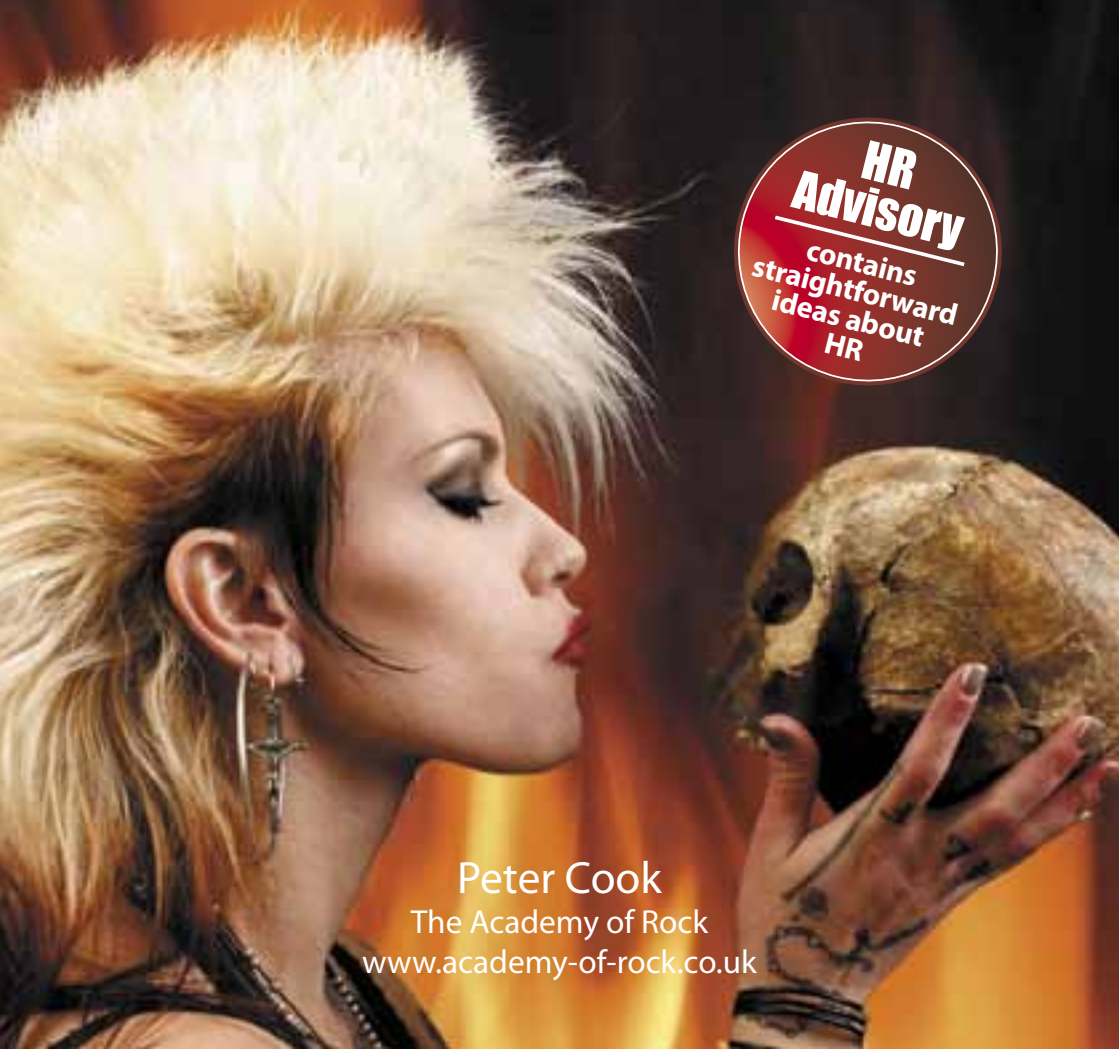


PUNK ROCK

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

A NO-NONSENSE GUIDE TO
HIRING, INSPIRING AND FIRING STAFF

**HR
Advisory**
contains
straightforward
ideas about
HR



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PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

A NO-NONSENSE GUIDE TO
HIRING, INSPIRING AND FIRING STAFF

💡 **HIRING** 💡

Selection – Shall I stay or shall I go?
Induction – It's my first time
Rewards – What do I get?

💡 **INSPIRING** 💡

Engagement – Pretty vacant
Motivation – Reasons to be cheerful
Diversity – Mis-shapes
Appraisal – Ever fallen in love?
Training – Waiting for the great leap forwards
Promotion – Simply the best?
Innovation – What's new pussycat?

💡 **FIRING** 💡

Conflict – Who killed Bambi?
Unions – Two Tribes
Redundancy – Submission

I'd like to thank Nicola Gunn for her great cutting critique of the drafts of this book. Also to Jason Dodd for the photo of myself and John Howitt. Cult Punk Rocker John Otway deserves credit for his teachings on the punk rock definition of cashflow (when other people's money passes through your hands). And all the musicians and management thinkers that have enabled me to see through the 'fog of trad HR'.

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INTRO

Between Madonna and Marx in the dictionary there is Management.

Between Leadership and Lennon there is Learning.

Between Human Beings and Human Resources there is Human Relations.

The Human Resources profession has its own lexicon and a bloated industry that supports it. Yet good human relations separates great companies and great service from the herd. Punk Rock People Management offers a new wave approach to an industry badly in need of a makeover – in the same way that Johnny Rotten's outrageous clothing was a metaphorical and literal shop window for what has become part of the mainline fashion industry. We don't need more smart-dressed men and women from the so-called HR profession, spouting meaningless mantras such as:

"We must leverage our corporate assets in pursuit of superior net present values for our shareholders, stakeholders and wider communities (not forgetting our customers and staff)".

