



401 Ways

to Create a **More Fun,**
Inspiring, and **ROCKING**
Workplace Culture

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Hi, I'm Michael!

Life is too short to work in a soul-sucking, fun-sucking workplace!

Let's remember that work has a massive impact on our lives that goes far beyond just earning a paycheck.

Work affects our mental and physical health, it impacts our marriages and family lives, and it's just a wee bit of a time-sucker.

It affects where we live, who we socialize with, our personal growth and development, and it provides us with a sense of purpose and meaning.

And without a doubt, work has an enormous impact on our level of happiness.

So, I think we owe it to our employees *and their families*, our customers, and to our souls to create as much of a positive, and as inspiring a workplace as possible because this thing called work matters – *a lot!*

And if you want your organization to be wildly successful, then know this:

Your workplace culture is your #1 competitive advantage.



Culture is Your #1 Competitive Advantage

Wonder what it takes to earn a reputation as an “awesome place to work” in your industry or community? Building an **inspiring culture** with **intentional leadership** will help you attract, hold onto, and engage employees.

Your workplace culture is the key to attracting great employees and turning those employees into lifelong, loyal fans of your business.

Your workplace culture is the key to attracting customers and turning your customers into lifelong, raving fans of your business.

Your culture is the key to driving outrageous results.

But here's what great organizations and inspiring leaders understand – great cultures don't just happen by accident!

You can't buy your culture at IKEA (you probably wouldn't understand the instructions, anyways).

You need to be intentional about building a great culture.

Which means promoting your culture and hiring and onboarding employees with your culture in mind. This is such an important part of any successful culture that I've written an entire book on it: **Hire, Inspire, and Fuel Their Fire: How to Recruit, Onboard, and Train New Employees to Live Your Culture Out Loud.**

Being intentional about your culture means that you need to translate your workplace values into observable behaviors and intentionally live those values out loud.

Being intentional about your culture means that when you make any decision, you consider how that decision both creates the desired culture you hope to achieve and reflects your desired culture.

Being intentional about your culture requires that all your employees understand that they play a critical role when it comes to shaping your culture and that the majority of your employees learn what it means to embrace the role of a frontline leader. This is so key that, yup, you guessed it, I wrote an entire book on the topic: **The Jerk-Free Workplace: How You Can Take the Lead to Create a Happier, More Inspiring Workplace.**



Finally, creating a “want to” workplace instead of a “have to” workplace means you really should leverage your humor advantage to help you and your business laugh all the way to the bank.

You see, I’ve had the pleasure of traveling all over the world researching, writing, and speaking about inspiring workplaces and inspiring leaders – and so often one of the keys to their success has been humor!

Now, to be clear, it’s not necessarily about being funny, and it’s certainly not about telling jokes or becoming a stand-up comedian.

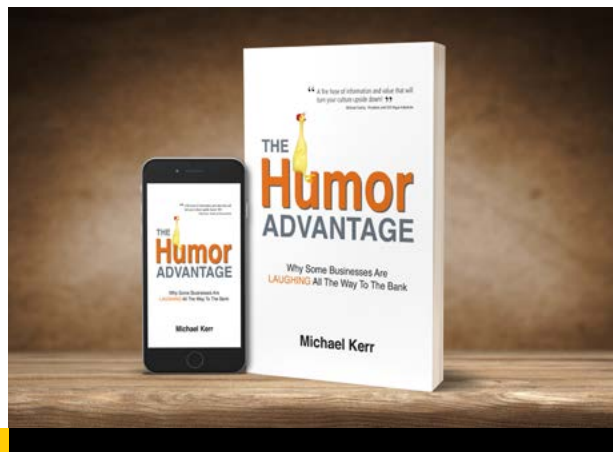
Embracing humor at work is about doing things in a spirit of fun rather than trying to be funny. It’s about laughing at the things we have no control over and especially, being able to laugh at ourselves.

Embracing your humor advantage is about looking for strategic opportunities to use humor to stand out from the herd to attract employees and customers. And it’s about leveraging your humor resources to build a more positive, resilient, and innovative workplace culture.

There’s a chicken and egg relationship when it comes to humor and workplace culture: Humor helps build a more collaborative, innovative, and humane culture, but it also reflects a more positive, humane culture where employees find it easy to bring their sense of humor along for the ride where humor happens organically.

This is such an important and overlooked topic that – you guessed it – I wrote an entire book on this serious subject: **The Humor Advantage: Why Some Businesses are Laughing All the Way to the Bank.**

So, with that as a brief introduction to why culture and humor matter, let’s dive into some ideas for how you can build a more fun and inspiring workplace that drives outrageous results!



Create a Culture that Celebrates **Work** and *Fun*

Culture moment: Creating an inspiring workplace isn't about a 1, 10, or even 20-times-a-year events; it's about how you work on an on-going basis.

It's about the small things everyone does consistently to build a better workplace.

1

Turn “Blah blah blah” into “Rah rah rah!” Create an inspiring workplace vision and mission statement that connects employees and your customers to an exciting, memorable sense of purpose.

2

If you want to up the fun factor at work, then include humor or fun as one of your core workplace values and define what that looks like.

3

Create a humor squad/team. Have volunteers apply and compete for positions to make sure you get committed employees.

4

Create a rotating “Humor Ambassador” position to champion humor in your workplace and create fun initiatives. Have employees apply for the role. Include a small budget. Make it a four-month term so employees don't burnout and to allow as many employees as possible to have the chance to participate.

5

Create a fun “Humor Code of Conduct” which encourages the use of respectful, positive humor in the workplace. (Make it fun so it doesn’t backfire and suck the fun out of your workplace!)

6

Create a fun list of “Workplace Rules to Work By”: Similar to #5, but this would be a list of ideas that would reflect your core values and remind people of basic rules of the road to live by – but in a fun, conversational way.

7

Create a fun slogan to remind people of the importance of embracing fun. One credit union, for example, uses the mantra “Work made fun gets done!”

8

Create a fun mascot that reminds people of the importance of bringing their sense of humor along for the ride.

9

Create a 3-in-3 challenge where you challenge every department or team in your company to come up with 3 fun ideas that they can implement over the course of 3 months.

10

Set specific targets around fun. Aim for at least one fun event or fun new initiative every quarter.

11

Make sure you explicitly let employees know that it's okay to have some fun at work – don't assume they know this already!

12

Create a humor library and stockpile with both humorous books and serious books that talk about the importance of putting humor to work (ahem, did I mention I wrote a book called *The Humor Advantage?*)

13

Measure it! Okay, I know it's not easy to tally up the number of "humor units" in your workplace, but make sure you survey your employees on a regular basis. Keep your pulse on how your employees are feeling about their work – remember humor and laughter in the workplace is a key indicator of success, akin to the canary in the coal mine.



Harness Humorosity

The outrageous power of play, fun, and humor to unshackle people and transform soul-sucking workplaces.

Jumpstarting a **Culture Shift**

Culture moment: A great question to ask about your culture is this:
What are the unwritten rules for how everyone behaves in our workplace?

14

Like the Humor Squad, why not create a Culture Club that champions your culture?

15

Create a culture “3-in-3 challenge” where every team or department is encouraged to do 3 things over the course of 3 months that will have a positive impact on your culture.

16

Do a values blitz where you focus on one of your core values for a week at a time, encouraging all your employees to live that value in the most outrageously loud way as possible.

