



presentation:

jump! Comedy Rubberneck

for:

jump!
friends

jumplers:

jump! team

date:

July 2010



In our 2009 jump! Christmas card we suggested the word to best capture the zeitgeist of 2010 will be GUTS.

More than just 'courage', 'Guts' demands action - radical action.

The guts to start your own business, to emigrate, to stand up for or against, to survive, to lead, to re-invent, to re-take control of your life, your business, your brand, your country.

To fundamentally change your approach to everything. Figure out what you believe in - and act on that. Guts.

Ever thought about what it takes to stand up in front of hundreds of strangers and make them laugh?

Well, guts, among other things.

This Rubberneck explores what it takes to be a stand-up comic, how comics hold our attention and..

...how brands can act differently in order to connect more powerfully with people and drive growth.

What would happen if you built your brand according to the principles of comedy?

Every second of every day, we're on show. We put our brands on shelves, in hands, in homes. We want people to fall in love with us, to find something special in what we have to offer. And we're constantly looking for ways to do this better.

It's like being in a world where it's you, on your own, trying to win over hundreds of people. How would you do it? We thought about this and decided we could learn from...comedians!

Making people laugh is a big deal.

Doing so means you have stirred an emotion, caused a reaction, engaged with someone, forged a deeper connection, surprised, delighted or shaken people's thinking in some way.

Aren't these the things brands need to do everyday?

Comedy is growing fast. New comedy clubs are springing up at pace and club owners talk about being inundated with people looking for stage time.

We checked out the comedy scene in Dublin and beyond. We went to gigs, big and small, to open mic sessions and to the Cat Laughs Comedy Festival in Kilkenny.

We spoke to people in the audience, comedy club owners and comics themselves to find out what makes Irish stand-up tick.

So without further ado, ladies and gentlemen, let's give it up for...



This is 'naked marketing'!
These guys are selling to us.
Selling their ideas, their observations, their life experience.
And it's 'ker-ching' every time we laugh

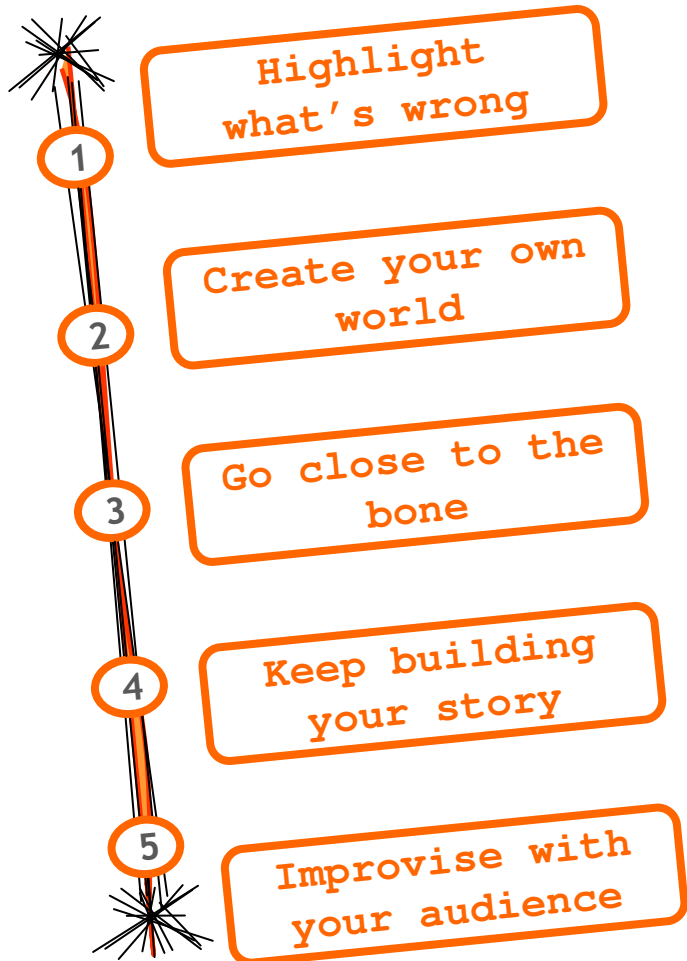


When comedy connects with us it's powerful and it's physical.
We laugh, we cry, we throw our heads back, our sides hurt...

