Leader & member networks predicting creativity and popularity in jazz music

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Improvisation

- Improvisation refers to impromptu interaction (Moorman & Miner, 1998)
  - Composition and execution converge in time

- Improvisation is jazz musicians’ core practice to innovate (Berliner, 1994)

When the muse does not strike
Core tension

Deliberate techniques to divert from existing norms, standards, and conventions.

- Creativity: diversion from existing standards, practices and conventions

Conventions: stuff that people like because they recognize it and/or have heard it before

- Popularity: product acceptance among audiences

Divergence from exiting ideas

(Coie Porter’s “What is this thing called love?” (1929) vs. Charles Mingus “What love” (1961))
Social networks

- Social capital—the resources that result from social structural position—produces advantage (Coleman, 1988)
- Ties between actors serve as conduits for the flow of resources between them (Balkundi & Harrison, 2006)
- Structural position provides access to diverse knowledge (Ahuja, 2000; Tsai, 2001)

Structural position in social networks

- Differentiate between the leader’s and members’ social networks
- Structural marginality vs connectedness to the core

Leader and member networks

- Leader network position drives popularity
  - Leaders manage for creativity (Amabile & Khaire, 2008)
  - Leaders oversee the different phases in the project (Venkataramani, ‘14)
  - Leader’s role to pull ideas together (e.g., knowledge integration, Long Lingo & O’Mahony, 2008)
    - Corroborate ideas with peers about potential impact of ideas
    - Gain legitimacy by being connected to the core (Cattani & Ferrangi, 2008)
- Member network position drives creativity
  - Leaders select creative employees to contribute to create and be creative (Amabile & Khaire, 2008)
  - Diversity of background of members
    - Distinguish between pryor intelligence and creativity by testing ideas
    - Quickly to experiment with new talent arriving
Networking exercise

- Networking is important but oftentimes feels uncomfortable

- Short exercise (adapted from Janasz & Forret, 2008) to gain insight in
  - How much you are networking
  - Where you are focusing your networking efforts
Debrief

• How much are you networking, and why?
• Experience?
• Career goals?

Improvisational challenge

• “To improvise, actors must simultaneously identify new challenges and generate responses, with little or no time to prepare. In fact, the process of improvising is one single step: a response is generated and executed as the task is presented” (Fisher & Amabile, 2009)

Role division: teams of 4, one leader, three members

→ However, preparation must happen previously, outside of the frame of action.
  - 2 minutes prep 1
  - 2 minutes prep 2
  - 2x4 minutes improvisational conversation

Debrief

For leaders:
• How did you stimulate creativity (divergence) and popularity (convention)?
• What improvisational actions did you apply to motivate team members to create ideas that have the potential to become popular?
• What was your own role in the creative process?
  – Did you contribute more to creating divergence or convergence?
• What keywords were used by whom?
What are the differences in experience for those who network more / less?

For team members:
• How did the leader simulate creativity and popularity?
• What did you do to achieve your goals?
  – The timid, the joker, the subordinate: did your respective strategies work?
• How did the leader reply improvisationally?
• What did you think about the improvisational conversation?
  – Member interactions, fluency of the conversation, creativity, success?
Exercise conclusion

• What can leaders do to stimulate the generation of popular (in contrast to creative) ideas among team members?
  – And what can members do?
• What can leaders do to stimulate their creativity?
  – How can members facilitate the leader to become more creative?
• What can teams do to deal with the tension between creativity and popularity?
• What is the role of networking capabilities?