17

Create monthly culture themes, where you rally everyone around a specific aspect of your culture for one month. (For ideas: Monthly Culture Themes)

18

Use the “Wheel of Change” formula to focus on a few key behaviors that will impact your culture. Have everyone on your team commit to:

One thing you need to CONTINUE doing

One thing you need to STOP doing

One thing you need to START doing or CREATE

One thing you need to LEARN TO LIVE WITH

19

Hold a culture town hall once a quarter or at least once a year where you solicit feedback, celebrate cultural successes, brainstorm ideas, and perhaps bring in a charming, hilarious speaker to speak about the importance of workplace culture (*I happen to know a fabulous speaker!*).

20

Hold culture pitch days once a quarter where employees or teams can pitch their culture idea.

21

Invest in your culture by offering workplace culture training. (For organizations that are serious about investing in their employees and their culture, I have created a comprehensive **Culture Leadership Academy** course/membership site with generous bulk discounts for group enrolments because of course you want to create as many culture champions as possible!)

22

Keep your culture messages alive by opening all your meetings with a “culture moment.”

23

Keep your culture messages alive by holding monthly lunch n’ learns focused on different aspects of workplace culture.

24

Subscribe to an on-going infusion of culture messages by signing up for my weekly **Inspiring Workplaces e-Newsletter**.

25

Create a monthly culture video series for employees or subscribe to a video series (*Again, I know someone who can help!*).

26

Create a fun, engaging, humor-filled culture guidebook for all your employees that helps bring your culture to life.

Culture nugget: Another great question to ponder as you think about your workplace culture: **Do you match your own hype?**

In other words, does your culture really live up to how you describe it on your website, in your career ads, and in all your promotions?



Get REAL

Create space for your authentic self
to show up.

Creating a **Fun Physical Work Environment**

Culture moment: Research suggests that gerbils kept in stark, boring, gray, cubicle-like environments lose brain cells, while gerbils in stimulating environments grow more brain neuron connections!

27

Encourage employees to personalize their work areas as much as possible. Businesses that still discourage this are in the dark ages!

28

Create a humor bulletin board where people can post humorous thoughts of the day, humorous quotes, cartoons, and funny photos.

29

Create a “Deep Thought,” “Inspiring Quote of the Day,” “Groaner of the Day” or “Pun of the Day” board.

30

Create a Wall of Fame featuring your employees complete with fun photos, a fun tagline or motto for each employee, and a fun alternative job title.

31

Create a Wall of Fame that highlights key milestones and accomplishments of either your company or your employees.

32

Hire a cartoonist to sketch caricatures of employees and display them in a prominent place.

33

Create a Captions Board featuring employee photos that change on a regular basis where people can add captions to the photos.

34

Create a “Ministry of Silly Walks” hallway (based on the old John Cleese/Monty Python sketch) where people are encouraged to walk in a silly way for a portion of the hallway.

35

Create a “Vegas Room” decorated like a casino as a fun way to create a safe space for challenging conversations (because what happens in Vegas...).

36

Create fun directional signs or street signs for hallways and stairwells.

37

Name all your meeting rooms, stairwells, hallways, even your elevators and all your offices something funny or inspirational that reflects your culture.

38

Create a truly welcoming reception area by making it fun! Stockpile it with funny office props, humorous reading materials, or funny signs.

39

Post funny signs with funny slogans throughout the office.

40

Post an inspirational sign on your entrance door to remind people to be aware of the energy they bring into your workplace. For example, the following sign greets employees on the front door as they enter the Indiana University Health Department: Please take responsibility for the energy you bring into this space. Your words matter. Your behaviors matter. Our patients and our teams matter. *Take a slow, deep breath and make sure your energy is in check before entering. Thank you.*

41

Hold a contest for the funniest decorated office or cubicle.

42

Assign fun names to all your office equipment and even office plants.

43

Put up funny signs or quotes that reflect your cultural values on the back of washroom stall doors.

44

Put up funny departmental signs identifying different departments' offices with fun names. (The Mitchell Airport in Milwaukee has a "Recombobulation Area" right after security where discombobulated people can get recombobulated!)

45

Create, as so many companies are doing, a noise-free/meditation space for people who need to chill in order to keep their sense of humor intact!

46

Create a “Humor First Aid” kit and stockpile it with funny resources that employees can access when faced with a “serious emergency.”

47

Create a dedicated humor room that can be used for creative brainstorming sessions or as a stress-relieving space.

48

Once a month encourage employees to hide post-It notes of praise and encouragement in creative places throughout your office so people keep finding them as they go about their day.

49

Create a Wall of History to celebrate your origins and key milestones.

50

Create a Values Wall to bring your values to life in fun, meaningful ways.

51

Create a Purpose Hallway where you celebrate your company’s reason for being on one side (including downstream impacts on your client’s lives and all your community or charity work) and celebrate your employees’ individual reasons for working on the other side.

52

If you have an on-site cafeteria rename the menu items to reflect your values and culture.

53

Put a piano somewhere in a common area where employees (or clients) are invited to sit down and entertain people for a few minutes.

54

Designate a hallway where employees can hang framed pictures of their children's artwork.

Culture nugget: The culture guide from Zappos once told me that their fun office environment doesn't necessarily help create a better workplace, but it reflects the fact they work in a fun, humane, inspiring workplace.



Spark Curiosity & Embrace Intellectual Honesty

Unquestionably question everything!

Hire, Inspire, and Fuel Their Fire

Culture moment: According to one U.S. study, 1/3 of all new employees begin looking for another job immediately after starting a new one! So, it's critical to start off on the right foot and make new employees feel like they're a part of the team right away!

55

Promote your culture on your website in fun ways and with social media to attract more employees and the right employees for you.

56

Start teaching potential hires about your culture by creating fun job descriptions that truthfully describe the qualities of the candidates you are looking for and the qualities you are NOT looking for.

57

Hire *with* humor so your ads stand out from the herd.

58

Hire for attitude and humor first and foremost – you can train for so many other aspects of the job, but you can't order a personality transplant.

59

Hire not just for a culture fit, but for culture growth: people who will help you move your culture in the right direction.

60

Send new hires a fun office “survival kit” before they start their job. Something that makes them feel welcome while also sending a message about your culture.

61

Create a fun trivia quiz to help new employees learn about your culture.

62

Create a “scavenger list” of fun, obscure facts about employees that new hires must complete within a month. This will help them connect with all your employees.

63

Have all employees wear a “Hello, My Name is _____” or a “Hey, I’m New Here!” tag or identifier badge for one month after they are hired.

64

Have new hires answer trivia questions about themselves (change the questions up every time) then at the end of their first week on the job hold a trivia contest where your employees compete to see how well they got to know the new hires.

65

Match employees with a culture mentor – someone who can guide them on your cultural norms and values.

66

Create a humorous, upbeat employee orientation video that will introduce new hires to the values, vision, and team in an engaging way.

67

Hold a parody of “Jeopardy” or “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire” in training sessions to help onboard new employees.

68

Create a fun ritual for new hires. New employees who start with the company Mindvalley, for example, touch a statue of Wonder Woman while reciting the “Oath of Awesomeness” from the movie Kung Fu Panda.

69

Reserve special parking spaces for new hires for their first week.

70

As Intel does, have a red-carpet ceremony for new hires.

71

Welcome new employees with a fun banner.

72

Welcome new employees with a musical tribute performed by some of your very own employees.

73

Hold regular touch point interviews with new employees for the first 6 months of their job.