We saw comics regularly do five things
- five **Principles of Comedy**, if you will.



image source: google images



“Comics say what’s s**t and then add a punch line”...PJ Gallagher tells us in his act. By highlighting life’s screw-ups and idiosyncrasies comics force a connection and grab our attention.

Comics impose their imagination on us. Comics create a distorted world and then keep building the story as if everything is normal.

Comics talk about core emotions and experiences; relationships, sex, growing up, growing old, abuse, being male, being female, being gay... Often taking risks when they do so - saying the unsayable.

Comics create a story from which they digress and then return to, using it as a lens to look at life from different and surprising perspectives.

Most comics we saw make the audience part of the act. It adds spontaneity, realness and a little risk to the evening’s entertainment

There's a dynamic to comedy - from 'punchline' to laughing together to mood change. And it prompts questions for brands.

image source: google images



The Act



'Punches'

Comics tell us that the key part of the word 'punchline' is 'punch'.

In order to impact, and so create laughter, comics need to 'punch through our assumptions and expectations', to jolt us out of our complacency.



Where's your brand's punch?
How do you demand attention?



The Audience



Laughs Together

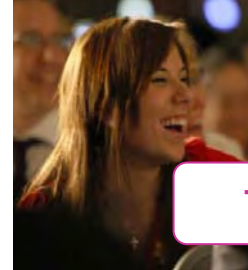
Behavioural Science suggests that laughter signals being part of a group. We tend to laugh with others. It creates a bond.

The saying goes that "laughter is contagious".

One comic suggested to us that laughter is so powerful that a comedy audience is a few short steps away from becoming a mob!



What does your brand enable people to do together?



The Individual



Changes Mood

We love things that alter our mood - a movie, a couple of drinks, chocolate, comedy...

When we laugh we are forced to focus on the moment, to enter the comic's world and so to escape our real world cares and routine.

Our mood changes, we escape, sometimes we re-think our assumptions.



What is the mood change your brand promises? What are you asking people to re-think?

inspiring radical action

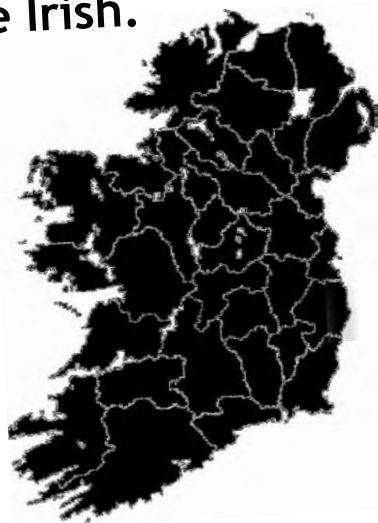
Comedy is entirely individual. Each comic has his or her own style and content. The key is to find a way of connecting their individual subject matter to what the audience can relate to.

Dara O'Briain does one routine based on chemical formulae. If a guy can deliver laughs from this material, then pretty much anything is up for grabs.

Themes we see comics mining often include the church, the 'battle of the sexes', sex, growing up, whatever is in the news that week.

But across the many comics we saw, one topic was most frequent - us.

The Irish.



Irish 'slightly mad' character, unorthodox approach to life

Irish enthusiasm for alcohol

How the Irish use their unique characteristics to outsmart the rest

Stereotypical Irish flaws - from sunburn to sexual inhibition

The slightly 'unsophisticated' Irish male

image source: google images



It takes a lot to be a comicand people really appreciate this:

Original thinking to look at everyday life differently

Intelligence to make unexpected connections, to react to the crowd quickly

GUTS to step on stage, to face the crowd

Boldness to tackle tough subjects and push them further, to express a new view on people

Empathy - to understand situations from others' perspective, to establish rapport quickly

Visualisation - to conjure up pictures and ideas in our minds, to play with thoughts, to mix things up

Personal **magnetism** to compel us to join the imaginary world they create

Expressiveness and **plain speaking**- to bring their act alive, to say it as it is.

"His intelligence is a big thing, he is a really smart guy. I think the way he delivers, he is very well articulated and he's just sharp" - Comedy Fan, F, 27

"I think, how can they do this, how can they stand in front of a couple of hundred people? Balls of steel - you have to respect them for it" - Comedy Fan, M 24

"I mean, it takes guts to stand up on stage in the first place, it takes guts to say I am here and I am going to be funny" - Comedy Fan, M, 28

"If someone is there having a good time themselves and putting a positive vibe out there then I think it bodes well. Your eyes are glued on them"- Comedy Fan, M, 22

What could these qualities do for your brand?
 What new customer interaction and relationship could they stimulate?

