

## **Professor of Improvisation**

Now for something completely different: a little syncopation and improvisation. Michael Gold, a bassist who once led the jazz department at Vassar College and went on to become vice president of operations at Unbank, a Minneapolis financial services firm, touts the connection between jazz and business, arguing that "jazz uses a system that enables collaborative improvisation to thrive—the very same skills that many corporations rely on for success." He developed the idea for his consulting firm, Jazz Impact, in 1998 when a Lucent executive asked him to lead a workshop at the company. He's since put on 90-minute seminars—complete with a New York jazz ensemble—for a number of major companies, including Johnson & Johnson and Starbucks. His program is especially effective in integrating diverse corporate cultures after a merger or acquisition.

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