

Book Excerpt

Harmonizing Employee Efforts

Imagine eight musicians who are members of a renowned jazz ensemble, diligently working on a new musical piece. If you could listen in on each of them individually, you would hear highly competent musicians, each practicing his or her part and sounding quite good.

Then they get together and, suddenly, something captivating happens: You hear and feel the piece come alive. It's no longer just several skilled performers. Their instruments blend into one rich, unified voice. The musicians are in unique dialogue with each other. It's "musicality."

Imagine those artisans making up a workplace team. Imagine that amazing collaboration coming together as an iPad ... or TurboTax ... or a winning basketball team. Our job – as employees and as managers – is to combine our individual and team efforts to make "music" like that.

If they do a terrific job, that music group might transport their audience ... or win a Grammy. Similarly, that workplace team might make a lot of consumers, employees, and shareholders happy. If not done well, collaboration is a blueprint for a mediocre product or even a failed one. This failure is all too common in organizations. Individuals and teams may be extremely competent in their area of focus, but if they don't collaborate well with others, the final product will suffer.

During the last several decades, much progress has been made to foster better workplace collaboration. Nevertheless, getting people to work well together remains one of the tough issues that keeps both managers and individual employees up at night. We need to do better. If we continue to use existing tools, we only make incremental strides in addressing this snarly problem. We need a new model.

Hopefully, this snippet from the Introduction intrigues you enough to want to purchase the book and learn secrets of Silicon Valley that you can use to help any organization, anywhere become more collaborative and more successful as a result.