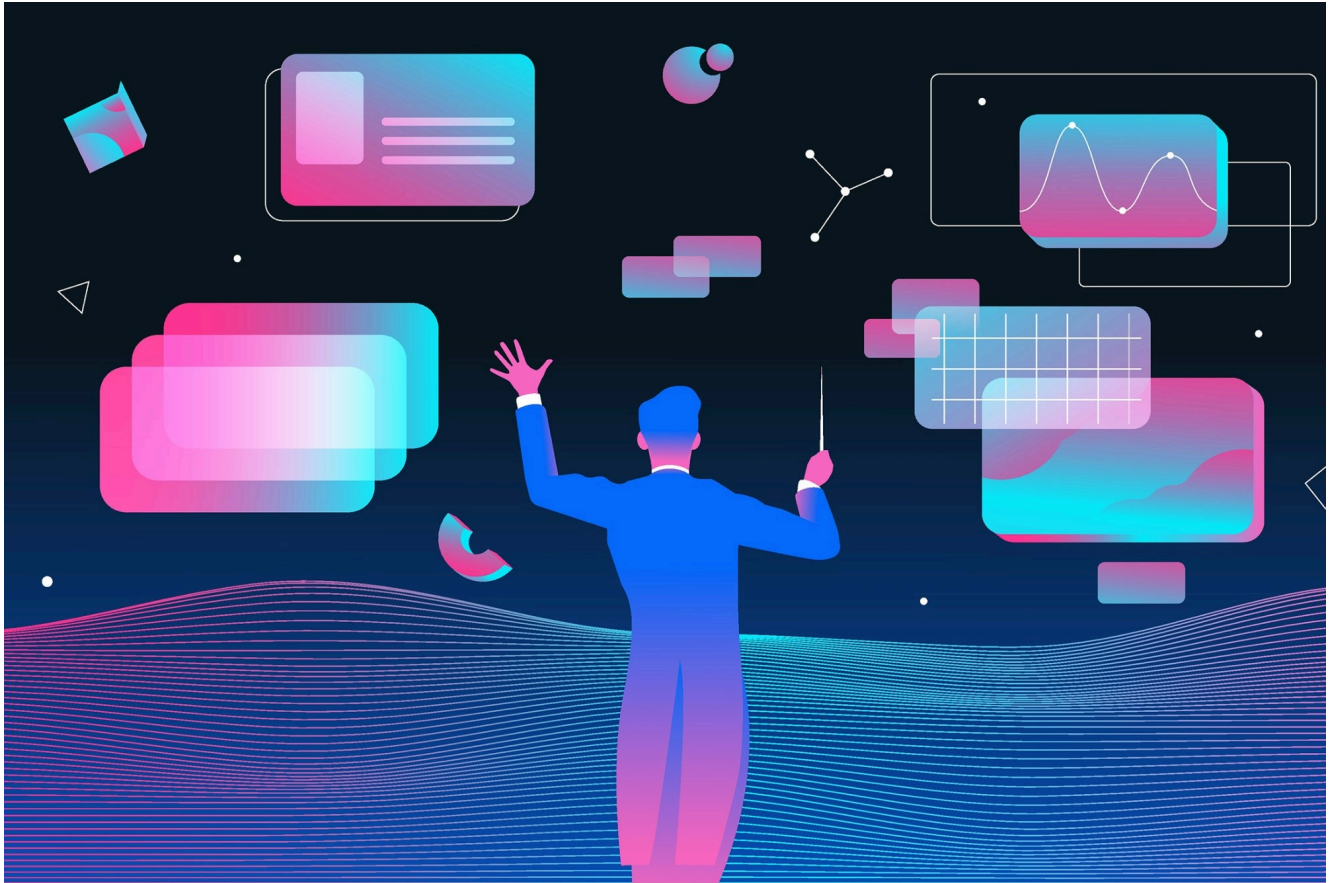


Why The Most Effective Leaders Don't Yell the Loudest – They Conduct



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Are you The Wizard of Oz or The Great Gatsby? Behind the curtain or in front of the crowd?

