



Need Problem-Solvers at Work? Use Humor

The very word “problem” doesn’t normally bring humor to mind. Problem-solving evokes images of late night work sessions – guys with their ties loosened and shirt sleeves rolled up and women with their uncomfortable dress shoes kicked off, all gathered around a conference table looking tense and wondering how to resolve whatever issue they’re working on.

Think how different that scene would be if those very same people were relaxed around that table, tossing soft toy balls to each other, making things out of pipe cleaners (remember pipe cleaners?), or squeezing squishy toys and laughing.

In the first example, their minds are totally focused on the problem. They think they are there to find a solution but it’s hard to get creative ideas when you are tired and stressed out. It’s one of the reasons brilliant ideas come to us in the middle of the night when we’re not actively working on them. Our creativity can finally reach us in our sleep!

Laughter is a gift from the Creativity Gods and a boon to Employee Engagement. That’s not just my opinion, scientists tell us that the more they research the benefits of laughter, the stronger the case for using it in work situations, especially those requiring problem solving. A study out of Wharton, for example found that laughter resulted in individuals demonstrating more creative decision-making and greater flexibility. According to the article **Leading with Laughter** by Eric Tytslin laughter “clears the mind and improves focus.”

So think about how you can make the problem-solving meetings at work more fun. Ideas could include:



- Have an air guitar contest
- Do a 10-minute icebreaker. Example: without showing it to them, tape to each person’s back the name of a cartoon character and get them to guess who they are by asking questions, “Am I male or female?” “Animal or human?” etc.
- Before the meeting is officially started, show one of the thousands of short YouTube videos that evoke contagious laughter
- Hold a “stupid human tricks” contest where everyone displays one of their unique talents

None of these require a lot of time but 5-10 minutes invested in frivolity at the front end will pay off handsomely when the meeting moves into problem-solving mode.

Silver Rose is an Employee Engagement Thought Leader who provides organizations with strategies for: (1) re-energizing employees; (2) increasing profitability; and (3) freeing leadership from the necessity of micro-managing results.

For information on having Silver work with your company on re-energizing your employees call 480-560-9452 or email: Info@SilverSpeaks.com