



Innovation Impediments

During tough economic times, the ability to adapt becomes critical. In their book, *Innovation to the Core: A Blueprint for Transforming the Way Your Company Innovates*, authors Peter Skarzynski and Rowan Gibson suggest what can impede a company's capacity to innovate. They identify five questions that will help leaders spotlight the impediments:

1. Corporate values. They suggest leaders ask, "Are there things in our values that get in the way?"

2. Cultural behavior. Again, the authors suggest leaders determine what things in their everyday behavior that impede innovation.

3. Management processes. By management processes, the authors are referring to strategic planning, capital budgeting, product development, leadership development, and succession planning. "Are there things in any of these that are in the way of innovation?"

4. Organizational and political structures. Once again, the authors expect leaders to investigate to identify what might be hindering innovation.

5. Skills. The question here is simple: "Are there skill deficits, where we simply don't know how to do certain things?"

From *Innovation to the Core: A Blueprint for Transforming the Way Your Company Innovates* by Peter Skarzynski and Rowan Gibson. Published by Harvard Business School Publishing.

Intentional Change: The Power of Emotion

BY ANNIE MCKEE, FRANCES JOHNSTON, AND SUZANNE ROTONDO

The pressure is mounting. Concerns about the economy are growing, and the future is not certain. Some leaders, and some companies, are running scared. You are doing more with less, and the stress is beginning to show.

Under this kind of pressure, many good leaders slip into bad behaviors. Maybe you micromanage people or lose your temper too often. You know your behavior isn't helping things. You vow to control the stress and micromanaging. But there is little change. Despite your good intentions, you fail. Why?

Recent research in neuropsychology tells us that, yes, you can change—you can develop healthier responses to stress and more effective leadership behaviors. You can become more emotionally intelligent. But it's not as simple as noticing your deficiencies and working to overcome them. Real change begins with hope and excitement, not frustration or despair. In fact, research shows that emotions have a profound effect on what we choose to change about ourselves.

Achieving Change

Many of us decide to make changes in our behavior and our lives when faced with problems, when we believe that we are failing, or because others want us to change. These goals are more often than not about what we *should* be and do, rather than what we truly want. Very quickly these goals begin to feel



burdensome and irritating. These feelings matter. In fact, recent research in neuropsychology shows that when we are gripped by negative emotions like frustration, self-doubt, and resentment, our mental and physical energy dwindle. We lose focus and concentration. One result: we can't stick to our goals.

Research also indicates that hope, and the positive emotions sparked by hope, increase our capacity for resilience, creativity, focus, and goal orientation. This is related to the effect of what scientists call the Positive Emotional Attractor—a complex neurological process that helps us to function effectively even in the face of stress and the hard work of change.

Starting with a Dream

Practically, this means that a personal change process, or a leadership development program, needs to begin with a dream. To spark hope, we need to envision a future for ourselves, our lives, and our work that is meaningful and compelling. One tip: a vision of one's future must encompass all that is important to us. It is never enough to simply imagine our work or our role at work. Test this

continued on next page

Jazz Up Your Team: Leadership Insights from Jazz Masters

INTERVIEW BY STEFANIE SMITH

Insights into leadership don't only come from business authorities. In a recent interview by executive coach/consultant Stefanie Smith, Eli Yamin, recognized as a great jazz pianist, composer and educator, shared his insights into evoking top creative performance from players, advice that isn't limited to the musical realm.

Yamin has played with jazz masters for decades, recorded numerous CDs, and was the musical director for the tour of *Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies* directed by Mercedes Ellington. Eli performs concerts and conducts workshops throughout the U.S., Europe, and Asia.

Eli leads the Middle School Jazz Academy at Jazz at Lincoln Center, now in its third year. The program is the first of its kind.

Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis explains the passion behind the program: "The Middle School Jazz Academy reflects our vision that this music can be appreciated by audiences of all ages. For me it's important that the kids play, with an integrity and a belief in what they are playing."

Smith: Let's get right to the heart of the matter. What does a leader mean to members of a jazz ensemble?

Yamin: Jazz is a unique art form because leadership shifts around the group even though there is one music



Eli Yamin leads/conducts/directs The Middle School Jazz Ensemble.

director. No matter what style or generation of jazz, there are always times when different musicians take prominence as the creative focal point. It's understood in our culture that other ensemble members rally around that new focal point and support his or her vision in that particular moment.

Smith: What does it mean for a leader to give up that focal point?

Yamin: Great jazz leaders have the flexibility and openness to integrate ideas coming from beneath them, above them, and around them. They allow room in their vision for other people's visions. This is one of the great legacies of jazz that makes jazz so reflective of democratic values and the American culture and spirit.

Smith: There's organizational value there as well. Please share some leadership lessons you've learned from jazz masters you've played with or studied.

Yamin: I had the good fortune to play with Illinois Jacquet, one of the most famous jazz saxophonists of the '50s, who played with the Count Basie Orchestra.

