

BRAVE NEW WORKSHOP

Creative Outreach

MARGI SIMMONS POWERING YOUR BEST, MOST PRODUCTIVE SELF



Margi advocates small shifts in our every-day behavior, to help us quiet our inner critics and foster habits of gratitude, authenticity and trust. Margi compels audiences to focus their mental and emotional energy intentionally and choose to actively co-create the environments they work in.

Audiences: corporate teams, corporate women's networks, educators, diversity networks, women-focused organizations, young professionals

Topics: authenticity, creative confidence, women's leadership, executive presence, being present, building trust, self-awareness, self-confidence, teamwork, communication

About Margi: Margi is the Director of Applied Improvisation at the Brave New Workshop (BNW), the oldest satirical and improv theater in the USA. She trains thousands of professionals every year in using improv techniques to become their best, most productive selves and applying improvisational principles and behaviors in business and in life. Margi is part of the BNW Creative Outreach team led by John Sweeney, which helps Fortune 500 companies transform behaviors through BNW's laughter-filled, experiential approach to learning.

Sample Sessions

Connecting at the Speed of Laughter: The Power of Intentional Communication

In this session Margi shares lessons from her 15+ years as a professional improviser and uncovers how improv teams are able to collaborate so rapidly. The basic description of an improvisational scene is: a group of individuals listening to their customers and instantly creating an interesting, engaging product, while in the spotlight. Margi Simmons outlines some of the practical ways improvisers connect with one another and their audience and allows session participants to practice them first hand. Margi creates a safe environment of active, fun, on-your-feet learning and laughter. Facilitated debriefs allow participants to bridge how the techniques Margi introduces can increase their productivity at work, and help them be better collaborators and communicators.

Learning points and practice focus areas can include:

- 🔊 **Intentional Communication:** Participants are reminded of the basics of communication and are introduced to simple ways they can hone the way they send and receive messages.

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- 🔊 Team accountability and trust: Learners practice serving a shared team goal and experiment with how different levels of energy and engagement affect the team's success.
- 🔊 Comfort with ambiguity and change: Individuals exercise their ability to remain calm, focused and productive even when they don't know or control the outcome of a process. Margi helps them practice "thinking on their feet" and being in the moment.
- 🔊 Being present and exercising creativity: Learners will practice coming up with ideas and deferring judgment of both their own ideas, and those of others to create a team culture that values ideas.

Leaving Your Creative Footprint, Heels and All

In this session Margi Simmons brings a unique approach to helping women in the corporate world use their voice in a confident, authentic manner that is appropriate to the circumstances and objective at hand. During the session participants will fearlessly dive into the world of improvisation not with the goal of performance, but as a way to practice techniques that help us produce great results even under stress. Improvisers are able to generate ideas, communicate their unique point of view and win audiences over on the spot because they embrace a mindset of discovery and relentlessly practice simple behaviors including:

- 🔊 Reframing adversity, change and obstacles into opportunities to connect with their audience and move the action forward;
- 🔊 Shifting the focus of their communication onto the communication receiver;
- 🔊 Adding passion and energy into everything they do;
- 🔊 Focusing and serving a common goal.

Margi is skilled at creating a safe learning environment where participants can feel supported and celebrated as they stretch and step out of their comfort zone, regardless of personality type. This session includes interactivity and features carefully selected and distinctly targeted improvisational exercises, which will include both volunteers from the audience and the whole audience. After each exercise, Margi facilitates a discussion bringing "aha" moments and key learning points to life.

The More the Merrier: Leveraging Diversity of Thought to Drive Team Success

Improvisation is the perfect vehicle to demonstrate what happens when a team celebrates, embraces and builds upon diverse points of view. Audiences tell us that the more points of view are present on stage the richer and more engaging a scene is. As a result improvisers train themselves to not only encourage diverse points of view on the team, but also to bring their own unique point of view forward regardless of how different it may be from the majority.

In this session Margi shares how improvisers collaborate when they disagree and how they are able to build strong forward



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momentum utilizing the energy of the team's diversity of thought. Participants will gain understanding and practical tools for:

- 🔊 Declaring their honest and authentic point of view clearly;
- 🔊 Practicing remaining open and present even if when they disagree or do not understand a point of view;
- 🔊 Reacting in a constructive manner when differing points of view are declared;
- 🔊 Building curiosity for differing points of view;
- 🔊 Understanding the difference between having a point of view grow and change throughout the course of the scene and compromising the point of view simply to appease others.

