



# Humor That Works

**An Engineer's Guide to Using Humor**



andrew tarvin  
@HumorThatWorks



# Articles on AIChE

- *Concurrent phase partition and between-mode statistical analysis for multimode and multiphase batch process monitoring*
- *Electrophoresis of pH-regulated particles in the presence of multiple ionic species*
- *Numerical derivation of dispersion coefficients for flow through three-dimensional randomly packed beds of monodisperse spheres*



# **Chemical Engineering for Non-Chemical Engineers**

In today's workplace, non-engineers are increasingly expected to work with chemical engineers on projects, scale-ups and process evaluations. But to do so, you need a solid understanding of basic concepts of chemical engineering analysis, design and calculations. Join chemical engineering expert Jack Hipple and gain knowledge of the fundamentals of chemical engineering you need to understand, communicate and work with chemical engineers.

## **Gain an understanding of chemical engineering**

In three days, you'll learn how to hold your own in discussions on safety, industrial hygiene and reactive chemicals. You'll gain an understanding of the basics of fluid flow, heat transfer, heat exchanger design and cooling towers and how to apply it. You'll also get up-to-speed on solids handling, tank and vessel design, polymerization and polymer processing and how use this knowledge to sharpen projects and evaluations. Through case studies, you'll see the concepts you learn in action so you can apply them in your workplace when collaborating with chemical engineers on projects, chemistry scale-ups, process evaluations and other initiatives.

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# Agenda

- 21:00 Presentation Start.
- 21:01 Tech Issues.
- 21:03 Tech Issues Resolved. Introduction.
- 21:05 About the Presenter.
- 21:25 About the Presenter Ends.
- 21:26 Slides That Contain 300+ Words Each.
- 21:30 Reading of Each of These Slides To You.
- 21:38 Examples You Can't Understand.
- 21:40 Examples You Can Understand but Would Never Use.
- 21:45 Good Question Comes Up, Pushed To End of Meeting.
- 21:55 Easy Questions Answered. No Time for Good Questions Asked.
- 21:58 Conclusions aka Takeaways aka "Learnings."
- 22:00 Finish for the Night.
- 22:22 Share Pain with Significant Other / Roommate / Cat.

# **Virtual Meeting Notes**

- **Use the hand!**
- **Notes available.**
- **It's okay to laugh.**
- **Think of questions.**
- **Participate via Whiteboard.**

WHITEBOARD: MAP

**HUMOR**



An open dictionary is shown from a high angle, with its pages spread wide. The pages are filled with dense, small text, typical of a comprehensive dictionary. The background is a blurred image of a library or bookstore, with shelves of books visible. The overall tone is educational and scholarly.

**humor –**

a comic, absurd, or incongruous quality  
causing amusement.

– Random House Dictionary

# Some Examples...

I'M JUST OUTSIDE TOWN, SO I SHOULD  
BE THERE IN FIFTEEN MINUTES.

ACTUALLY, IT'S LOOKING  
MORE LIKE SIX DAYS.

NO, WAIT, THIRTY SECONDS.



THE AUTHOR OF THE WINDOWS FILE  
COPY DIALOG VISITS SOME FRIENDS.



