

It's only Raga and Roll but I like it

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In the book *Sex, Leadership and Rock 'n' Roll* we use Rock music as a powerful analogy for thinking about structure and improvisation in business:

Too much structure and you have an orchestra, where everyone is a slave to the score.

Too much freeform improvisation and you have some of the worst excesses of jazz music.

Rock music has a balance of structure and creativity, and we use this in the book as a more appropriate analogy for modern business:



But what about other music forms? Professor O' Suilleabhain of the University of Limerick observed the contrast between the classical orchestra with the informality of traditional Irish music. He says:

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Irish music depends a good deal upon individuality and improvisation, although these take place within a system. Inside the system's rules, musicians are free to play, elaborate and diverge. Different players take the lead at different times. Players respond to each other dynamically, swapping lead and background roles. What looks anarchic and directionless has an underlying structure and form and can lead to something sublime.'

Pretty much the same point as we make in the book using Rock'n'Roll. So, what about Indian Raga? Classical Indian music is not organised using major and minor scales as we expect in the West. Instead it uses 'raga' with scales which sound unfamiliar to some Western ears. If you are musical you will probably understand the idea of the 'Camel's interval' (root note, one semitone higher and 3 semitones higher etc.) which evokes the flavours and moods of much Eastern Music. If you are not musically trained just listen to Within You Without You by the Beatles on Sgt Pepper for a variation on this idea.

Although Raga is classical to the extent that there is a written score and it uses scales, the main point of an Raga performance is to allow for improvisation within and beyond the score. People come to listen to a Raga performance expecting the unexpected. Conversely, most people attending a performance of Beethoven's 5th symphony expect a faithful rendition of the piece, performed according to the score. If we are thinking about the value of improvisation within a predefined structure in business Classical Indian Raga is part of our Rock'n'Roll model.

Key lessons for business leaders arising from this analogy:



Come to work expecting the unexpected

Balance improvisation (creativity) at work with a score (structure) to ensure that good ideas turn into reality

See something different in the ordinary and do something about it if you think it will make you rich!

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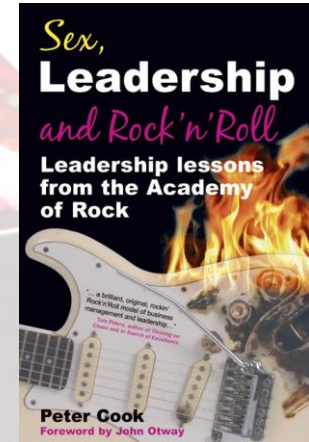
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We offer engaging seminars on the music and management metaphor. Sitaras can be provided if required!! *Why not book us for your next conference, or company event?*

Try listening to some Indian Raga music and I hope you will hear what I mean.

Or, have a look at www.ravishankar.org or http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ravi_Shankar - this has links to George Harrison and a host of other places.

Reference: Sex, Leadership and Rock'n'Roll – Leadership Lessons from the Academy of Rock



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