It's not that such aims are undesirable or impure. It's just that the so-called professional lexicon of HR does not communicate. After all, great business leadership and people management are all about clear communications!

So, if we want authentic communications at work, we must find pure and simple ways of talking and writing about what we want to communicate. This is a futurist manifesto for that revolution. Are you part of the revolution, or just revolted?

In the spirit of punk rock, each of these vignettes is very short, so that they can be read in less time than it would take to pogo to a Ramones' song. In the minimalist world of Punk Rock People Management, each chapter is just two pages long. Simple but not simplistic. Potent, but not offensive. Short, but not always sweet. Chapters are organised under three headings, representing the

time-honoured life, sex and death lifecycle of people management: Hiring, Inspiring and Firing. In the context of a short book, I have left some subjects out, such as: Grievance, aka 'Anarchy in the UK'; Personal development, aka 'Career opportunities' and; Pensions, aka 'Holidays in the sun'. Careless, you might say? Not at all. [Email](mailto:dean@academy-of-rock.co.uk) these chapters to me at dean@academy-of-rock.co.uk You will then become part of the sequel, entitled 'The Great HR Swindle'.

These ideas are based on my [conferences and keynote speaking events](#) and are an illogical build from my last book '[Sex, Leadership and Rock'n'Roll](#)'. People all over the world tell me that the approach works much better than the usual language game beloved by some inspirational speakers and HR gurus with an attitude bypass operation. It's a refreshingly different approach to HR, which has all too often become a self-serving industry of its own. If you like this book, fast forward it to colleagues, customers, clients and contacts to start the positive revolution for plain people management!



SELECTION – Shall I stay or shall I go?

The classical HR approach to selection is to hire people for knowledge and skills, and then sack them for their attitude. It's faulty in many circumstances. Punk Rock HR simply reverses this. Hire people for their attitude and top up their knowledge and skills as needed like great companies such as [First Direct](#) do. It's that simple. What other myths can we expose in the hiring game?

Psychometric testing in selection is for dummies. I am not a psycho killer by any means. Finding out about your preferences, strengths and weaknesses is always a good thing. It's just that too much faith is placed in 'men and women in white coats', when there really is little evidence of the benefit of psychometric tests as a selection tool. Consider the facts. Most psychometric tests only improve the validity of a selection decision by a few percent, but cost a lot of time and money. Somewhat annoyingly for the 'psychos', tests you can do on social media such as Facebook and in lifestyle mags are often 80% accurate compared with the real deal, plus they're free. Think about someone who got the sack due to poor performance. Did the psychometric test tell their boss this? Of course not, because they hired them! Save yourself time, money and angst by trusting your judgement as much as a spreadsheet or test. Use 'The Star Trek' method: Make your decision using intuition (Captain Kirk) and cross check with logic and analysis (Mr Spock) when a selection decision really matters.

So, what about qualifications? I have spent a fair bit of my life studying whilst working for the simply fantastic company that was [The Wellcome Foundation](#) – A science degree, an MBA, qualifications in HR, psychology

and so on, so you would think I'd be all for education? Well, in a way I am. It would certainly be dumb to have a chip on your shoulder that says intelligent people are dangerous, as some celebrity entrepreneurs do. However, I observe with some disappointment that, in some cases, business qualifications disable basic instincts. In other words, the more you know, the less likely you may be inclined to trust your emotions. This is a mistake. In my case, I was saved from relying solely on qualifications by travelling the world at an early age, working as an international troubleshooter and playing in rock bands. So, you must supplement formal education with the kind of learning that teaches you attitude and wisdom. This comes from experience and life rather than a training course or a degree programme.

Punk Rock People Management offers us three chords on selection:

- u Trust intuition as much as a logician when hiring people.
- u Question the use of psychometric tests as a selection tool to decide whether, in the words of The Clash, people should stay or go.
- u Balance formal education with learning from the University of Hard Knocks.

INDUCTION - It's My First Time

Post-punk princesses Madonna and [Lady Gaga](#) unwittingly stumbled upon the problem of induction with their songs 'Like a Virgin' and 'Bad Romance' as did punk group The Boys with their minor hit 'It's my first time'. However good your hiring of people is, failing to induct people properly can cost you in the long run. Classical HR induction sessions emphasise all the statutory stuff, such as health and safety and getting your corporate identity badge (whilst losing your identity). But they generally fail to establish what is called a 'psychological contract' between the new recruit and the company, which leads to long term performance and commitment. The costs of NOT doing this include rapid turnover, poor performance, corporate sabotage and mental sabbaticals (the lights are on but no-one's at home) etc.

Imagine what would happen if this approach were adopted when you fell in love. You would have a ARRSE (Adviser – Romance Risk Strategy Executive) come along to show you some PowerPoint slides on the risks of falling in love, issuing you with badges to say you are officially in love, and so on. So, why does common sense go out the window when we enter the crazy world of work?

I love it when induction does what it says on the tin and introduces people to the work. That, after all, is what work is all about. Make sure that new starters

meet two or three people who will be pivotal in making sure they can do a good job at work on the very first day of work. Find out what turns the person on about the work and what switches them off. Share your views on these two things. Over time, this gives you the chance to design work to include more of the things that switch them on and exclude things that switch them off. You may even care to go as far as thanking the new staff member for joining the company! The words 'thank you' are free and can often make a big difference to initial impressions of the company, when they are meant. The statutory stuff cannot be ignored, but should be contained in a 30 minute slot and made very enjoyable rather than the usual dull diet of induction training. These days it is possible to place a lot of non-essential stuff on websites, to be digested before the new staff member joins or at some point later on.