How the customer explained it



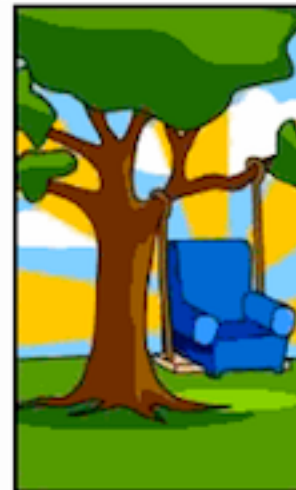
How the Project Leader understood it



How the Analyst designed it



How the Programmer wrote it



How the Business Consultant described it



How the project was documented



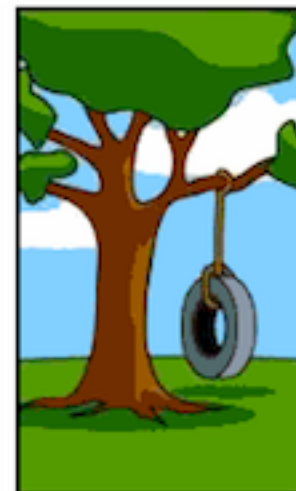
What operations installed



How the customer was billed



How it was supported



What the customer really needed

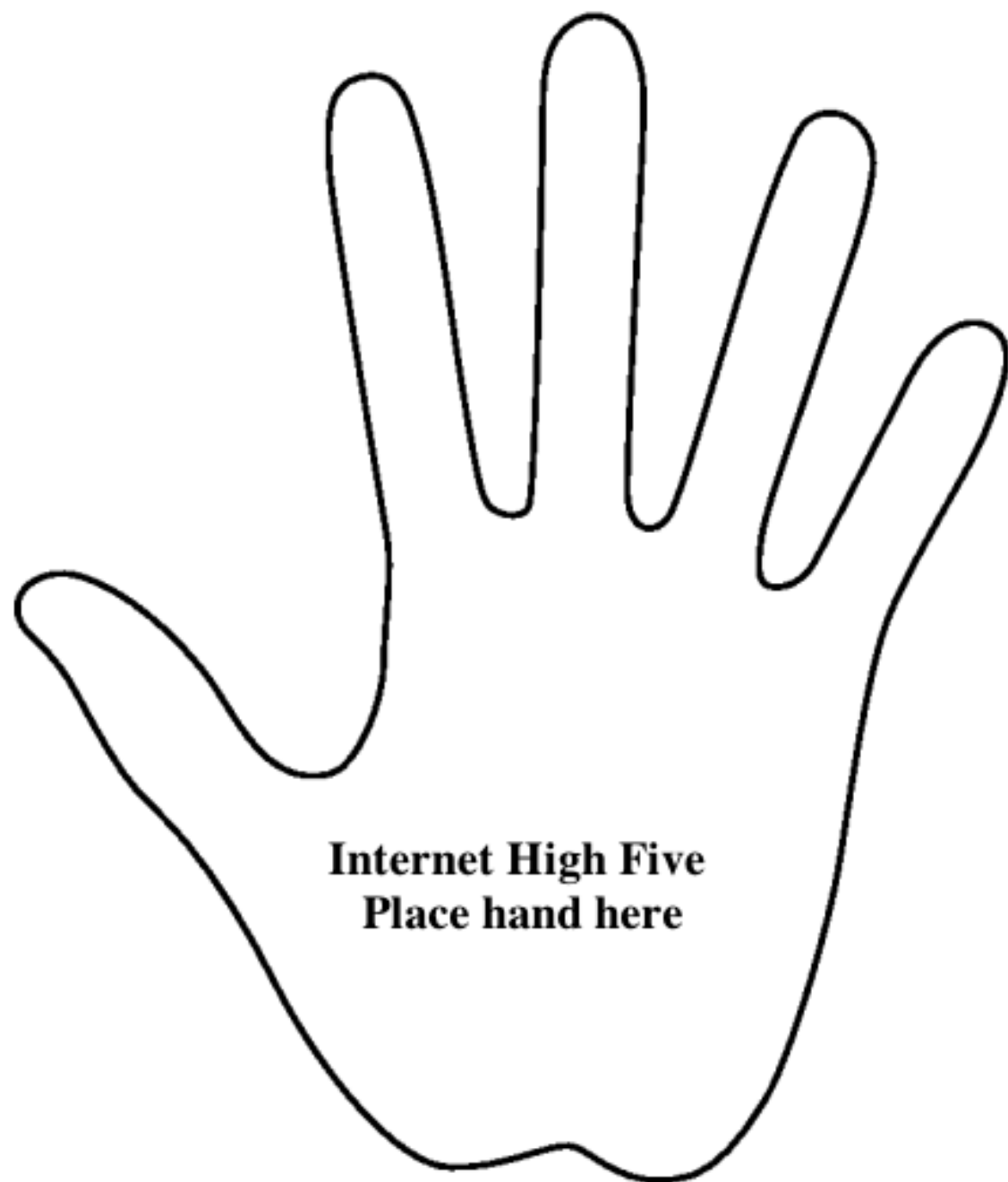


***TireDiscounters***  
**FAMILY OWNED**  
**SHUTUP**  
**NO**  
**YOU SHUTUP**

***TireDiscounters***







**Internet High Five**  
Place hand here

**humor that works** – a way of working  
that is different, effective, and fun.



# WHY HUMOR MATTERS



# Efficient Birth Timeline

**My Arrival**  
Feb 11



**Start of Q1**  
Jan 1



**End of Q1**  
Mar 31

**Project Delivery**  
Mar 2

## Efficient Grade Graph

**A+ (4.0)**

**100%**

**A (4.0)**

**94-99%**

**A (4.0)**

**93%**

**A- (3.7)**

**90-92%**

**B+ (3.4)**

**<90%**



# Efficient Grade Graph

**A+ (4.0)**

Who You Trying  
To Impress?

