

# **Improving Customer Service Through IMPROV!**

Julie Mandal, Branch Manager, Brampton Library

Julie Andrews-Jotham, Branch Manager, Brampton Library

serving

customers

person  
patrons

patron

internal

asked  
people

etiquette

need  
time

library  
think

staff  
email

open-ended  
response

difficult

dealing

services  
diverse

work department  
information needs  
populations

customer  
communication  
always  
providing

problem  
anything  
telephone

customer  
fines

know

## Why Improv?

### Improv and Innovation:

- Shakes people out of traditional ways of doing things
- Breaks habitual patterns of thinking, being and doing
- Fosters experimentation without fear of failure
- Allows new patterns and directions to emerge

### Improv and Inspiration

- Raises energy, alertness and positive feelings
- Engages and integrates different parts of the brain and body
- Increases self awareness and expands self concept

### Improv and Creative Team Culture

- Instantly equalizes every member of the group
- Breaks down barriers quickly and non-threateningly
- Increases trust between team members
- Enhances skill of supporting, giving and receiving
- Fosters the ability to think on your Feet and under pressure

# HOW?

We tried improv as a stand alone session– not talking about the intent of it – just to see how it would go...

- We did it as a separate occurrence – not as part of any other meeting or event
- It took some time for people to get comfortable
- It felt awkward for some
- They started to lose their inhibitions and get into it
- Once they got loose, they really had fun
- They worked together to achieve an outcome
- They saw the value in responding positively to make a situation work out better
  
- THEN we talked about the intent...

## What we hoped for: the intent of the exercise

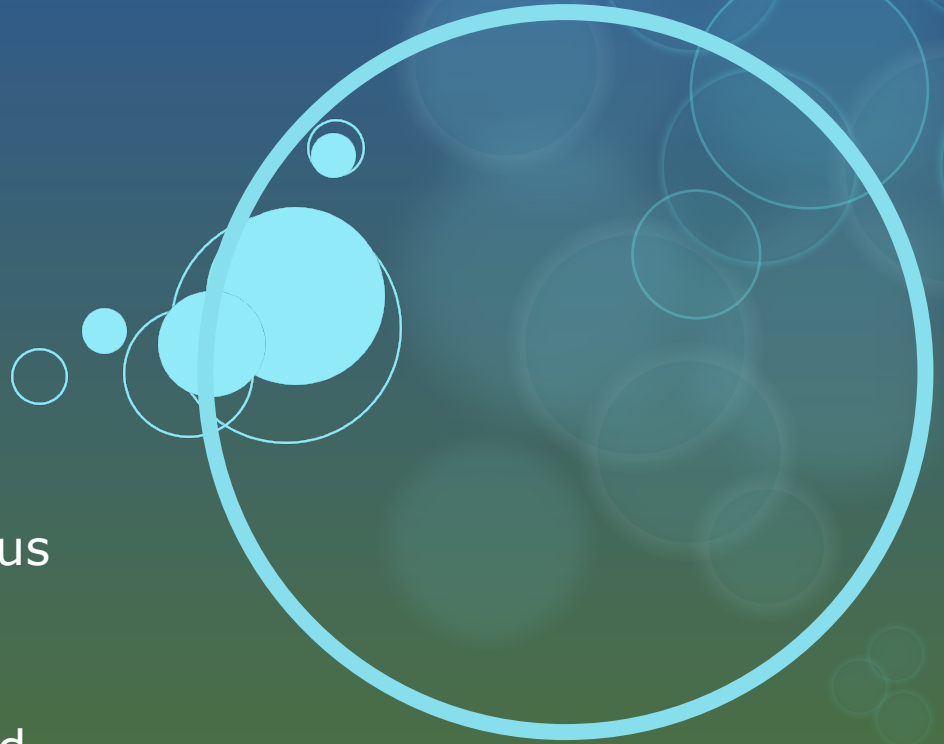
That staff would come together as a team

That staff would loosen up and be better able to think on their feet

That staff would be more spontaneous and be more able to seek creative solutions

That we would have fun together and take ourselves less seriously

That we would be better prepared to meet visitors with no preconceived ideas and to engage people individually and connect with them





