

Riffs and Myths of Leadership

Top 5 'Riffs' - Questions to ask at work

- It's the end of the world as we know it? (and I feel fine) – How can you create comfort with the unknown and unknowable, so that people are willing bring their soul to work?
- Shake, rattle and roll? Can you have too much creativity and improvisation? In what circumstances do you need to apply structure and scores to the workplace?
- I'm too sexy? – What turns your customers on about what you do? Why do some of them want it all the time and why do others lose their appetite for what you do?
- Changes? – Highly successful rock stars manage to change the relationship between themselves and their audiences without losing their following. Successful leaders also manage to change assumptions, values and beliefs over time, taking people with them. How can you take others with you?
- Speed King? – How many speeds does your Company work at? Can it do 16, 33, 45 and 78 rpm? Who is your Company's drummer? How do you motivate them?

And 5 'Rock Anthems' – bigger questions for a longer company jam session

- Chain Gang? – How can you keep all your people working together at the same pace? Is there a natural rhythm to work and what happens if leaders try to change it? (speeding up the beat or slowing the organisation down to reflect and learn more deeply etc)
- I want to break free? – Most music has a 'score' within which there is room for 'improvisation'. Some music forms have less room for each component – classical has a written score and relatively little 'wiggle' room. Rock rarely has an explicit score, offering more room for improvisation etc. In management 'score' = structure and 'improvisation' = creativity. Too much structure and nothing gets started at work. Too much improvisation and nothing gets finished, e.g. the 1st wave dot com companies. How can your bring structure to work situations where there is too much 'unhelpful' creativity? and vice versa?

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- Second that Emotion? – The philosopher Kant said music is the language of the emotions (or was it Madonna?!). Certainly music touches many of us at a much deeper level than a Powerpoint presentation. As Tina Turner said - 'We don't need another spreadsheet'. Look at the effect that Live Aid (and Live 8) has had in galvanising opinion about global issues in ways that politicians and managers only dream of. Recently some companies have lost their 'soul' and it seems like a lot of people now refuse to work for companies that do not adopt responsible approaches to business. Just think about the stories of call centres where it was reported that one company asked employees to wear nappies so that they would not need to take comfort breaks. How can we restore 'soul' (or humanity) to companies and organisations?
- Memories are made of this? – How can musical intelligence help us memorise important stuff? Whilst most of you could probably continue the lyrics of Bohemian Rhapsody if I started with 'Mama, just killed a man.....' some of use would have a greater problem remembering the company mission statement! How does music work for memory and accelerated learning?
- What's new pussycat? – What can we learn from paradigm changing innovations such as the Fender Stratocaster in terms of innovation, design and marketing?

Extracted from 'Sex, Leadership and Rock'n'Roll'