

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 4

How might you increase motivation in your organisation?

Create flow and motivate people...

“It’s a Zen feeling, like meditation or concentration. One thing you’re after is when things become automatic... somehow the right thing is done without your ever thinking about it or doing anything at all... it just happens and you are more concentrated.”

*Rock climber, quoted in **Good Business: Leadership, Flow and the Making of Meaning** by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (“chick SENT me high”).*



“We’re in Flow”

Do you know what it is like to be in flow?

Have you ever felt a similar kind of feeling to that described in the quotation above? Either at work or whilst pursuing a hobby? Csikszentmihalyi describes this feeling as flow, which occurs when both challenges and skills are high and equal to each other.

I was on holiday in Brittany recently and reading Csikszentmihalyi’s book (a bit sad, reading business books on holiday!). His description was brought home to me when we watched a Breton band (bagpipes, drums and pipes) in the local square. They were brilliant, really lively music played very well, but I was most struck by their conductor.

A small stocky lady, she would conduct when the band played a particularly difficult piece and her conducting was a performance in itself... She conducted with her legs, torso and elbows (you had to be there) and it worked brilliantly, every instrument stopping and starting on time and in beat. As she conducted, she seemed to be transported; a beaming smile on her face.

As I watched I thought, “she’s in flow” and the whole band seemed to be in it too. A memorable evening.

Csikszentmihalyi states that people work their best when given the opportunity to achieve flow. To help stimulate flow he suggests (in my words) leaders should:

- Make organisational vision / mission / goals clear to everyone and clarify the goals of individuals
- Ensure the individual is able to receive appropriate feedback from the task, other people and from their own standards
- Ensure the challenge matches the

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individual's skills, values, emotions etc

- Ensure the individual has control over the job, including the ability to control time factors and interruptions
- Tame rampant egos (e.g promote people who place the needs of the organisation or customer over their own)

The book describes how various leaders have applied these principles to build innovative and successful companies.

In his closing words, "If more leaders of business would follow their lead then business would truly fulfil its potential to help make life happier for all". Which is not a bad aim for a Creative Leader, is it?

SO

If you are an organisational leader, how well are you implementing the principles? If you are an individual worker, what might you do to create flow for yourself and your peers?

ACTION

Consider how you might develop the principles further in the company or for yourself. Why not invest in the book available from Amazon at various prices.

TO CLOSE

I went to see Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban on the Imax screen last night. It was awesome; the impact from the large screen transformed the movie in to the best film I've

ever seen. There's a wonderful scene where he flies on a young Hippogriff (half eagle, half horse). He struggles to stay on at first, but then finds he can hold on with no hands and screams with delight as he soars above Hogwarts.

I thought it a wonderful example of "flow" ~ skill matching challenge and I guess a perfect example of "chick SENT me high" (sorry, couldn't resist it!).

[John Brooker](#), *Facilitate, Innovate, Transform.*



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