

**HUMOUR**

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**WORK**

**Why Laughter  
Is Good  
Business**



SPECIALIZED SERVICES

It's funny, but I've been waiting a long time for this to happen... something that I enjoy is now good for me! In fact, it turns out that it's always been good for me. Throughout my life I've considered humour as simply good fun, but over the last couple of decades it has proved so beneficial that even the medical profession are beginning to recognize and applaud the therapeutic effects of a gigantic guffaw or even a good giggle.



When I visit my family doctor I am always subjected to his 'unique' brand of humour. While it rarely elicits a rollicking knee-slapper type of response, his ever present jokes always relieve at least a portion of whatever tension I may be experiencing. For this reason, a very significant percentage of his patients walk out of his office much happier, and feeling much better about themselves, than they were when they entered... regardless of their medical condition.

A resounding belly laugh has been shown to reduce our blood pressure to a point even slightly below the normal relaxation rate. Any amount of laughter and levity will exercise the lungs and raise the level of oxygen in the blood. In addition, it has been proved that 20 minutes of laughter will burn the same number of calories as 20 minutes of jogging!

O.K., so I fabricated the last one, but I wanted to make sure I still had your attention, because it is true that laughter stimulates many of the same positive physiological changes as exercise.

Regular and frequent measures of merriment will create enough fun in everyone's life to raise the joy level of situations that might otherwise cause severe bouts of stress. And it's worth remembering that stress has been identified as one of the major causes of illness in today's society.

Other studies have revealed that a joyous outlook encourages expansive thinking and improves our ability to solve problems; a major reason to encourage laughter in the business world.



Sadly too many traditional thinkers in the ranks of senior management still believe that laughter in the workplace is an interrupting influence and downright counter-productive. The more enlightened recognize that a generous helping of mirth will create happier and healthier employees in a more relaxed and enjoyable place to work. All of which automatically translates into reduced absenteeism, increased staff retention, higher productivity and greater profit levels.

Yet one of the biggest advantages of maintaining a humorous attitude is that it provides us with a powerful sense of perspective and balance in our lives. Not only does it allow us to flourish in a hectic environment (currently referred to as 'pursuing a career' or 'having a life'), it also helps us build relationships with others much more quickly, and maintain them far more easily.



So why don't we have more fun in our lives? Some startling statistics tell us that, as children, we laugh over 400 times every day. Yet, by the time we reach the age of 35, that frequency has plummeted to 15.

Why...? Simple. We grew up... We matured... We got a job... And 'everyone knows' that you've got to get serious about a career eventually. So we got serious and got busy. Ask 10 of your friends today, "How are you doing?" At least 8 of them will tell you, "I'm busy, I'm soooo busy, I'm having to work all the hours God sends and a few he doesn't even know about." O.K. so maybe most of them won't have the sense of humour to use that last line, but the message will be the same. We're all so busy making a living, we forget about living a life.

I fell into the same trap when I was in my early 30's. I was so busy that I eventually received the age-old award of the "excessively occupied"... an Ulcer! And that was before the days of the palm pilot and the cell phone.

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From that experience, let me give you some advice... GET OVER IT! Start laughing again, release the joy inside of you and focus on having fun. It really isn't too late.

You know you need some humour in your life when.....

“..... your idea of a joke is that someone else is sent to that conference  
in Kalamazoo.”

“..... you know that someone's a visitor to the office because she's smiling.”

“..... working only half a day means you can take it easy for the other  
12 hours.”

Don't worry, be happy. That musical advice from an earlier era, gives us the secret of a more joyful and more productive existence.



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