**100%**

**A (4.0)**

Too Much  
Effort

**94-99%**

**A (4.0)**

**SWEET SPOT**

**93%**

**A- (3.7)**

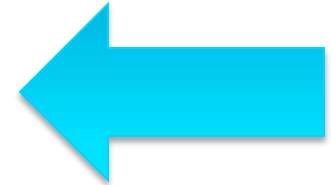
Not Enough  
Effort

**90-92%**

**B+ (3.4)**

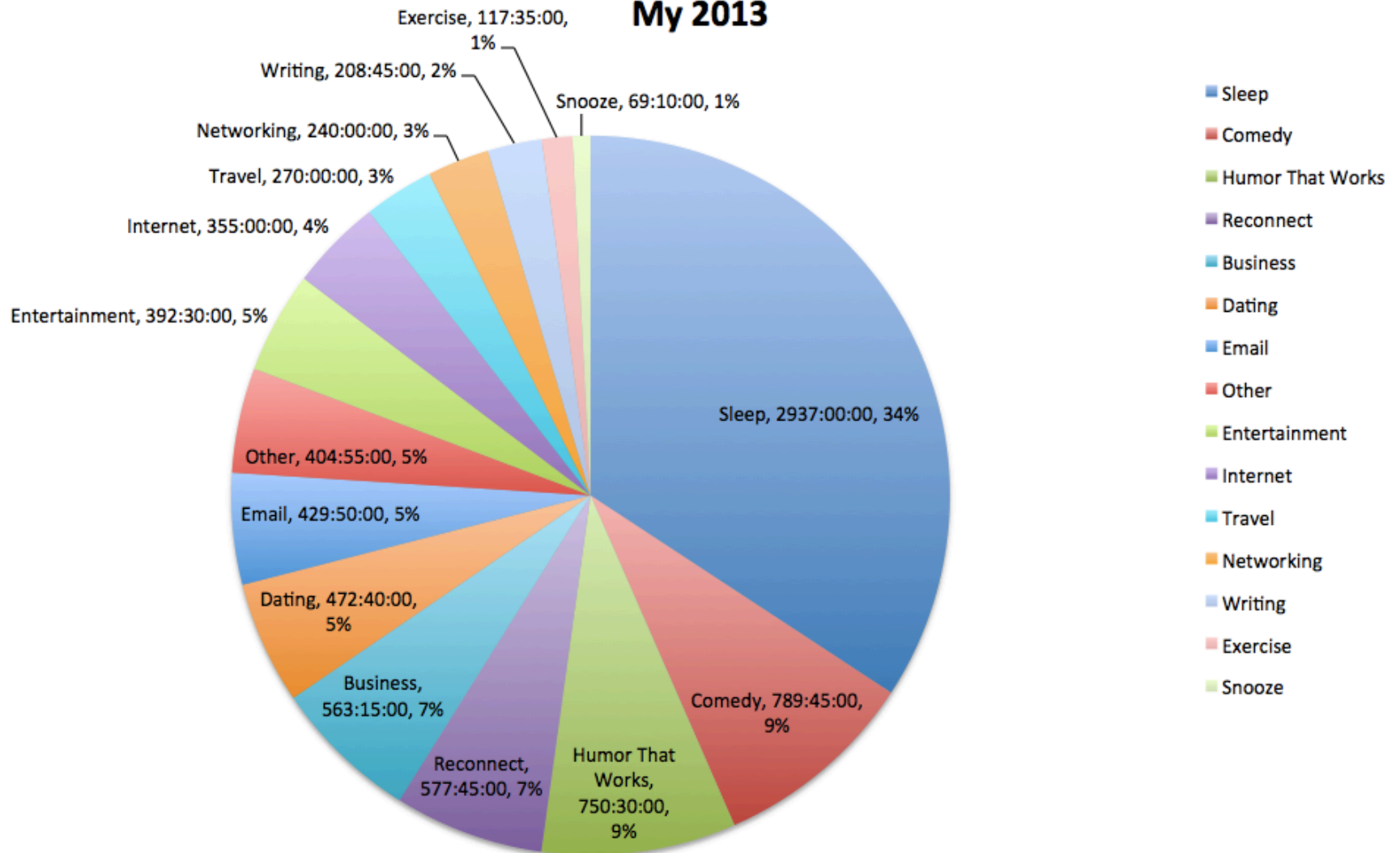
Come On Now

**<90%**



# Track-Your-Entire-Life-To-Improve-Efficiency Chart

**My 2013**







**Time doesn't have to  
worry about health.**





A large, dense pile of US dollar bills of various denominations, including \$1, \$5, \$10, and \$20 bills, scattered across a dark surface. The bills are crumpled and overlapping, creating a textured, chaotic appearance. The lighting is warm, highlighting the green and yellow tones of the currency.

**Money doesn't need to  
be motivated.**



**Chemicals don't have to  
be convinced that they  
should react.**









**83%** of Americans feel  
stressed out by their jobs.



*Source: Harris Interactive*



A man is sitting on a wide set of stone stairs. He is wearing a light-colored short-sleeved button-down shirt and dark trousers. He is holding a smartphone in his left hand and has his right hand covering his face, suggesting he is stressed or frustrated. The background shows a building with a metal railing on the right and some foliage on the left. The overall tone is somber and reflective of the text about job dissatisfaction.

Only **45%** of Americans  
are satisfied with their job.

*Source: Conference Board*



A black and white photograph of a man wearing a dark winter hat with a light-colored, fuzzy trim and glasses. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a plain, light color.

**47%** of Americans  
struggle to stay happy.

*Source: Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index*

And statistically only **1 out of 7**  
Dwarfs are Happy.



*Source: Snow White*



The background is a monochromatic blue-tinted photograph. In the center, a mannequin stands on a small wooden pedestal. To the left of the pedestal is a Slinky dog, and to the right is a Rubik's cube. The entire scene is reflected on the surface below. Overlaid on this background is the text 'HOW HUMOR HELPS' in a large, bold, white sans-serif font, with a subtle drop shadow.

# HOW HUMOR HELPS



**HUMOR**



The background of the entire image is a vibrant yellow, populated with numerous white circles of varying sizes. Each circle contains a classic yellow smiley face with two dots for eyes and a curved line for a mouth. The circles are scattered across the frame, creating a playful and cheerful atmosphere.