Most founders pause when I ask them this. Some smirk. All of them get it.

Early on, you have to be both.

You're pulling the strings and selling the show. But eventually, the lines blur. And it becomes critical to know your zone of genius (and more importantly, your blind spots).

Every time I meet with an early-stage founder, I'm looking for

two things: self-awareness and clarity. Not just “what’s your product” or “how big your market is,” I want to know if they’ve taken the time to really learn themselves.

I’ve learned my strengths and weaknesses over the years. That is one of the best things that a founder can do for themselves (and their investors). It’s not glamorous, but it’s the work that lasts.

The faster you admit what you’re not good at, the faster you can build a company that doesn’t depend on you doing everything. A business is an orchestra. A founder is a conductor.

Conductors know the notes. They don’t play them all.

Conductors aren’t guessing up there. They know the music. They’ve studied every instrument. They could jump in and play. But they don’t. Their job is to lead the performance.

The same goes for founders. You might know how to code. Sell. Market. Fundraise. But that doesn’t mean you should do it all forever. You’re not supposed to be a solo act.

You’re the one setting the tempo and keeping the vision clear. Making sure everyone hits their mark. If you’re the smartest person in every room, you’ve stopped growing. Hire people who play their parts better than you ever could. Then trust them to deliver.

Startups don’t die from a lack of hustle. They die from a lack of harmony. Leadership isn’t about control. It’s about coordination.

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Music isn't just a sound. It's a story.

My company's named after Van Morrison and Bob Seger. My daughters are named after Phil Collins and Don Henley.

Music has always been personal for me. It's not just what I listen to. It's how I lead. Every album tells a story. Every track carries a truth. Music is storytelling. Every lyric is a snapshot. A single thought. One moment frozen in time.

Yet somehow, millions of people hear the same song and make it their own.

That's leadership.

You don't need to yell louder. You need to say something real. The best founders don't just build companies. They write stories people want to be part of. There's a reason some brands have lifelong fans and others get forgotten in six months.

It's not about ad spend. It's about resonance.

My favorite thing about music?

Music is the great equalizer. You step into a concert, and everything else fades.

You're not a CEO. Not a parent. Not a whatever-your-resume-says. You're just a person in a crowd, feeling something.

It doesn't matter who you worship or what you believe. When the lights go down and the music hits, you're part of something bigger. Cheesy? Sure. True? Definitely.

That applies directly to business. Create something that lets people belong. Build something they can feel. Lead in a way

that brings people together. That's how you build brand loyalty, not with transactions, but with transformation.

Don't confuse the spotlight with the sound

You've got to decide something early on: Do you want the attention, or do you want the impact?

Both are possible. But chasing one often kills the other.

The conductor isn't louder than the orchestra. He's not front and center, chest out, hands in the air. He's present. Tuned in. He guides from where he's needed most.

Same with great founders.

You don't have to be the loudest in the room. You just have to know how to lead one. The right tempo is quiet confidence. It's not about being seen. It's about being felt.

No one remembers perfect. They remember powerful.

Have you ever left a concert and remembered one off-key note? Didn't think so.

You remember the emotion. The silence before the beat dropped. People don't follow you because you're perfect. They follow you because you make them feel something. If your team trusts you, if your brand has rhythm, if your vision makes people stop and listen, you've already won.

Founders who obsess over perfection miss the point. People connect with the real. Not rehearsed.

Founders who succeed don't try to play every part. They conduct. They know the song. They build the team. They guide

the energy. They lead so others can perform.

You don't need to be everywhere. You need to be in sync.

Great Gatsby or Wizard of Oz? A little bit of both? Either way, be well-rehearsed when it comes to balancing life behind the curtains, in the pit, or on the stage.

Mic drop.

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