Setting the Stage for Success: Applied Improv in the Workplace

When you hear the word “improv” what do you think? Perhaps that it’s short for improvisation, or is a live performance where actors invent characters and situations out of thin air. You may be familiar with Improv through shows like “Who’s Line Is It Anyway?” – but did you know that Improv is actually a powerful tool for staff training in the workplace?



We’re pleased to announce that the Chamber has partnered with Literacy Link South Central, Fanshawe College, Thames Valley District School Board - Gateway Adult Learning, the YWCA and the St. Thomas-Elgin Local Immigration Partnership to help businesses deliver relevant, timely training to build employee skills and help them grow within your company. Training that includes Applied Improv!

Applied Improv is an outstanding tool that can help employees develop and practice a range of skills, including adaptability, creativity, empathy, verbal and nonverbal communication, and team building. Consider the skills that someone who is good at Improv must have. Beyond just being funny, performers must be **observant**, **listen** carefully, **think** and **respond** quickly, **communicate** using both body language and **verbal skills**, come up with **creative ways** to deal with **unexpected changes**, focus on the task at hand, and **support** one another so everyone can succeed. These skills aren’t just what makes a great Improv performer – they are what make a great employee.

Through facilitated Applied Improv activities and guided debrief conversations, your employees can reflect on why they react positively or negatively in stressful situations, what helps them be creative or feel able to take risks, how their actions and reactions impact themselves and others, and more. Through humour and being brave even when it’s intimidating or uncomfortable, your staff can grow their skills and become stronger and more supportive employees.

Employers who have worked with our partners to experience Applied Improv training recognized it as a powerful opportunity for both front line and supervisory staff, particularly those dealing with differences in opinion or conflict. Whether working with each other or customers, employees often need to learn new ways to “put themselves in the shoes” of their customers or peers, approach problems in new ways, and not personalize disagreements. Applied Improv offers new techniques for communication, teamwork and conflict resolution – it can help staff empathize with others and use creativity and humor to defuse tension.

Mark Your Calendars

If you’d like to find out more about how you can work with local upskilling programs to build employee skills through Applied Improv or other training opportunities, then join us for lunch on **May 9th** at the **CASO Station** (Farley Waiting Room) from **noon** until **1:00 pm**. You can RSVP by contacting mail@stthomaschamber.ca.