Illinois Jacquet loved to rehearse. He would have the entire band, sixteen of us, practice for five or six hours. Maybe with a ten-minute break, maybe not. His style took endurance and patience.

He was rather dramatic sometimes. He liked to call people out and kind of mess with you. You never knew who was coming next. This is not necessarily a part of his style I want to emulate but it had its effect. It made us focus.

At a sound check, he would tune up the band, almost like a high school band director, one instrument at a time. He was dealing with professionals who'd been playing for 20, 30, 40 years. Yet he'd tune us up. I recognized over time it wasn't about tuning up the instruments. He was getting us to tune up our minds, and that's very important to bringing unity to a group.

Reflecting now, I recognize his job was to get sixteen people to focus into the moment and share a commitment to the swing we were creating together. That's a big task with everybody thinking about their insurance payments or their cars not working right or whatever. To come into a room and say, "Okay, it's about this music right here, right now."

Intentional Change: The Power of Emotion

continued from preceding page

for yourself: write down 27 things you want to do before you die. Add up how many are about work, and how many are about the rest of your life.

In *Becoming a Resonant Leader*, we provide a guideline for Intentional Change that allows people to engage in a process of articulating the Ideal Self (who I want to be), examining the Real Self (who I am today), and creating a plan that will work.

To begin a change process that works:

1. Create a personal vision. Think

about who you want to be, and the life you want to live.

2. Assess where you are today. Be honest. What is working in your life and work, and what is not?

3. Analyze the gaps. Create a learning plan. What do you need to learn or do to move closer to your vision?

4. Experiment and practice in relatively safe environments. For example, if you're working on new ways of communicating difficult emotions, don't start with your boss!

5. Ask for support from people you trust. You'd be surprised by how engaged and invested others become in helping us when they see how our learning plan is tied to our vision.

You have the power to change your behavior, your response to stress, even your life. And there is no time like now.

Annie McKee is co-founder of the Teleos Leadership Institute and teaches at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education. Frances Johnston is co-founder of Teleos and Suzanne Rotondo is executive director of Teleos.

Now, Duke Ellington—a totally different story. I never knew him. But I think about him almost every day.

The creativity he brought out of his musicians was all in the music. He got to know players as individuals—what their soul wanted to say and what their heart had to express. He wrote parts particularly tailored for them. He didn't have to tell you, "I want it like this." You knew how to do it because that music was written just for you.

I know a drummer who played with Duke Ellington. When he first got with the band, he asked Duke, "How do you want me to play this number? Can I get a recording of how your other guy did it?" And Duke said, "No, I don't want you to hear the record. I want you to play it like you play it."

Smith: So from Illinois Jacquet we learn that rehearsing intensely as a group yields success. And you need to tune up and focus. Whereas from Duke Ellington we learn that success starts with individual talent and soul.

Yamin: Right.

Smith: How do you balance bringing out the best creativity in individuals with maintaining cohesion and inspiring best performance from the team as a whole?

Yamin: You need to establish a shared sense of values. Leaders have to bring the maturity to step back and say, "This is not about me. This is about my vision."

The best leaders stimulate a group chemistry where all players come together, are checking in with and tuning themselves into a common purpose.

What's so inspiring here at Jazz at Lincoln Center is that Wynton Marsalis has articulated a vision for how jazz can be a force for positive change in American culture. It's up to each of us to find out how we can make an individual contribution to that effort.



Eli Yamin and Jazz at Lincoln Center Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis.

Smith: How else do elements of jazz apply to working in teams?

Yamin: I recently did a workshop with a management professor at Fordham on how jazz can be a model for deepening your ability to manage, create, and work on autonomous flexible teams. The idea of more diffuse power structures has emerged as the new direction companies are pursuing.

This is exactly what we have in a jazz band. The bass player's got a certain role. The drummer's got a certain role. The

piano, the horn players, they've all got roles. You've got a score that everybody's checking in with and you have a certain aesthetic approach, whether you want it to be swinging or bluesy or real aggressive or more laid back. So you have parameters, but everybody gets a chance to have their voice heard and have an impact on the overall sound of the group.

Smith: As a coach, I help professionals understand how they are truly exceptional. We need to know our strengths to feel and project confidence. How do you evoke that with your students and band members?

Yamin: I make sure to play all different kinds of songs and see which musicians resonate with which styles. Sometimes you can see in a personality "Oh, I bet you that person is going to be good with a plunger mute, a Bubber Miley kind of Duke Ellington thing." Or, "This person has more of a Miles Davis kind of vibe so let's try something and see if it suits him."

It's important to notice who responds to what. Duke Ellington, my greatest hero, said, "I am the world's greatest listener." That is a key. To be a great leader is to be a great listener.

Smith: Eli, thank you for teaching us a little about jazz and a lot about leading.

