

Corporate Yuks

To get ahead in business, crack a joke.

Today's the day. You're giving the big presentation. The audience is restless, anticipating boredom. How do you get their attention? How will you make them understand instantly that you are the presenter who's truly on the ball?

Why, with a punchline, or course. Writer Michael Iapocce offers here a handful of jokes certain to wake up and warm up any business audience. In his recent book, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Boardroom*, Iapocce provides many more, with strategies for creating original, pertinent humor of your own. It's a must for any executive riding a rim-shot to the top of the corporate heap.

Advertising

Advertising brings quick results. Yesterday we advertised for a security guard and last night we were robbed.

Airlines/Airports

The airline of course lost my luggage. I'm used to that, but this time I was a little suspicious—the guy at the baggage claim was wearing my clothes.

Bankruptcy

Three executives were fighting over the check at lunch. One said, "Let me take it, I can write it off on my taxes." Another said, "Let me pay, I can charge it to the company." The third said, "No, I'll take it—I'm filing for bankruptcy tomorrow."

Banks

Banks lend billions to Third World countries, but for us they chain down the pens.

Bills/Creditors

I sent a customer a letter that said, "This bill is now one year old." He responded right away. He sent a note that said, "Happy Birthday."

Boss/Management

One employee complained to the boss when he was let go. "How can you fire me? I'm doing the work of three people." The boss

BY MICHAEL IAPOCCE

said, "Tell me who the other two are and I'll fire them too!"

Business/Sales

You know your business is in trouble when your insurance company sends you just half a calendar.

Closing Lines

If I've gotten my message across, it's my hope that some of you will leave here inspired . . . and the rest of you will at least wake up refreshed.

Conventions/Hotels

Our last annual conference was so successful that some people wanted to have another one the next week.

Economy/Inflation

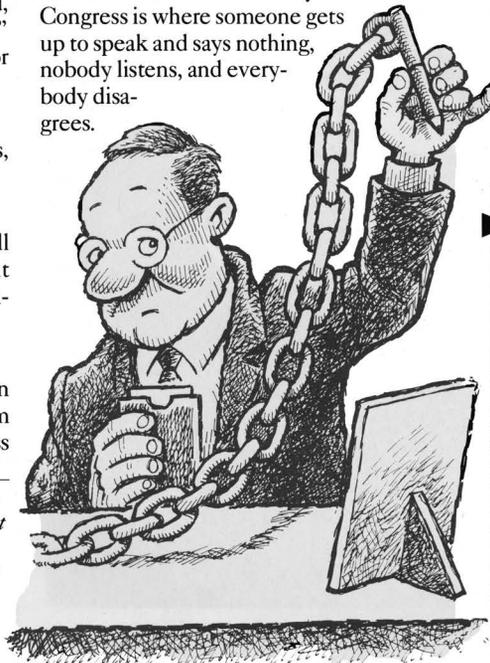
An economist is a person with the data to prove that all confusion about what's going to happen isn't mere coincidence.

Experience

Experience is that wonderful knowledge that enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it again.

Government/Bureaucracy

Congress is where someone gets up to speak and says nothing, nobody listens, and everybody disagrees.



Interpreting Data

I heard of one firm who had hired a consultant to come in and determine why they were losing money. When he showed up he asked one employee, "What do you do around here?" The woman said, "Nothing." He then asked another employee, "What do you do?" He also said, "Nothing." The consultant said, "Just as I thought . . . too much duplication of work."

Opening Lines

I'm going to speak, and you're hopefully going to listen. If you finish before I do, please raise your hand.

Investments

There was a time when a fool and his money were soon parted. Now it happens to everyone.

Unions

A woman used to go to a doctor to see if she could have children. Now she consults her union contract.

Value of Persistence

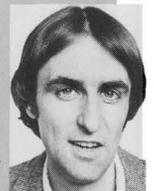
A salesman visited the office of a very difficult potential buyer at the end of the day. He was let in just before five o'clock and the prospect said, "You ought to feel honored. Do you know that so far today I've refused to see 12 salesmen?" The other man said, "I know—I'm them."

Women in Business

A female executive is a person who can mismanage as badly as a man, only she gets blamed for it.

► **MICHAEL IAPOCCE** has written humorous speeches for corporate executives, and has conducted workshops on the effective use of humor in business for such clients as Arthur Andersen and Atari. He's also written for professional entertainers—Rodney Dangerfield and Robert Goulet, to name two.

Iapocce, who graduated from SU in 1971 (speech and dramatic arts), also made a stab at stand-up comedy, performing for three years in the San Francisco area. After finishing 32nd in a regional comedy competition, he says, he decided to become a consultant.



Excerpted from *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Boardroom*, by Michael Iapocce. Copyright © 1988 Michael Iapocce. Reprinted by permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. To order this book, call Linda Rubinstein, (212) 850-6069.