

## Overture to the Digitally Reissued *The Music of Management*

On this 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its original publication, I am gratified to have *The Music of Management* republished as a digital book in the Georgia State University Library Digital Archive, for several reasons. First, I believe the book remains just as relevant today as it was in 2004 to the understanding of the challenges of managing organizations in our society despite the huge changes that are taking place in technology and the character of organizations themselves. Second, the original book, issued as a research monograph by Ashgate Publishers, never did receive the attention I thought it deserved in the wider world of management practice. Third, reissuing the book in digital form offers new advantages not available through print technology a decade ago.

With the exponential growth of social media and the internet, and growth of the global economy, the very nature of organizations has changed. Organizations are now flatter, substitutions have been made between staff work and technological infrastructure, organizations have greater global reach, competition for resources is fiercer, and organizations have become more embedded in complex networks, with boundaries blurring between one organization and another. While this landscape is much changed and the solutions to organizational management may be different, the basic organizational functions and challenges, as analyzed in this book, remain the same. Organizational activities must be coordinated to achieve their intended impacts, leaders and staff must be highly motivated, organizations must find their special niches where they can excel relative to their competitors and contribute their unique value in collaborations, and organizations must constantly focus on innovation if only to stay abreast of the accelerating pace of change in the contemporary world around them. These are the universal and timeless themes of *The Music of Management*.

Moreover, the metaphor of music continues to apply with full force. The numerous variations on musical ensembles that the book uses for illustration continue to suggest that organizational forms can be applied to new circumstances and adapted to promote new ideas, products and services. We can now contemplate ensembles whose members are far-flung geographically but still require coordination, motivation, distinctiveness and adaptation according to basic principles of organizational life. While the popular tunes change, the classics endure and variations on themes will continue to drive organizations as they do musical ensembles of every description.

The importance of returning to the basics, as elegantly illustrated in the world of music, has never been greater. Since this book was first published, many organizations that we may have considered permanent fixtures in the societal landscape have struggled and even disappeared while others have grown and thrived. Eastman Kodak, Hewlett Packard, Alcoa and Bank of America have lost their status as members of the Dow Jones Industrial Average while Verizon, Pfizer, Nike, Visa and Goldman Sachs have joined this elite group. Lehman Brothers has

disintegrated, as have the New York City Opera and the venerable Hull House in Chicago. The City of Detroit totters in bankruptcy while General Motors has returned from the brink. Google, Facebook and Apple now dominate a corporate landscape once owned by IBM, GM and AT&T. Many external factors have influenced the fates of these and other organizations in the decades since this book was written, but in all cases, their success or failure was influenced if not determined by their abilities to coordinate, motive, innovate and find distinctiveness, as the best musical ensembles continue to teach us.

The original print publication of *The Music of Management* was limited from the start by its high price and the publisher's focus on hardback library sales. This digital edition however is not so constrained. The potential now exists to circulate this volume widely and in circles such as universities and not-for-profit organizations where price and accessibility are important challenges. I am grateful therefore that the GSU Library is offering this digital edition. My reward will be psychic rather than financial, which at my age is equally if not more important!

It follows that this electronic edition is better positioned to have an impact in management education as well as research. The metaphor of music, as the book documents, has been a fairly popular one for scholars and practitioners of organizational management and this continues to be the case. If the wider circulation of this book contributes more to the education of our current and future leaders and managers, its digitization will have served an important purpose.

Finally, I want to thank Sean Lind of the Georgia State University Library for his help and encouragement on this project, and my wife Linda Serra for her love and perseverance and contribution to this text. I still chuckle over the cartoons she drew for the start each chapter!

Dennis R. Young

Professor of Public Management and Policy

Georgia State University

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