For many more ideas and insights on how to hire and onboard with your culture in mind, be sure to read: **[Hire, Inspire, and Fuel Their Fire: How to Recruit, Onboard, and Train New Employees to Live Your Culture Out Loud.](#)**

Meetings for the **Seriously Challenged**

Culture moment: Meetings are key culture touchpoints. Meetings offer opportunities for you to build the kind of culture you desire, and they reflect your desired culture. A study reported in Scientific America found that the most effective meetings were meetings with a lot of humor: Participants were more engaged, more open, and more creative.

74

Create fun agendas by putting funny quotes, catchy titles, or jokes in them. A fun agenda might help people actually want to be at the meeting and will send the message that the meeting is not going to be the equivalent of watching paint dry!

75

Create “theme” agendas. For example, use movie titles to describe each agenda item.

76

Purposely put a “blooper” or “word of the week” in your agenda. Then, award a prize to the first person who finds it.

77

Name your meeting room something fun and inspiring – after all, who wants to spend time in a BORED room! (Some Yahoo offices have dubbed their meeting rooms names such as Coherent or Consistent, so employees get to say, “Susan? Oh, she’s in coherent right now.”)

78 Occasionally hold meetings in different locations to spark creative insights.

79 Create an official “Meeting Jester” position who is responsible for bringing a little levity to meetings.

80 Break the ice! Open in-person or virtual video meetings with a short, fun icebreaker. Read on throughout this list for ideas on how to break the ice.

81 Share meeting icebreaking duties – have a different person be responsible for a new icebreaker every meeting.

82 Social time before the meeting. This is even more important with virtual meetings, since virtual employees don’t get the usual dose of “water cooler chat,” so start virtual meetings ten minutes earlier than the actual formal meeting start time to allow time for personal conversations.

83 Hold a drinking game during your meetings where everyone must take an exaggerated sip from their coffee/tea/water every time someone uses a certain phrase, word, or acronym.

84 Create some regular prizes that you award at the end of each meeting, such as best quip or comeback of the meeting, best use of jargon, or wackiest idea of the meeting.

85

Name in the hat. Every time someone says something particularly wise, pithy, memorable, or funny, their name goes into a hat for a draw at the end of the meeting.

86

Assign a “meeting ref” who oversees any meeting “violations” in a fun way.

87

Use the www.WheelofNames.com. The Wheel of Names is a great way to add some fun to your virtual (or in-person) meetings. You can use the wheel to give out small door prizes, to randomly assign who must answer a particular question, or offer up an idea. You can even put images onto the wheel and use it in creative ways to turn it into an interactive game.

88

Open with a funny or thought-provoking quote. There are hundreds of great sites on the web for quotes, and you also can find great quotes in the archived issues of my weekly **Inspiring Workplaces e-Newsletter**.

89

Open with a thought-proving question drawn from a “question jar.”

90

Meeting icebreaker question: The cast of characters from the last TV show you watched is who you are going to be quarantined with for 14 days – so who will you be quarantined with?

91

Drawing conclusions. Have a quick “Everybody draw their best version of _____” and then have everyone show their work after two minutes and vote on the winner or most creative masterpiece.

92

Have everyone describe where they were born using only food items.

93

Show and tell. Everyone must do a one-minute show and tell presentation with an artifact from their house/remote office that reveals something personal about themselves.

94

Alter ego names. Assign everyone an alter-ego name for the meeting based on this simple formula: Your alter ego name is: Your First Pet’s Name + Your Mother’s Maiden Name = Your New Alter Ego Name.

95

Rock star names. Same as above, only using everyone’s “Rock Star” name as generated at the website: **Rock Star Names.**

96

Country Western names. Same as above, only using everyone’s “Country Western” name as generated at the website: **Country Star Names.**

97

Another alter ego name: How you are feeling right now + the last thing you ate.

98

Dragon Name: Your first name spelled backwards + your current mood + “Hoarder of _____ the last thing you ate.”

99

A penny for your thoughts. Pull out a coin and read the date, then have everyone talk briefly about their top memory of that year, where they were, and what they were doing.

100

Winner for a year! Super quick icebreaker: “The last thing you bought is what you’ve won a year’s supply of. So, what did you win for a year?”

101

Mighty-minis. An icebreaker (or middle-of-the-meeting-breaker) for virtual meetings: Have everyone bring a small household object and give everyone a turn to show just a small portion of the object. The rest of the participants then try to guess what the object is.

102

Warning labels. Ask everyone “If you came with a warning label, what would it read?”

103

Video kick off. Open with a short, fun video, such as **The Happy to Go to Work Fun Dancers** video featured on my YouTube Inspiring Workplaces channel.

104

Icebreaker question: What celebrity would help our organization the most and why?

105

Hold a humor break in the middle of a longer meeting where people share a funny story, a safe joke, or something funny they read in the news.

106

Icebreaker question: What was the worst job you had, and what specifically made it so bad?

107

Have a meeting icebreaker where everyone draws the name of an exciting movie from a hat, and they must explain it in the most boring terms possible. (For example, for Groundhog Day: “Man turns off his alarm clock 3,764 times.”)

108

Hold a “whine and cheese” break in your meeting where people are allowed to whine about something that is driving them batty in a funny, exaggerated way. But then make sure you bottle the whine by reminding everyone this is their only opportunity to whine – whine now, or forever hold your peace!

109

Icebreaker question: What TV show or movie title best describes your workplace culture?

110

Icebreaker question: If you could change one policy or rule in your workplace, what would you change and why?

111

If you could change your job title to better reflect your role and responsibilities, what would you call yourself?

112

What's your most annoying workplace buzzword or jargon phrase?

113

What's one thing we could do to make the workplace more fun?

114

What's one thing we ought to be doing for our customers that we're currently not doing?

115

What's something we need to do more to foster more ideas in the workplace?

116

Who's the most creative person you know and what makes them so creative?

117

What's the best movie you've seen recently?

118

What's your favorite TV sitcom of all time?

119

What's the weirdest job you ever had?

120

What's the number one place you want to visit in the world?

121

If you won the lottery tomorrow, what would you do?

122

If you could play a musical instrument that you currently don't play, what would it be?

123

What other language would you most like to speak fluently?

124

What was your very first job?

125

What is your favorite season?

126

What would your last meal request be?

127

What are you most looking forward to in the coming month?

128

What's the funniest thing that has happened to you recently?

129

What's the funniest thing someone has said to you recently?

130

If you could start your own country, what would it be called, where would it be located, and what's the first law you would pass?

131

If our organization/team/business was a t-shirt, here's what it would say...

132

If you could be the Big Cheese for a day in our company, how would you spend the day?

133

If you were the Big Cheese for a day, what one rule would you create or eliminate?

134

If you had a magic wand, what would you change instantly about your job?

135

Celebrate the wacky theme days. Recognize whatever fun, offbeat theme day or holidays it happens to be, such as “Talk Like a Pirate Day” or “Make Up Your Own Holiday Day” by simply announcing the day’s theme at the start of the meeting and/or post it on a whiteboard or flip chart for everyone to see. Go to my website, www.MikeKerr.com for a listing of the current month’s wacky theme days.

136

Recognize someone on the team by sharing and praising a positive piece of news about them.

137

Pass the praise. Have each person pass along a piece of praise to another person, going around the room until everyone has had a turn praising and being praised.

138

Spread the news! Share a good news story that has happened in your organization or industry.

139

What does your name mean? A meeting icebreaker where everyone must assign an adjective to each letter of their first name that describes them (Mike = mischievous, impish, kind, and energetic!).

140

What's your favorite part of your job?

141

Fun facts. Share a fun fact related to your business – some weird statistic, strange historical fact, or offbeat piece of trivia.

