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Business Day

WE CAN WORK IT OUT You did not realize it, but when you were listening to “Yesterday” or “Ticket to Ride,” you were actually receiving a management lesson.

So argues a consultant, Andrew Sobel, who says the Beatles are a textbook example of how to forge cooperation and creativity inside an organization.

“The Beatles were great artists and entertainers, but in many respects they were four ordinary guys who, as a team, found a way to achieve extraordinary artistic and financial success and have a great time together while doing it,” Mr. Sobel writes in **Strategy and Business**.

He says there are at least four lessons to be learned from the Beatles’ success.

First, their early years performing in small clubs forged a true sense of esprit de corps that is rare today when “virtual teams” are common. “Invest in and build face time between team members,” Mr. Sobel writes.

Second, the Beatles’ music evolved over time, and so must a company’s product offerings if it is going to generate new ideas.

Third, while John Lennon and Paul McCartney wrote most of the songs, George Harrison and Ringo Starr were given chances to shine from time to time. “It’s great to feel part of a whole, but in the end everyone needs a sense of personal importance as well,” Mr. Sobel writes. “Why not give team members a project that makes

them look good in their own right?”

And then there was the makeup of the group itself. Each member contributed different skills and had a different temperament, and such diversity is to be encouraged, Mr. Sobel writes.

Of course, nothing lasts forever. In April 1970, the Beatles broke up.