...prevents burnout.

...burns calories

# HUMOR

...boosts energy.

...lowers blood pressure.

...reduces stress.



The background of the entire image is a vibrant yellow, populated with numerous 3D-style smiley face emojis. These emojis are rendered in white with yellow faces and black outlines for eyes and mouths. They are scattered across the frame, with some appearing larger and more prominent than others, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is bright, cheerful, and visually engaging.

...prevents burnout.

...gets people to listen.

...burns calories

# **HUMOR**

...lowers blood pressure.

...boosts energy.

...improves focus.

...reduces stress.

...increases long-term memory retention.

**...diffuses conflict.**

**...prevents burnout.**

**...gets people to listen.**

**...builds trust.**

**...burns calories**

**...boosts energy.**

**...improves focus.**

**...reduces status differentials.**

**...reduces stress.**

**...increases long-term memory retention.**

**HUMOR**



**...diffuses conflict.**

**...increases paycheck.**

**...prevents burnout.**

**...creates opportunities.**

**...gets people to listen.**

**...builds trust.**

**...boosts brainpower.**

# **HUMOR**

**...burns calories**

**...lowers blood pressure.**

**...boosts energy.**

**...increases happiness.**

**...improves focus.**

**...reduces status differentials.**

**...reduces stress.**

**...increases long-term memory retention.**

WHITEBOARD: HUMOR USE

# **5 REASONS ENGINEERS SHOULD USE HUMOR**



1.

To Improve Communication.





# SohCahToa

Do you remember  
what it means?

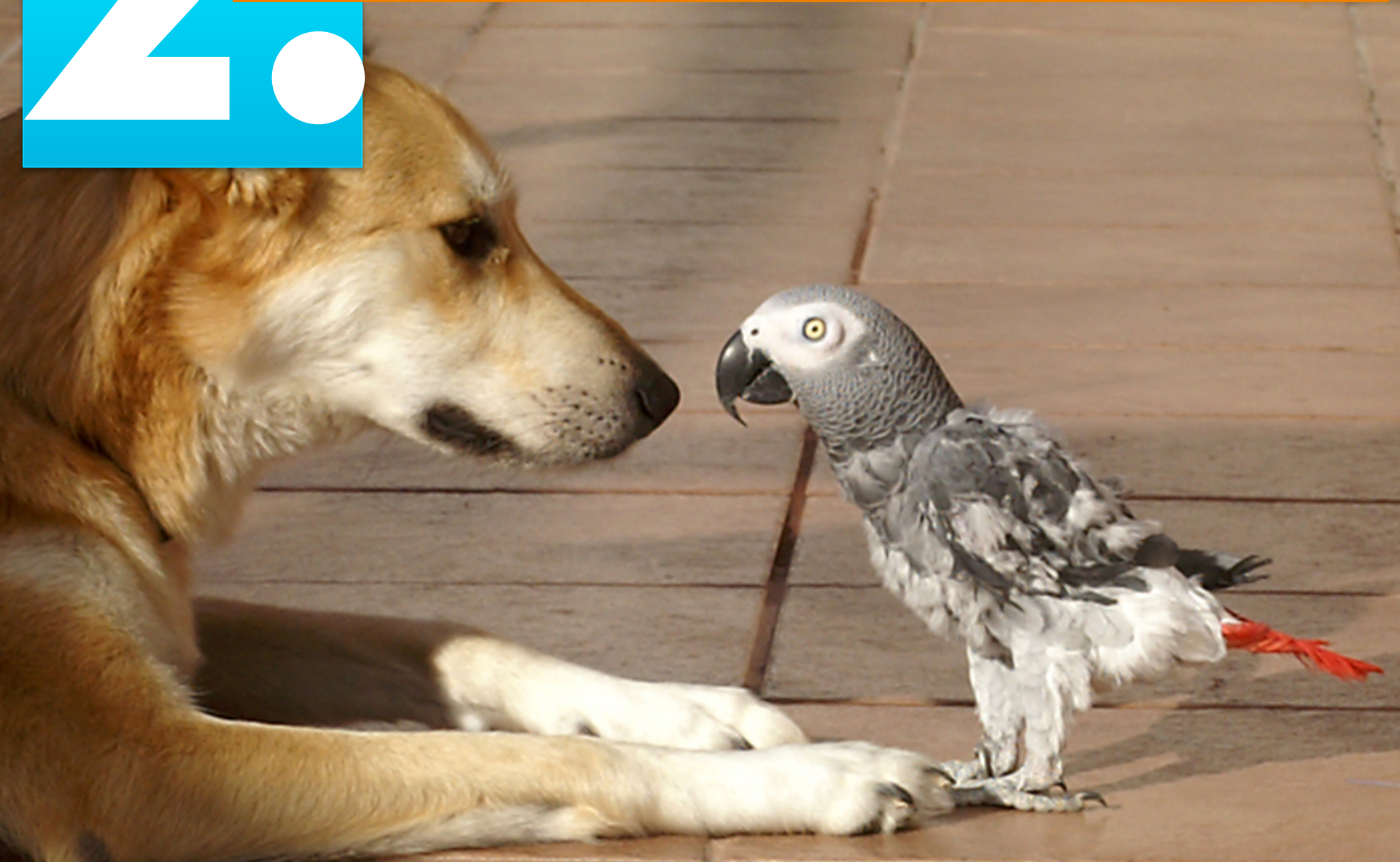
I haven't used it since high school  
but I still remember what it means.

