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Dayton Comedy Goes to Harvard

Theater Owner Takes Corporate Training to Harvard, Launches Workshops for Region

Dayton, OH – Justin Howard, owner of The Black Box Improv Theater in Dayton recently returned from Cambridge, Massachusetts where he taught the principles of improv to Harvard's MBA students. **Today, his new corporate consulting website has officially launched at outsideblackbox.com**

"We've been offering workshops since we opened the doors in 2012," said Howard. "But now we're offering a full menu of programs for businesses to benefit from, and we wanted an online presence dedicated to those services."

Howard, who was a featured speaker at Dayton's first year of TEDx talks, has already provided training to regional government offices, non-profits, and private businesses. Last month, he and his fellow performers took to the TEDx stage again during the lunch program. The web launch also coincides with Howard leading a session today on generating creativity for Emerson Climate Technologies.

But the trend goes beyond the Miami Valley. Increasingly businesses around the country are engaging improv theaters to help their employees work together more effectively, communicate clearly, think on their feet, and ultimately improve the bottom line.

"People don't immediately connect improv with business because on stage it's comedy, but the principles of a good improv performance have limitless impact on business practice," said Andrea Fantacone, Harvard MBA student and former Black Box performer. "Successful entrepreneurs have to not only be quick on their feet, they have to be effective communicators, and they have to learn to be flexible and creative in a number of settings. Improv teaches all of those things."

Howard, who first got his start in improvisation at Wittenberg University, has studied the craft in Chicago and New York. He says its principles are universal in transforming the way someone approaches a problem, but that he offers workshops that are focused on specific areas of business improvement.

"We customize our training for groups ranging from 6-50 people at a time, and they can focus on conversation and idea management, collaboration, communication, creation, teamwork, public speaking and much more," Howard said.

"Since Justin met with our staff, there is noticeable difference in behavior, and it has improved our ability to generate leads, and convert those leads into business," said ASlware Vice President of Product Development Paul Hanrahan. "Both my team and I are communicating better with our stakeholders and with one another."

Businesses interested in engaging Howard and his team for organizational training should contact Howard directly on the new site outsideblackbox.com.

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About the Black Box Improv Theater:

Established in downtown Dayton, Ohio, in July 2012, the Black Box Improv Theater has become nationally recognized for its talented performers. Black Box improvisers have performed around the country, including as featured mainstage performers at the prestigious Del Close Marathon in New York City at the famed Upright Citizens Brigade Theater, co-founded by improviser Amy Poehler.

The theater offers business-focused workshops through Black Box Consulting as well as general improv classes for those interested in performance. It also opens weekly to the public for Thursday-Saturday performances. Show updates can be found at www.daytonblackbox.com.

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