



The Customer Communicator Web Extra



Try these ideas for putting humor to work in the workplace

The good news is it doesn't cost a lot of money or take a lot of time, just look for very simple ways to add a little bit of fun.

Keeping a friendly, light-hearted tone in the workplace is a great way to build teamwork and combat the stress associated with working in customer service. And there are a lot of relatively simple things that you and your coworkers can do to keep things light. Here are suggestions from Mike Kerr, author of *You Can't Be Serious! Putting Humor to Work*:

■ **Use caution.** What you think is funny may not be to a coworker. "It's important to practice safe humor in the workplace," says Kerr. What is safe humor? Consider the topic and make sure it's not sexist, racist, political, or religious.

■ **Create unique, fun awards**, such as: Most Creative Idea, Best Sense of Humor, Most Succinct Memo Writer, Nicest Smile, Friendliest Phone Voice, Most Likely to Be Adopted by a Customer, etc.

■ **Have a theme agenda** at your next team meeting (e.g., use movie titles to describe your agenda items).

■ **Hold a "pick your nose" day** where everyone has to don a clown nose, animal nose, or other type as a way to lighten up.

■ To loosen up before a team meeting, **brainstorm wacky topics**, such as 25 uses for a paper clip.

■ **Start team meetings by playing the "Mission Impossible" theme** while reading the agenda with a sense of urgency.

■ **Give out prizes at team or department meetings** (be creative, they don't have to cost too much). Have fun penalties for late arrivals (e.g., a small donation to the social fund).

■ **Hold a "match the rep to his or her pet"** (past or present) photo contest.

■ **Rename your meeting room** or boardroom something fun and inspiring. (Who wants to spend hours in a "bored" room?)