1. Create a mnemonic for key project details.
2. Add humor to the end of emails.
3. Do something experiential.

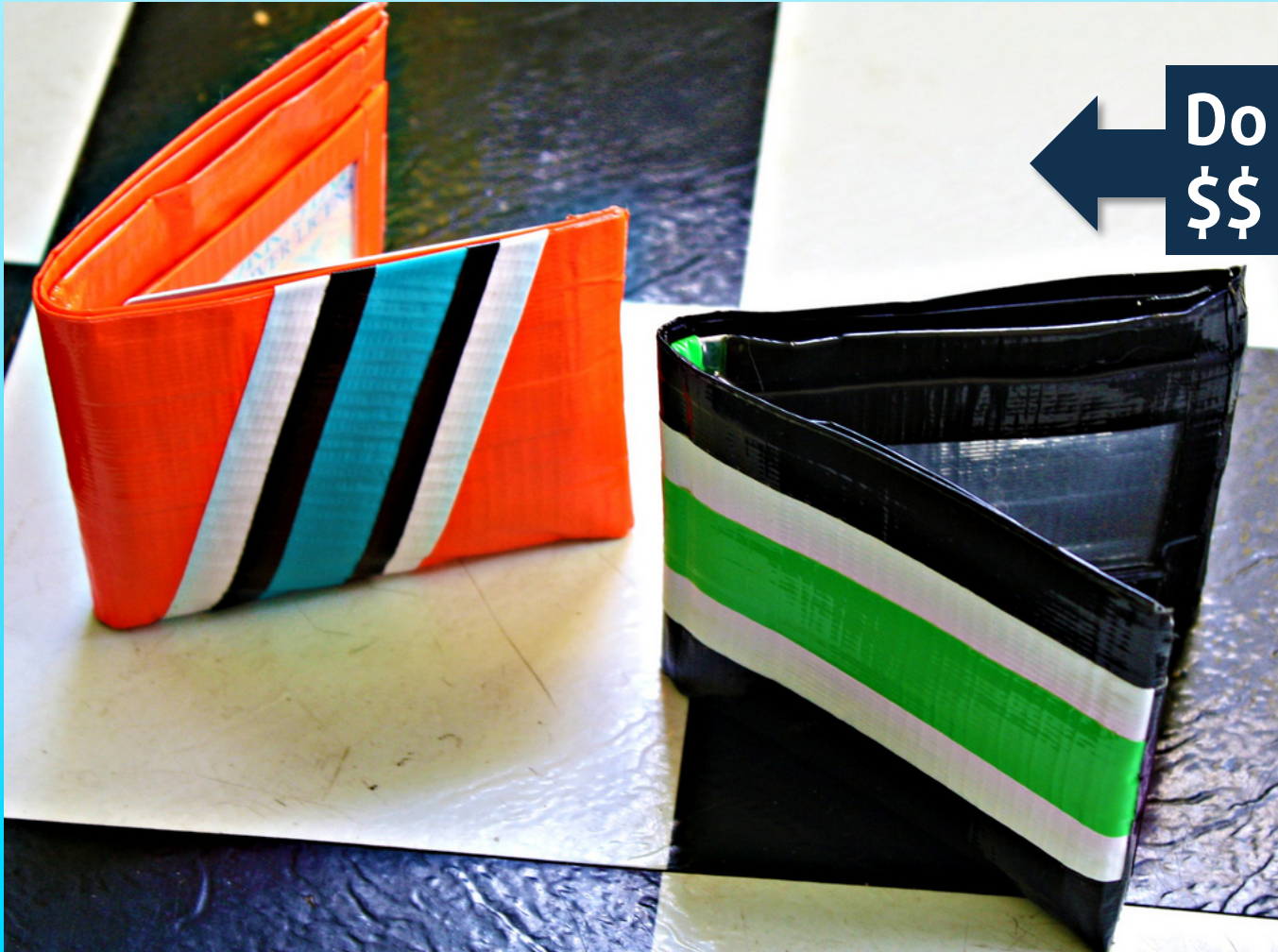


# 2.

To Build Relationships.



1. Open with interesting questions.
2. **Hold a duct tape fashion show.**
3. Give the camera a high-five.



Do duct tape  
\$\$ bills work?