142

Open the meeting with a “Meet _____” segment, where you introduce someone new to your organization complete with some fun, personal facts about the individual.

143

Stupid human tricks. Yes, open with a segment of stupid human tricks wherein you encourage anyone to step forward with any weird skill or talent they possess, be it ventriloquism, touching their tongue to their nose, wiggling their ears, or simply arching one eyebrow in dramatic, “Spock-like” fashion. Award a small prize for the best stupid human trick as voted on by participants.

144

Public praise. Read out a rave review customer letter or raving comment by a customer.

145

A moment of gratitude. Have everyone share 3 simple things they are grateful for. Or open or close each meeting with everyone sharing one simple gratitude.

146

Brainstorm something fun or silly to fire up the creative juices, focus people in the present, and to remind participants of the basic rules of a good brainstorming exercise (no blocking, listen to each other, leapfrog off each other's ideas, go for quantity not quality). Potential topics include: Come up with the most number of uses for a paper clip, create a new superhero that reflects your best business practices, come up with 10 alternative uses for a stapler, 20 ways to add value to your customer service, or alternative names for your meeting rooms.

147

Scale of 1-10. Go around the room and have everyone say how they are doing on a scale of 1-10. For Option B, have them not only say their number, but why they chose the number they did.

148

Picture this. Have participants share a photo or picture they drew before the meeting that best represents what is on the top of their mind right now.

149

Get your nerd on. Have a nerd theme meeting where everyone dresses like a nerd for your meeting.

150

Ugliest shirt theme. Have everyone wear their ugliest shirt to your meeting and vote on a winner.

151

Mini-work-trivia. Have a five-minute trivia challenge game with questions related to your industry or organization. This could easily become a tradition at every meeting.

152

Mini-general-trivia. Have a five-minute trivia game NOT related to your business.

153

Book reviews. Open with a book review of a work-related book that someone read. This could become a rotating tradition where someone new each meeting is called upon to provide a synopsis and review of a book.

154

In the news: Share some interesting news articles or opinion pieces from the news that relate to your industry.

155

Open with the “stress-busting tip” of the day. This could become a tradition along the lines of the “safety moment” but instead focusing in on stress management and overall wellness topics. The tips could run the gamut from how to get a better night’s sleep to nutrition tips; from how to prioritize your workload effectively to how to tap into your sense of humor.

156

The joke’s on you! Open with the joke of the day. Keep it clean - stay away from any sexual, ethnic, religious, or political humor.

157

What’s so funny? Ask everyone or anyone to share the funniest work-related anecdote that has happened to them since the last time you met.

158

Imaginary guests. Introduce the special guests attending your meeting in spirit only: To add some fun to your meetings and to help your team brainstorm from some different perspectives, try creating a few exaggerated imaginary characters who attend all your meetings. Make one an imaginary superhero – someone who represents your company values in an outrageously exaggerated way. When you brainstorm or debate a new decision, you then get to ask, “What would Super Dave or Fantastic Fran do?” Then create a character who represents your most ideal customer, and a character who represents your most powerful nemesis (perhaps your main competitor), after all, every great superhero requires a super villain! Flesh out their attributes, then use the characters as points of reference in all your planning, brainstorming, and communication efforts.

159

Open each meeting with a Top-10 list. It could be funny or merely interesting facts or tidbits about your industry. A simple one to try is a “Top-10 Reasons We’re Having This Meeting”, then create a list that intertwines the humorous with some serious reminders as to why the meeting is important.

160

Announce the “Meeting Rules of the Road,” but since the idea is to set a positive tone make sure they are fun! You might consider announcing, for example, some fun penalties for meeting infractions, such as: Whoever is caught texting or answering a cell phone call will have to dance an Irish jig or pay a dollar into the social fund committee.

161

Announce a “word of the day” for your meeting. Define what the word means, use it in a sentence, and then encourage people to weave it into as many conversations as they can.

162

Announce the “weasel word” of the day for the meeting: a word or phrase that you are trying NOT to use in your workplace. Fine people a dollar every time they use it in the meeting.

163

Open the meeting with a wacky sound that becomes your official “start of the meeting kickoff” signal: a gong, kazoo, or bagpipes would all work fabulously. Except for the bagpipes.

164

Have everyone wear name tags revealing a word that reflects their energy level or mood.

165

Have each person around the table take a moment to thank someone, as a way of reminding people how important it is to regularly praise employees in your organization. The person doesn't necessarily have to be present at the meeting, it could be a simple public recognition of someone that serves also as a reminder that after the meeting everyone present at the meeting should take the time to acknowledge the individual in person.

166

Fun dance! Have everyone stand and do the “fun dance” for one minute. And yes, you can do this virtually.

167

Acknowledge any birthdays, anniversary dates, or special occasions happening in any of the meeting participants' lives.

168

Open with an interesting “This Day in History” fact (Google “this day in history” to find examples). Bonus points if you find a few that are not only interesting but also relevant to your industry.

169

Anagram challenge. Have each participant come up with as many anagrams for their full name as possible in one minute.

170

Have everyone stand and spell their name using only the movement of their hips.

171

Theme nametags. Rather than have everyone wear nametags with their names on them, have everyone wear a tag with a word on it that best describes their work situation since you last met. Or their middle name. Or their dream travel destination. Or their favorite sitcom. The possibilities are endless.

172

Stand proud. Open with the question: What's one thing you have done since the last meeting of which you are most proud?

173

Funny questions. Open with the question: What's the funniest thing someone has asked you since the last meeting.

174

Thanks for the help! Name one person who has helped you since the last meeting.

175

Hold a "stand up, sit down" meeting where everyone stands for every other agenda item, to change up the energy and encourage some movement/exercise.

176

Surprise, surprise! Start by having everyone share one thing everyone would be surprised to learn about them.

177

Ask everyone what their unique superpower is?

178

“Love it or loathe it?” Run through a series of rapid-fire, non-controversial issues and get people to vote on whether they love it or loathe it.

179

For virtual meetings only: Have everyone take a few seconds to have a good look at everyone on their cameras, then have everyone turn off their cameras for 10 seconds. During those 10 seconds everyone must change just one thing about their physical appearance. Turn the cameras back on and go quickly around person-by-person to see who can guess what’s changed.

180

Ask the question, “What is one thing people tend to get wrong about me when they first meet me?”

181

Hold an impromptu paper airplane contest.

182

Hand out fun office toys or props to get the creative juices flowing and help people unwind.

183

Add a “rumor mill” section to allow people to safely bring up work-related rumors.

184

Create a fun ritual or tradition to end your meetings on a high note. It could be hitting a giant gong or reciting an oath.

Culture nugget: Poorly run meetings are a huge source for stress for employees — so much so that some employees even leave their jobs because of soul-sucking meetings! So, make sure you get your meetings right!



Shake n’ Make

Disrupt up the status quo to create something new, something different, or something outrageously better than before.



Think Outside the *Bored* Room

Creativity is the currency of success.



Ignite Deep Impact

A relentless belief that we are here to make a profound impact on every client.

Creating a **Culture of Open** and **Honest Communication**

Culture moment: One of the single biggest indicators of future success in an organization is the level of open and honest communication. And yes, once again, a little (or a lot) of humor can help.

185

As Beryl Health does, hold regular “Chat n Chews” where employees can ask senior managers questions over coffee or snacks with no set agenda.

186

Institute random coffee dates where everyone’s name goes into a random name generator and then people are paired up for a coffee date – virtual or in-person. These are great ways to break down silos and connect people who don’t often have the chance to interact.

187

Random coffee team meetups. Like above but with 4 people randomly meeting.

