



Business as a Jazz Band

If the metaphor for old-economy companies is a symphony with musicians who never deviate from the parts their conductor assigns, then today's successful corporation is more like a jazz ensemble: from the CEO down, everyone needs to learn to improvise and play off one another. That's the lesson of Jazz Impact, a business-improvement seminar created by Minneapolis, Minn., bassist Michael Gold for clients that include General Mills and Starbucks. "In jazz improv there is a specific tune that we use as the common ground, yet someone can present a unique version of the tune," says Gold. "This type of thinking has to be able to happen for companies to be innovative." During a 90-minute presentation with a live ensemble, Gold shows, with words and music, how jazz players trade the roles of leader and accompanist, sending one another body cues to signal change.

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