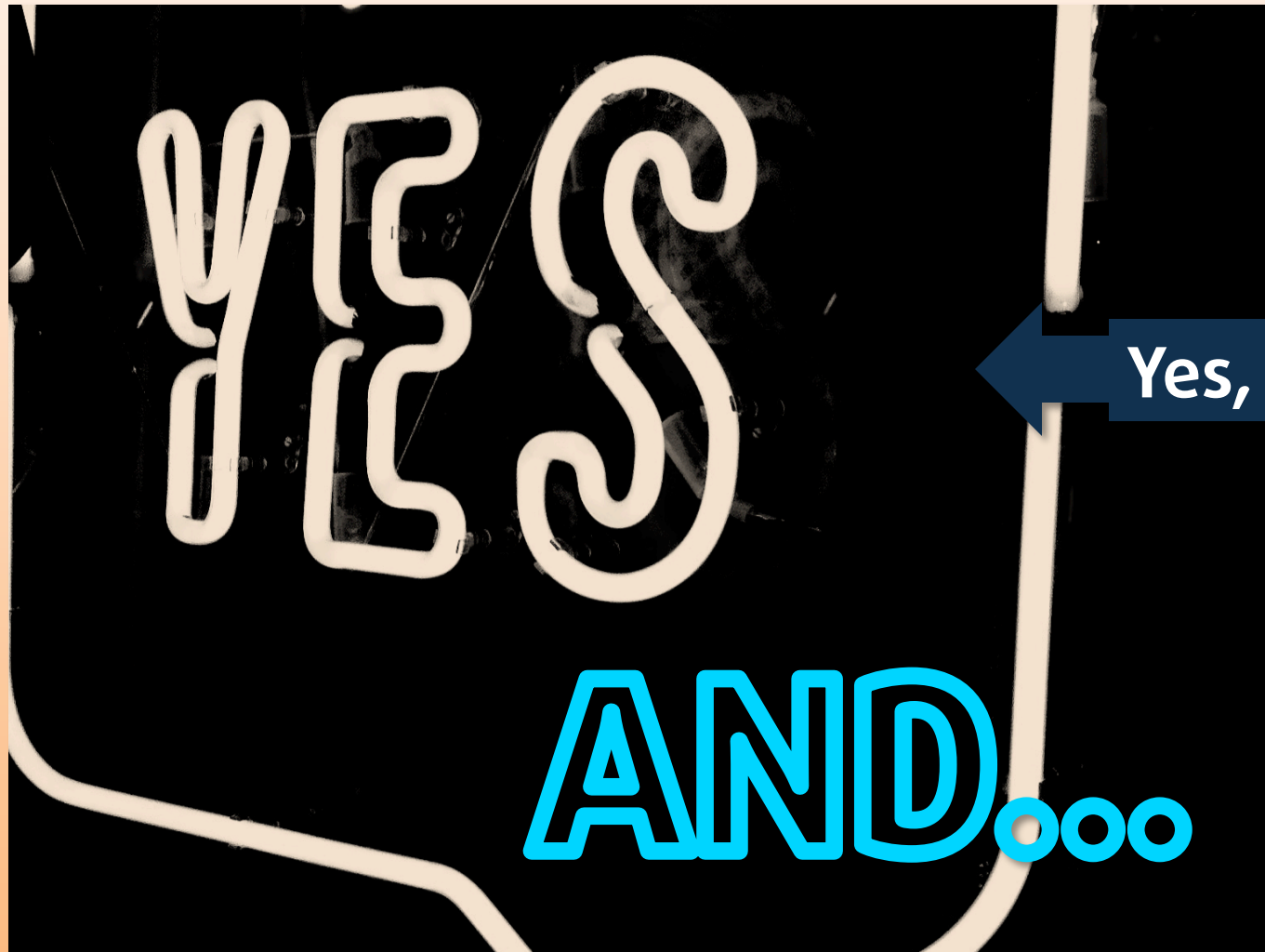


3.

To Enhance Problem Solving.







Yes, but = No.

1. Explain the problem to a 5-year old.
2. Warm up with some comedy.
3. Practice Yes And.

# 4

To Increase Productivity.

