

In the pirate business

by Stefanie Giebert

Characters:

Captain

Bill, the strategy expert

Roger, the anchorman

Davy, a networking expert

Tom, a networking expert (and also the cook)

Jimmy, the helmsman

Jack, expert for joint ventures

Narrator

Prelude

All pirates sing a song, for example this one or any other pirate song:

Yo ho, yo ho, a pirate's life for me

We pillage, we plunder, we rifle and loot
Drink up me hearties, yo ho
We kidnap and ravage and don't give a hoot
Drink up me hearties, yo ho

Yo ho, yo ho, a pirate's life for me

We extort, we pilfer, we filch and sack
Drink up me hearties, yo ho
Maraud and embezzle and even high-jack
Drink up me hearties yo ho

Yo ho, yo ho, a pirate's life for me... *(singing fades out), pirates go into tableau and freeze.
Lights down on pirates, spot on narrator.*

Narrator:

The developments of the last few years have definitely given capitalism a bad name. Certain types of businesspeople – mostly in finance and banking - have been called vulture capitalists, locusts, exchange sharks, predatory capitalists. Also the term robber barons – this time mostly connected to Wall Street - has experienced a renaissance. Sometimes the more unscrupulous types of businesspeople have also been likened to pirates – who pillage and plunder, rifle and loot and then move on to attack the next company. But who'd have thought that it also works the other way round? Modern management's influence on piracy.

In the Pirate Business

Lights up on pirates sitting on crates and benches, they are in the middle of a meeting. Jack is sleeping in a corner.

Davy

I think offshoring would be a good strategy.

Captain.

Oh, I don't know. I think we should... rather... um... *(looks at pirate who is chewing on an apple core)* concentrate on our core competencies.

Bill

And what would that be?

Davy

Hostile Takeovers?

Capatain

Yeah – mergers and acquisitions. Acquisitions mostly, I guess.

Bill

But in order to acquire anything we have to meet other ships and we can't do that when we are lying at anchor in a secret bay.

Captain

Alright, alright, I see your point. Anchorman! Let's go offline!

Roger, the Anchorman:

Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to this evening's hoisting of the anchor. *(pulls on the chain that doesn't move. Takes a bit of rope and uses this like a microphone)*
Um - Captain Starbucks – We are facing a problem. It seems that this ship cannot be disconnected. What do you think about this?

Captain

Crew! Get out the spreadsheets!

Roger*(While Roger talks the crew jump up and set the sails. Then they sit down again.)*

Thank you for this interesting comment. So you think this will help? I mean yes, of course, if there's enough wind, and in the right direction then maybe the ship will pull herself free. What do you think about this, Jack?

Jack

What? Oh, leave me alone. I've got work to do.

Roger

Well, thank you for this inspiring statement. *(pulls on the chain again and is successful this time)*. Ah, there we go.

Captain

Helmsman! Pursue an offshoring strategy!

Jimmy, the helmsman

Aye, aye sir!

Captain

(gets himself a coffee) Starbucks! *(someone nudges him)* Sorry. What I meant was: Starboard! *(he sits down again)* Right. From here it should be plain sailing. Better?

Bill

Yes. Um – but I have another issue. I think we need a new targeting strategy.

Captain

Really?

Bill

Yeah.

Captain

And what makes you think so?

Bill

Well, we have this killer application. Right?

Captain

You mean our cannons?

Bill

Yeah. But just looking out over our cannons and aiming them any old way doesn't seem to be very effective. Our hit rate isn't quite what it is supposed to be. We hit the water as often as we hit other ships. Look, I've been benchmarking. (*points at the bench he is sitting on, the are lots of marks carved in*). In the last battle we fired 42 shots. We hit the enemy ship 14 times. We hit the water 26 times.

Roger

Well, Bill, this is very interesting. Maybe you could explain-

Davy (*ignoring Roger*)

Wait, that makes only 40 shots. What happened to the other two?

Tom

Don't you remember? Pete was a bit drunk and accidentally fired at our topmast and then-?

The others signal him to shut up.

Davy

Oh right. Must have suppressed that memory.

Bill

Anyways. The enemy ship hit us 33 times.

Davy

Oh I knew that our strategy wasn't bullet proof!

Bill

And the enemy ship hit the water only 6 times.

Captain

And how do you propose to solve that issue?

Roger

Yes, I'm sure the audiences out there would all be very interested in knowing more.

Bill

Well... I know that this is quite a leap and what with all the technology... maybe we'd need some inhouse training for that... but I think... Yes, we should do it. I think what we need is... some telescopes.

All *(in awe)*

Telescopes!

Captain

Maybe you should take that suggestion to the steering committee. I don't think I can decide about that on my own.

Roger *(talking into his "microphone")*

And Captain Starbucks passes the buck. How will Bill react?

Bill.

Okay. *(shouts)* Jimmy!

Roger

Well, in fact it turns out he is being rather pragmatic about it.

Jimmy, the helmsman

What?

Bill

Can you come over for a minute?