We saw comics regularly do five things - five Principles of Comedy, if you will.

- Highlight what's wrong
- Create your own world
- Be close to the home
- Keep building your story
- Improvise with your audience

Comics say what's "right" and then add a punch line... Comics take us to a new world... Comics create a distorted world and then keep building the story as if everything's normal... Comics talk about love, emotions and experiences... Comics create a story from which they agree and then return to, using it as a lens to look at life from different and surprising perspectives... Most comics we saw make the audience part of the act... What could these theories do for your brand? What new customer interaction and relationship could they stimulate?

The Act
Comics tell us that the key part of the "moral" (sometimes "punch") line is to create laughter... Comics need to "walk through our assumptions and expectations" to get us out of our complacency.

The Audience
Behavioural Comics suggests that laughter happens because of a group... The learning goes that "laughter is contagious"...

The Individual
We have things that alter our mood... Our mood changes, we react, sometimes we re-think our assumptions.

Where is your brand's punch line in development?
What does your brand make people do together?
What is the mood change your brand expects? What do you want people to re-

But across the many comics we saw, one topic was most frequent - us. The Irish.

- Irish "slightly mad" character, unorthodox approach to life
- Irish enthusiasm for alcohol
- How the Irish use their unique characteristics to outsmart the rest
- Stereotypical Irish flaws - from authority to sexual inhibition
- The slightly "unappreciated" Irish male

It takes a lot to be a comic... and people really appreciate this:

- Original thinking to look at everyday life differently
- Intelligence to make a unargued connection, to react to the crowd quickly
- Witty to keep on stage, to face the crowd
- Business to tackle tough subjects and push them further, to express a new view on people
- Empathy - to understand situations from others' perspectives, to establish rapport quickly
- Vulnerability - to compare up gut-hurts and share in our needs, to play with thoughts, to mix things up
- Personal magnetism to compel us to join the imaginary world they create
- Empowerment and ability to bring these all above, to let it all in.



A brand that applies the principles of comedy and the qualities of comics arguably...

...becomes more magnetic, a more compelling force, something people want to be part of.

A brand that...

- shows people a new and better way - **new solutions** to enduring needs
- is full of **original ideas**
- has the **guts** to stand up for its beliefs
- is **in tune** with people's core needs and emotions
- is **quick-thinking** and quick to act on opportunities
- and gets **talked about**



So, what would a brand built on the principles of comedy do?
Five things...

1. Highlight What's Wrong

Start with an important dissatisfaction

2. Subvert Reality

Create your brand's 'distorted reality'.

3. Cut to Core Emotions

Talk about stuff that really counts.

4. Build Your Story

Go beyond campaigns.

5. Work the Crowd

Harness group energy.

1. Highlight What's Wrong

We complain that 'The News' is always bad.
 But we pay attention to what's wrong in life.
 Comics understand this.

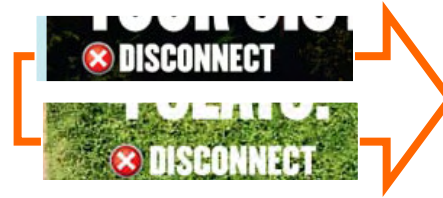
They know that positive, happy, "life is wonderful" situations don't produce humour.
 We laugh when the guy falls down the man-hole, not when he jumps over it.
 And when we're laughing, the comic has our attention.

The default for so many brand communications is to focus on the positive benefit a brand delivers.

But in our race to sell the positive we create a perfect world that feels like 'marketing'.

And we miss the opportunity to empathise and grab attention by exploring what people find wrong with life.

And so miss the opportunity to make our brand's benefit more relevant, more desirable, more significant.



Diesel invites you to "DISCONNECT".
 To reject making pseudo 'friends' on social networks.



www.facepark.org...

Diesel takes on a quite well known social networking brand!

2. Subvert Reality



Comics create a distorted reality and compel us to join them in this place.

Brands can create any world they like for themselves...

