1

WAY IMPROV CAN HELP PEOPLE GET ON BETTER WITH EACH OTHER AT WORK

and save your team hassles and costs*

"Sorry, Bob, but I'm taking you off this project. I'm concerned that we are going to butt heads."

We show how improv can overcome regular interpersonal workplace issues so everyone wins.

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PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH IMPROVISATION

People are (still) not the best listeners, and therefore, communicators

"We are communicating better
but we are still not out of the woods."

Most of us believe we pretty good at listening, except when we're not. Relationship issues usually involves one party not listening enough to the other.

Some common or typical complaints

"people don't listen to what I'm saying…"
"others sometimes make me feel uncomfortable…"
"my ideas aren't taken seriously…"

This can come up in meetings, strategy sessions, brainstorming, and other times at work.

We drift when our minds run faster than what we hear, and there are those who don't care to listen. So communication hovers at this acceptable level, but it's not optimal.

But you can reach this optimal level, and with that, effective listening often leads to effective action.

What can be done to remedy this?

Equal percentage of males (82%) vs. females (79%) indicated more effective listening as a gained skill.[1]

Active listening leads to more effective communication, taking people to their desired goals. "OK, great" you say, "but how do we achieve it (and keep it)?"

Answer: the initial learning of the skill, then dedicated practice.

Practice can be one conversation a day with colleagues, your family, or clients/prospects. Preferable more if you're in sales.

Improv constantly reminds you how much you're in your mind and **how much it's getting in the way of knowing the other person's mind better.**

*Less hassles: when people effectively listen, they are less combative. As a result, HR deals with fewer instances, and being a manager isn't as much of a headache. This creates a more open work environment, which has positive effects on productivity.
*Less costs: fewer instances means people have better (or more real) connections, and is more of a psychological safe workspace. As a result of this, productivity rises and costs lower.

"ONE WORD AT A TIME"

👥 4+   🕐 4-10 min.

Anyone can introduce this to the team | Easy to implement | A lot a fun

Each participant (#) contributes ONE word to a story that is being grown together. You can start from no story or a beginning. Each # adds to the last word heard as well as the direction the story is going.

Each # gets three seconds max to add a word. One second is all you need for a good flow of story. As this game is fit for times before meetings some end time

• Stay grammatical
• add punctuation if needed
• stick to the story as it goes, and do it **without thinking.**

Other issues this game addresses

Not just better listening, but:
• the experience of 'failing' or 'not being up to standard' and this being accepted. This is a powerful place to be. After this game, strategy sessions can be a lot more productive.
• you're thinking on your feet, so you're editing your thoughts less and being more creative.

An example of how this game is done

Start with participant 1 (#1)
#1: "I"
#2: "sat."
#3: "down"
#4: "yesterday"
This paragraph eventually formed is "*I - sat - down - yesterday - to - eat - a - pie. Then - a - bird - came - and - stole - it - and - gave - it - to - the - ravenous - tiger - next - to - me*".
No-one planned it, but it happened, and it was a group effort.

HINTS:
• hard to think of a word? make a sound/grunt or 'pass the challenge on' by adding in a '*suddenly*' or '*absolutely*'. Too many times though and it looks like you're not trying!
• stick to a 3 second time limit for a word. Any longer and you are thinking too much of what 'sounds cool or good or makes you look smart'.
• it's OK to sound 'wrong'. Everyone accepts your word and moves on. You'll be funny unknowingly, and those will be real laughs.

EXTENSIONS:
• Limit of ONE second between #s
• Give TWO or THREE words each, or do a sentence at a time.

1 Farnaz Tabaee, 'Effects of improvisation techniques in leadership development', Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology - Theses and Dissertations, 222