• Y PAINT

• STENCIL

• DUCT TAPE

• GOOD IDEA TO  
PAINT ON WALL





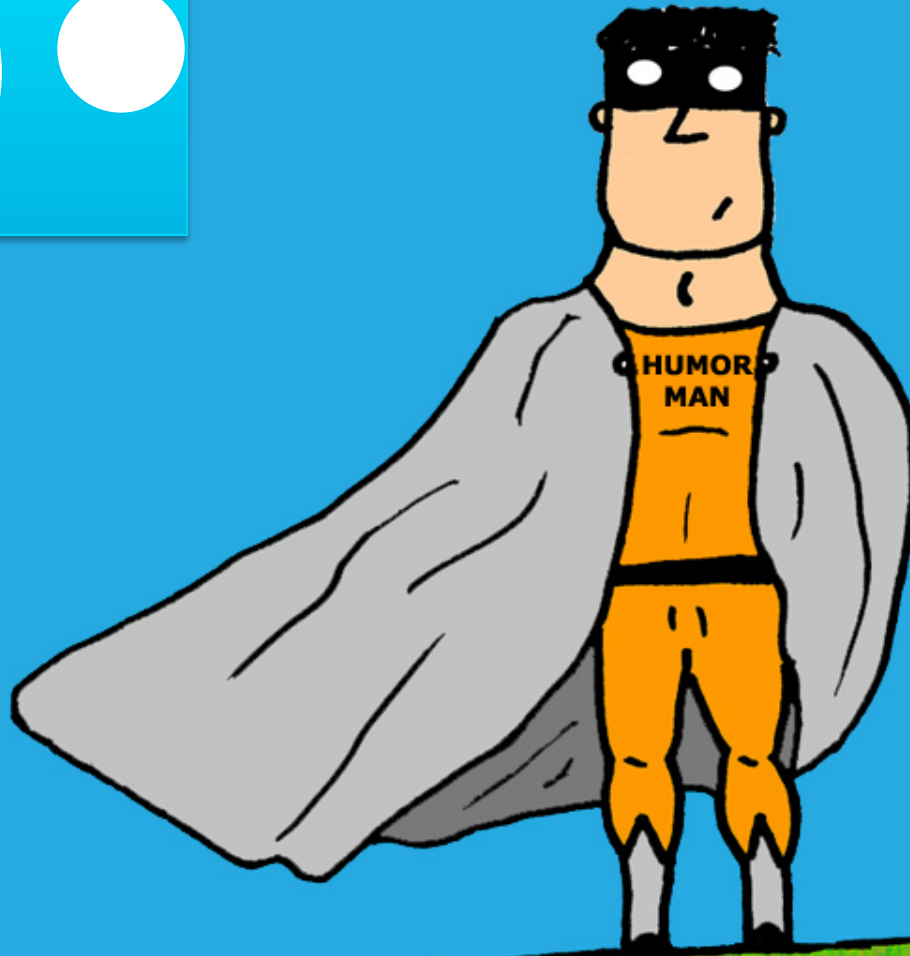
1. Listen to music while working.
2. Have standing only meetings.
3. Gamify.



It was popular on the Death Star.

# 5.

To Boost Health.





**Mirror this.**



1. Save your eyes with 20/20/20.
2. Solve a riddle.
3. Smile.

# CHAT: QUESTIONS

# HOW TO HUMOR

A sepia-toned photograph of a desk setup. In the background, a large computer monitor sits on the desk. To the left of the monitor, a small figurine of a person stands on a small pedestal. A keyboard is visible in the lower-left foreground. On the right side of the desk, there are several books or papers, one of which has the number '50' visible on its cover. A small, rectangular object, possibly a name tag or a small sign, is also visible on the desk. The entire scene is overlaid with the text 'HOW TO HUMOR' in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The text is arranged in three lines: 'HOW' on the top line, 'TO' in the middle, and 'HUMOR' on the bottom line. The text has a slight drop shadow, making it stand out against the background.



WE HAVE  
SHORT ARMS



PLEASE PULL CLOSE

CONSULT YOUR

*Source: reddit.com*



Source: reddit.com

## Gilbert Gottfried Fired As Aflac Duck After Japanese Tsunami Tweets

First Posted: 03/14/11 10:36 PM ET | Updated: 05/25/11 07:40 PM ET

React > [Inspiring](#) [Funny](#) [Hot](#) [Scary](#) [Outrageous](#) [Amazing](#) [Weird](#) [Crazy](#)

Follow > [Japan Earthquake](#), [Japan](#), [Japan Tsunami](#), [Tsunami](#), [Aflac Duck](#), [Gilbert Gottfried](#), [Gilbert Gottfried Aflac](#), [Gilbert Gottfried Japan](#), [Aflac](#), [Entertainment](#), [Gilbert Gottfried Twitter](#), [Entertainment News](#)

### SHARE THIS STORY

852

175

130

2

f Share

Twitter

Email

g+1

**UPDATE:** Gottfried issued a statement of apology for his offensive tweets ([via People](#)):

"I sincerely apologize to anyone who was offended by my attempt at humor regarding the tragedy in Japan. I meant no disrespect, and my thoughts are with the victims and their families."

### PREVIOUSLY:

With some wildly inappropriate tweets, the quack has been silenced.

Comedian Gilbert Gottfried [sent out a slate of offensive twitter missives](#) about the tragic Japanese earthquake and tsunami, and instead of drawing laughs, it cost him his job. The longtime voice of the iconic Aflac Duck, Gottfried was fired by the insurance company on Monday, according to [The Hollywood Reporter](#).

"Gilbert's recent comments about the crisis in Japan were lacking in humor and certainly do not represent the thoughts and feelings of anyone at Aflac," the company, which does 75% of its business in Japan, said in a statement. "There is no place for anything but compassion and concern during these difficult times."