Punk Rock People Management offers us three chords on induction:

- u Make induction fresh and personal by connecting the new member of staff with people who can help them do their best. In doing so, help them feel committed to the enterprise and their part in it.
- u Do the statutory stuff, but do it quickly and make it interesting.
- u Make sure that new people understand on the first day exactly what they can do to succeed.

REWARDS – What Do I Get?

Classical HR says you use an unemotional set of exchange tokens to get performance from people. Simply stated, we're talking money, money, money. Had HR studied their social science theory more carefully, they would uncover the truth about rewards and recognition.

Maslow offered us his hierarchy of needs. He said that rewards and recognition should take account of 'where people are at', rather than attempting to apply a 'one size fits all' approach. Critics of Maslow point out that his hierarchy is too simple, and that he never dealt with money in his study, but fail to destroy his basic wisdom. A classic case of this occurred when a subsidiary of the Munich Reinsurance group rewarded its top executives by giving them an evening in a brothel. Completely inappropriate and crass, as women were excluded and we all know that senior people are motivated by self actualisation rather than basic instincts! Hopefully they will visit a monastery next time to compensate for their premature evaluation of the reward options.

"Money don't satisfy but it sho' 'nuff pays for the search" – wise words from Prince, based on the wiser research of Frederick Herzberg on the so-called 'satisfiers' and 'dissatisfiers'. Basically, the things that produce long term satisfaction differ from those that are required just to prevent dissatisfaction. Money is a dissatisfier – double people's salary and they don't necessarily work twice as hard for twice as long.

These 'oldies' have high face validity in spite of a horde of critics, who simply want to replace Maslow's triangle with a prism or a 3D graphic that you can colour in. Forget the fads. Stick with what works.

More recently the US HR guru Daniel Pink came out with the insight that, if you reward behaviour, you get more of that behaviour, especially where profit meets purpose. More surprisingly, he said that if you punish behaviour you get less of that behaviour. We only have to look at the risk taking of banks to generally agree with Pink's first point, but the second is questionable. A study of child psychology would point out that punishment for some kids acknowledges bad behaviour. If you really want to change a child's behaviour, then you must 'extinguish' the behaviour by ignoring it and making sure that the child gets no social approval from others in their circle. Adults are just big kids in many respects... So, sometimes, punishments are wrong because they perversely reward the perpetrator.

Punk Rock People Management offers us three chords on rewards:

- u Pay people well enough, but don't just focus on pay as the reward for work. This reinforces the conversation about 'What do I get?'
- u As far as possible, match rewards to where people are in terms of their hierarchy of needs.
- u Don't always assume that a carrot and stick approach to life is right.

Pomp and
circumstance HR
is OUT - Punk Rock
HR is IN



Inspiring

ENGAGEMENT - Pretty Vacant

HR gurus such as Gary Hamel at HR conferences seem to mouth the word 'engagement' more times per minute than Robert Plant used to sing 'baby' in the average [Led Zeppelin](#) song. What does this mean? Is engagement some kind of secret code for 'in company dating' or a causal relationship between casual workers and casual sex?

Of course engagement is all about the 4E's: getting people excited, empathetic, ecstatic and energetic about the company and what it does. There's nothing wrong with that, but what about achieving it? Some HR professionals think it is enough to post the words engagement on every wall, website and WC in the company, in the vain hope that the repetition will somehow rub off on staff in some Orwellian approach to culture change. Let's look at an environment where many people feel engaged naturally. The pub!

Pubs do NOT have mission statements that say:

"We aim to encourage sociosexual networking and leverage mission critical knowledge, skills and wisdom through the use of addictive depressant substances in a relaxing lifestyle environment that encourages the suppression of societal norms of decency and so on".

Equally, genuine 'employers of choice' such as Google, [Innocent](#) and Unilever do NOT have such depressing mantras displayed around the office. Isn't there something very odd about that? To get people engaged with your company, try some of these things:

- u Set your people free to decide how they go about their work but be clear about the demands / end results – smart leaders worry about the destination but provide some scope over the journey.
- u Encourage constructive and destructive deviance in the pursuit of better / quicker ways to do existing things.
- u Encourage spontaneous behaviour by leaving some aspects of work unplanned and unstructured.
- u Where performance matters, insist on proper prior preparation. Surprisingly, this applies as much to punk rock as it does to people management. Writing a two and a half minute music hit requires a great deal of discipline as well as tapping into your intuition, as [Ian Dury](#), The Sex Pistols and The Ramones would tell you.

Punk Rock People Management offers us three chords on engagement:

- u Cut the crap on engagement and get engaged with what counts and what gets counted.
- u Give people discretion on the means of production whilst being precise on the ends of production.
- u Create a vacancy if your people are pretty vacant ...

MOTIVATION – Reasons To Be Cheerful

In the words of honorary punk rockers Rogers, Hammerstein and [Captain Sensible](#), “Happy talk”. Yes, it’s nice to be happy at work, but that’s only half the story. The Smiths’ classic “Heaven knows I’m miserable now” (OK, I know the Smiths are not punk, but why let the truth interfere with a good story) is the mantra for people stuck in jobs that don’t fit their skills, attitudes, inner or outer desires.

What then are the reasons to be cheerful at work? Certainly NOT because the 360 degree appraisal system has been put online in full colour, because the team has won a set of fake plastic palm trees inscribed with the company mission statement, or when the HR department places a ‘People are our greatest asset’ plaque in every toilet cubicle.

