

FUNsulting, etc. Times

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Welcome to another edition of FUNsulting, etc. Times. This issue deals with humor as a tool in presentations. Please feel free to copy this information and use it in any way that is helpful. Also visit my website at www.funsulting.com for information about programs, services and products. - Ron Culberson, MSW, CSP, Director of Everything!, FUNsulting, etc.

Humor In Practice - Presenting Powerful Presentations

You have probably heard reference to the “MTV Generation”. This usually refers to people who grew up watching MTV and who need multiple forms of stimulation to keep their attention. Long gone are the days when a crackling fire, a walk in the moonlight or a good book were considered entertaining. Now we need music, lasers and rapid-fire action or we lose interest.

When considering the delivery of a presentation, this same principle applies. Whether we like to admit it or not, a presentation, no matter how serious, must be entertaining. That does not mean that a presentation must be a Broadway production but it does mean that a presentation must be engaging. Content alone is not usually engaging. If you want your message to be remembered, you must do something more than present the information. You must create a memorable experience for the audience.

Humor is one very effective way to make a presentation memorable. Let’s look at three

specific ways of adding humor to presentations.

Verbal. The most common form of humor is delivered verbally in the form of a joke, story or quote. Verbal humor requires a sense of timing and delivery and is probably the most challenging type of humor because the effect relies solely on the presenter. The best sources for verbal humor are personal stories. Stories are powerful metaphors for universal truths in life. Plus, a personal story is unique to the presenter.

Jokes and quotes, are another form of verbal humor. Whereas they may be familiar to the audience, they do not require the presenter to “come up” with the humor. Whereas personal stories must come from you, jokes and quotes are available in books, magazines, newspapers and the Internet.

Visual. Another form of humor is visual humor. Visual humor can include funny slides or handout materials, magic, juggling, slapstick antics, etc. The power of visual humor is in the way it looks not necessarily in the way it is delivered. This type of humor

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can add a wonderful visual experience and for some people, this is the way they learn.

Interactive. The final method of using humor in a presentation is to create an atmosphere of humor or laughter with an activity or interaction. Games, role plays, and discussions are exciting ways to get an audience to create its own humor. By allowing the group to have FUN, you can rely on them to create the humor. Plus, don't forget to reward participants with FUN prizes. Toys, candy and even money can be given to those who participate in an activity as a way of having FUN and thanking them for their contribution.

Humor is a necessity in most presentations today. Audiences love it and will remember you and your point longer if you make it FUN.

Three things matter in a speech – who says it, how he says it and what he says; and of the three, the last matters the least.
– Lord John Morley quoted by Dale Carnegie in *How to Develop Self-Confidence and Influence People by Public Speaking*

Humor Resources

For more information on humor and management, check out these resources:

Wake 'Em Up: How To Use Humor and Other Professional Techniques To Create

Alarmingly Good Business Presentations.
By Tom Antion (Anchor Publishing).

The Games Trainers Play (and other training books) by Ed Scannell and John Newstrom (McGraw Hill).

Don't Let The Funny Stuff Get Away by Jeanne Robertson (Rich Publishing).

Humor In Real Life

My family went to Las Vegas in April for our kid's spring break. Even though Las Vegas is known for gambling, there are many family oriented attractions in the area including golf, amusement parks, the Hoover Dam and the Grand Canyon.

The Hoover Dam was one of the most impressive experiences of our trip. This amazing facility was completed in 1935 under budget and ahead of schedule. Imagine any construction group doing that today!

When we arrived at our "waiting" location prior to the tour, the tour guide announced loudly that in just a few minutes, we would be going on "the dam tour!" My wife and I got a great laugh out of the way the tour guide used humor to get our "dam" attention.

- Rc

Just Humor

Everybody is ignorant – only on different subjects. – Will Rogers, American Humorist.

If you like what you see, talk about us. If you don't, then keep your mouth shut!
– Robert Porterfield, Founder of the Barter Theater in Abingdon, VA, before every live performance.

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The mission of FUNsulting, etc. is to help people and organizations find and enjoy humor to achieve a healthier perspective in life or work. FUNsulting, etc. helps people have more FUN while preserving the integrity of the work they do and the lives they lead.

Ronald P. Culberson, MSW is a Certified Speaking Professional (CSP), the highest earned award from the National Speakers Association, and is one of only 421 individuals worldwide who have received this designation. He has provided entertaining and informative programs to over 30,000 people in more than 450 associations, government agencies, non-profit organizations and Fortune 500 companies. To find out more about programs, services and products visit his website at www.funsulting.com.