Stefanie Smith speaks and moderates for academic and professional groups and is frequently quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* and other national newspapers. For more info: visit www.stratexconsulting.com

Almost Half of Americans Still on Track to Timely Retirement

"Despite the market volatility that began last year and still continues today, fully 46% of our financial advisor respondents said their clients are still on track to a timely retirement," according to John Coyne, president of Brinker Capital, a leading independent investment management firm. "While there may yet be some dark clouds on the economic horizon, overall the Retirement Indicator's results provided a much more optimistic picture of America's retirement landscape than we had initially anticipated."

While 46% said that they were on-track to a timely retirement, those who admitted they were off-track said that it would only

take between one and five years to make up the retirement savings shortfall. As to the reasons for being off-track, 63% said "started saving too late," 55% noted "general procrastination," and 23% said "didn't have access to financial advice."

Perhaps no question in the Retirement Indicator engendered as vigorous a response as: "Do you think the concept of a 'typical' retirement age is still relevant in the U.S. today?" Fully 86% of financial advisors weighed in with a resounding "no." Asked why they think the concept is no longer relevant, 59% said "traditional retirement is just an outmoded concept; people will work as long as they

feel physically and mentally able"; 17% said "serious retirement saving began too late for most Americans"; and 8% said "people are living longer, therefore they're working longer."

When asked if their clients expect to work past 65, the results were split 54% vs. 46% in favor of "yes."

When asked to comment on their already-retired clients' spending patterns, and if these patterns had changed since retirement, 60% of advisors noted that the spending habits hadn't changed at all. Thirty-seven percent said their retired clients had become more frugal; 3% indicated their clients had become more extravagant.



Here's what you'll find on the
AMA Members-only Website www.amamember.org

LEADERSHIP

Perfectly Imperfect Leadership. If you aspire to leadership greatness, the first step is to admit that you're not perfect. You're going to make mistakes; the key is how you handle them.

SALES & MARKETING

10 Simple Pricing Rules for Challenging Economic Times. Is your company tempted to reduce prices in order to survive difficult economic times? In reality, lower prices will cause price wars, eliminate profits, and cause revenues to decline further.

HR/TRAINING

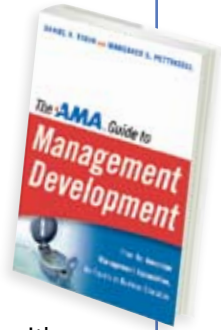
The HR Confidentiality Conundrum. As the guardian of confidential employee information, HR is sometimes viewed as being unduly secretive and suspicious. The challenge is finding the fine balance between transparency and confidentiality.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Taking the Risk, Making Your Move. Business lessons can arise from the most unlikely situations—even a dogsledding race. Lucille Maddalena learned that you don't need to ask anyone for permission to succeed.

Book of the Month

The AMA Guide to Management Development, by Daniel R. Tobin, Ph.D. and Margaret Pettingell (AMACOM, 2008). Based on the set of managerial competencies developed by AMA for a new core management curriculum, this new guide outlines strategies to provide both current and future managers with the skills they need for professional and organizational success.



AMA Conferences/Special Events Calendar

JUNE 18 WEBCAST • Success Signals: Body Language in Business. Have you ever been in a business meeting and wondered what someone was thinking? Can you "read" people by observing their gestures, posture, facial expressions, and other subtle movements? Join Patti Wood as she explains how to read and use body language to understand dozens of secret messages. This interactive program will give you insights that can help you build and maintain better business relationships.

JUNE 25 WEBCAST • High-Impact Decision Making. All too often, people faced with tough decisions procrastinate, rely on intuition, or allow outside events to take control. In many cases this leads to costly or disastrous business results. In this webcast, you'll discover innovative, easy-to-learn techniques

enabling you to make high-impact decisions that are smart, timely, and effective. You'll see how to clarify objectives, use structured processes for decisive thinking, and effectively analyze, articulate, and draw conclusions so you can commit to decisions with confidence.

JULY 2 WEBCAST • Persuasion IQ: How to Get What You Want. Your professional success, income, and personal relationships depend on your ability to persuade, influence, and motivate other people. Yet most people use outdated techniques for convincing others...or have no technique at all. Join Kurt Mortensen as he explains the essential habits, traits, and behaviors you need to cultivate your natural persuasive abilities.

JULY 7 WEBCAST • Igniting Commitment: Developing and Strengthening Boss-

Employee Relationships. Are you out of touch with the people you manage? People join companies, but they leave bad managers. Building effective professional relationships with your employees is absolutely critical to reaching your organizational and personal goals. Join Judith Bardwick as she explores building an environment of trust and respect that will increase commitment as well as engage and inspire your employees.

JULY 9 WEBCAST • Getting Started in Sales: Essential Skills for Success. Many prospective sales professionals don't have a solid foundation and understanding of the fundamentals of selling. Whether you're just starting out or want a quick refresher, this webcast reviews a number of simple, time-tested strategies that can help you achieve greater sales success right away.

117441

June 2008 Issue
Executive Matters
 Member Newsletter

1601 Broadway
 New York, NY 10019-7420



Nonprofit
 U.S. Postage
PAID
 American Management
 Association International