## What we want it to translate into over time:

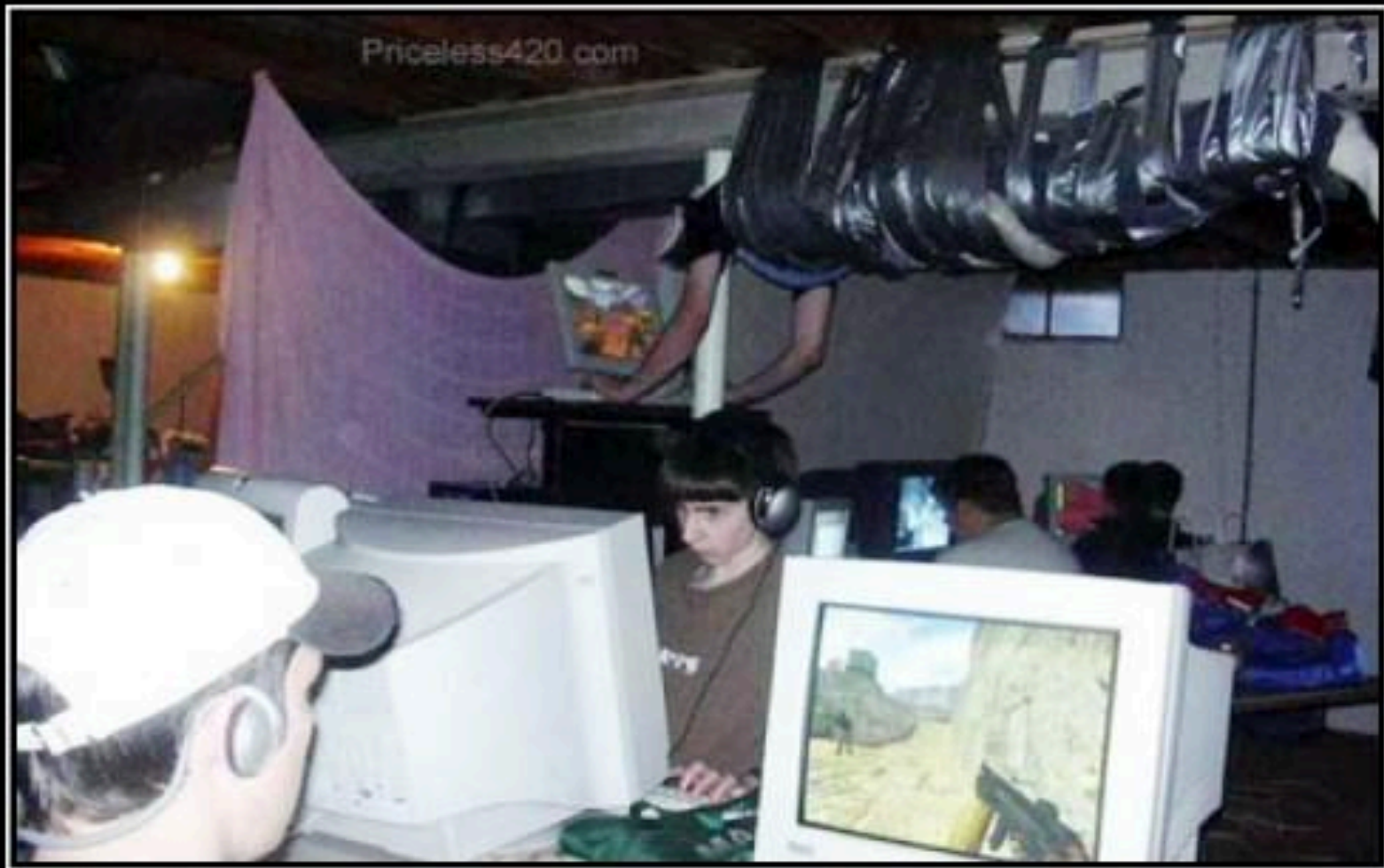
- \*staff being able to respond to situations in the workplace from a place of creativity

- \*staff make connections between people and our products and services  
And the wider community

- \*staff working on solutions with customers and achieving positive outcomes

- \*Staff approaching situations with confidence in our brand and a greater willingness to connect with visitors and engage them

Priceless420.com



# IMPROVISATION

Because, damnit, there's always room for one more.

Julie Mandal is a Branch Manager at Brampton Library and the Creator of Coaches Corner at the OLA Superconference.

She can be reached at:  
905-793-4636 ext. 4404  
[jmandal@bramlib.on.ca](mailto:jmandal@bramlib.on.ca)

Julie Andrews-Jotham is a Branch Manager at Brampton Library  
She can be reached at 905-793-4636 ext. 4120

[jajotham@bramlib.on.ca](mailto:jajotham@bramlib.on.ca)