Management As Performing Art

A qualitative investigation into whether theatre-based rehearsal methods and techniques can be used to enhance managerial communication skills

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A qualitative investigation into whether theatre-based rehearsal methods and techniques can be used to enhance managerial communication skills

A research by Beatrice Bergner

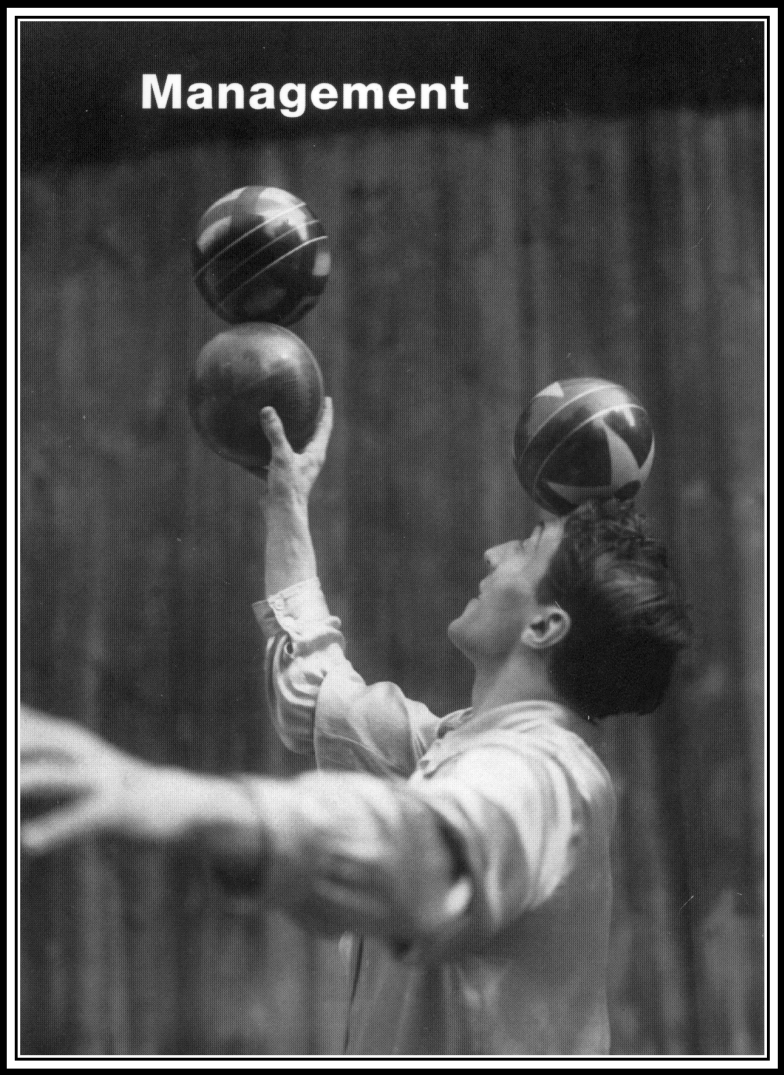
Management is:

trying "to handle five things at the time

and remember five things

and doing it at the same time."

Gitte Neltoft, Appendix II – List of Tables, Manager Table 5


Management

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Dr. Christine Daymon

and

Liese,

without whom…

ABSTRACT

Using a dramaturgical perspective and thus recognising that impression management is concerned with the individual's self-presentation in order to make a desired impression, the purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which the concepts of impression management and theatre improvisation can be applied to communication management and to investigate, how they can contribute to the development of managerial communication skills through a qualitative fieldwork study.

Hitherto, previous research explored this field from an explicit management point of view and failed to acknowledge how and to what extent theatrical practices may contribute to the development of specific communication skills. This study was therefore the first to investigate theatre improvisation techniques and the application of these to management communication practices by bringing in both perspectives, the management and professional theatrical perspective.

Multiple methods of data collection were adopted in order to increase depth and scope of this study. The data obtained from workshop observation and interviews with managers and trainers identified not only specific improvisation exercises and the communication skills they addressed, but also recognised a number of important issues regarding the understanding of the concept of improvisation which allowed the proposition for a revised definition of improvisation for the management domain.

Further findings suggest that dramaturgical theatre concepts could be used as tactical techniques to implement impression management strategies and behaviours. Another finding emerging from the workshop observation was the significance of trust, which was found to be a basic requirement for the training of specific communication skills. Recommendations for the practical use of exercises and further research are made, thereby considering the limitations intrinsic to this study.

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