It may be slightly quaint or even old fashioned to say this, but whatever happened to good old job design, as described by Hackman and Oldham? They pointed out that people work well when they have well designed jobs. These include some good old fashioned factors:

- u Skill variety – using an appropriate variety of skills.
- u Task identity – being able to see the whole task.
- u Task significance – the extent to which people identify with the task and its importance to something wider.
- u Autonomy – giving some discretion over the way in which work is done.
- u Feedback – gaining an idea of how well people convert effort into performance.

In practical terms, many of the tried and tested methods of improving job design at work still have value. For example: vary work where possible to encourage skill variety; assign work as a whole unit to enhance task significance; delegate tasks to their lowest possible level to create autonomy and responsibility; connect people to the impact of their work through feedback. Some of the world’s best workplaces such as [Prêt à Manger](#) use these principles intuitively as they are common sense, although they are not commonly applied. Others have made significant improvements by just following them as a conscious protocol, such as The Royal College of Physicians.

Punk Rock People Management offers us three chords on motivation:

- u Design work according to Hackman and Oldham’s principles.
- u Eliminate pointless tasks from the daily grind.
- u Remember that reasons to be cheerful include: being listened to; doing things that count; understanding why they matter; being part of something; not having to do pointless tasks; getting meaningful feedback on what you do and so on.

DIVERSITY – Mis-Shapes

Classical HR is preoccupied with managing a world of 'exceptions', in which 'who you are' (your identity) is more important than 'what you do' (your behaviour). This is unwittingly reinforced by diversity gurus who emphasise individualism over cohesion. There's nothing wrong at all with being you, but tokenism in HR tends to overwhelm sensible attempts to make diversity work as a source of business advantage. Bizarre manifestations of this include a local council that set up interest groups to discuss just about every single issue that any single member of staff thought important. This almost resulted in single interest groups of single people! If I worked for them, no doubt I could have the '[Peter Cook interest group](#)', where I could attend my own group in work time and discuss aspects of my life, music, spiritual matters and so on, with myself! Another example was when I was given a business card by a public servant which announced their job as 'Sexuality Champion'. I could not tell whether this person was a champion at sex, championing sexuality at work etc. In fact, their job was 'cost accountant' but this was not mentioned on the card ...

Another well known pharmaceutical company instituted a 'gay science' group to explore the ramifications of homosexual science. By the way, this was nothing to do with the development of products for homosexuals. A gay colleague ironically suggested that it might involve wearing, pink laboratory coats! Don't let me be misunderstood. I am a vigorous supporter of all things diverse, but let's get this straight. Work is an environment for doing work – the clue is in the title. Well-meaning HR management of companies by atomising teams is one of a number of reasons why some HR hopefuls don't always get to become chairman of the board and why some board members are bored with HR.

What is the alternative? Simply find ways to focus people on the things that unite people's experience of work. Let them be themselves, but be clear that there is a deal here – an exchange of money for doing the work rather than turning work into a personal campaign. At the extreme, fragmentation of work into interest groups destroys the cohesion needed for high performance and turns workplaces into mass debating forums, which allegedly leads to corporate myopia. Not to mention the huge waste of money involved. Alan Lafley, former CEO of Procter and Gamble sums up the business case for diversity: "A diverse organisation will out-think and out-perform a homogeneous organisation every single time." However, tokenism in this area is not enough and sometimes divisive.

Punk Rock People Management offers us three chords on diversity:

- u Emphasise what unites us as human beings rather than our differences. Valuing differences does not mean setting up corporate ghettos to reinforce feelings of isolation and difference.
- u Celebrate difference by finding ways to mix and integrate people regardless of sex, age, race, sexuality, orientation, disability, spirituality and so on as a natural part of work and not as a replacement for work.
- u Listen to Prince's views on diversity by checking out his song 'Family Name' on 'The Rainbow Children' album. Also the song 'Mis-shapes' by post-punk pop-art performers [Pulp](#) for some poignant perceptions on the problem.

APPRAISAL – Ever Fallen In Love?

I have had the privilege of working with ‘Honorary Punk Rock Leadership Professor’ Dennis Tourish, who asks audiences of HR professionals “Who enjoys their appraisal?” Almost every time he asks the question, no hands go up! The next question he asks is obviously “So why do you make people do them?” Even more inexplicably, very few explanations are forthcoming. So, why do we do appraisals? Companies like [Fred Perry](#) are asking such questions. Furthermore, why do many HR departments attempt to link appraisals with rewards? These are big questions which are relatively unquestioned.

Giving people praise and feedback is generally considered a ‘satisfier’, whereas pay is a ‘dissatisfier’ in Herzberg terms. Look at what happens when we attempt to combine appraisal with pay in pseudo-mathematical terms:

$$+ 1 \text{ (appraisal)} \quad + \quad - 1 \text{ (pay)} \quad = \quad 0 \text{ (neutrality)}$$

Is it any wonder that most people feel neutral at best with their appraisal? With a few exceptions where there is a broadband of opportunity to enhance pay through high performance, most attempts to link pay to appraisal produce pretty tepid results.

I’m not saying that we can simply dispense with any sense of giving people feedback on their performance. People need to know what they are doing well so they can do better and they need to know where to improve. However, when this is reduced to a bureaucratic ritual that overwhelms the results, something better change in the words of [The Stranglers](#).

So, what is the alternative? The key to any successful appraisal is embedded in the wisdom of ‘punk pop poets’ [Bananarama](#) (OK, I know, they are not punks!), with their hit “It ain’t what you do, it’s the way that you do it – that’s what gets results”. People’s experience of appraisal is hugely dependent on how it is done, even if the appraisal is not overwhelmingly a good experience for the person on the receiving end.

