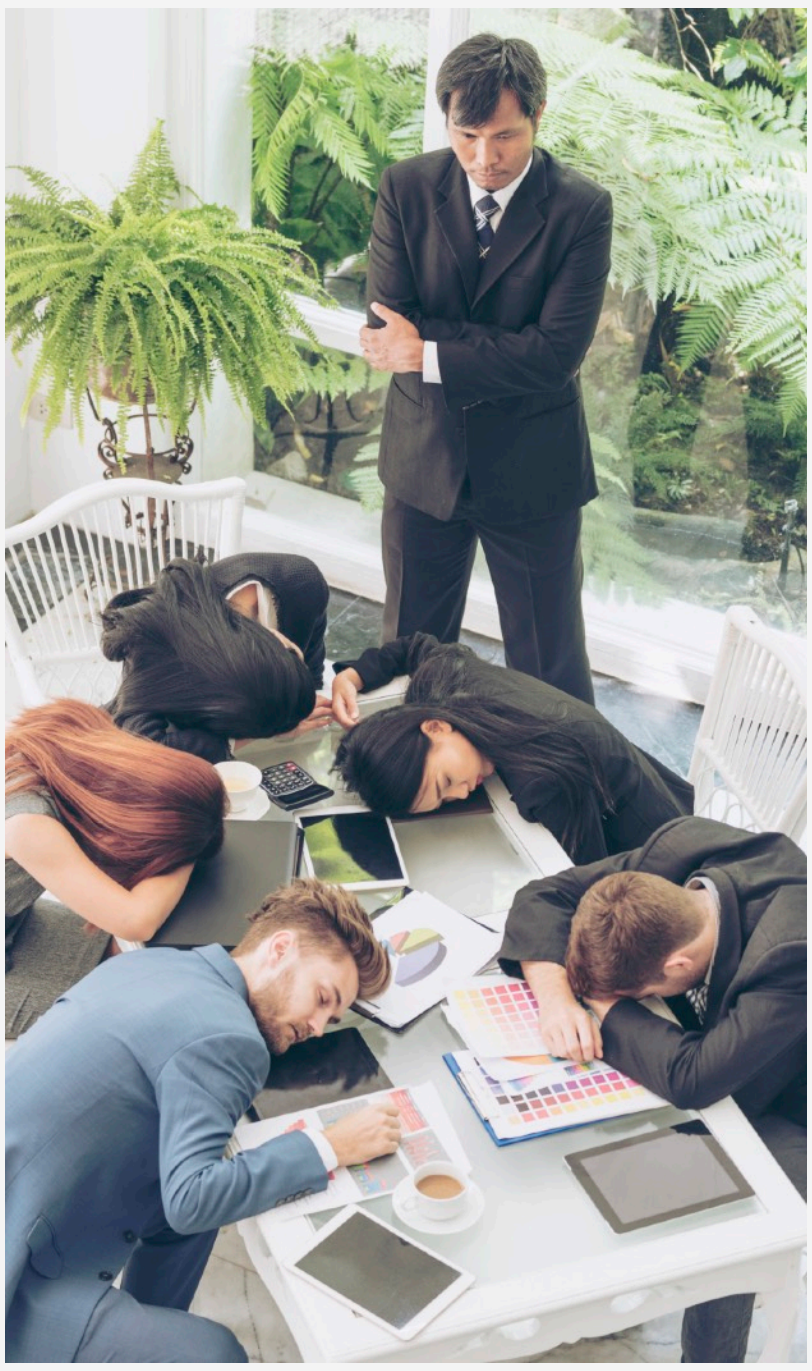
CASE STUDY

Humour@Work

Positive Energy.
Stronger Relationships.

A structured wellbeing programme designed to help leaders and teams foster more positive, engaging and psychologically safe workplaces by using humour intentionally to strengthen relationships, reduce tension and improve collaboration.

1 Client Context & Challenge



A technology company operating in a hybrid work model, with many of its employees assigned to client sites, was experiencing a period of high organizational demand. The fast pace of delivery, continuous pressure for innovation, and the geographical dispersion of teams had created an environment that was highly efficient from a technical perspective but increasingly arid from a human standpoint.

Communication had become objective, fast, and predominantly functional, leaving little space for relationships. Team meetings and individual feedback conversations fulfilled their agenda but rarely generated connection or proximity. Emotional fatigue was accumulating, mistakes were experienced with greater tension, and physical distance reinforced relational distance.

The organization recognized that its greatest strength — highly skilled and committed teams — was operating under levels of strain that were beginning to affect well-being, psychological safety, and the quality of interactions.

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It was strategic: how to humanize hybrid work, reduce relational tension, and strengthen positive relationships without compromising performance and accountability.

2 The Solution

Thrive Partners Approach

Thrive Partners positioned humor not as entertainment, but as a strategic relational competence, particularly relevant in demanding and hybrid work environments.

We worked from three structuring principles:

a) Humor is a developable competence, not a personality trait;

b) The quality of relationships directly influences well-being and performance;

c) Psychological safety depends on how we communicate, deal with mistakes, and manage tension.

Experiential Intervention

The intervention was designed as a collective experience, aimed at promoting a shared relational language across teams and organizational levels.

One-day in-person workshops were conducted in six groups of approximately 12 participants, intentionally composed of employees from different departments and hierarchical levels.

The methodology was active and experiential, based on the principles of Action/Reflection and Experience/Abstraction, encouraging experimentation, shared reflection, and direct application to real work contexts.

Through techniques such as psychodrama, dramatic expression, improvisation, clowning, and storytelling, participants were invited to:

- Make explicit existing patterns in how teams deal with mistakes and tension
- Experiment with new forms of communication under pressure
- Work with vulnerability in a responsible and constructive way
- Develop humor as a tool for empathy and relational clarity.

Humor was addressed intentionally — not as an escape from demands, but as a resource for emotional regulation, connection, and relational decompression.

3 Critical Success Factors

- Creation of a psychologically safe space, free from exposure or judgment
- Strong contextualization to the hybrid work model and the technology sector environment
- Cross-functional participation from different organizational areas and hierarchical levels
- Clear focus on the intentional use of humor as a relational tool
- Explicit linkage between relationship quality, well-being, and performance.

4 Results & Impact

Humor became established as an intentional relational tool, without compromising focus or performance. According to client feedback, the intervention contributed to visible improvements in the quality of interactions and in the relational climate across teams.

Key outcomes included:

- Reduction of defensive tension in interactions and greater openness to dialogue
- Use of humor as a shared mechanism for emotional regulation and connection between colleagues
- Team meetings and feedback conversations becoming more fluid, human, and participative
- Greater ability to deal constructively with frustration, mistakes, and change
- Strengthening of psychological safety, relational proximity, and team belonging.

5 Participant Testimonials

Participants described the program as:

“Fun, engaging and full of laughter , a different way of working on serious topics.”

“An innovative approach that combines lightness with deep reflection on relationships.”

“Dynamic and engaging , it made me think about how I communicate.

“It created an environment of trust that allowed more open communication and helped us get to know colleagues better.”

“A real wake-up cal, it showed how humor can be used intentionally in relationships.”

“An interactive and mind-opening experience that changed the way I approach communication in my day-to-day.”

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