Harvey Seifter)

''The MFA is the new MBA''
Pink, D. (2004) *Harvard Business Review* Special Issue: Breakthrough Ideas for 2004, February. Pink has written extensively on the growing importance of creativity in the new global marketplace. In this *HBR* article he covers the phenomenon of arts degrees becoming ''one of the hottest credentials in the world of business'' as corporate recruiters seek creativity and innovation: more ''right brain'' approaches to business problems. (Gary P. Steuer)

''Notes from a Marine Biologist's Daughter: on the art and science of attention''
Sullivan, A.M. (2000) *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 70, No. 2, pp. 211-227. When business people are in danger of confusing ''information'' with whatever can be distilled into a report or a spreadsheet (and therefore of disdaining or neglecting that which cannot), Sullivan's article is a wonderful reminder of the value – and the delight – of sensory attention, and of the ways in which imagination and creativity can be stirred by direct perception, in a way they simply are not by a column of figures or an executive summary. And she reminds us, too, that teaching is so much more than ''telling.'' (Guy Claxton)

*NyX Innovation Alliances Evaluation Report*
Barry, D. and Meisiek, S. (2004) published on the Learning Lab Denmark web site (http://www.lld.dk). This report evaluates when, how and why arts-based interventions work in organizations. The NyX Innovation Alliances program aimed at pairing 20 artists with 20 companies for 20 days. Five critical ''make-or-break'' stages were found: forming the challenge, matching of artist capabilities to organizational contexts, the problem framing and search modes used by artists and companies, the contextualization of the ''art-work'', and shaping the intervention style. The top-performing alliances resulted in significant payoffs, both directly and indirectly. (Lotte Darsø)

''Professional skills – can they be taught? Can they be assessed?''
Shuman, L.J., Besterfield-Sacre, M. and McGourty, J. (2005) *Journal of Engineering Education*, Vol. 94 No. 1, January (American Society for Engineering Education). This article is a valuable overview of some of the leading efforts in bringing professional skills to

engineering education in the USA. The accrediting agency ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, Inc.) has included a number of requirements regarding professional skills in its recent accreditation criteria and this article reviews programs dealing with most of those requirements. It provides a resource for identifying areas where arts-based programs could make significant contributions as well as a comprehensive overview of the assessment of professional skills. Finally, it has a bibliography of 135 items – a valuable starting point for researching the field. (Richard Stock)

*(Re)Educating for Leadership: How the Arts Can Improve Business*
Buswick, T., Creamer, A. and Pinard, M. (2004): published on the Web sites of Art & Business UK (www.artsandbusiness.org/Educating_for_Leadership_Sept_04.pdf) and Arts & Business Council, US (www.artsandbusiness.org/home.htm). This report focuses on how artistic processes can develop an aesthetic approach to observing and thinking, which is needed to advance creativity and innovation in business. The report offers various convincing examples from two successful programs that apply art-based activities, one from Unilever UK and one from Babson College USA. It concludes with practical guidelines worth following for business. (Lotte Darsø)

''Rethinking transfer: a simple proposal with multiple implications''
Bransford, J.S. and Schwartz, D.L. (1999) *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 24, pp. 61-100. This paper offers one of the best explorations of transferring skills learned from the arts to other arenas. The authors conclude that most attempted measurement of transfer tries the measure the wrong things. The authors identify the correct approach to transfer as ''preparation for future learning.'' (Ted Buswick)

''Strategic innovation: the Children's Hospital at Montefiore''
Labarre, P. (2002) (*Fast Company*, May, www.fastcompany.com/magazine/58/innovation.html). This article provides an inside-out look at the design and subsequent operation of an innovative, inspiring children's hospital in the Bronx of New York. In doing so, we gain access to motivations and decisions that led Dr. Irwin Redlener to create an extraordinary environment, designed with the intention of not only healing bodies, but also of uplifting hearts and spirits. Almost from top to bottom, the hospital embodies the reframing of standard ideas into structures and practices that treat each child as a unique and unlimited source of human potential. (David A. Cowan)

''Strategy retold: towards a narrative view of strategic discourse''
Barry, D. and Elmes, M. (1997) *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 22 No. 2, April, 429-452. Using narrative theory, this article explores strategic management as a form of fiction. After introducing several key narrative concepts, we discuss the challenges that strategists have faced in making strategic discourse both credible and novel and consider how strategic discourse may change within the ''virtual'' organization of the future. This paper will be particularly useful to readers who are interested in the aesthetic and discursive dimensions of the strategy-making process. (Nick Nissley)

''Studio thinking: how visual arts teaching can promote disciplined habits of mind''
Winner, E., Hetland, L., Veenema, S., Sheridan, K. and Palmer, P., To appear in Locher, P., Martindale, C., Dorfman, L. and Leontiev, D. (Eds), *New Directions in Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* (in preparation, Baywood Publishing, Amityville, NY). The authors document the kinds of thinking skills learned in serious visual arts study. (Howard Gardner)

''Third-order organizational change and the Western mystical tradition''
Bartunek, J.M. and Moch, M.K. (1994) *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 7 No. 1, 24-41. Bartunek and Moch's piece elaborates on the consequences of an approach to living such as that described by Foucault, relating Peter Senge's learning models to mystical practice and the ability to apprehend reality as a whole in a glimpse, such as an artist does. (Pedro David Pérez)

''Unleashing creativity''
Kraft, U. (2005) (*Scientific American Mind,* Vol. 16 No 1, April, pp. 17-23). This article by a German medical writer explores how moments of brilliance arise from complex cognitive

processes, and reports on research into the secrets of creative thinking. The article also suggests some books for further reading on the subject. (Gary P. Steuer)

''Visual thinking strategies: a new role for art in medical education''
Reilly, J.M. MD, Ring, J. PhD and Duke, L. (2005) (*Family Medicine,* Vol. 37 No. 4, pp. 250-2). Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), an art-viewing curriculum, has most frequently been used in schools to develop critical thinking skills. This recent study cites the use of VTS to enhance graduate education in medicine. VTS was used with medical students and existing faculty to enhance their ability to look again at a body of evidence and consider alternative interpretations before reaching a conclusive diagnosis. VTS also contributed to analyzing problems in a group, and building upon the ideas of others for group-based problem-solving. (Abigail Housen)

''What does drawing my hand have to do with leadership? A look at the process of leaders becoming artists''
De Ciantis, C. (1996) *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 30 No. 4, pp. 87-97. De Ciantis introduces the use of arts in leadership development, then describes a management-arts program from the viewpoint of one of the participants. This provides insight into the value of arts processes for leaders as well as the specifics of the art-making process itself. She also describes some aesthetic competencies for leaders that are developed in the program. This entire issue of the *Journal of Aesthetic Education* is devoted to ''the aesthetic face of leadership''. Not all of the articles will be of equal interest to management practitioners, but there are a number of articles worth reading, particularly those written by faculty from the Center for Creative Leadership. (John Churchley)

''Why attack art? Its role is to be helpful''
Smith, R. (2004, 13 May). *New York Times*. Retrieved 13 May, 2004, from the World Wide Web. A *New York Times* arts critic explores the nature of and reason for art. Set in the context of the 2001 destruction of the Bamian Buddhas in Afghanistan, and more latterly in 2004 the destruction of life-sized sculptures by an offended citizen in Milan Italy, Smith questions why art provokes feelings of such extreme that people have the urge to destroy public installations. Her article provides the basis for important question for those at the nexus of arts and business, namely: Why make art? Why support artists? Why fund arts programs? (Ralph Bathurst)

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