Jimmy

Sure. *(he leaves the helm, comes over and sits down with them)*

Roger

And the helmsman leaves his helm – I don't know if that is a good idea?

Bill

What do you think about telescopes?

(The ships veers off course and the pirates sway)

Roger

Uh oh...

Jimmy

Telescopes? Why not. *(Pause)* Now can I get back to my rudder? We're moving in heavy seas, you know. *(The ships sways, the pirates have to grab hold of the railing etc.)*

Captain

Sure, sure. Thank you for your input.

Jimmy

By the way, Jack promised me that flow chart. Here I am navigating all these difficult currencies without a flow chart.

Captain

Oh yes. John? Where the hell is Jack?

Roger

And this is indeed a very good question! And I am sure I have heard it asked before on this ship. Where is Jack? (*looking for someone willing to make a statement*)

Tom

Um, he said something about... um, that he was working on a ... joint ... venture.

Jack comes around the corner, completely stoned with a joint in his hand.

Roger

Oh, but there he is. Now, Jack what do you have to say- (*hurrying over to Jack who ignores him*)

Captain

Oh right. (*Jack disappears around the corner again.*) He might be having a flow experience right now but not one that'll result in a diagram I'm afraid. Sorry, Jimmy. I'll talk to him later.

Jimmy

I should let him keelhaul if I was the boss. (*goes back to the helm. The swaying abates a little.*)

Roger

(*to the audience*) Oh, oh – I guess Captain Starbucks will have to watch out for knives in his back. (*to the captain*) Now, captain, what do you say to this challenge to your authority?

Captain

No comment. (*slightly annoyed*) Roger, can't you go and interview the fish for a moment? (*Roger goes off, sulking.*) Anyways. The next issue on our agenda today... We have been relying on a sole supplier model up to now. But I think we should diversify. This is what we have now. (*draws a boat and a fish on the sail - for lack of a flipchart.*) Can you all see it? (*He adjusts the sail and accidentally hits one pirate over the head with the boom the sail is attached to.*) Sorry. So this is our sole supplier. It means that we get to eat sole every day. And to be honest – I'm sick of it. So - this is what I want. (*Draws different kind of fish on the sail*). Haddock, halibut, herrings, whatever. Anything but sole for dinner. And so I put a team – Tom and Davy here – on to the task. Tom and Davy are now going to present their results. All right boys, so what have you been doing?

Tom

Networking. Very important nowadays.

Davy

And see – in comparison to yesterday, we've had a significant net increase. (*points to a heap of fishing nets*)

Tom

It didn't work out the first try. But we've figured out how to do it now. So here it is: web 2.0!
(holds up the net)

Davy

Yes, and don't forget to add that we employed a holistic approach.

Captain

Yes. Very good. *(Pause)* Um – what exactly do you mean by that?

Davy

Well. See – there's a hole. And here's another. And another. And all the holes are held together by bits of string. So the water and the little fish get out and the big fish stay in. Brilliant – isn't it?

Captain

Oh. Excellent! Very holistic. Good work! So we'll have some nice fish for dinner tonight?
(the sea gets rougher)

Roger coming back

Now let's interrupt the programme for a moment for the latest weather report. Thick clouds massing the in West are promising storm, current wind speed is up to 7 beaufort, which means that this here is a high wind, almost a gale, the sea is heaping up –

Captain

Thank you.

Roger

The waves-

Captain

Roger.

Roger

The waves have-

Captain

Over and out!

Roger

The waves are-

Captain

Back to the main programme!! Davy, please.

Davy

Fish for dinner? Oh yes. We certainly hope so. We'll also throw out some catch lines.

Tom

And you know what?

Captain.

No.

Tom

When we the time is right, we'll employ a pull strategy.

Captain

Oh yes. Good thinking. Well done. *(The sea gets rougher)*

Roger

And I think we are now approaching 8-9 on the Beaufort scale which means high waves whose crests sometimes roll over. Light objects might be blown about. *(is hit by a small flying object)* Ouch. Dense foam is blown along wind direction. Large amounts of airborne spray may begin to reduce visibility.

Jimmy *(holding his hand before his eyes to shield from the spray)*

Um. I have another issue. We want to enter the Ebay ... but there are some entry barriers. We'll never make it.

Captain

Any suggestions?

Davy

How about doing a pilot project?

Jimmy

What good would that do?

Davy

Well, if we had a pilot, he could guide us into the Ebay.

Jimmy

Oh, right. Sounds goo-aaaaahrgh! *(a monster wave has hit the ship (sound effect), the pirates cling to anything that is fixed. They are tossed about, the helmsman goes overboard.)*

Bill

Man over board!

Roger *(hasn't noticed Jimmy's fall, shouting into his mike)*

Now this should be about 10 on the Beaufort scale - considerable tumbling of waves with heavy impact.

Bill

Man over board!!!

Captain

Where's Jimmy? I saw him just a moment ago.

Roger

Oh, indeed. It seems that right now the question is for once not ‘where is Jack’ – but where is Jimmy?