188

Use Top-10 (or 9.5 or 11 and $\frac{3}{4}$) lists to communicate workplace messages in a fun way.

189

Do a spoof of a TV talk show, complete with a desk, TV host, and guests from management that will gladly answer all your pertinent questions.

190 Add a humorous quote or funny deep thought to your e-mail signature.

191 Instead of the usual, boring e-mail autoreply or out of office reply, create a fun, creative one.

192 Add a humorous option to your voicemail. For example, “Press #2 to hear the funny thought of the day!”

193 One study suggests that there are ten negative comments for every one positive comment in the workplace! Spend one day tabulating the number of negative comments you hear vs. positive comments. This may not sound like fun, but it will help raise some awareness around how people are communicating.

194 Look for opportunities to add some humor to signs around the office to communicate any messages in a friendlier manner.

195 Since buzzword speak is a common source of stress and demoralization, assign a buzzword buster committee to seek out and eliminate overused, meaningless jargon from the workplace.

196

Create a buzzwords jar, akin to a curse jar, where people have to put a quarter into a jar for charity every time they use a buzzword or acronym you are trying to avoid.

197

Because communication is so critical, take the time to hold a “communications pet peeves” meeting with your team every few months to raise awareness around some common communication pet peeves that might be bothering everyone.

198

Translate your values and cultural norms into stories to help make them more meaningful and concrete.

199

Invest in daily team huddles. I am a huge fan of daily huddles as a means of checking in. Keep them short and sweet (most are 7-10 minutes max). Same location. Same time. Set agenda. And no chairs allowed, or they turn into a meeting!



Communication at Work is Everything

When it comes to communication, it's not just what you say, but **how** you say it. If you're tired of your employees working in isolated “silos”, you're frustrated by soul-sucking meetings, or you long for a more collaborative team environment, then **ramping up** and **investing in your communication** is a game changer for your company!

Culture nugget: Creating an environment where employees feel comfortable having open and honest conversations is critical. In fact, one mantra I suggest to my audiences is this: Have fewer meetings and more conversations.

Meaningful conversations. I've included several tips and frameworks for holding better conversations in my soon-to-be-made-into-a-Broadway-musical book, **The Jerk-Free Workplace: How You Can Take the Lead to Create a Happier, More Inspiring Workplace.**

Laughing for the Health of It: Putting Humor to Work for Less Stress

Culture moment: When people laugh and tap into their sense of humor, there is a physiological, emotional, and cognitive response, so it's no wonder humor is thought to be a potent stressbuster.

At a culture-wide level, we know organizations that embrace a spirit of fun and humor are more resilient and have lower employee turnover and absenteeism rates. And employees tend to be happier and more positive at work!

200

Create an at-home fun ritual to start your day on the right attitudinal foot before you've even left for work.

201

Create a fun tradition to start your day once you are at work. For example, one team I worked with meets in a team huddle every morning and everyone shouts out how they are feeling on a scale of 1-10 (using decimal points of course).

202

Smile. Force yourself to just smile. Simply smiling more often can change your body's physiology.

203

Laugh. Yes, just start laughing. Even fake laughter has some of the physical benefits of real laughter, so just fake it 'til you make it!

204

Hold a “laugh off” contest where employees compete for the funniest laugh, most contagious laugh, the loudest laugh, or the most memorable laugh.

205

Use a “laugh-line” buddy system. Partner with someone who can be your humor mentor, someone you phone when you are stressed out who can offer some perspective or make you laugh when you need it the most!

206

Attach positive rewards to stressors. For example, one bank offered a fun reward to whoever had to deal with the most annoying customer of the week.

207

Create an “I’ve Had the Day from Heck” fun badge or small, fun reward award to someone who has had a particularly stressful day.

208

Create a “Worse Day at Work” prize per month and have employees vie for who is most worthy.

209

Have a “Bonehead Play of the Month Award” where employees nominate themselves and vie for a fun, small award in a brief ceremony at the end of each month.

210

Plan a fun, mock funeral to mourn an old way of doing something, an old computer system, or an old policy before the new changes are implemented.

211

Humorously reframe stressors by wildly exaggerating how the situation “could have been worse.”

212

Reframe stressors by looking at the situation through the eyes of a child, an alien, a comedian, or a superhero.

213

Reframe stressors by creating a funny mantra to recount each time the stressful event occurs.

214

Reframe stressors by asking for a standing ovation when something bad happens.

215

Reframe stressors by forcing yourself to look at the upside. Force yourself to create a Top-10 list of the “Top-10 GREAT Things About _____”.

216

Take a five-minute humor time-out by reading a funny book, watching a funny video, or listening to part of a funny podcast.

217

Imagine a funny newspaper headline that would perfectly capture the situation.

218

Every time you get stressed, stop, and consider these 3R's: How am I going to REWARD myself in the face of this stress? How can I REFRAME this stressful situation, so I gain a healthier perspective? How can I tap into my sense of humor to RELAX?

219

Hold a "Whine and Cheese" party where people are allowed to whine in a fun, exaggerated way about things that drive them batty.

220

On a more serious note, hold regular mental health/stress-busting best practice meetings where people can share what's working well for them to destress at work.

221

Create a common resource list of humor resources including sitcoms, funny movies, funny podcasts, and humorous books.

222

Create funny code labels to describe things that stress you out. For example, a "22" might be a particularly high maintenance customer.

223

Do something outrageous to tap into your sense of humor. Get up and do a fun dance or phone up someone you know well and say, "Hi, it's me. Sorry, I'm too busy to talk right now" and hang up.

224

Create a "Silly Hour" the way one company has where, for five minutes, every day at 3:00 p.m., everyone does something silly to blow off some steam

225

Create an individual or team “humor first-aid kit”, and stockpile it with things that will help people tap into their sense of humor, such as: books, fun office toys, wacky props, wacky costume parts, etc.

226

Create a “stress-busting squad”. This is a team of committed volunteers who seek out workplace stressors and “jobstacles” that are getting in the way of people having fun and doing their work.

227

Create a “seagull hunting” team to spread messages about the need for employees to keep their seagull voices (that squawk all over the place) at bay.

228

Find a quiet space and take the time to recall a funny event in your life. Transporting yourself to a humorous time is an effective way to calm your nerves.

229

Create a fun ritual or activity for Sunday evenings, a time many workers report feeling stressed about with the “back to work blahs.”

230

Instead of a “Code Red”, come up with some funny codes to lighten the mood. For example: CODE BLUE (I need coffee - STAT!), CODE GREEN (I jammed the photocopier again!), or CODE PINK (Someone make me laugh, quickly!).

231

Keep a blooper book where people can record their bloopers to remind everyone to not take themselves so seriously.

232

Try what's known as "cartooning". Imagine a cartoon strip or thought bubble that would put a humorous slant on a stressful situation.

233

Have a "destress party" to help people celebrate and lift their spirits during a time of big change or stressful work.

234

As many companies do, hold "failure parties" to celebrate the lessons learned from a workplace failure.

235

Have a funny mantra or goofy song you can recall every time you need to remind yourself to lighten up.

236

Put on a funny hat or clown nose to force yourself to lighten up in a difficult time.

237

Frame with a long lens by asking yourself, "Will this be worth stressing over a year from now?"

238

Finish the following: The bad news is _____, but the GREAT news is _____. Force yourself to come up with some funny answers to how this bad situation will end up being great!

239

Create some standard blooper recovery lines, so you are ready the next time things go awry. For example: “I think my train of thought just derailed!” or “Houston, we have a problem!” or “Oops. There goes my chance at a Nobel Peace Prize.”

