



CUTTINGS

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Compiled and edited by Geof Cox

Jazz Leadership – Yes To The Mess

For six workshop sessions since September, along with a couple of colleagues, we have been using a live jazz band to investigate the principles of leadership using the metaphor of a jazz band rather than an orchestra conductor.

I had been inspired a number of years ago by a couple of workshops run by a Professor of Management at the US Navy Graduate School at Monterey, Frank Barrett (who also happens to be a jazz pianist), and this was an opportunity to replicate some of his insights in a live environment.



The Bierkantslei in Vienna was the venue, with a band put together for the event to play and engage in discussion with the workshop participants. It was the first time they had played together, there were no rehearsals – and in the discussion, they could have been reading from a script, despite having no knowledge of the articles and principles written about by Frank and others – look at the intensity of their listening.

(Follow [this link](#) to read an article on the subject in an earlier Cuttings.)

Now comes a book from Frank on the subject – entitled Yes to the Mess: Surprising Leadership Lessons from Jazz. I haven't finished reading it yet,



so this is not a full review, but so far I have found it – like others – to be a great read. As one reviewer on Amazon, who is also a jazz musician, it challenges the control freak tendencies we have when working in an organisation, which don't show up in a jazz band.

What's on managers' minds?

The economic climate is still the number one challenge for business, says a new research report from Roffey Park, with most organisations preoccupied with efficiency and cost savings – focusing on core business, implementing new technology and process re-design, but with a conspicuous failure to address the growing issue of the deterioration in employee morale.

Leaders were rated much higher by employees when they demonstrated engaging behaviours such as providing staff with clear direction, being visible, communicating directly with employees and being open and honest. Fostering a collective sense of purpose and actively practicing the

organisation's values were important for successful leadership.

This research also identified the need for organisations to follow through on their change initiatives and make sure they are truly embedded. Although managers generally thought their organisations were good at initiating and planning change, they felt they were less able at maintaining momentum and managing employee motivation.

Key messages:

The prolonged economic crisis is having a negative impact on managers who are feeling more insecure and under pressure, with public sector managers most affected. Those at the top of organisations generally feel more secure and optimistic about the future.

Larger organisations are finding the economic climate more difficult. They are under greater pressure from reduced revenue and difficult employee relations but are also finding it hard to adapt to changes in the macro-economic, political and regulatory environment.

Redundancies and staff reductions are only being handled adequately. There is a need to ensure that staff reductions align to future business needs, carry out an open and transparent process with real consultation at all levels and provide good support for the people leaving.

International organisations are finding bureaucracy, political and legal systems and IT a challenge in managing international teams effectively. They also found it difficult to manage performance when cultural issues were problematic.

This report is available from Roffey Park <http://www.roffeypark.com>

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A BIG collection of thought provokers and quotations...

- ✂ "The more we nourish our internal world, the more powerful we grow in the external world." *Susan L. Taylor*
- ✂ "The meaning of things lies not in the things themselves, but in our attitude towards them." *Antoine de Saint-Exupery*
- ✂ "Light tomorrow with today." *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*
- ✂ "We will be known forever by the tracks we leave." *American Indian Proverb*
- ✂ "I find that a great part of the information I have was acquired by looking up something and finding something else on the way." *Franklin P. Adams*
- ✂ "Vitality shows not only in the ability to persist, but the ability to start over." *F. Scott Fitzgerald*
- ✂ "In a changing world, better address the change than change the dress." *Pierre Dac and Francis Blanche*
- ✂ "We tend to forget that happiness doesn't come as a result of getting something we don't have, but rather of recognizing and appreciating what we do have." *Frederick Keonig*
- ✂ "It is much more difficult to measure non performance than performance." *Harold S. Geneen*
- ✂ "Spread love everywhere you go." *Mother Teresa*
- ✂ "Half an hour of meditation is essential except when one is too busy. Then 1 hour is necessary." *St. Francois de Sales*
- ✂ "The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them." *Ralph Nichols*
- ✂ "I start with the premise that the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers." *Ralph Nader*
- ✂ "Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go." *T.S. Eliot*
- ✂ "Dwell not upon thy weariness, thy strength shall be according to the measure of thy desire." *Arab Proverb*

- ✂ "A cardinal principle of Total Quality escapes too many managers: you cannot continuously improve interdependent systems and processes until you progressively perfect interdependent, interpersonal relationships." *Stephen Covey*
- ✂ "If we did all the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves." *Thomas Edison*
- ✂ "People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within." *Elisabeth Kubler-Ross*
- ✂ "We must not allow other people's limited perceptions to define us." *Virginia Satir*
- ✂ "True happiness comes from the joy of deeds well done, the zest of creating things new." *Antoine de Saint-Exupery*
- ✂ "There is always some madness in love. But there is also always some reason in madness." *Friedrich Nietzsche*
- ✂ "Courage is the capacity to confront what can be imagined." *Leo Rosten*
- ✂ "I was not looking for my dreams to interpret my life, but rather for my life to interpret my dreams." *Susan Sontag*
- ✂ "To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity." *Douglas Adams*
- ✂ "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." *William Shakespeare*
- ✂ "It takes a deep commitment to change and an even deeper commitment to grow." *Ralph Ellison*
- ✂ "The doors we open and close each day decide the lives we live." *Flora Whittemore*
- ✂ "Knowing what you want is the first step toward getting it." *Mae West*
- ✂ "Man learns little from success, but much from failure." *Arab Proverb*
- ✂ "We don't know who we are until we see what we can do." *Martha Grimes*
- ✂ "The time came when the risk it too to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it too to blossom." *Anais Nin*

The FT Essential Guide to Negotiations

Sales are going well for my new book on win-win negotiation and it is receiving positive reviews from people who are using its approach to conduct successful negotiations. It is being well received internationally too - translation into Korean is underway, and I am being interviewed by Malaysian radio later this month. The launch date in the USA is later this month.



Part of the Financial Times Essential Guide Series, this task-focused and results-oriented guide offers you the know-how to get the results you want.

The book is available now from Amazon or direct from my own online shop at the special price of £12.00 including shipping in the UK.

Also still available from the online shop is my previous book on positive organisational influence **Getting Results Without Authority**. This deals with the behavioural underpinning necessary for the effective interaction between the parties in a negotiation.

Get a discount if you buy both titles together. (How about a Christmas present...)

You can reach the online website by following [this link](#).

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