

Humour in the Workplace

Humour – from the Latin; *to be fluid and flexible*.

Humour in the Workplace is a practical ethos that encourages enjoyment in employment. Humour will increase productivity, communication, teamwork, enthusiasm, staff retention and work life balance. It will decrease stress levels, mediation, training time, and recruitment costs. Quite simply,

PEOPLE WHO HAVE FUN GET MORE DONE.

With easy to implement workplace practises, Humour is more than telling jokes or forced frivolity. It is the development of a GSOH – both on an individual and organizational level.

What is a GSOH?

Good sense of humour. Every would-like-to-meet advert mentions it, and increasingly, Humour is an attribute sought during the recruitment process. Someone with a GSOH is more likely to work well with a team and less likely to respond to stress in a negative way.

This coveted sense of humour is **learned behaviour**. Therefore it is a skill that can be cultivated and honed. Every individual has a sense of humour; what they find funny or enjoyable. This will have been influenced by family, community, and personal taste. Moreover every organization has a sense of humour. This will have evolved from the collective humours of the individuals making up the organization and from external sources such as the media, culture and the nature of the business.

Developing a good sense of humour, or a BETTER sense of humour is particularly important as the face of work is now in a constant state of change. Humour is FLUID AND FLEXIBLE. A culture that does not bend and roll with the punches will eventually break. Using Humour does not mean work isn't taken seriously, it is just taken lightly.

Individuals and organizations with BETTER senses of humour display high levels of tolerance – to each other and to workplace challenges.

Humour does not BRACE, it will EM-BRACE.

The Humour Habit

Once upon a time, a good sense of humour in a man meant he could **tell** a joke, and a good sense of humour in a woman meant she could **take** a joke. But with the sexual revolution and our increasingly diverse workplace, Humour

has had to live by it's own definition, and be fluid and flexible.

Joke telling, practical jokes and once popular activities such as paint balling or go-karting, are SUBJECTIVE. They run a high risk of offending or creating negative competitiveness. Employment Law, presently sides with the offended – if you think there has been a slight, then there has, whether the other person meant to offend or not. Perceived offence is grounds for litigation. Humour, therefore, with its subjective nature, is a minefield. But the rewards far outweigh the risks. Health and Bottom Line, personal and professional – we all just want to have fun, we all just want to have funds. Therefore the development of Humour in the Workplace has had to evolve. There are many rituals, ideas and skills, which can be implemented – individually, small teams, or through out an organization.

**There are three steps to Humour ...
As you will plainly see**

Step One **DISCIPLINE** – cognitive practise of the skills and rituals you chose to employ. Some daily, some weekly, some monthly, and some yearly. Developing a GOOD sense of humour.

Step Two **HABIT** – A Humour reponse becomes the learned behaviour. Seeing the lighter side, finding the flexible solution, practising compassion and tolerance with workmates. Laughing easily, laughing louder, laughing longer. There is now a BETTER sense of humour.

Step Three **INSTINCT** We are born fun. Seeing funny and being funny. As we get older judgement plays a role and our taste becomes acquired. In effect limiting our humour to telling a joke or taking a joke. But in the beginning FUNNY JUST IS. This can be re-discovered. This is the BEST sense of humour.

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