

SELLING POINTS

Want to use humor to its fullest advantage? Here are some humor how-to's from www.humorproject.com's Joel Goodman:

- 1. PUT HUMOR INTO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT.** Display posters with such light-hearted sayings as "The brain is a wonderful organ. It starts the moment you get up in the morning and does not stop until you get to the office (Robert Frost)."
- 2. USE HUMOR AS A TOOL RATHER THAN A WEAPON.** Laughing *with* others builds confidence, brings people together and pokes fun at our common dilemmas. Laughing *at* others destroys confidence, ruptures team work and singles out individuals or groups as the butt of the joke. In the words of a 5th grade teacher, you don't have to blow out my candle to make yours glow brighter.
- 3. BUILD HUMOR INTO THE CORPORATE CULTURE.** There are a growing number of successful corporations who practice this. Southwest Airlines President Herb Kelleher is known for his shenanigans. Ben & Jerry have established the joy committee.
- 4. HUMOR'S BOTTOM LINE.** Tom Peters says business shouldn't be boring or dull. If it's not fun, you're wasting your life. Model your ability to laugh at yourself and tell stories about yourself.

Laugh it up!

Workplace humor builds trust, productivity and good feelings

by Connie Brubaker

After years of working in a customer call center, one of the service representatives quit to become a traffic cop. After a few months on the new job, a friend asked how he was enjoying it.



Connie's Comments

"Well," he replied, "the pay and the hours aren't much better, but at least

the customer is always wrong!"

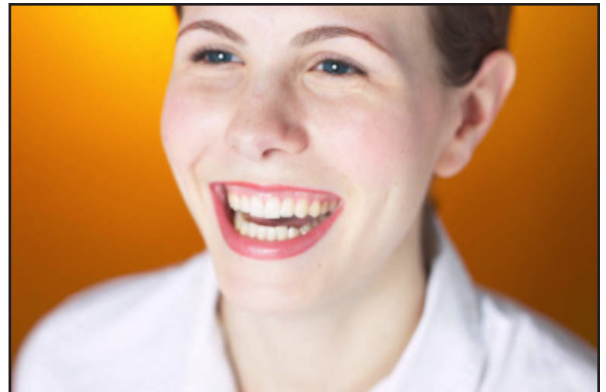
Years of conducting training workshops and giving speeches has taught me the value of humor in creating a positive atmosphere, increasing receptivity to new ideas and building trust. Humor makes an immediate and often lasting impact on audiences. It puts them at ease, gets their attention — and sometimes hammers home a point.

During my speech "The Difference Between Male and Female Consumers," I talk about women being the ones who write 80% of all checks. To illustrate the point, I spoof the ladies present, myself included, by pulling out a cascade of increasingly unlikely items from my purse as I "try" to locate the all-important checkbook. Shoes, umbrellas, calculators, even a bra follow one after another as the au-

dience laughs. By the end, I've made the impact I want — and those present know I don't take myself too seriously.

Humor is unmatched in its ability to topple defense and relax tension. If you can be easygoing, laugh easily and smile often, your good mood will envelope those around you like a warm tropical breeze.

In fact, a study by the Yale School of Management found that people's moods directly influence how pro-



ductively people work, how well they cooperate with others and how fairly they make decisions. Good moods spread more easily than bad moods (thankfully!), and laughter is the most contagious of all. Hearing laughter, we are predisposed to smile or laugh ourselves, setting up a chain reaction of good feeling.

I've seen that firsthand. Over the course of the past three months, I've

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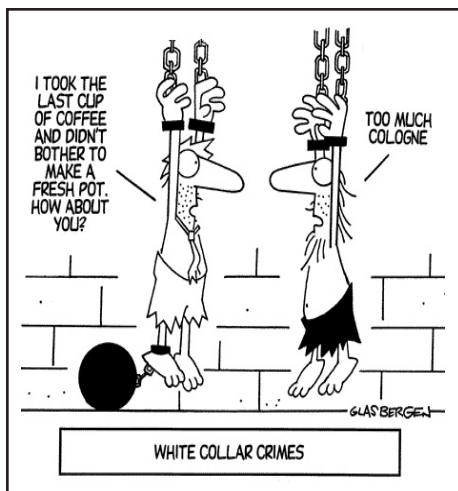
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In this issue of SOLUTIONS:

- Office laughs can boost profits, productivity
- Selling Points: Humor how-to's for the workplace
- Cartoon of the month



WANT TO IMPROVE YOUR SALES TO WOMEN? Sign up for one of Connie's informative, insightful and fun workshops on *Women's Role in the New World Market*. Choose from:

- *The Difference Between Men & Women and How They Buy*
- *Marketing to Women*
- *Selling to Women*

Connie Brubaker is a certified Integrity Systems® business consultant and professional speaker who focuses on sales, customer service and leadership.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"A sense of humor can help you overlook the unattractive, tolerate the unpleasant, cope with the unexpected and smile through the unbearable."

— Anonymous

Value of humor no laughing matter at work

continued from page 1

worked with some great companies that exemplify that idea. The employees at All Homes Mortgage and Sharp Propane laughed and joked with each other, and clearly were highly motivated. Their trust and affection for each other was clear — and that's something their clients feel as well.

Trust is essential to building good working relationships, and humor and laughter are essential to building trust. In his book, *Primal Leadership*, author Daniel Goldman writes that the sound of laughter signals a group's emotional temperature. It's a sign that their hearts, as well as their minds, are fully engaged. It's a measure of trust, comfort and a shared

sense of the world.

Ken Blanchard, author of the best-selling *One-Minute Manager*, notes that humor helps increase the amount and honesty of feedback a company receives. Employees and customers alike feel comfortable enough to tell the truth — and that's invaluable.

Be sure to use "healthy humor." Laugh with people, not at them — unless it's yourself. A little self-deprecation goes a long way.

It also provides some needed perspective when dealing with difficult circumstances. I keep a quote on my filing cabinet: *Learn to laugh at yourself and you will never cease to be amused.*

Try it. You might just like it.