

CLOWNING AROUND

Is the boardroom ready for creative treasurers?



The CFO saw a large, yellow shoe protruding from behind the boardroom door. He had no recollection of having replaced Mr Treasurer with Ronald McDonald and, anyway, he couldn't remember whether Ronald McDonald's shoes were yellow or red.

"Um, do come in, come in," urged the CFO. Mr Treasurer gently pushed the door open, then stood before the CFO, the chairman and the rest of the board, wearing yellow shoes, size 27, I should judge, red trousers, a green shirt, a gold lamé tie, a bowler hat of indeterminate colour and a most peculiar look.

The CFO opened his mouth to speak. Nothing came out. Mr Treasurer consulted a small cue card in his hand and then suddenly burst forth with a song he'd obviously made up, along the lines of: "Got my foot in the door and my voice in the boardroom! Treasury's

givin' more, gonna chase away the board gloom!"

"You *are* here to explain our risk management strategy for our funding programme, is that correct?" asked the chairman, as though he had occasionally seen this kind of behaviour before.

"Oooh, yes!" said Mr Treasurer with a zing. And he suddenly jumped onto the boardroom table, scattering the directors' papers with his oversized shoes, grabbed the PowerPoint controller from the dumbfounded company secretary's hand and whizzed through 16 charts in about 32 seconds.

The CFO found his tongue. "Um, Mr Treasurer, that last chart – the one with our quarterly cash flow projections. It appears to be going rather nicely in an upwards direction," he said. "Not quite what we would normally expect at this time of year, is it? Given our business cycle and all that?"

"Good cash management!" said Mr Treasurer, boldly. "Also," and now he spoke in a conspiratorial whisper, "the graph is rotated anticlockwise 90 degrees." And he winked to the CFO and chairman.

"Why, pray tell," said the chairman, "is the chart rotated anticlockwise 90 degrees?"

"Easier than rotating it clockwise 270 degrees!" exclaimed Mr Treasurer – and he tried to laugh at his own joke, but didn't quite succeed. "Thought it was time for a change. Something different. No point being boring and predictable!"

"To be fair," said the CFO, "we are rather fond of 'boring and predictable' when it comes to treasury. Not so keen on tilted charts." He stood up and helped Mr Treasurer off the table, put his arm around him, and said quietly, as he guided him back towards the door: "Feeling OK?"

"Er, no, not really," Mr Treasurer confided. "I was at the ACT Annual Conference in Glasgow and I attended the session on getting your voice heard in the boardroom."

"And?" said the CFO.

"And the session called Treasury Voodoo about how

we should all be more creative, and maybe a bit wacky, and do things differently," said Mr Treasurer. "He was ever so good, that Guy Browning."

"And?" said the CFO.

"And maybe I overdid it at the 'Eat, Drink, Connect' on the Thursday night and got the two sessions a bit muddled," said Mr Treasurer.

"Thought so," said the CFO. "Why not take the afternoon off, come back tomorrow all rested and in your smart blue suit we all like and I'll get you another 10-minute slot in the morning's board session?"

"Thank you," said Mr Treasurer. "Yes, I think I've had quite enough of all this wacky creativity."

"But we haven't heard nearly enough of your voice in the boardroom," said the CFO. ♥

"I was at the ACT Annual Conference in Glasgow and I attended the session on getting your voice heard in the boardroom"



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