

Exploring Inspired Leadership Through Music

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Music is the international language of emotion and a performing art consisting of sound and silence expressed through time. Elements of sound as used in music are pitch (including melody and harmony), rhythm (including tempo and meter), and sonic qualities of timbre, articulation, dynamics, and texture.

The language and elements of music represent a unique and refreshing metaphor of Inspired Leadership; As Artist; As Leader. Inspired Leadership is a performing art and requires the abilities to create, inspire and sustain followership. Charles Kingsley reminds us of an exceptional parallel between the voice of music and the voice of Inspired Leadership. “Words are wonderful enough; but music is even more wonderful. It speaks not to our thoughts as words do; it speaks straight to our hearts and spirits, to the very core and root of our souls.”

The language and elements of music provide managers and leaders the opportunity to explore, discover and practice the creative and artistic competencies of Inspired Leadership. In the Banff Centre Inspiring Creative Leadership Program™, participants step into the role of a composer and musician through the use of tuned percussion tubes (Boomwhackers®).

The bright colored Boomwhackers® produce the eight tones of the C Major music scale by gently striking two Boomwhackers® against each other. Workgroups and teams of employees become musical duos, trios and ensembles as they discover and practice the components of effective musicianship, as a parallel to Inspired Leadership.

Participants are provided the opportunity to utilize and expand their abilities to listen, observe and synthesize communication through the language of music. The musical elements of melody, harmony and rhythm are translated into the work environment and the participants are engaged in conversational dialogue to apply their musicianship insights and learnings to their roles as leaders. The lively and interactive experience with the Boomwhackers® culminates in a concert of original compositions by the participants.

The Latin root of percussion is **percusio**, meaning to strike together. In the world of musicianship, percussion provides the rhythm or background for musicians to perform in a synergistic manner. Rhythm or flow, as translated from the Greek language, is a variation of the length and accentuation of a series of sounds. In the world of Inspired Leadership, creating a culture which supports creativity and innovation is the parallel to rhythm, without which, employees will not be encouraged to reach their fullest potential.

The musical term **melody** refers to a succession of notes forming a distinctive pattern or sequence. Inspired Leadership cultivates a unique melody in the workplace through the deliberate and consistent reinforcement of organizational purpose and sustainable, competitive differentiation.

The essence of Inspired Leadership is the ability to emotionally engage employees, clients and stakeholders.

There are two musical equivalents to emotional engagement; **resonance**-having a lasting presence or effect; and **dissonance**- a lack of agreement, consistency or harmony. Inspired Leadership requires the ability to constructively provoke thought and evoke emotion in the workplace, which facilitates resonance, versus rationalizing thought and suppressing emotion in the workplace, which brings about dissonance.

Inspired leaders, like inspired musicians and performing artists, are constantly scanning their environments and paying attention to the cues and feedback from their audiences and constituents, which enables them to be attentive, present and available, thus creating meaningful connections with their fellow musicians or colleagues.

Rather than trying to artificially manufacture motivation, an effective leader inspires exceptional work in others by calling upon others' innate desire to make a difference. The musical term **harmony**, evolves from the Greek word **harmonia**, and translates to agreement.

Inspired Leadership models and achieves agreement through the encouragement of people's imaginations which in turn triggers organization innovation.

Kevin D. Asbjörnson, MIM serves as Performing Artist in Residence and Creative Faculty with Banff Centre-Leadership Development and is the Founder and Principal Performing Artist of Inspire! Imagine! Innovate! Please visit www.InspireImagineInnovate.com
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