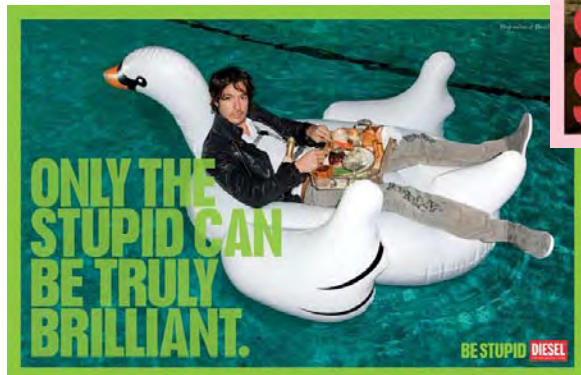
Yup. Diesel again.

...a place where the brand creates the rules and shows us what the world would be like if they were in charge...

Diesel's 'Be Stupid' campaign shows us how life could be more fun if we let ourselves "be stupid".

... creating distinctiveness, fascination, magnetism.

It creates an alternative world that rejects the refrain we hear since childhood; "Don't Be Stupid, you can't do that".



inspiring radical action

3. Cut to Core Emotions

Here are some things that grab our attention...

Love

Relationships

Sex

Growing up

Being male

Being female

Unfairness

Courage

Discrimination

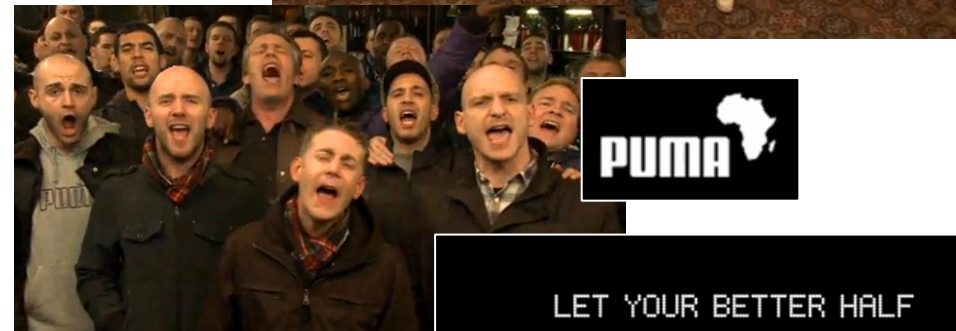
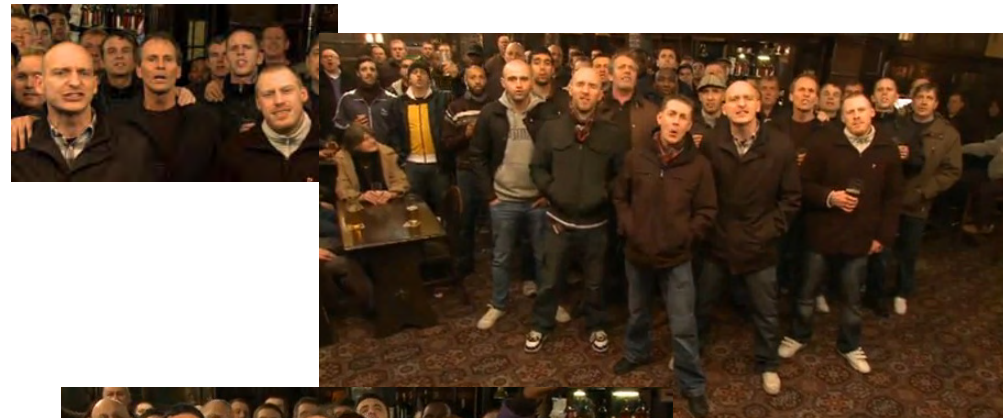
Comics frequently choose subject matter that's close to the bone, that cuts to core emotions.

If you're going to stand up alone in front of a hundred people, you'd better talk about what really counts.

And if you want people to join your brand, shouldn't you talk about what counts?

Check out Puma's "Hard Chorus" video on youtube....

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mo2wFptAX3k>



LET YOUR BETTER HALF
KNOW HOW YOU FEEL.

This is really worth watching. Enjoy Puma celebrating the fact that even guys who are hard core football fans genuinely love the women in their lives.

Stories hold people's interest.

Comics will tell you that Irish audiences respond to comedy that is built around stories; more so than British audiences who seem to warm more to "quick fire gags".

Comics 'hang' their message on stories. They open a story, go off on a tangent, return to their theme again and so on...

...always weaving in new connections, using the story to put a new spin on the subject matter behind their comedy.

How many brands really build their story over time?

Take a cause, a theme, a passion that is close to the heart of the brand - then play with it, own it, find new depths, new meanings that hold our attention?



