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## **Humour, Attention and Engagement**

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**Humour gets attention and is engaging. Engagement is a key to learning, advertising, leadership, and team work. If you are not integrating humour into some core business functions in appropriate ways you are losing time and money.**

### **Humour important to Learning**

Students at the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (*not a particularly funny field of study*) strongly agreed that humor usage was engaging and motivating (88%), increased material retention (60%), did not decrease attendance (93%) and enhanced the overall learning experience (78%).



[Any given Goldfish pictured here.  
Attention Span: 9 seconds.]

### **Humour gets Attention**

The BBC says that a regular Web user has the attention span of a goldfish. According to Stephen Jones, editor of Growth Strategies, humor can increase attention by 700%. Getting attention is key to selling, motivating and persuading. Half of the world's most impactful ads are humorous; whereas just 1 percent of the least impactful ads are

humorous. Other studies prove that 94% of advertising practitioners see humor as an effective way to gain attention. Both the viral video and experiential marketing trends and campaigns also make use of humour.



[Ninety-eight percent of CEO's prefer workers with a sense of humour. Actual worker pictured here.]

### **Humour and Working**

Why do 98% percent of CEO's prefer job candidates with a sense of humour?

Because 84% think that those with a sense of humour do better work. And more than three-quarters of workers believe that companies that promote fun at work are more effective than companies that do not. Are you a leader who promotes fun at work?



### **Snoozing**

Seventy one percent of business people admit to having fallen asleep during a business presentation. It may just have been a big lunch that put them to sleep or it may have been the content or delivery. Change the content, delivery or deliverer. Or find ways to wake them up. Fortune 500 companies in the lowest quartile in profitability had 50% fewer engaged employees compared to those in the top quartile.

## Most Laughter Improvised

Eighty to ninety percent of laughter does not follow anything related to a joke, story telling or anything intended to be funny. Most everyday laughter is an unexpected improvised process. The trick to this is having enough presence and confidence. The good news is that you don't need to tell jokes.



## Humour in Emails

Our advice is to keep humour out of emails unless you have a positive relationship with your intended recipient. Fifty six percent of humour fails in emails because humour is dependent on body language, tone of speech and appropriate pausing. These critical factors are absent in emails.

## Make Humor Relevant

Make the humour relevant to the message and the audience. Studies have shown that the less the intended humour relates to the message, the more likely people will remember that 'funny ad' or 'funny trainer' but not remember the content. You might be getting attention at the cost of your message.

## Sarcasm

Sarcasm can be humorous but there is often some form of negativity behind sarcasm, bitterness or past grievance. Sarcasm can be a symptom of a dysfunctional team or relationship and the best way to get at this issue is to engage actively in conflict. Ask yourself, is my humour inclusive? Does it bring people together or does it create divisions?



[A Mexican Walking Fish. Attention span: unknown.]

## Creating Engagement

Laughter is 30 times more frequent in social than solitary situations. Strive then to capitalize on opportunities to use humour strategically in training, communications, meetings, and in marketing. On a personal, tactical level, remember that the truth is usually funnier than fiction so start by taking yourself and your life less seriously. Then, apply that same lesson to finding ways to bring out the natural humour and laughter of the people in your team, audience or market.

## Truth Funnier than Fiction

I was asked to deliver a workshop on the topic of humour for a telecommunications company. I asked them why they wanted a workshop on humour and they replied: “You’ll know when you get here”.



## Are you involved in:

- Meetings, conferences or events?
- Learning or Training?
- Marketing or Experiential marketing?
- Team or Leadership development?
- Communications?

Talk with us and learn how to create more engagement.

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!Improv at work engages people, teams and audiences through our creative production and professional delivery of events, videos and workshops. This is usually accomplished with some humour.

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