Punk Rock People Management offers us three chords on appraisal:

- u Find ways to praise what people do well on a continuous basis rather than storing it up for the appraisal. Use a personal communications channel rather than text or email for this purpose. Let people know immediately if you feel they need to improve. Discuss ways to achieve this rather than letting poor performance become a chronic problem.
- u Focus appraisal 80% on the future and 20% on the past, using it as an opportunity to improve personal and company performance.
- u Resist linking appraisal to pay unless your company can show a very clear link between extra effort and results.

TRAINING – Waiting For The Great Leap Forwards

Someone does not measure up to your expectations? What do you do? Fire them? Fire yourself for not hiring them properly in the first place? Well, the time-honoured HR solution to the capability problem is to train them. Nothing wrong with that at all, I hear you say? No, except there are some faulty assumptions built into the antidote. Firstly, that training will actually make them more capable. Secondly, that they actually want and have the capacity to learn. Training is also a highly political issue, especially in public services, where it is used as a sop for poor performance, with thousands of people who don't wish to learn anything sent for mandatory training, just to keep corporate scoreboards straight. Finally, the training itself can be of such poor quality that the probability of learning anything is zero. What a waste!

So, what is the great leap forward to make learning worthwhile? It's very straightforward and needs to be done in this order:

1. Identify what needs to be learned.
2. Identify and navigate obstacles to learning – factors within the person such as their preferred learning style, opportunities to practise at work, support from the boss and so on.
3. Identify the best learning method – there are plenty of ways to learn. A training course is just one approach – not always the best.
4. Just do it – deliver learning using the best method, addressing particular obstacles, targeting specific needs and providing opportunities to practice and apply the learning.

That said, some HR people start at step 3 – they send someone on a training course, when they are unclear what they are expected to learn, there may be obstacles to learning and a course is not the best solution. This is quite simply a waste of time and money. In the words of post-punk disco and crooning phenomenon [George Michael](#) 'If you're gonna do it, do it right' (from the great song 'Freedom'). The antidotes to this problem are common sense, yet they are not commonly applied.

These issues are multiplied many times over when we are considering becoming a learning company rather than a bunch of learning individuals. Collective learning is much harder. Revisit classic ideas by looking at the work of Peter Senge and [Tom Peters](#) in this area.

Punk Rock People Management asks us to snap ourselves out of the trance that says training is inherently good and offers us three chords on training:

- u Decide whether training is needed in the first place by getting to grips with the learning needs. Recognise that there are many ways to learn and training is just one. Fit the method to the need – not the reverse.
- u If training is the answer, do it well, by: lining up expectations; adjust the approach to meet learning styles and; ensure follow-up opportunities to practise what has been learned.
- u Avoid the 'premature evaluation' trap in training and evaluate what has been learned and how it has been applied more than the typical 'how was it for you?' approach.

PROMOTION – Simply The Best?

The HR approach to promotion in its purest form is to promote those with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to rise to the next level. This noble ambition is most often scuppered by employment law, which proves the old punk rock saying that it [the law] is “an ass”. The trouble is that by the time equal opportunities quotas, emotional intelligence questionnaires, declaration of interests and so on have been factored in, you are often lucky if the person who gets the job is able to understand their title, let alone be capable of doing the work.

Classical HR emphasises loyalty and long service as major contributors to climbing the greasy corporate pole. But what if what you did led to your re-employment or reinvention? Would that lead to some kind of Utopian society, where getting on was related to your contribution rather than being the last one in the car park, performing ‘indecent acts of feedback’ on your boss and hanging around long past your sell by date? By the way, post-punk HR princess Madonna once said on promotion, “Losing my virginity was a career move”.

The Punk Rock People Management approach turns this on its head. The people who do the work get ahead. The people who stand and watch stay where they are or get fired. Harsh but fair you might say? If meritocracy is such a good idea, then why isn't it more popular? The evidence suggests that people tend to promote those who fit their own image. At the same time, hopeful candidates have learned to mimic their bosses to get promoted, so there needs to be a basic disruption to

these basic instincts. To have a career based on merit rather than staying power, we must spend less time filling in competency frameworks and more doing our jobs. It was a work ethic that philanthropic pharmaceutical company The Wellcome Foundation carried out very well, winning it many Nobel prizes, whilst other companies spent time posturing but getting nowhere. Without professional HR management, Wellcome managed to promote people based on merit, regardless of race and all the usual HR phobias. Crikey, we're talking about a meritocracy without even having had to create a spreadsheet to manage the process here! More recently Tim Smit, CEO at [The Eden Project](#) ensures that his company continues to succeed by systematically moving people out of role to ensure the company does not ossify. In his view, as soon as a department becomes a mini-industry, it is time to shake things up. Tim seems to have acquired a great deal of his common sense through his musical career. This included writing songs for Barry Manilow, who was definitely NOT a punk rocker and producing Motörhead, who could just as well have been punks, having toured with The Damned.

Punk Rock People Management offers us three chords on promotion:

- u Value what people do more than what they say they will do.
- u Hire people who are better than you.
- u Give them realistic expectations of promotion rather than courting dreams you cannot fulfil.

INNOVATION – What's New Pussycat?

I once read a book entitled "Innovation in HR", published by an HR institute. I was moderately excited to receive the book, which was a gift for perceived services of acting as an 'agent provocateur' to the profession – by the way that's 'irritant' in English. You can be sure that, once an HR professional starts speaking in French to you, they are about to be inauthentic. Imagine my disappointment when I opened the book to find it empty – ha, ha! 'Caveat emptor' I should have replied to keep the foreign language HR intercourse going ...

