



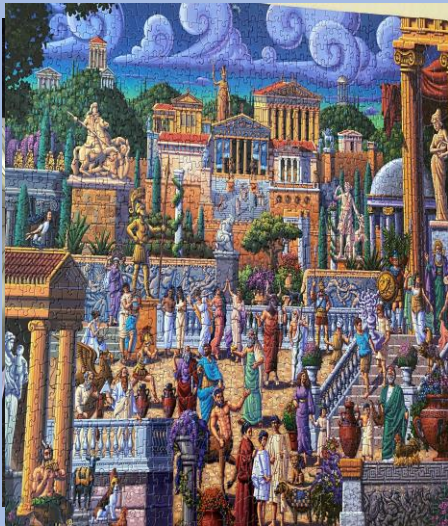
The Keynote Chronicle

Humor News from Jan McInnis
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Making Crap Up: The Key to Success



Have you ever had one of those "aha" moments where you had a brilliant idea AND it turned out to actually be brilliant? (That is, not a drain on your time, energy or finances?)

My epiphany hit me about 30 years ago when I was working at my marketing job, while also starting my comedy career by working comedy clubs and bar gigs on the weekends.

Success is putting together a 1,000 piece puzzle!

For my marketing job, I had hired the Capitol Steps comedy-singing troupe as the after-dinner entertainment for an optics industry conference (the kind of optics dealing with lasers and telescopes, not eyeglasses). The Capitol Steps performed hilarious songs like "Hubble Trouble" which made fun of the problems the Hubble Telescope had when it first launched. The performance was GREAT and everyone loved them!

When I handed the Capitol Steps their check, I saw the HUGE difference between what I was paying them, and the comedy money I was making in the clubs and bars. This money gap was NOT in my favor!

In that instant, I thought, "Well, I could do what the Capitol Steps are doing. . ." (Okay, not the singing part—if you see me singing, take away my wine—but the entertainment part.) So I started asking my comedian friends if there was a market for entertainment at conventions. Everyone I asked said no; there are only "privates" which are basically holiday parties. No one had given any thought to performing at conventions year-round except me, and I had this nagging feeling that I was right.

Twelve months later, after I quit my day job and was working as a comedian full-time, a comic asked me about the kind of comedy I did. I blurted out that I work comedy clubs, but that I'm also a "corporate comedian." He said, "What's a corporate comedian?" and I said that I specialize in shows for corporations and associations at their conventions.

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Spotlight

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Scan this code to see a clip of my popular keynote "Finding the Funny in Change".



"CNN REPORTS THAT ON SUPER BOWL WEEKEND LOTS OF VENDORS WILL BE SELLING COUNTERFEIT SPORTS ITEMS THAT AREN'T OFFICIALLY LICENSED BY THE NFL. AN NFL SPOKESPERSON SAID THAT YOU CAN TELL IF THE T-SHIRT IS NOT AN OFFICIAL T-SHIRT. . ."

IF YOU CAN AFFORD IT!!"

Jan McInnis, Keynote Speaker & Comedian
www.TheWorkLady.com

The first joke I sold to Jay Leno for his Tonight Show Monologue. "Comedy Writer" is another thing I didn't realize I could do.

He said he'd never heard of a "corporate comedian" and I admitted that, well, I made it up! The comic looked at me like I had two heads and said something about how he wasn't sure you can do that. Well, why not? It's what I wanted to do, even though I had absolutely no idea if it existed and if so, how to do it . . . but from then on I started calling myself a corporate comedian anyway.

It's a funny thing that once you label something and focus on it, you tend to move in that direction. A couple years later, after a lot of starts and stops, I was proved right: there is a market for entertainment at conventions AND I found the path I was looking for to the convention stage.

One of those starts was on the New Jersey Turnpike way back in the prehistoric days before cell phones and apps. I pulled over at a rest area to make some old-fashioned calls from a phone attached to a wall. I happened to call a comedy club in Iowa to ask about being booked, and Keith, the booker, actually answered the phone! (That never happens.) He said he had split from his business partner, and the partner had taken over the comedy club booking, but he had an option: he asked if I had a clean act because he booked corporate parties at Christmas in December and at conventions during the year. I told him I was a corporate comic! I sent him my VHS tape (very hi-tech) for consideration. He liked the tape and said he could book me for a bunch of Christmas parties to get started.

I knew I needed a solid resume to get booked at convention events, so I took Keith up on doing his Christmas parties to earn a lot of good recommendations from these organizations. Every December for three years I flew into Des Moines for a couple weeks and Keith would set me up with his truck, a hotel, and a list of holiday parties each night. I didn't really care what money I made at each party, I just needed the clients to give me a good recommendation if they liked the show. Then I could parlay that recommendation into future corporate work during the other 11 months. It worked, and I was launched as a "corporate comedian." And a few years into my corporate comedy career, I moved into being a keynote speaker. . . another job I didn't even know existed when I started my comedy journey.

If the last 24 months of flying by the seat of our pants has taught us anything, it's to keep doing what you're doing while keeping your eyes open for hidden opportunities. And if you're not sure about something, but you have a good hunch, then make it up. You too may end up with a brilliant idea that actually works!

Jan has shared her customized humor keynotes with thousands of associations and corporations, and she is the author of 2 books: "Finding the Funny Fast" and "Convention Comedian." She was also featured in the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, and the Huffington Post.

*From a recent client "On behalf of the planning committee, we would like to extend a huge THANK YOU for being part of our recognition event. **Your presentation was a big hit**.....as evidenced from the level of participation in the chat box and the smiles on everyone's faces. The 'pause' from work and ideas for incorporating humor in our day to day work is much appreciated, and we are ready to begin to flex our 'humor muscles'!"*

BABY BOOMER COMEDY SHOW: Jan co-stars with Kent Rader in this hilarious clean comedy show. Check out their schedule and book them for your event at BabyBoomerComedyShow.com

Connect with Jan on Facebook: www.JanFanS.com and LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/JanMcInnis

About Jan . . .

Jan McInnis has written for Jay Leno's Tonight Show monologue as well as many other people, places, and groups radio, TV, syndicated cartoon strips, and even guests on the Jerry Springer show (her parents are proud). For over 26+ years she's traveled country as a keynote speaker and comedian sharing her unique and practical tips on what business leaders can learn from comedians (no, it's not all about telling jokes). She can be reached at www.TheWorkLady.com, Jan@TheWorkLady.com or contact her assistant Brenda@TheWorkLady.com 703-581-7604