Jimmy from offstage

Help! Drop me a line!

Roger (*doesn't have a clue where the shouting came from*)

Jimmy? (*tries to find out where the shouting came from*)

Captain

Oh. I think we need a replacement. Tom, I appoint you to the steering committee with immediate effect.

Tom

But I can't-

Captain

Take the helm! You, Davy, you've got to use your networking skills right now. Throw out the net and employ a pull strategy! Maybe we can get Jimmy on board again.

Tom *takes the helm*

I have to admit that I'm feeling a little bit a sea right now.

Bill (*to Tom*)

Look, Tom, we're all in the same boat-

Tom

Yeah, except Jimmy-

Bill

So everyone has to help! Now stop complaining and steer!

Captain

You have to manage a complete turnaround!

Tom

What?

Captain

Get us back on the mainstream!

Tom

Without a flow chart?

Davy (*who has been looking out ahead*)

Bad bank ahead!

Tom (*the storm is too loud*)

What?

Davy

Bad bank ahead!

Tom

What kind of bad bank?

Davy

A sand bank!

Tom

Oh shit! We must have drifted into the bankruptcy!

Roger

The bankruptcy, ladies and gentlemen, being that part of the blue ocean that is filled with the ruins of many proud ships who didn't watch out for the bad banks.

Tom

That's dangerous waters we're in now! Okay, Dave, I'll try to steer around it!

(another wave crashes (sound effect))

Davy

Water, water, everywhere!

Bill

We need a bailout, I think!

Captain

Start bucketing!

(They get out buckets and start to bail)

Davy

There! Look!

Captain

What?

Davy

A floating asset!

Captain

Wow! Let's get it on board.

Roger

A floating asset? Now that sounds interesting! This is Roger Jolly reporting live from the Flying Codfish-

Captain

Networkers! Over here!

They run to the side with a net and haul up a treasure chest.

Jimmy *(offstage)*

Aaaaah! Drop me a line! Please!

Bill

Oh shit. I think he's spotted the first exchange shark. *(shouting)* Hold on Jimmy, we'll have you online in a second!

Roger

And here we have Bill, trying to play the hero- *(Bill takes his "microphone" = rope away)*
Hey!

(Bill throws rope out to Jimmy and hauls Jimmy back on board)

Jimmy, *laying on deck, panting*

About time, too.

Jack shows up from somewhere, quite undisturbed by the storm.

Jack

Hey Jimmy! How're you doing? I promised you that flow chart some time ago, I remember. Awfully sorry, took a bit longer, had slipped down in my pile. Here you are. *(hands him a bit of paper)*

Jimmy *(getting up, going over to the helm. The sea is calming down.)*

Well, thank you. *(to Tom)* What are you doing there?

Tom

Steering?

Jimmy

But you're the cook!

Tom

Well - job enrichment?

Jimmy *(looking at the flow chart)*

No, no, no! Port! *(pointing to the left)*

Tom

No, that's sherry in that barrel over there, I think. We got it from that merchant vessel last month, do you remember?

Jimmy

Oh, let me do that. *(pushes him away, Tom shrugs and walks over to the captain)*

Captain and crew *have opened the treasure chest and they're very disappointed*

And now? There's nothing in it. What do we do with it?

Davy *(puts the box over Tom's head)*

Bloody fucking useless thing.

Tom

Well. We could use it to put stuff in.

Bill

Oh man, you've got to think outside the box! *(takes the box off Tom's head)* Don't you see the possibilities?

Tom

No.

Roger *has got his rope back*

And let me interrupt for a short weather report: The storm has miraculously calmed down, the sun is breaking through and-

Bill

Will you shut up now! *(Maybe he puts one of the buckets over Roger's head)* This – is – not simply a box. *(holds the box up and points at the little compartments.)* This is – a content management system!

Tom

Oh. I see! Cool.

Bill

And... moreover... you can use it to gain a whole new perspective on any topic you want *(puts the box on the floor and climbs to stand on it, looks to the horizon)* Hey, hey what is that? That island wasn't there before the storm!

(the others rush to the side to look)

Davy

It's getting bigger!

Tom

It's still rising from the water. I've never seen anything like this.

Jimmy

It's not on the map! There's nothing about this island on my flow chart.

Bill

Do you think what I think this is?

Tom

Atlantis?

All

No...

Davy

An emerging market?

All

An emerging market!

Captain

I've seen some emerging markets in my life but this is sure one of the biggest. Let's come back for it in a few weeks and see if we can exploit it.

All

Yes!

Captain *(gets himself a new cup of coffee)*

And now: Starbucks! Uh, I mean – starboard!

All

Yo ho, yo ho, a pirate's life for me
We kindle and char, inflame and ignite
Drink up me hearties, yo ho
We burn up the city, we're really a fright
Drink up me hearties, yo ho
Yo ho, yo ho, a pirate's life for me *(repeat refrain, fade out)*

Narrator:

And so they sailed off, cruising the blue ocean, scanning the event horizon for promising floating assets, emerging markets and so on.

lights fade to black