

Benefits of Humor in Training

I'm incredibly passionate about humor in the workplace and not because it's fun. As an engineer, the reason why I care about using humor is that it works. It's effective with the one thing you can't be efficient with, human beings.

So with that in mind, here are **30 benefits of humor at work**, backed by research, case studies, and real-world examples.

Humor and Execution

1. Humor improves productivity. "In one study of more than 2,500 employees, 81 percent said they believe a fun working environment would make them more productive."¹
2. Humor reduces stress. "People with a sense of humor report less stress and anxiety than those with a low sense of humor, despite experiencing the same number of problems at work."²
3. Humor prevents burnout. "Humor has also been identified as a communication tool that, when used effectively, can prevent burnout and create a resilience to stress."³
4. Humor provides motivation. "The use of humor in organizations has been associated with improving morale among workers, creating a more positive organizational culture, ... and increasing motivation."⁴
5. Humor increases size of paycheck. "The size of their bonuses correlated positively with their use of humor – 'In other words, the funnier the executives were, the bigger the bonuses.'"⁵

Humor and Thinking

6. Humor boosts overall brainpower. "A dose of humor releases the chemical serotonin in your brain, which improves focus, increases objectivity and improves overall brainpower."⁶
7. Humor improves decision-making. "Positive moods prompt more flexible decision-making and wider search behavior and greater analytic precision."⁷
8. Humor increases the acceptance of new ideas. "Unconventional interactions can lower the barrier for people to posit novel things."⁸
9. Humor triggers new connections. "Humor in the design and problem-solving classroom can promote divergent thinking."⁹
10. Humor enhances one's ability to solve problems. "Studies have shown that simply watching comedy films can improve creative problem-solving skills."¹⁰

Humor and Communication

11. Humor gets people to listen. "Consistent use of appropriate humor makes people want to read and hear what you say."¹¹
12. Humor improves memory retention. "Instructional messages that gain students' attention and help

them make sense of course content (clarity behaviors) enhance students' ability to process the content resulting in greater retention and learning.”¹²

13. Humor boosts persuasion. “Humor can be highly persuasive when presenting a message that people disagree with because the humor distracts them from immediately creating counter arguments, in part because they don’t feel like the message is being crammed down their throats.”¹³
14. Humor assists in learning. “The use of humor as a pedagogical tool has been shown to reduce classroom anxiety, create a more positive atmosphere, as well as facilitate the learning process.”¹⁴
15. Humor increases likability. “Innocent humor increases likeability and interpersonal attraction.”¹⁵

Humor and Connection

16. Humor connects us with others. “Positive sounds such as laughter or a triumphant woo-hoo can trigger a response in the listener’s brain. The response is automatic and helps us interact socially by priming us to smile or laugh, and thereby connecting us with the other person.”¹⁶
17. Humor fosters rapport. “Humor is valued as a social asset and, exercised judiciously, confers upon its encoder the animated interest and welcoming approval of others. Sharing humor fosters rapport and intimacy and promotes friendship by showing common sentiment and reducing tensions.”¹⁷
18. Humor reduces status differentials. “Humor can help to reduce the social distance between managers and employees.”¹⁸
19. Humor builds trust. “Negotiators who start an online transaction with a humorous experience will have more interpersonal trust, greater joint gains, and more satisfaction with the process and their partner”¹⁹
20. Humor encourages collaboration. “A growing body of research shows that when you share a laugh with someone, you’re mirroring not only one another’s body language, but also the hormonal and neuronal activity, prompting a mutual investment in each other’s well-being.”²⁰

Humor and Leadership

21. Humor enhances perceived leadership skills. “People who use humor, particularly in stressful or seemingly one-down positions, are viewed as being on top of things, being in charge and in control, whether they are in fact or not.”²¹
22. Humor diffuses conflict. “Humor has long been seen as the great equalizer—a means to facilitate conversation and bridge differences. As a matter of fact humor has been identified as a key factor in peace-building and international mediation.”²²
23. Humor creates more opportunities. “Research has shown that managers displaying a good sense of humor are given more opportunities in organizations than those without a sense of humor.”²³
24. Humor builds credibility. “Humor users are seen as more credible and as more competent.”²⁴
25. Humor improves ratings. “Supervisor use of humor is associated with enhanced subordinate work performance, satisfaction, perception of supervisor performance, satisfaction with supervisor, and workgroup cohesion, as well as reduced work withdrawal.”²⁵

Humor and Health

26. Humor increases ability to cope. “By finding humor in stressful or potentially threatening situations, people can replace negative with positive affect, thereby giving them an increased ability to cope with negative states of affairs.”²⁶
27. Humor strengthens the immune system. “Laughter may improve immune function by blocking production of stress hormones, such as cortisol, and by increasing the release of immunoenhancers, such as beta-endorphin.”²⁷
28. Humor relaxes muscles. “Humor relaxes muscles, decreases blood pressure and improves our immune system.”²⁸
29. Humor burns calories. “Laughing 100 times can burn as many calories as 10-minutes on a stationary bicycle.”²⁹
30. Humor increases happiness. “Humor was one of the healthiest adaptations to being happy in life.”³⁰

Want to see the latest research on humor? Check out the humor benefits page. Want to implement humor at work? Check out our humor training.

Sources

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