What else do we know about Margi Simmons?

[Margi Simmons](#)'s sharp mind and refined sense of humor propelled her comedic career rapidly from the classrooms of the [Brave New Workshop Student Union](#), where she was learning the art form of improvisation, to the main stage of the [Brave New Workshop Theater](#). As a true improviser she embraced the art form both onstage and off stage and quickly gained a following as one of the stars of the BNW. Margi's contributions, to this day, are considered some of the best scenes performed on our stage. After hundreds of successful sketches and memorable performances, she relocated to Los Angeles where she continued to leave her creative footprint, flip flops and all.

After 12 years in LA, we successfully lured her back with the promise of unlimited coffee at the office and ability to work with amazing corporate audiences every week. Margi shares her talent with our corporate clients all over the U.S. as a lead facilitator and emcee for the [Brave New Workshop Creative Outreach](#). She has wowed companies such as *Accenture, Allianz, Carlson Companies, Cargill, Dole, General Mills, Hilton Worldwide, Land o'Lakes, Novo Nordisk, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Thrivent, Target and Wells Fargo* to name a few.

Margi is also a leading force behind the [Brave New Workshop's women-focused programs](#) and facilitates learning experiences for hundreds of women every year, helping them use their authentic voice and become their best, most creative selves.

Margi is a graduate of the University of Minnesota, a real Minnesota native, and currently residing in Minneapolis, where she is reconnecting with her deep appreciation for the beautiful Minnesota winter.

What is Brave New Workshop Creative Outreach?

The Brave New Workshop brings its speaking, training, entertaining, and circus-like talents to more than 100 companies and organizations each year. As the fastest growing component of the BNW, Creative Outreach services range from keynote speaking, featuring John Sweeney and Margi Simmons, to customized training to enterprise-wide culture changing programs. More information about Creative Outreach services can be found at <http://www.bravenewworkshop.com/creativeoutreach/>.



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What else does the Brave New Workshop actually do?

The Brave New Workshop (BNW) has been writing, performing, and producing original sketch comedy, music and improvisation longer than any other theatre in the United States. Located in Uptown Minneapolis, the BNW is a unique place to laugh, learn, think, and play. It's even been known to transform a few lives.

50+ Years of Comedy - The BNW was founded in 1958 by an ex-circus performer named Dudley Riggs who combined vaudeville and off-the-cuff instant theatre to help create modern-day improvisation. Since then, more than 3 million people have been exposed to the audacious, hilarious, and thought-provoking original comedy and improv performances produced at our storefront theatre in downtown Minneapolis.

Graduate School of Comedy - The theatre's school for improvisation, acting and writing classes teaches nearly 200 students each week. BNW instructors have been instrumental in our community outreach programs and academic workshops. Currently led by the power of three: theatre owner and executive director Jenni Lilledahl and co-directors Joe Bozic and Mike Fotis, the school continues to build momentum as a nationally recognized destination for improv learning and performance.

Hollywood Impact - Many BNW alumni are prolific and influential members of the entertainment industry, including *Numbers* actor Peter MacNichol, *Mad Men's* Rich Sommer, *Naked Gun* screenwriter Pat Proft, *MAD TV's* Mo Collins, writers

Peter Tolan (*Analyze This*) and Linda Wallem (*That 70s Show*), *Reno 911's* Cedric Yarbrough, *Reba's* Melissa Peterman comedian Louie Anderson and well, Senator Al Franken to rattle off a few.

Brave New Citizens - BNW's corporate responsibility is a natural continuation of our theatre's historic commitment to serve the community and, more broadly, society. Brave New Citizens seek to positively impact stakeholders, innovate tirelessly, and relentlessly lead progress in our industry, our community, and our world. In achieving these goals, the BNW will remain honestly profitable, socially responsible, and environmentally conscious.

Original Social & Political Satire - More than 260 original productions have been performed on our stage since our humble beginning and all have employed a creative process fundamental to the theatre. BNW actor-writers spend eight weeks creating, writing, rehearsing, and mounting the productions, and then another 8-12 weeks performing the show. To date, more than 3 million people have been exposed to the theatre's unapologetic, and unwavering, brand of comedy and improvisation. To find out what's playing, visit <http://www.bravenewworkshop.org>.