### Get Entertainment Alerts

Sign Up

Submit this story   

Source: huffingtonpost.com



# 3 Ways Humor Can Be Inappropriate



## SUBJECT

- ✗ Race / Ethnicity
- ✗ Religion
- ✗ Sex



## TARGET

- ✗ Boss
- ✗ Coworker
- ✗ Group



## TIME

- ✗ Layoffs
- ✗ Bankruptcy
- ✗ Loss to Michigan



# The Humor MAP

**MEDIUM AUDIENCE PURPOSE**

**LEGEND**  
public parking  
visitor information

# Recap

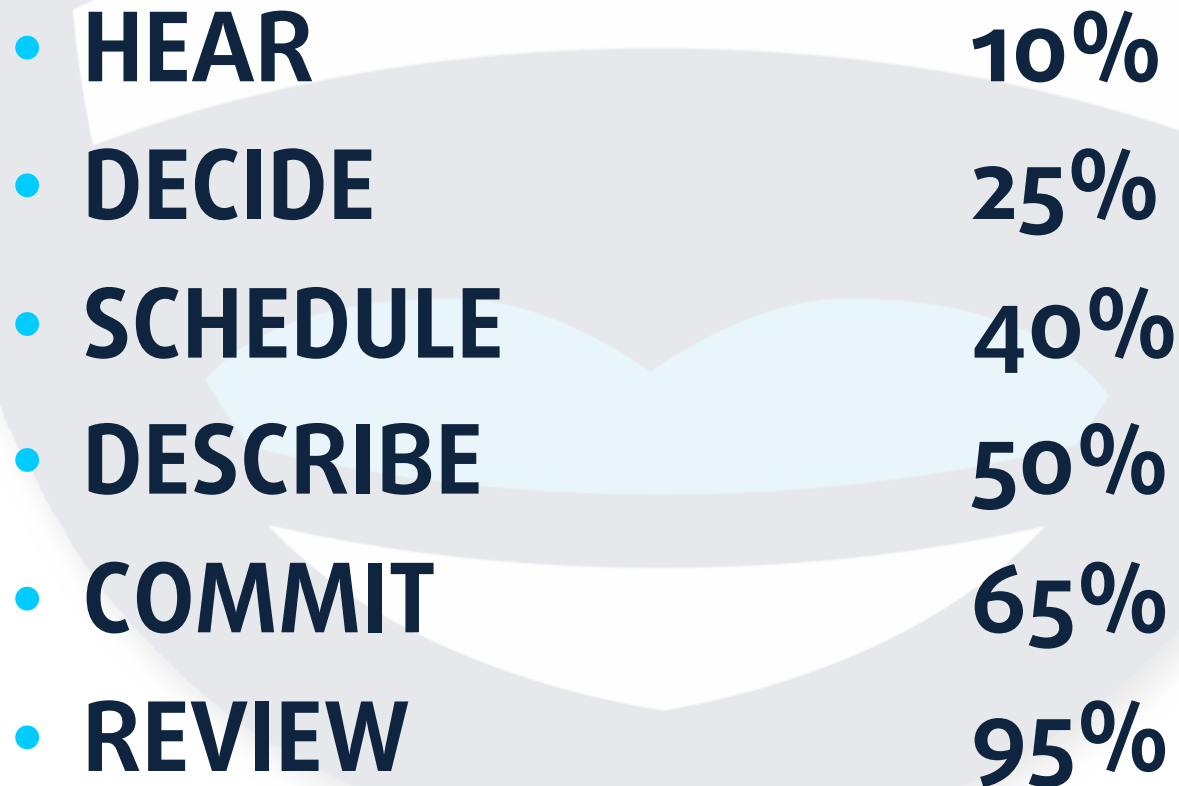
## **HUMOR and ENGINEERING:**

1. Humor: making work fun.
2. 5 Reasons to Use Humor:
  1. To improve communication.
  2. To build relationships.
  3. To enhance problem solving.
  4. To increase productivity.
  5. To boost health.
3. Stay Appropriate with the NY Times Rule.
4. MAP: Medium + Audience + Purpose.

**ACTION ITEMS**



# Likelihood of Succeeding



*Source: American Society of Training and Development*

**18 WAYS YOU  
CAN STEAL**

18 WAYS YOU  
~~SHOULD~~  
CAN STEAL



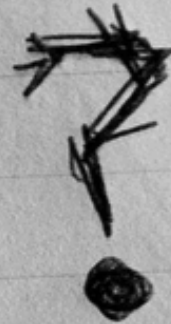
# 18 Ways to Use Humor

1. Create a mnemonic for project details.
2. Add humor to the end of emails.
3. Do something experiential.
4. Open with interesting questions.
5. Hold a duct tape fashion show.
6. Give the camera a high-five.
7. Explain the problem to a 5-year old.
8. Warm up with some comedy.
9. Practice Yes And.

# 18 Ways to Use Humor

- 10. Listen to music while working.
- 11. Have standing only meetings.
- 12. Gamify.
- 13. Save your eyes with 20/20/20.
- 14. Take a break to laugh.
- 15. Solve a riddle.
- 16. Give out awards for humor.
- 17. Poke fun at yourself.
- 18. Smile.

# QUESTIONS





# 10 Elements that Start with a Different Letter than their Symbol

[illegible][illegible]

# Photo Credits

24 Xkcd / 612 / Randall Monroe  
25 Reddit / My local Tire Discounters does it right / thelacepirate  
26 Flickr / A Great Joke, Well Executed / Claire L Evans  
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**Humor That Works:**  
**501 Ways to Use Humor**  
to Beat Stress, Increase Productivity, and Have Fun at Work

Andrew Tarvin

[htww.co/501w](http://htww.co/501w)



**[htwww.co/unlock](http://htwww.co/unlock)**

unlock code: **AICHE**



**andrew@humorthatworks.com**

twitter

website

email



One final thought...

