

My Core Principles of Strategic Humor

Kathy Klotz-Guest

- 1 Humor is an attitude of fun. You can have a sense of fun without having to be “funny.” Don’t force the funny – you’ll hurt yourself. Humor opens you up to the joy of the moment. Attitude is the most important determinant of success. Time flies, but *you* are the pilot.
 - 2 Humor attracts like. When you share appropriate humor, you build rapport and strengthen relationships. Happy begets happy. It’s universal law. I don’t make *those* rules.
 - 3 Humor oils the innovative engine. Use it regularly. It’s part of the creative process that drives innovation. When we use the humor brain, we are leveraging the creative brain. We are open to fun and spontaneity. Sometimes the “A-Ha” comes during the “Ha-Ha.” Ahhhhhhh!
 - 4 Funny Makes Money. Especially true in speaking and writing. Laughing helps people learn. And we all want to be educated, right?
 - 5 Humor helps you stand apart from the crowd. Be Heard – Not One of the Herd. An organization that values humor and laughter creates positive energy that powers everything it does. Additionally, a company that can laugh (especially at itself sometimes) adds a human dimension to its brand. Good humor doesn’t kill brands. People (doing dumb stuff) do.
 - 6 Humor is the greatest people skill you can have. No kidding. It makes you likable. It opens up positive channels of communication with others. And we need more channels. It’s like emotional cable. Humor is highly correlated with emotional intelligence – and career success. Take that, and your bigger paycheck, laughing all the way to the bank. Until you get to the bank – they are not fun.
 - 7 Humor puts people at ease. Builds rapport and reduces tension. It’s a *natural* pain reliever that won’t hurt your liver – but excessive laughter can be “side-splitting.” Organizations that laugh more are more productive and less stressful. I want to *stress* that.
 - 8 Humor aids in memory retention. Make people laugh – and they’ll remember you. People remember not what you did, but how you made them feel. Make people feel *great*.
 - 9 Humor is a part of a great customer-service strategy. It delights and surprises. Empower people to feel a sense of fun at work and to convey that in their interactions with customers. You can’t give to customers what you don’t feel internally as part of your corporate culture. Make sure your culture is happy, not crappy.
 - 10 Humor is an indicator of morale. Rife inappropriate humor is a red flag for any organization. Don’t ignore it. Constant inappropriate humor indicates a lack of respect for the organization, its customers (look at Enron) and a lack of trust. These are lethal to a healthy corporate culture. If employees exhibit toxic humor, run away fast! It’s gonna blow!
 - 11 Laughter is good for the soul, bad for the crow’s feet. Mileage is inevitable, but smiling takes off years. It’s better than botox. Increase your “smileage” and turn back the “old-ometer.”
 - 12 Humor is *the* best universal language (although ironically subjective. Hmmm.). So, move over math. That’s right, pi, I’m talking to you.
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