

## Santa asks: Is your office naughty or nice?

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Steve Tyra, Professional Humorist. in Phoenix, got his first critique from Mrs. Slatten, his first grade teacher. Mrs. Slatten said to Steve's mother, "Your son is a nice young man but you need to let him know it is not his job to entertain the minute I turn my back." Like all irrepressible class clowns Tyra kept

on entertaining and in 1983, he started a successful business making people laugh. Whether he and his associates are working with corporations on team building or stress reduction Steve said, "Everything comes under the humor umbrella."

Of all the Best Practices Tyra's group brings to corporations, Steve said, "Our most popular program is called Lighten up with Humerobics. You get the same physiological benefits from a good laugh that you get from exercise without any special equipment or sweat. Laughter is an effective way of dealing with stress. It is economical and everyone can do it." Steve teaches businesses to effectively deal with stress and to bring humor into their daily activities.

During the high stress holiday period when stress soars, business people are trying to cover the office and the home fires, and Tyra does his part to lighten the load. He puts on his Santa suit and heads for the corporations. Some of the bits that get the professionals laughing are:

- The Naughty and Nice Roast
- Office Party appearances by Santa with jokes in his bag
- Client/ Business Gift Deliveries

Over the years, I've worked with thousands of overworked, driven, stressed executives and middle managers. Often, type A personalities reach for a cocktail, overeat or push themselves harder to try and combat the extreme exhaustion they feel. "Laughter is more effective than alcohol, sleep, or prescription medications because it gives you that instant relief with no destructive side effects," said Tyra. "Another solid business reason it is good for you is that laughter opens up your listener - if you get somebody laughing they are more receptive to what you are saying."

Laughter is a very powerful mechanism. Where laughter is controlled or censored, for example in a country with a repressive government or

buttoned down office, there are very few comics and little spontaneity. Comics can't get their jokes approved by a government that wants to be in absolute control. "Unexpected and spontaneous, good laughter releases endorphins - even if nothing funny is happening, if you remember a time when you had a good laugh, see it, hear it, taste, the brain doesn't know the difference between the current or a past experience and you get the full benefit," said Tyra.

Most of us make our living by through the serious endeavor of business, and it is easy to approach our business endeavor with grim determination. However, study after study has demonstrated that people are more effective when they are relaxed and enjoying their life and their work. Any business can improve their operations by instituting the best practice of "lighten up." Here are three best practices you can use in your business at holiday time and all year:

1. Realize that laughter reduces stress. The popular TV show, MASH has the exaggerated but valid premise that in order to accomplish the stressful work of a mobile wartime hospital, the medical personnel need to laugh through it all.
2. Relive good laughs with co-workers. Remember Tyra said the benefit is the same as a current laugh.
3. Look for humor in situations. Not every setback is a tragedy - there often is humor found in many situations that are temporary setbacks - not disasters.
4. Instead of the same tired holiday party, bring in a humorist to entertain your people. Also, hire trainers and consultants who add humor to your workplace - the learning will be painless and the laughter helpful to productivity.

Lowering stress, building teamwork and increasing productivity are all serious endeavors. However, if you incorporate laughter you can watch your business success grow while adding significantly to the well-being of yourself and your staff. Reach Tyra at [www.professional-humorist.com](http://www.professional-humorist.com).

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