

Audience Participation

Corporate Events

Turn to Interactive

Entertainment

Experiences

Up Close and Personal

How deeply will the influence of our pop culture's more relaxed attitude affect the event industry? Time will tell. From my perspective, one clear trend has already emerged in corporate entertainment: A surfacing of shows that comedically blur the line between the stage and the audience. In addition, more and more performers and producers are stretching creatively to bring some fascinating entertainment experiences to the stage.

Hip-nosis

For 15 years, Tom DeLuca's hypnosis show, Theatre of the Imagination, has been leading the charge for audience participation. By inviting attendees to be the stars of the show, DeLuca highlights their creative side and delivers real audience bonding.

"This kind of show is so far beyond the traditional icebreaker," says DeLuca. "It's not heavy handed. It's so hip it's almost scary. And when folks let go a little, it's hilarious. Afterwards, people want to know how participants felt on stage and what the whole experience was like. It's all about identifying with each other."



Photo by Christina Photographic Studios



Photo by Gary Knight

As national entertainer Tom DeLuca puts it, "There is a perceivable shift in corporate entertainment programming. Planners are seeking interactive, ice-breaking programs that push the boundaries more than they did, say, five years ago. More groups are willing to open up ... but I think there will always remain a need for respect, safety and non-embarrassment of our audiences. I've learned that you can't make the audience feel uncomfortable. Even if it's

funny, you have to be careful that you don't break their trust. It's a tricky task because these are sophisticated clients who are protective of their image.