Yet, perhaps that is a little unfair, and I feel I deserve to have my bare bottom thrashed with hawthorn twigs for even having such thoughts! Nonetheless, I must be brutally truthful, in that this rather long book had very little to say other than 'be positive'. This in itself is often only half the story in terms of innovation. It may be nice to surround yourself with 'shiny happy people', but they don't always succeed in the innovation game. If Isambard Kingdom Brunel had decided to hold a series of 'iron horse focus groups', 360 degree appraisal forums and 'drop in customer transportation strategy listening sessions', he would probably have never built the [Great Western Railway](#) and the world would never have discovered Swindon – some good points in this then – oops! If [James Dyson](#) had written a pleasant letter to Hoover explaining his minor concerns with their vacuum cleaner rather than getting fed up and making one that sucked (in the best sense), we would NOT now have "The Dyson" as a new name for "The Hoover".

In short, innovation in new products and services requires more perspiration than inspiration. Innovation is not over when the flip chart is full in the brainstorming meeting and everyone has imagined 101 ways to use a paper clip as a labour saving device for nail care in HR. Cold sweat, blood and sometimes tears are required.

If you want to innovate, know that perspiration matters more than inspiration, and comes AFTER the brainstorming session. Too many so-called innovation social networks are only concerned with creativity. This is fine as far as it goes. However, there is evidence to suggest that modern social networking websites are a new displacement activity, replacing ironing, daydreaming and focus groups at work. In the words of Andy Warhol and Lou Reed "It's work" that counts. [Toyota](#) stands out by being excellent at execution as well as inspiration.

Punk Rock People Management offers us three chords on innovation:

- u Perspire more than inspire. A walk on the wild side to discover new ideas is necessary but never sufficient for profitable innovation.
- u Run the numbers alongside the brainstorming and recycle your thinking until the innovations have been tested to destruction to improve the ratio of new ideas : profitability.
- u If your innovation is more 'product push' than 'market need', know that you need to work much harder and differently to succeed.

Inspiration +
Perspiration =
HR Innovation.
Sweat it out



CONFLICT – Who Killed Bambi?

Veteran punk rock band [The Damned](#) summed up the all too common result of organisational conflict with their seminal song 'Stab yor back'. How much money is wasted on ineffective conflict between warring silos in companies? I mean the sort of conflict that simmers on for years sapping time, energy and passion? How much of this is unwittingly assisted by classical HR thinking, which encourages harmony or conflict avoidance over a healthy fight and subsequent resolution of a chronic problem or opportunity?

Thomas Killman (good name for a conflict guru by the way) pointed out that there are at least five things we can do about conflict:

1. Avoid – just walk away physically or emotionally
2. Accommodate – smooth things over for others
3. Compromise – reach a low level solution for all
4. Problem-solve – reach a high level solution for all
5. Compete – play to win

Most of us have a preferred range within which we operate and each of the five styles has its own strengths and weaknesses. I did some work for a social services department some years back who admitted they were largely avoiders and accommodators. Whilst this was 'nice' because they never upset anyone, they also admitted that they failed to tackle serious issues because of this tendency. While you can take a psychometric test to find out what sort of person you are, you have already read the Punk Rock People Management view on these, so just try a little educated guesswork on your preferences, or ask someone who knows you and you will be close to the mark.

To solve conflict, all five postures may be used to produce results. Contrary to popular HR speak, this cannot always be win-win, nor need it be lose-lose. No-lose strategies are often overlooked as a viable alternative to win-win bargaining. It's what my football fanatic friends call a nil-nil draw. Successful conflict managers are also great at separating conflict over issues from conflict over people and personalities. They are also highly creative and willing to come up with options, especially when things seem deadlocked. I admire the way that [FujiFilmSericol](#) manages to handle conflict in a more mature way than many in the field.

Punk Rock People Management offers us three chords on conflict:

- u Use all the available styles to handle conflict, not just the easy but less effective ones such as avoidance and accommodation.
- u Separate conflict over work from conflict over personalities. You can have a good bun fight over a project, but once things are settled, move on and don't harbour grudges towards the people.
- u Have options rather than dead ends when you are deadlocked.



UNIONS – Two Tribes

The Bard of Barking, [Billy Bragg](#), may not have been an HR pro, but he may have contributed more to our understanding of collective bargaining than all the employment law authors in the world if they were laid end to end, via his song 'There is power in a union'. [Frankie goes to Hollywood](#) also reminded us of the classic pluralist assumption within classical HR thinking on unions in their 80's anthem 'Two Tribes'. OK, Frankie are not punks I know, but they conveyed the spirit of punk rock through their music.

The traditional HR view is that unions are bad. It is easy to point towards corrosive strikes that uphold this view, which have led to further employment legislation that makes people more disaffected with the workplace, creating a vicious circle. Yet pluralism (us and them) is not necessarily a bad thing. Indeed, diversity in all its forms is considered an asset for innovation, yet it is resisted by those who don't enjoy difference. Consider the benefits of unions from economic and sociological viewpoints:

- u Unions do all the collective bargaining for you, lining up the employees' wishes, saving you time and money on HR people to negotiate with the workforce directly over an unco-ordinated and unprioritised set of single issues.
- u Many modern unions have shifted ground by taking on the roles of helping with employee benefits, healthcare, pensions etc., removing cost to the company.
- u Unions can take quite a few grievance cases outside the HR department and therefore save you time, money and grief in dealing with them. They will also mediate to produce a better long term solution for all concerned.

