

Innovation at the *Speed* of Laughter: 8 Secrets to World Class Idea Generation

by John Sweeney and the Brave New Workshop

BRAVE NEW WORKSHOP FACT SHEET

The Brave New Workshop (BNW) Theatre has been writing, performing and producing original sketch comedy, music and comedy improvisation longer than any other theatre in the United States. The company's historic brand of political and social satirical sketch comedy and improv performances, along with a nationally recognized school and booming corporate services division, all combine to make the BNW a truly unique place to laugh, learn, think, and play.

- **46 Years of Comedy** – The BNW was founded by ex-Ringling Brothers circus performer Dudley Riggs in 1958. Dudley brought the theatre to its current location on Hennepin Avenue in Minneapolis in the 60's and promptly installed the first espresso machines west of the Mississippi. Since then, more than 3 million people have been exposed to the theatre's unapologetic, and unwavering, brand of comedy and improvisation.
- **Non-profit** – The BNW theatre and our school for improvisational acting, the Brave New Institute, are non-profit entities and do not accept any government funding. We are uniquely self-sustaining. In addition, BNW's corporate services division is managed for-profit and helps to support the artistic vision of the company through custom entertainment, corporate training, keynote speaking and select other services.
- **Original Social & Political Satire** – More than 500 original productions have been mounted on Brave New Workshop stages since 1958! Employing a creative process fundamental to the theatre, the actor-writers spend eight weeks creating, writing, rehearsing, and mounting the productions, and then another 8-12 weeks performing the show. The team that drives the creative side of the theatre possesses decades of comedy experience and is remarkably committed to continuing the legacy that Dudley started nearly fifty years ago.
- **Graduate School of Comedy** – The Brave New Institute (BNI) is the theatre's school for improvisation, acting and writing classes. Currently teaching more than 270 students each week, the BNI is instrumental in the theatre's community outreach programs and continues to grow at a rapid pace. The school is a world-leading improvisation training center, with a curriculum refined over forty-five years and 70% of our students are non-actors.
- **Music for the Masses** – Driven by the expertise of musical director Pete Guertin – with more than forty shows at the BNW to his credit - the company released its first CD in 2002. Entitled the *Best of the Brave New Workshop, Volume 1*, the CD is a crowning achievement to the musical talent that drives BNW shows. The CD features such hits as "Waiting Around To Die," and "It's Hard to be An American" and is for sale at a number of Twin Cities music stores, on the BNW web site, and at the BNW theatres. Another CD was released in 2004 featuring the soundtrack from our hit show in St. Paul, MN: *It's Not Just For Lutherans Anymore*. As the theatre's well-respected musical director, Pete composes and performs the original musical accompaniment to a new show every couple of months and is justifiably one the most experienced and most-respected improv musicians in the country.
- **Corporate Training, Entertainment, & Keynote Speaking** – The Brave New Workshop also brings its writing, acting, musical, and teaching talents to more than 150 companies and organizations each year. As the fastest growing component of the BNW, the corporate services division provides business training based on the patented improvisation process that the BNW employs, writes and performs original productions for events and meetings, and offers a variety of customized services, ranging from keynote speaking to scriptwriting to video production. Relying heavily on the creative talent that drives the BNW stages and the improvisation philosophies and principles that have built the school, the corporate services division has created it's own niche by literally wowing companies like Sprint, Altria, Hewlett Packard, General Mills, RBC Dain Rauscher, Cargill, and Texas Instruments with unexpected business acumen and an unmatched pool of writers, actors, and creative directors. Most recently, John Sweeney and the Corporate Services team wrote *Innovation at the Speed of Laughter: 8 Secrets to World Class Idea Generation*.
- **Hollywood Impact** – Dozens of Brave New Workshop alumni have become successful and influential members of the entertainment industry, including Al Franken (writer, commentator, actor), Pat Proft (*Naked Gun, Police Academy, Scary Movie*), Mo Collins (*MAD TV*), Peter Tolan (*Murphy Brown, Gary Shandling Show, Analyze This*), Peter MacNichol (*Sophie's Choice, Ally McBeel*) Louie Anderson, (comedian), Linda Wallem (writer, *That 70s Show*), Jeff Cesario (host and comedian, Comedy Central) Cedric Yarbrough (*Reno 911*) and Melissa Peterman (*Fargo, Reba*).

More information about the theatre, our shows, our book, or John's training and keynote speaking, can be found at our web sites (<http://www.bravenewworkshop.com> and <http://www.speedoflaughter.com>).

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