

FINANCIAL TIMES

FT business books: April edition

From resetting ideas around how we work to productive disagreement — here are this month's top titles

'Two Beats Ahead: What Musical Minds Tell us About Innovation', by Panos A Panay and R Michael Hendrix

Do the mindsets developed by musicians make them good entrepreneurs? According to Panos A Panay and R Michael Hendrix, they do.

Panay, senior vice-president for global strategy and innovation at Berklee College of Music, and Hendrix, global design director at Ideo, a design and innovation consulting company, stress that this is not a how-to manual. They have put together what they describe as “an ongoing dialogue” with various musicians — from Pharrell Williams and Justin Timberlake to Prince's sound engineer Susan Rogers — that are designed to “inspire you to think about your business, your goals, pretty much everything, through the lens of the musical mindset”.

Take the role of silence, for example. Musicians hone their ability to listen and know how to create moments with no notes to break patterns and create dramatic effects to capture attention. Similarly, whether you are channelling your creativity, building a dynamic company, or leading a team, say the authors, if you know how to look for this “space between the notes” you can see a new opportunity or come up with a new solution to a problem.

Panay and Hendrix also believe the growth mindset of musicians — where they are always learning, always developing — is not just helpful, but essential in today's uncertain, complex world.

It can be a bit heavy on the detail at times, but each chapter is followed by an interlude — where one is encouraged to allow the information to sink in and listen to playlists of the artists featured.

It makes a sound case for why the arts should play just as central a role in education as maths and science and that to meet the ever increasing complexity of the world's challenges “it's not about making the false choice between science or art, mathematics or music, but about emphasising both”.

Reviews by Janina Conboye, Andrew Hill, Leo Cremonezi, Pip Murrison, Jonathan Moules, Jonathan Eley and Isabel Berwick

<https://www.ft.com/content/4a5e65bf-4c27-4019-a674-53966d1e1abb>