So, the Punk Rock People Management position is to invite diversity, unions and works councils, in so far as it can maintain a healthy dialogue about differences in the psychological contract at work. Not to mention the managerial benefits that emerge from effectively outsourcing many of the employee communications issues that arise from a pluralist work environment. Admittedly, none of the above syntax has been written into the chorus line of a song by The Clash, but then nobody said that punks were intellectually unsound!

Punk Rock People Management offers us three chords on unions:

- u See unions as an advantage in a pluralist workplace.
- u Focus on interests rather than positions if you are to do collective bargaining well.
- u See negotiations from all viewpoints so that you can be most effective in reaching a solution. It is what pre-punk Scandinavians Abba would have called 'Knowing me, knowing you'.



REDUNDANCY – Submission

“You’re fired” is perhaps the shortest way of getting rid of people. More often than not these days, these words are not even spoken but sent in a letter, email or, worse still in a text, as practised by UK company The Accident Group (although this wasn’t an accident). Classic HR treats employees as if they are part of the business sitcom [The Office](#), where David Brent comes out to the staff to tell them “There’s good news and bad news - I’ve been promoted and you’ve been fired”. There is plenty of research that demonstrates just how bad this short-term approach to making people redundant is on those that remain. You may want to deal with staff redundancy as quickly as possible, but there are good business reasons for taking a little longer and doing it well.

If you must make someone redundant, the authentic approach includes things like:

- u Telling them what is going to happen at the start of the meeting. Dithering around the subject does not help anyone.
- u Giving the person a chance to ask questions and understand the reasons for the redundancy. Keep to the facts of the case and don't confuse them with your feelings of false hopes / life philosophies / need to be loved and so on.
- u Accepting any emotions that arise with good grace and empathy but not sympathy.
- u Dealing with any personal matters with dignity and following through on any commitments on both sides.
- u Explaining any support or assistance that may be available e.g. career coaching or counselling.

These are by no means the only principles, but they are the ones that provide a firm basis for getting redundancy right, with the result that losing people does not have to kill the business. Handling redundancy well may be one of the most important things you can do. People don’t make judgements about your ability to handle the positive stuff or when things are going well at work. They will however judge you by how you deal with the tricky things at work, when times are tough. It’s what the HR pro’s call ‘The Survivor Syndrome’. A large survey on this topic showed that survivor syndrome can limit financial savings from redundancies by reducing the performance and attendance of the remaining employees, and increasing staff turnover. In the warped words of Essex-based post-punk disco phenomenon Billy Ocean ‘When the going gets tough, the tough get good at redundancy’.

Punk Rock People Management offers us three chords on redundancy:

- u Handle redundancy using personal communications methods.
- u Provide support and maintain people’s self esteem.
- u Keep things short and simple, sticking to the facts and not turning the meeting into a company PR or therapy session.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR – Peter Cook

Peter Cook leads The Academy of Rock, a creativity and innovation management consultancy, blending leading edge ideas from the world's business schools with the power of music. He has delivered conference keynotes and

longer masterclasses to some of the world's top businesses and organisations.

Author of 'Best Practice Creativity' and 'Sex, Leadership and Rock'n'Roll', acclaimed by Professor Charles Handy and Tom Peters. Peter has appeared on BBC One TV, BBC Radio 4, Radio 2 and the Institute of Directors with his ideas. His clients include Johnson and Johnson, Electronic Arts, Pfizer, The Royal College of Physicians, BT, GSK, BP Amoco, The Chartered Insurance Institute, Laing O'Rourke, The United Nations, Imperial College London and Ashridge Business School.

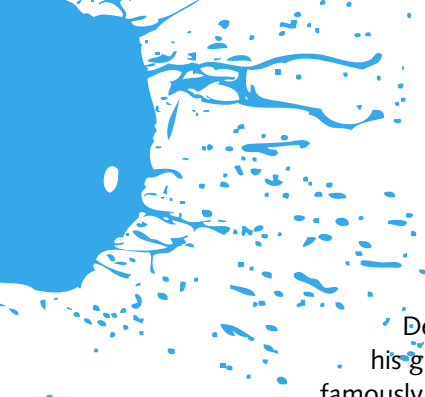


Peter has over 25 years experience, comprising:

- u Leading innovative new Pharmaceutical Product Research and Development teams to bring multi-million dollar life-saving drugs safely to the market including the first treatments for Herpes and AIDS
- u Trouble-shooting businesses and starting up factories around the world
- u Internal business, organisation development and change consultancy
- u Writing and tutoring for Business Schools at MBA level
- u Writing and performing music in a variety of disguises

Peter holds an MBA (which, in his view, should stand for Much Bigger Amps rather than More Bloody Analysis), is a Chartered Chemist, Chartered Marketer and fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. An NLP master practitioner and wildly enthusiastic guitarist. He brings this combination of theory and experience together in events and conferences that reach way beyond the usual keynote speaker fare.





Peter is also an accomplished musician, having performed with John Otway, Wilko Johnson and Altered Images amongst others. He helped Bill Nelson, leader of 70's pop art band Be-Bop Deluxe, who turned down David Bowie for a job as his guitarist, to sell out his ITV Legend's concert. He also famously sponsored an entrepreneurial adventure to go on a record breaking round the world rock'n'roll tour with cult punk rocker John Otway. The tour was an unmitigated disaster in the great British 'Carry On' tradition, but the story of this comedy of errors has very powerful lessons for entrepreneurs, business leaders and people trying to start new ventures.