Bulmers never stray far from their story about craftsmanship, time, care, the goodness of apples, the goodness of orchards...

Hell, they even talk about apples when they launch a pear cider!



inspiring radical action

5. Work the Crowd

Together is better O₂

By making their audience part of their act, comics create a dynamic that is different to most other art forms...

...a sense of realness and a little risk.

People feel they are contributors to something real.

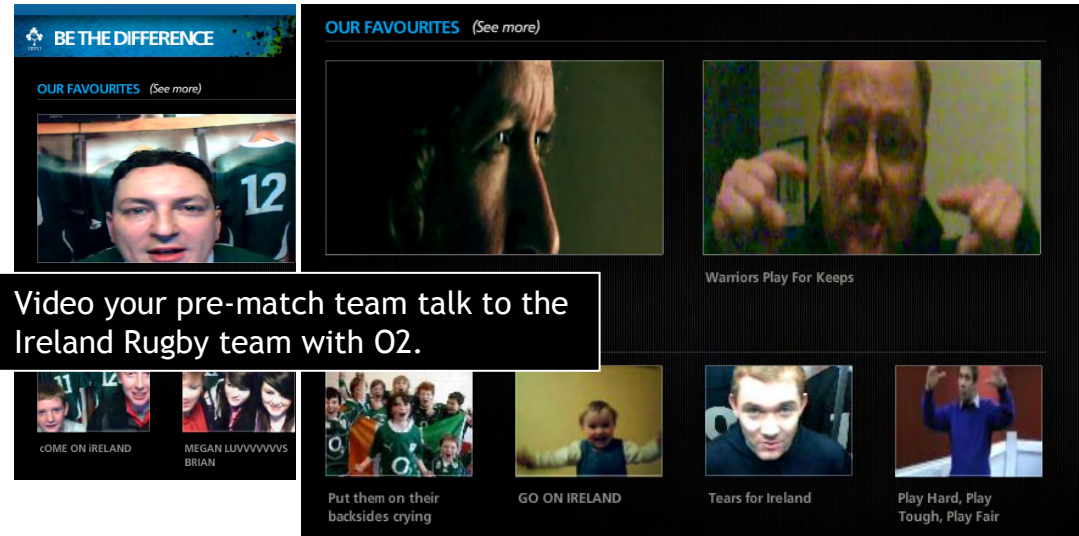
Most brands do interaction. They create the obligatory Facebook page, they create competitions etc.

How many brands make people feel like contributors to something real?

How many brands harness the energy of their customers and focus it on a cause, an issue or a passion that is important to them?

Think Innocent's 'Big Knit', Tesco's 'Computers for Schools'...

...and O2's 'Be The Difference' sponsorship of the Ireland rugby team...



O2 creates energy around its sponsorship of the Ireland rugby team by involving rugby fans and helping them "Be The Difference" for the team.



inspiring radical action

So what would a brand built on the principles of comedy do?

1. Highlight What's Wrong

2. Subvert Reality

3. Cut to Core Emotions

4. Build Your Story

5. Work the Crowd

We think the learnings for brands from the principles of stand-up comedy are a big deal.

Comics create a connection with their audience, they stir emotions, raise energy and shake people's thinking.

If you see potential in applying some of the learnings and strategies in this Rubberneck to your brand, then let's talk.

We can apply this thinking to strategy, positioning and innovation through tools such as research and team workshops.

Thanks! You've been a lovely audience!

rubberneck™

We hope this Comedy Rubberneck stimulates new thinking, ideas and possibilities for your brand.

Interested in talking about how the principles of comedy could create new engagement and new growth for your brand?

...call us or e-mail us:

ruan@jump.ie : +353 (0)86 6504360

lee@jump.ie : +353 (0)86 3043837

paul@jump.ie : +353 (0)86 3800787

bettina@jump.ie : +353 (0)87 2237777

louise@junp.ie : + +353 (0) 87 6164684

Our sincere thanks to:

Andrew Stanley

John Lynn

Neil Delamere

Fred Cooke

AbandoMan (aka Rob Broderick)

Frank Gordon (Bray & Dalkey Comedy Clubs)

Simon O'Keefe (Capital Comedy)

Peter O'Mahony (Laughter Lounge)

Eavan Kenny (Lisa Richards Agency)

Des Doris (Alchemy Events)

& PJ Gallagher (inadvertently!)