

Laugh Like a Man

By Randall Munson

Humor is a totally human trait. Don't even try to tell a joke to an animal. They just don't understand even the funniest jokes.

People have often wondered what distinguishes mankind from the animals. Some have suggested it is the use of language or tools but there are animals that blur those distinctions. I've come to the conclusion that the one thing that truly distinguishes mankind from animals is a sense of humor. (That, and the fact that we aren't afraid of vacuum cleaners.) People laugh. It is fundamental part of what makes us human.

Have you noticed that most of the memorable TV commercials are humorous? They may seem frivolous but they are, in fact, very effective. They appeal to us because we are human and we possess our deeply human sense of humor.

Every purchasing decision is, at its foundation, an emotional decision. We may like to justify the emotional decision with intellectual rational. However, information causes people to think. More information causes people to think more. Emotion causes people to act. The use of an emotion, such as humor, appeals to our gut-level human nature.

I work with my consulting clients to show them that simply educating people about their product is not an effective way to sell it. Technology companies seem especially reluctant to accept the fact that informing their prospects about the product is not sufficient. A technically superior product does not ensure sales success.

People buy things because they have a desire for them. They want what it will give them.

People like that great feeling they get when they laugh. And associating that great feeling with your product works like magic.

I've added some wonderfully funny commercials to my web site.

<http://creativelyspeaking.com/commercials.html> They are from IBM, believe it or not. Ironically, IBM may never show them on TV or even post them on the IBM web site because their own attorneys are debating with themselves about the appropriateness of them. This may be your only opportunity to see them <http://creativelyspeaking.com/commercials.html>. (I've secured special permission from IBM to put them on my web site while the lawyers fuss.)

They are effective because they use humor to differentiate one computer platform, the iSeries, from the rest of the computer platforms.

Humor is an effective way to make a serious point.