

7 ways to infuse humour at work

Everybody likes a good laugh, even the bosses. And if you're one, it'll pay to know that humour at the work place eases tensions, stress and generally improves productivity.

Industry reports, charts, graphs are usually dull but with a little light communication, a clever joke here or there, you can turn things around at work. Here's how:

- **Use a funny quote to make a point**

Whether you are a CEO or making a business presentation, you can liven things up by using a funny quotation. Don't just throw it in, use it as an analogy. Especially if its not-so-good news.

- **Quote somebody people know**

Pick a quote from a personality known to most people. Now is not the time to show off the two terms you spent reading 17th century English literature while studying economics at university.

Shove Shakespeare in your back pocket and fish out Jay Leno or Jerry Seinfeld.

- **If you MUST use a literary figure, give the quote a twist**

Mark Twain once said, 'a classic is something that everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read.' How about replacing 'classic' with 'industry reports'?

- **Don't shy away from self-deprecating humour**

It is immensely effective and can promote relationship building with your peers and superiors. It works on an emotional level. But sadly, studies have shown that it only works with men.

Not many are willing to crack a smile at a woman boss who uses self-deprecatory humour.

- **Make the office newsletter fun or start a humour room**

Many companies are now using the newsletter to encourage humour in the office. And if you have the money like Kodak does, open a Humour Room.

The room provides a separate space for workers to connect with others in a relaxed and fun way.

- **The laughter challenge**

It worked for The Bank of America, who ran a laugh-a-day challenge. It asked its employees to bring a joke or cartoon every day to share with their workmates.

- **Leave out the sarcasm**

While writing an office memo, or a listing, or making notes on a report, be careful not to go overboard. Sarcasm might be your mother tongue, but at the office, it will only work if you can accompany your criticism with a viable alternative.

Nobody likes Mr or Ms Smarty Pants, not even those who are wearing the pants