240

Create your own funny “Top-10 Ways to Deal with Stress” list.

241

Create your own wacky “Top-10 Signs I’m Too Stressed” list.

242

Create a fun, end-of-the-workday ritual to leave the office on a positive note and, hopefully, leave any stressors behind. In one company, for example, all employees put on clown noses and made a pact to keep them on until they walked through their front door at home.

243

On your commute to and from work, look for and collect a list of funny bumper stickers or funny signs

244

Listen to comedy podcasts during your work commute.

Sparking Creative Thinking

Culture Nugget: Remember that Ha + Ha = AHA! Several studies suggest that humor is one of the most important drivers of creative thinking and innovation at work.

This is why I spend an entire chapter delving into this topic in my soon-to-be-made-into-a-major-motion-picture-book, **The Humor Advantage: Why Some Businesses are Laughing all the Way to the Bank.**

245

Create a culture of curiosity and questioning. Questions and curiosity boost engagement at work and drive the creative process.

246

Put up a question board where employees can post work-related questions they are pondering.

247

Have a question of the month where you encourage all employees to ponder a specific question.

248

Create a “Dilbert Committee” to identify Dilbert-type behaviors and policies in your workplace that might be stifling creativity and innovation.

249

To spark new perspectives, brainstorm in an offsite location, such as a coffee shop, park, or even the zoo.

250

Before brainstorming, play a fun game to loosen people up and get the juices flowing.

251

Do a high energy fun brainstorm on a trivial topic beforehand to get the creative wheels greased up. For example, have everyone brainstorm the number of uses for a paper clip.

252

Brainstorm the opposite of a problem or issue to force a change of perspective on a problem.

253

As some companies do on a regular basis, bring in a group of kids to brainstorm for some totally new perspectives.

254

Randomly pick an occupation then brainstorm how your problem would be solved looking at it from that occupation's perspective.

255

Toss a foam ball around and have people immediately blurt out spontaneous suggestions as soon as they catch the ball.

256

Line an entire wall in a meeting room or along a hallway with "inspiration" or "idea" whiteboards. Then, encourage people to doodle and jot down suggestions for ideas to various projects.

257

Ban idea-squashing language (“We tried that before in 1947”) from your meetings in a fun way.

258

Take the team on an “idea safari” by visiting a museum, a zoo, or businesses in search of ideas you can use.

259

Hold a contest for employees to come up with the most creative slogan for your company.

260

One company sends employees crayons and blank paper every six months and asks them to draw their impressions as a creative way to gauge employees’ feelings about their workplace.

261

Hold creative brainstorming meetings where instead of focusing on “problems” or “issues”, you purposely remain focused on the positive by talking only about the “possibilities.”

262

Invite some outsiders into your brainstorming sessions: People from other departments, clients, or artists who can bring a fresh perspective without any baggage.

Culture moment: It’s one thing coming up with ideas. It’s a whole other topic when it comes to turning those ideas into action!

For more on that topic, please refer to chapter 6 in my book, **The Humor Advantage: Why Some Businesses are Laughing all the Way to the Bank.**

Inspiring Customer Service with a Laugh

Culture moment: Great customer service starts on the inside. In other words, it starts with your workplace culture and by recognizing that some of your most important customers are your coworkers!

Having a service-first mindset drives a more collaborative, inspiring workplace: Great teamwork after all, is about providing phenomenal service to the rest of your teammates.

263

Put up a banner in your back office that reads: Stop Providing Good Customer Service to remind everyone that good customer service isn't good enough! You need to exceed customers' expectations or do something different to convert customers into loyal fans.

264

Reward customers for their stress they may have experienced with a fun, offbeat award. For example, Barney's Motel once offered a 10-cent bounty for flies, dead or alive, retrieved from guest's motel rooms!

265

Give out prizes to customers in line-ups or in waiting areas to help them pass the time and reward them for their patience. For example, give a small prize to whoever has the oldest dated coin on them or a hole in their sock.

266

Look for opportunities to use humor in all your customer service signs. For example, one sign at a vet clinic reads: No Parking Here. Violators Will Be Neutered.

267

Add some humor to your company's automated voicemail. For example, a brokerage firm added this to their voicemail: "And for the sound of a quacking duck (their mascot), press seven now."

268

Rotate the job around of "playing customer" for a day to help employees see your organization through the customer's eyes. It's not only fun for employees, but also very enlightening.

269

Offer special wacky deals, discounts, or prizes to garner free publicity and generate some buzz. For example, every Wednesday, a bald restaurant owner in California charges customers based on how much hair they have!

270

Keep a file or book of unusual client requests or questions.

271

Create a special fund that is used just for ideas that engage the customer in fun and meaningful ways.

272

Create a fun waiting room or reception area. Stockpile it with humorous books and magazines to read, fun posters, etc.

273

Encourage all frontline employees to create a unique personal signature of something they say or do that's a little different to make an impression with customers in a fun, memorable way. For example, one grocery bagger has done this by writing brief "thoughts of the day" on small notes and slipping them into customers' grocery bags.

274

Like above: Encourage employees to come with “extra inch” ideas: small gestures they can do consistently and inexpensively to exceed customers’ expectations.

275

Hold a contest and award a prize for the most creative photo or video of someone using one of your products or services in a creative way.

276

Put funny quotes or “thoughts of the day” on customer’s bills or invoices.

277

Collect and display great client testimonials to continually encourage front line employees to be at their best.

278

Recognize your customer service stars by providing them with opportunities to mentor, coach, and train other front-line employees on what they are doing that is working so well.

279

Create a humorous service slogan that describes your commitment to the customer.

280

Add some humor to any instructions you give out to customers.

281

Include your customers in some of your workplace contests.

282

Include customers in some of your brainstorming sessions.

283

Create a funny “thought of the day” board or humor board for customers.

284

Create a public display of customers’ photos showing off your products from their travels around the globe.

285

Hold annual fun customer appreciation days.

286

Celebrate different customer service milestones in a fun way.

Culture moment: Consider how humor can help humanize and brand your business to help you stand out from the herd to be heard.

For more ideas, insights, strategies, and real-life examples read chapters 8 & 9 of **The Humor Advantage: Why Some Businesses are Laughing all the Way to the Bank.**

Putting Humor to Work to Inspire, Motivate and Engage Employees

Culture moment: As I write in both *The Jerk-Free Workplace* and *The Humor Advantage*, “money isn’t always honey” when it comes to engaging and motivating employees.

To truly engage employees, you need to relentlessly focus on building a positive, healthy, respectful workplace culture.

Tapping into **employees’ sense of pride, recognizing employees, celebrating successes, feeling connected to a team and to a sense of purpose and meaning** at work, **communicating in an honest and open manner**, and **treating people humanely, with respect and dignity**, is what will truly create a “want to” work environment where employees are more likely to be engaged and inspired to do their best work.

But, of course, who says you can’t have a little fun along the way?

Argus Industries embraces the mantra, “Work is hard enough as it is without making it any harder!” And I couldn’t agree more.

So, let’s make sure we infuse our workplaces with a spirit of ongoing fun and humor wherever and whenever possible.

Thanks a lot!

287

Practice positive praise. Be 100% positive, specific, timely, and sincere with your praise and keep in mind – studies show that praise and recognition coming from coworkers has a far greater impact than when it comes from their supervisor.

288

Hold a “Thank God It’s Monday!” morning huddle to launch the week on a positive note. Share any timely news and have employees share the top 3 things they are looking forward to.

