

## The Power of Humor

by David Glickman

Thank you for taking the time to read this article that is here under the pretense that it will inform you about “the power of humor.” Actually, now that I’ve got your attention, I wanted to let you know about this incredible multi-level marketing opportunity that gives you the opportunity to make \$50,000 a week, working from home in your pajamas.

Wait, stop! Don’t click me off! It’s a joke....I’m kidding. We really are going to discuss the power of humor. I just wanted to prove that sometimes a small little thing like that can give you a chuckle. Now, come on, admit it, you did smile once you realized it was a joke, didn’t you? It’s ok. We don’t have to be afraid to laugh anymore.

There has been a decided paradigm shift over the last fifteen years from humor often being thought of as “silly” or “not appropriate,” to it being a welcome addition to practically every area of society. The last five years especially have seen an incredible insurgence of humor into the heretofore “no humor permitted” corporate world. (I don’t think “Dilbert” would have been so widely embraced back in the 1980’s.)

So why are we embracing humor now? Out-of-control stress in both work and home life caused people’s pendulums to swing way too far to one side. Humor is now being used as one of the most powerful forces to help swing the pendulum back to center. (And maybe even further, if we’re lucky!)

Humor sells. I’m not talking about funny commercials, although they certainly are more memorable than “straight” commercials. I’m talking about a salesperson trying to make a sale. If you can get your prospect to laugh at something in your proposal....or presentation....you have instantly shot to the top of his or her mind. We like people who make us laugh....and we do business with people we like. And when people are laughing, they don’t feel like they’re being “sold”..

What can you do to get your laughs? You’re only limited by your imagination. I put together funny-phony print ads for sales people to show the prospect what their “competitors” are doing. While some feel it’s “not appropriate” to poke fun at the competition, I have never failed to get a laugh with one of these props. And, once you’ve gotten the prospect to laugh, you’ve got a much easier route to the sale. I also recommend humorous outgoing voicemail messages. It can be as simple as, “Hi, this is David Glickman. You’ve reached my voice mail, which means I’m not available right now. And, yes, it is a voice mail system. I assure you it’s not an answering machine where I’m sitting here screening your calls. I wouldn’t do something like that. That’s what I’ve got Caller ID for. So please leave me a message and I will call you back as soon as I can.”

These are just two examples of the unlimited ways you can harness your creativity to use humor as a powerful sales tool.

Humor heals. There have been countless medical studies and books written on the healing power of humor. I’m not a doctor (and I don’t play one on TV), but I’ve seen enough cases of this to know its validity.

In my line of work as a professional humorist, I laugh a lot. Every day. And I think that’s one of the reasons I haven’t had a cold or flu in years. Laughing causes endorphins to be released in the system, and they may be more powerful than diet and exercise put together. (Or so I tell myself every time I

procrastinate my workout sessions.) I think that's one of the reasons that so many comedians live such long lives. We're surrounded by laughter...our own and our audience's.

And I know if I were to get sick, especially if it was something serious, I would add the viewing of funny videos or listening to funny audios as an integral part of my healing regimen.

Humor breaks the ice. A few years ago I was asked to design a "comedy curriculum" for a traffic school. I can't think of a group of people who are more unhappy to be sitting in a room. They've all received traffic tickets. Many don't feel they deserved the ticket. Most are angry. And none of them are looking forward to sitting in a classroom for four hours.

I began the class by launching immediately into a quick song parody of the "Looney Tunes" theme song: This is it. It's traffic school. Don't feel bad. You're not a fool. Almost everyone's breaking the law. But you're the one they caught. I am Dave. This is your class. Four hours long. A pain in the...(pause) But who knows what you'll learn. On with the class, this is it.

The whole thing was less than thirty seconds, but it served its purpose. I caught them totally off guard, acknowledged the fact that they didn't want to be there, and got some instant laughs.

I proceeded to tell them how I knew they didn't want to be there, and were probably feeling some animosity towards the police officer that gave them the ticket. I asked them to pick up the printed test that was sitting on their desk, crumble it into a ball (which I demonstrated for them). I asked them, on the count of three, to pretend that I was the officer that gave them their ticket...and to get their frustrations out of their system...and I counted: one, two, three! And, of course, I was pummeled with several dozen wads of paper...and a huge amount of laughter and applause.

I always followed up by clarifying that we were just having some fun, and then praising the police officers that patrol the streets. I then launched into the curriculum to a much more receptive crowd. Using humor as an icebreaker makes difficult tasks a whole lot easier.

Humor diffuses tension. A speaker is heading to the podium, trips, and falls down. The crowd gasps and there is immediate tension. The speaker quickly looks up and says, "I will now take questions from the floor." A huge laugh follows, and the speaker picks himself up and regains his dignity.

Not all of us can think that quickly on their feet...or off their feet, as it were. But when faced with a tense situation, the power of humor will work more quickly to diffuse it than any other remedy. Another speaker steps onto the platform. Either the wood is rotted, or the supports are bad, but the speaker falls right through the platform, as it collapses around him. Again, tension fills the room. Until the speaker quickly looks up and says, "Don't mind me. It's just a stage I'm going through." When I heard that story, I was so impressed with the speaker's quick thinking, I wanted to design a stage to collapse so that I could have the opportunity to use the line. (I wisely decided not to.)

Both of these stories illustrate how humorous quick thinking can not only diffuse tension, but can raise your credibility to an even higher level than had there been no problem.

You might recall during the presidential campaign of 1996, Bob Dole had a problem during a campaign appearance. He was shaking hands from a slightly elevated area, behind a fence. At one point the fence gave way, and Dole tumbled forward and fell to the ground. It was a tense moment for all, and, luckily, he was not injured.

However, had Bob Dole thought to look up from the ground and say (loudly), “Live, from New York, it’s Saturday Night!”, he would have gotten a huge laugh, and would have shot up several points in the polls. I don’t know whether it would have changed the election results, but I do know it would have given him some great momentum that he desperately needed at that point.

Humor gets results. The bottom line is that humor gets results. No matter what the need is, there is a way that humor can be used to help serve that need. Humor negates anger. Humor creates credibility. Humor gets votes. Humor gets ratings. Humor commands attention. Humor overcomes objections. The list goes on and on.

Whatever hurdles you might be facing at work or at home, don’t be afraid to try humor as a technique for clearing that hurdle. When I was a child, I remember how my father would handle the times when I would get very angry. He would find ways to make me laugh. He understood the power of humor. I remember going to him, very upset, and yelling. And I would try to resist his attempts to make me laugh—”Don’t do that, Dad! I can’t stay mad when I’m laughing!”— and he would say, “That’s exactly right. You can’t stay mad when you’re laughing.” And then in a few minutes we would talk about what was upsetting me....in a rational, calm manner.

I learned some important life lessons from that. Lessons that have given me the ability to make an entire career out of bringing that power of laughter into organizations. My father was right: You can’t stay mad when you’re laughing. So try to keep laughing. You’ll live longer. You’ll sleep better. And people will wonder what you’re smiling at all the time.

If you’d like more information on the power of humor, visit my other website at [www.laughteristhebestmedicineandthemostincrediblehealingtoolknowntomanavailablewithoutaprescriptiontoday.com](http://www.laughteristhebestmedicineandthemostincrediblehealingtoolknowntomanavailablewithoutaprescriptiontoday.com). If you have trouble accessing the site, then you’re more gullible than most of my readers who know a joke when they see one!

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