Rock-and-Roll Leadership: How to Manage Your Team Like a Band

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Rock-and-Roll Leadership

What is it? What do rock stars do?
- Think creatively
- Stay relevant
- Lead!
Rock-and-Roll Leadership

What do rock stars lead?

• A band
• Their industry
• Culture
Rock-and-Roll Leadership

Why talk rock-and-roll at Accelerate!?

• Lots of common ground with trucking, at least on the driving side:
• Both are a lifestyle, not just a job.
• If the wheels aren't turning, you're not earning (i.e. why classic rock bands are still on tour).
• Dispatchers vs. tour bookers.
• Women in Trucking and women in rock: the “7% challenge.”
Rock-and-Roll Leadership

Why rock-and-roll instead of standard leadership metaphors (pro sports, military, animal kingdom etc.)?

• 21st century calls for creative thinking. Somewhere, someone is working to disrupt your business, probably from outside of your industry.

• Music biz was disrupted early, survivors adapted quickly.

• New workforce: Gen Y & Z have a different approach to work and work-life balance. R-n-R leadership may help you attract and keep top talent among them.
Part I: Rock-and-Roll Woman
Aretha Franklin: Keep an Eye on Emerging Trends, Talent, and the Competition.
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“Emerging Trends” Takeaway:

- Gather information widely.
- Pay attention to “the kids.”
- Use technology and social media but first learn how (my mom is on Instagram and it’s not good).

- An additional Aretha thing: loyalty. Have your employees’ backs and they will give a lot more.
Wanda Jackson: Conflict is an Opportunity for Evolution, Not a Roadblock.
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“Conflict is an Opportunity” Takeaway

• If the culture at your company feels stale to you, it is.
• Always be evolving.
• Tap into your “teenage brain” – just enough to challenge old ideas and discover new ones.
• Don’t retreat from a difference of opinion. Pick your battles, hash it out.
Hayley Williams (Paramore) and Shira Yevin: How Do You Show Up?
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“How Do You Show Up” Takeaway

- How do you present yourself as a leader?
- Are you in a unique position to know it’s time to make a move?
- Risk/reward.
- Changing culture pulls up other women into the industry.
Tina Weymouth of Talking Heads: Leadership from Stage Left.
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Tina Weymouth of Tom Tom Club: Leadership from Stage Left.
Poison Ivy of the Cramps: Leadership from Stage Left.
Poison Ivy of the Cramps:
Leadership from Stage Left.
“Stage Left” Takeaway

- Identifying the leaders on your team.
- “Lead singer syndrome” – how to spot it and what to do about it.
- Don’t overlook the hardest workers just because they’re quietly doing their job.
Chrissie Hynde of the Pretenders: Tough Love.
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“Tough Love” Takeaway:

- When is it time to let someone go from your team?
- Latitude – when it’s enough.
- Destructive behavior.
- Antagonistic to a common goal.
Bonnie Raitt: Don’t Wait for Success to Give Back.
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“Give Back” Takeaway:

- Millennial and Gen Z-owned businesses build giving into their DNA.
- If your company doesn’t, you can.
- Team building for a common goal, something in which everyone can get involved.
- e.g. OODIA – holiday packages for troops.
Tina Turner: Connecting is Everything.
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Networking is critical. That’s one reason we’re all here!

It’s even better to start when you’re already in a power position.

Events: Industry, alumni, social, entertainment.

LinkedIn, social media groups.

Most crucially, connect with your co-workers, your team.
Part II: The Band Dynamic

- One of the most extraordinary group endeavors is playing music.

- How to make your team more harmonious by identifying the “players,” i.e. each person’s skills and foibles, and how to manage them.
The Drummer
The Drummer

• Does the heavy lifting.
• Rarely gets the spotlight.

• Best Approach:
• They really have more to do than everyone else.
• Give them or get them the support they need.
The Bassist
The Bassist

• Often overqualified for the position they’re in.
• Underutilized, and not happy about it.

• Best Approach:
  • Work their underutilized skills into the team effort – have them sing harmony, etc.
  • Give them autonomy by encouraging them to do a “solo project.”
The Keyboardist
The Keyboardist

- This is the genius of your team.
- Unfortunately, they know it.
- Always running late, wisecracking, distracting.
- Best approach:
  - Mix “high potential” with “lower potential” employees so they don’t have to constantly prove their genius.
  - “Jedi mind trick” them into being on time. They’ll still feel like they’re on their own time, and you’ll get them in when you need.
Lead Guitarist
Lead Guitarist

• The introvert.
• Capable of flash but tends to communicate through work rather than words.

• Best approach:
• Lateral moves – get out from behind the producer’s booth and get onto the studio floor to work things out.
• Make suggestions as a peer, not a supervisor.
Lead Singer
Lead Singer

• The extrovert
• Makes the most noise about doing the least work.
• Despite high profile, is generally not your best ambassador.
• Best approach:
  • Keep them in a group context, integrate their projects so they don’t drift off.
  • Monitor as a team and individually to see who’s actually doing what.
Now your team is in tune!