Peter is often accompanied by his colleague John Howitt, an international session musician who has performed on BBC's Strictly Come Dancing and with Celine Dion, Anastasia, Shirley Bassey to name but a few. Peter also records a wide range of beautiful soundscapes with John.



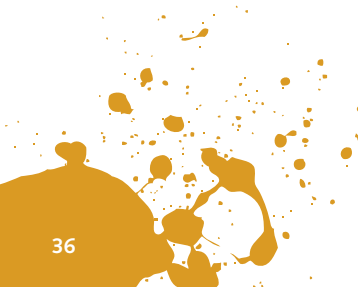
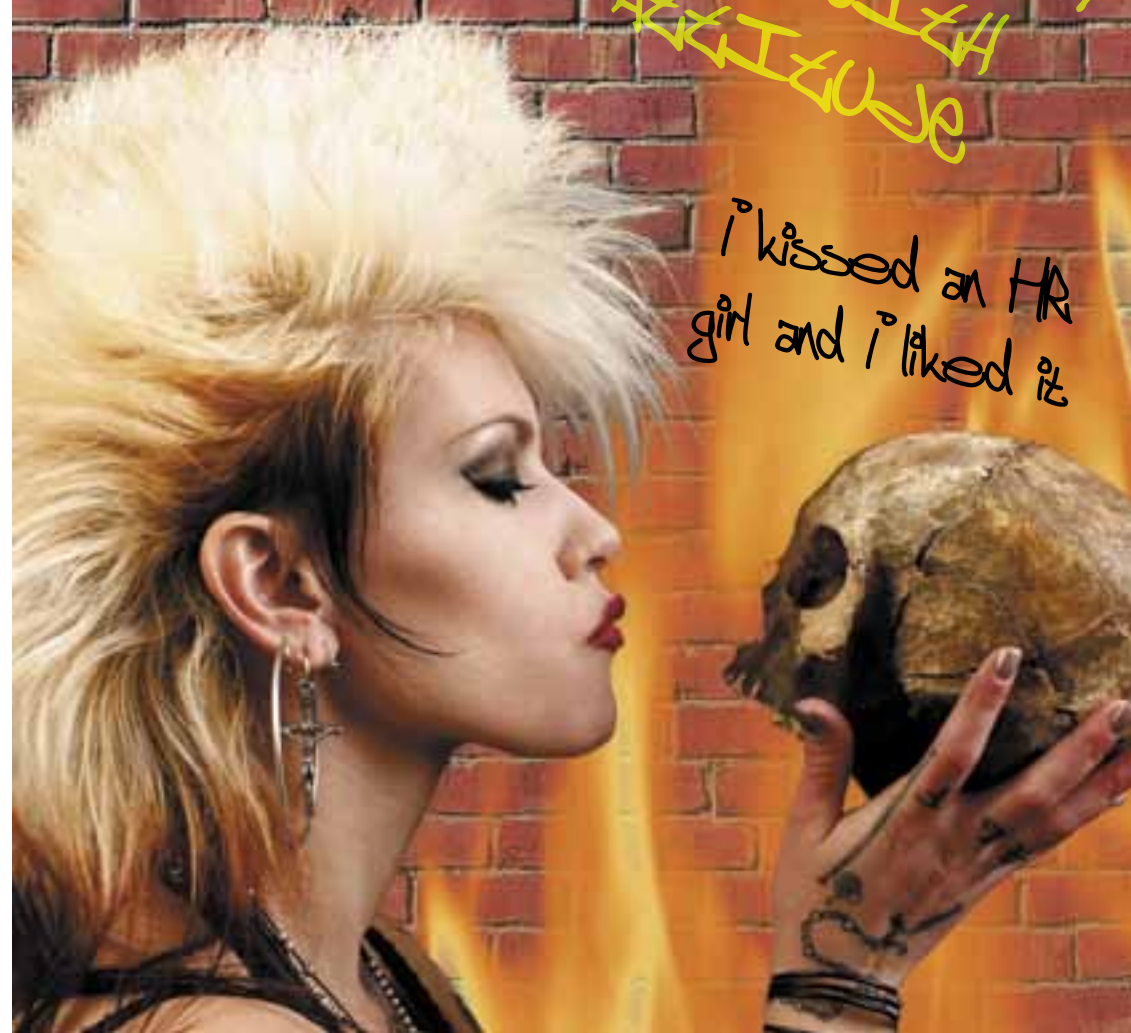
Never Mind the HR Bollocks - Here's Punk Rock People Management

DO IT

The reaction of Tom Peters on hearing about Punk Rock PM

PUNK ROCK PM
HR WITH
ATTITUDE

I kissed an HR girl and I liked it



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PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

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I wrote this book to clear out some of the stuff that goes down in the world of HR. If you like this short trailer you will enjoy the full feature, so book one of our outstanding events and get a copy of 'Sex, Leadership and Rock'n'Roll – Leadership Lessons from the Academy of Rock – acclaimed by Tom Peters, THE world's greatest business consultant, author and speaker.

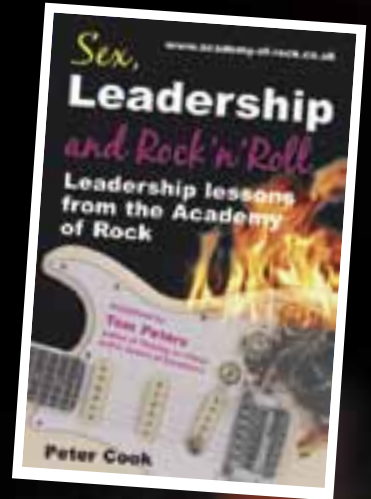
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