289

Give employees a standing ovation for coming into work Monday mornings, as one company does.

290

During a particularly nice day of weather, take the team out for an impromptu trip to a nearby city park.

291

Go to the airport and welcome a colleague back from a long work trip with a fun sign.

292

Post a fun message of “Thanks!” in unusual places, such as the back of washroom stall doors, on wastebaskets, on the coffee pot, etc.

293

Kidnap a co-worker in need of a break or deserving of a reward with the “Humor Police” and whisk them off somewhere fun.

294

Start a file of each employee’s “favorites”, such as: favorite ways to be thanked, gifts, hobbies, food, etc. Then, when it comes time to send them something special, to celebrate their birthday, or to offer an incentive, you’ll know exactly what to get them!

295

One company uses a giant stuffed elephant that gets passed from coworker to coworker whenever someone has done something noteworthy enough to deserve the Order of the Elephant.

296

Send gifts and thank-you cards to the families of employees when the employee has done something noteworthy. They’re a part of the support team, and it’s one of the most powerful ways to tap into an employee’s sense of pride.

297

Identify and celebrate all significant milestones.

298

Have a fun ritual for every time someone makes a significant sale or lands a major contract.

299

Keep a supply of inexpensive gift items and funny thank-you cards on so that it's easy to thank people on a regular basis.

300

Get offbeat and creative with your gifts and incentives. Some great examples are music lessons, free pet grooming, having their house cleaned for a year, pedicures, family memberships to a museum or zoo, or having their portrait painted.

301

Remember that one of the most powerful ways to recognize someone is to simply ask the question, "What do you think?"

302

Hold a weekly raffle for small prizes, but instead of employees having to purchase raffle tickets, they earn them from coworkers for being so nice and helpful.

303

Have a "Manager of Mirth" award that recognizes the manager who most successfully instills a sense of pride, recognition, and fun in his or her team.

304

Name hallways, stairwells, or meeting rooms after an employee's name to honor them. You can do this on a rotating basis so many employees can earn the honor over time.

305

Hold a "limo lottery" where the winner gets driven to and from work in a limousine.

306

Have managers serve coffee, drinks, and treats during a particularly busy time or simply to say thanks.

307

Order in some fun food for everyone.

308

Bring in a team of masseuses and offer everyone a chance at a shoulder or foot massage.

309

Designate an "ego massage chair" where an employee gets the honor of sitting in a comfy chair during a coffee break or lunch while all their coworkers drop by and massage their ego by saying nice things about them.

310

Wash employees' cars as an offbeat thank-you.

311

Hold a regular "Employee Appreciation Day."

312

Give out fun awards that encourage positive behaviors. For example, the “I Got Your Back Award” for whoever best looks out for their coworkers’ mental and physical wellbeing; The “Ha Ha Award” to whoever keeps everyone laughing during a stressful time or emergency, or “The Houdini Award” for whoever magically makes a big problem disappear!

313

Create team awards in addition to individual awards to celebrate team efforts and encourage greater collaboration.

314

Create a menu/shopping list of reward perks from which employees can choose what they want.

315

Name menu items in the company cafeteria after employees for a month who did something noteworthy.

316

Open or close meetings with a regular “kudos” shout out to an employee.

317

Open or close meetings with a “moment of gratitude.” Heaps of research suggests that one of the biggest keys to being happier is to be more intentionally grateful.

Culture moment: There are hundreds of fun and creative ways to recognize employees and demonstrate that you truly appreciate them. I’ve got even more ideas in chapter 4 of *The Humor Advantage*. Never forget though that the most powerful form of recognition at work is simply listening to employees and making sure they feel like they truly belong.

Happy days are here again!

318

Celebrate the anniversary of your company's founding.

319

Celebrate the anniversary date of when employees started working for your organization.

320

Celebrate the offbeat fun theme days as found on my website at www.MikeKerr.com.

321

Create your own theme days. One of my clients does a High Five day once a month. Another client celebrates "Third Person Thursdays" where everyone refers to themselves in the 3rd person (in other words, by using their own name to refer to themselves. Mike loves this idea.)

322

Once a week, say Friday mornings, have a "pass-the-joke" relay around the office. People are obliged to pass, by phone or in person, the same, clean joke to another person until everyone has heard it.

323

Hold an annual "nerd day" event where everyone dresses up like nerds.

324

Create a fun start-of-the-day team ritual/tradition to set the tone for the day.

325

Create a celebrations calendar that highlights employees' birthdays, significant dates, holidays, and social events.

326

Have a "Word or Phrase of the Day" where everyone is encouraged to use the word of the day as many times as possible throughout the day.

327

One bank has a "dress your boss or coworker" day.

328

Hold an annual 50's dress-up day to celebrate the 1950s.

329

Hold a day to celebrate the generational differences at work by having everyone wear clothes that match the year or era they were born.

330

Hold a monochromatic day where everyone must wear only blacks and whites.

331

Have a prize for the best costume every Halloween and hold a Halloween fashion show.

332

Hold a “beach party” in the middle of winter.

333

Celebrate obscure holidays, such as Groundhog Day.

334

Celebrate Make Up Your Own Holiday (every March 26th) by making up your very own holiday appropriate to your workplace or profession.

335

Instead of a “casual Friday” hold a “formal Friday.”

336

Hold a family open house once a year.

337

Create a fun tradition to match each day of the workweek.

338

Celebrate “over the hump” Wednesdays to help people stay motivated through to the end of the week.

339

If your profession doesn't have an official "X" day of celebration, then create one to celebrate your own profession!

340

Give everyone on your team a special day when it is *their* holiday.

341

Create a fun slogan to kick off and celebrate each month with.

342

"Name Tag Fridays": Have everyone wear a name tag all day Fridays that answers a different question of the week. It could be "What's your middle name?", "Cat or dog person?" or "Dream vacation destination?"

Culture moment: As I mentioned, rituals and traditions are important ways to strengthen any culture and give employees something to look forward to.

Again, there's lots of ideas for traditions and rituals in *The Humor Advantage*, my weekly *Inspiring Workplaces* e-newsletter, and my *Inspiring Workplaces* YouTube Channel. Have I mentioned my channel yet?

Good thing I remembered to here! There's lots of great ideas delivered in short, bite-sized videos, so, to make sure you don't miss out on any, be sure to subscribe here: [**Inspiring Workplaces Channel.**](#)

Let the games begin!



Less Stress, More Success!

You need resilient employees now more than ever. So, you need to be intentional about **managing stress**, building a more **resilient culture**, and putting **humor to work** for less stress and more success.

343

Hold a “rock-paper-scissors” tournament to determine who must make the coffee for a week, record the meeting minutes, or change the office cat’s litter box.

344

Have a “Word or Phrase that Pays” contest. Whoever first hears the phrase from someone out of your workplace loop wins a small prize.

345

Include families in company contests. For example, have them participate in contests to come up with a name for a new project or product.

346

Hold a contest for people to write the funniest work-related joke.

347

Hold a “match the employee to the baby photo” contest.

348

Hold a “match the employee to the high school grad photo” contest.

349

Hold a “match the employee to the pet photo” contest.

350

Have a “match the foot photo to the employee” contest.

351

Hold a contest for the best work-related excuse by an employee or customer.

352

Hold an employee talent contest or “stupid human tricks” night.

353

Create a mini-golf course in your office.

354

Hold a contest in which teams create fun, one-minute ads for your company’s products and services.

355

Hold your own customized Olympic games that require teams to compete in feats related to your business.

