

## ACT OUT NEWS

- **CREATIVITY WORKSHOPS @ Victoria Park Centre for the Arts**  
1 day workshop @ \$98.00  
Dates: Sunday 9 and Sunday 16 April  
Call 9470 5520 or 0406 758 062
- **Community Arts Project in Narrogin – ACT OUT** is part of a group of artists working with **CANWA** to produce a community performance in June. [www.canwa.com.au](http://www.canwa.com.au)

## SURPRISE! NO POWER POINT!

‘OK everyone, put the chairs up against the wall, we won’t really need them for the rest of the day.’

The participants looked around at each other a little confused.

‘You can put your pens and paper away too.’

With a few mumbles, groans and raised eyebrows, people slowly stood up and put the chairs away.

The reluctance did not last long. Within 10 minutes the whole group was smiling, had forgotten all about chairs and was fully engaged albeit in a new and unfamiliar method.

Choosing a method for community development or engagement is key to the success of any project that **genuinely** wants to access a community’s concerns.



This is particularly true if the issues at hand are tough and emotionally charged. People want to talk about them honestly but they CAN’T. And our methods sometimes don’t help.

The theatre-based activities used in this recent workshop in WA’s northwest, quickly created a safe yet playful space which allowed ALL OF US, facilitators included, to participate fully and wholly. So that it was not just our intellects running the show, with the same old, sometimes useful, often tired lines and insights; but our emotions and our creativity had a big say too.



And it was all playful - this not only gave the interaction greater depth it also made the human connection more authentic.

The response from the group reflected this: ‘Really enjoyed the laughs and the insight provided because everyone embraced the method...’

‘Great to have play instead of Power Point’ wrote one participant.

Another wrote ‘very innovative workshop...lots of fun and laughter...’

# The Closest Distance

Play and laughter: two magic ingredients. The right mix of these two and there is not much that cannot be resolved or created.



**Creativity at Work** guru, Linda Naiman, ([www.creativityatwork.com](http://www.creativityatwork.com)) lists some reasons to bring play into the office. Here are my top five:

**1. Play = Fun = Profit:** The more creative we are the more satisfied. This means we feel better about our colleagues, our work and our organisation in general. Naiman quotes research from Fortune Magazine (1998) that shows that employees with high levels of motivation show 127% more productivity than those with average motivation.



**2. “Play is good corporate strategy for problem solving”:** When we play we relax, when we relax we are more creative, when we are more creative we can solve problems and generate ideas – it’s very simple!

**3. Work / Life balance requires play:** this is the most important element listed (surprise! not money!) by employees. Being able to balance the two can be the single most important reason for an employee staying or leaving a job.

**4. Fun is the new status symbol:** Naiman refers to studies that show that if an organisation wants to keep their talent they need to foster a fun, creative and challenging environment at work. And talent, as we know, is what makes one company stand out from the rest.

**5. Workaholic = LOSER:** Being addicted to non-stop, fast-paced work without breaks for play and rest is a sign of low-self esteem. What is more, performance suffers.



I have been told on a number of occasions not to mention the word play too much in relation to business because it turns people off. I challenge that. The days of Henry Ford walking around the factory floor grimly picking on people for telling jokes are far gone.

Good leaders are fun; good leaders understand the importance of play and of laughter. Good leaders know that play and laughter bring people closer. They know that when people feel good and motivated they work well together.

Good leaders understand that laughter ‘...is the closest distance between two people,’ as Victor Borge so wisely said.