356

Create your own “Guinness book” of wacky, work-related records, such as: longest number of days the boss has gone without saying a certain phrase, maximum number of cups of coffee drunk by an employee in a single day, or longest office commute.

357

Hold a paper airplane making contest and reward prizes for the most creative design, flight distance, and flight duration.

358

Hold a celebrity look-alike and/or impersonation contest with employees.

359

Hold a contest to complete the following line the best: “You know you’re a- INSERT YOUR PROFESSION HERE when _____.”

*A team that **laughs together**, stays together.*

360

Create offbeat job titles for people, or, at least, let employees come up with alter-ego job titles that capture the true essence of their work.

361

Tell a “groaner-of-the-day”, each day, at the same time, over the P.A. system, or post it on your website or bulletin board.

362

Create an official “Corporate Jester” role that rotates around the company every three months.

363

Create a “Joy Grant” in the same way that Ben and Jerry’s Ice Cream supports projects/ideas that will bring more joy and fun to the workplace.

364

Start a humor file to collect on-going, relevant workplace humor.

365

Survey people on a regular basis, asking them this simple question:
“What inspires you at work?”

366

Create a code, phrase, or signal that employees can use when they’re having a bad day and need some extra support from colleagues.

367

Every now and then, create a totally wacky policy. For example, “Every third Thursday of September, employees are forbidden to wear brown socks.

368

Start a “Meet _____” tradition: a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly e-mail Post that introduces a new (or not so new) employee to everyone with some fun, personal information, and a fun photo.

369

Create a company song, cheer, or “company anthem.”

370

Create your own set of customized “Murphy’s Law” rules that would apply to your work situation.

371

Create a work-related trivia file to collect fun trivia.

372

Give cool, exciting, James Bond-ish sounding titles to your mundane workplace projects and processes.

373

Have everyone wear a “Hello my name is_____” name tag all day to change up the energy (and trust me, it will).

374

Conduct a “humor raid” on another team, department, or co-worker in need of a fun break.

375

Create an annual yearbook of fun photos and accomplishments to highlight the past year’s successes.

376

Create a team/company photo album into which people can contribute fun, work-related photos.

377

Put on a humorous skit in early January to review the past year on a fun way.

378

Assign a rotating workplace “paparazzi” to take candid, fun, spontaneous photos of people in action.

379

Participate in a little “stealth disco.” This craze, started by a Chicago ad firm, involves sneaking up behind someone who is hard at work and then disco dancing behind them. For bonus points, have someone secretly video you!

380

Set up a lemonade stand in the hallway or elevator and raise money for your favorite charity or social committee.

381

Grab a smart phone and create a fun spoof of a reality TV show based in your very workplace, complete with “person on the street” interviews.

382

Create a fun sticker, badge, or slogan to remind people to lighten up.

383

Hire a comedian, magician, improvisational troupe, or hypnotist for a networking event.

384

Create a variety of workplace clubs to help people connect with other employees who share a common interest, such as a workplace book club, chess club, gardening club, tennis club, or yoga club.

385

Find creative ways to let employees bring their personal talents and passions into the workplace. For example, if someone is an artist, encourage them to participate in designing posters or doing sketches of coworkers; if someone plays an instrument, have them play in the lobby one lunch hour a week.

386

Create your own offbeat “merit badges” in the same way the *Science Creative Quarterly* has done with badges, such as “I’m Pretty Confident Around an Open Flame.”

387

Compile an office cookbook with everyone’s favorite recipes.

388

Perform random acts of humor on fellow coworkers.

389

Create your own version of “recess” once a week - a fun, stressbusting break that promotes networking and teambuilding through fun and games.

Culture nugget: Research suggests that anything that gives employees a greater sense of belonging and connection at work helps them feel happier and far more engaged.

It doesn’t take much, but again, you need to be intentional about creating simple opportunities to strengthen your culture and up the fun factor.

Finding the Funny in Everyday Life

Culture moment: Resiliency experts suggest that one of the keys to preventing burnout at work is to make sure you are taking care of yourself not just while you work, but away from work as well.

A small part of that can include finding the funny in your everyday life as well as at work.

390

Carry a notebook to record those great jokes you hear that you can never seem to remember the next day!

391

Scan newspapers for funny stories, wacky facts, and trivia, and collect them in a file.

392

Make it a goal to read and watch more humor.

393

Instead of asking the same old questions, tap into people's natural sense of humor by asking offbeat questions, such as: "How are you on a scale of 1-to-10?" or "What's the strangest thing that's happened to you in the last month?" Ask your kids, "What the funniest thing that happened at school today?"

394

Keep a humor file or book and carry it wherever you go. Forcing yourself to look for funny things will help your brain focus to find those quirky things lurking out there in the serious world.

395

Sign up for a local theater improvisation class or take a stand-up comedy class – they are amazing stress busters!

396

Write your own Top-10 lists for any, and all, occasions.

397

Write your own jokes. For a simple formula, use the “rule of 3’s” when writing a joke, where the third item in a list breaks the serious logic of the prior two items. For example, “When hiking in bear country, always bring along bear spray, a noisemaker... and someone you can outrun!”

398

Keep a file of humorous quotes you come across, including funny quotes from family, friends, or fictitious movie and TV characters.

399

Keep a file of the “accidentally funny” stuff you come across. For example, these could be things people say, policies, and signs, such as, “Today Only! Bras Half Off!” or newspaper headlines that read, “Children Make Nutritious Snacks.”

400

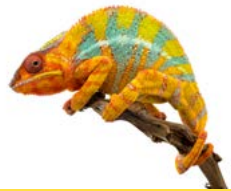
Practice telling funny stories. Stories are the most powerful forms of communicating and improving your ability to tell stories is a great way to have more fun, tap into your sense of humor, and build stronger relationships with the people around you.

401

Laugh at yourself as often as you can. As I stress in *The Jerk-Free Workplace*, this, above all else, is the most important idea to embrace if you want to live a less stressful, happier, and more fun-filled existence. Laugh at yourself and find the funny in your everyday bloopers to remind yourself that you're only human. By laughing at yourself, you take away anyone's ability to laugh at you because you'll beat them to the punch line! Plus, you'll never run out of things to laugh at!

Culture moment: This is only a small list of ways that you can start to make a small – or profound – difference in your workplace.

Never doubt that small gestures and small moments of appreciation and humor can make a big difference to the people around you.



Turn Ideas Into Action to Become a Champion of Change

If the pace of change outside your organization exceeds the pace of change on the inside, you'll soon be in serious trouble. You can ignore it, adapt to it, or become a champion of change. And to do this effectively, you need to **embrace innovation** by building the kind of culture that **celebrates new ideas** and **turns them into action**.

Final Thoughts



Creating an inspiring, rocking workplace is about being intentional, it's about consistently doing the small things that make a difference.

If this has inspired you to dig deeper and invest in your workplace culture even more (the way truly inspiring organizations do), then please reach out and let me know what I can do to be of service to you, your team, or your organization.

In addition to my in-person and virtual keynotes and workshops, I am available to support your culture goals with leadership coaching packages, subscription bundles to help deliver key culture messages to your workplace, and my online **Culture Leadership Academy** training program and membership site.

In the meantime, keep working towards an inspiring workplace that works for everyone and that creates a deep, lasting impact on everyone you interact with.

And remember to **keep laughing**.

Stay curious.

Embrace your sense of humanity and your sense of humor.

As someone once said, "If you live each and every day as though it were your last, sooner or later you'll be right!"

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Turbocharge **Inspiring, Happy and Humane Workplace Cultures** That Drive **OUTRAGEOUS Results.**

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