

Your choice: laugh or cry

As financial jobs disappear, the need for laughs grows, *Nury Vittachi* discovers



Photo: Brian Ching

Recently I was surprised to receive several invitations to deliver the keynote speech at a financial gathering. "I would have thought this is not a very funny time in your profession," I said to one organizer.

"Exactly," he replied. "Which is why we need a humorist."

I could see the logic of this. But I was worried some of the jokes might be just a little bit too accurate to be funny.

But on the night, I was amazed to find that the truest ones produced the loudest laughs.

Q: "You used to work for Lehman Brothers? How do you make a living now?"

A: "I sell furniture. My own."

An accountant with a mortgage loan company gets into a taxi. "Take me to the bankruptcy court," he says.

Twenty minutes later, they arrive. The accountant says to the driver: "Well, I guess you'd better come in, too."

An unemployed salesman of subprime loans goes to the doctor to get his check-up results.

Doctor: "It's bad news. You only have three weeks to live."

Salesman: "On what?"

Q: "What kind of calendar does an unemployed Wall Street banker use for his consultancy projects?"

A: "Decade-At-A-Glance."

A rich man is driving along a road when he sees two men eating grass.

"We can't afford food," one of the men explains. "We used to be dealers in subprime mortgages, so now we're broke."

"Shocking," says the rich man. "Come with me. I'll help you out."

"But I have a wife and two children. All of us are living on grass."

"Bring them all," says the rich man. "And your friend."

The friend says: "I was also a subprime mortgage salesman. I have a wife and SIX children."

"Bring every one of them," says the rich man. "You are all coming to my mansion in the countryside."

The two men bow tearfully. "God bless you for your generous heart," one says.

"Oh, it's no problem," says the rich man. "My mower is broken. The grass must be a metre high."

Q: "What do you say to a Wall Street banker with a steady job?"

A: "Two Big Macs and one large fries."

In the economic downturn, a finance company is swamped with defaulters. A new loans officer is sent to speak to the biggest non-payer. He comes back

one hour later with the loan recovered in full.

"How did you do it?" the manager asks.

The loans officer replies: "I told him that if he didn't pay us, I'd tell all the other creditors that he had."

Q: "What's the difference between a pigeon and a Wall Street banker?"

A: "A pigeon can still leave a deposit on a Porsche."

As the economy tumbles, one start-up company gets a stream of venture capital cash and grows at high speed. A reporter goes to ask the company's accountant what their secret is.

"It's easy," he says. "We never borrow money from optimists. They expect it back."

Q: "What's the difference between a Wall Street banker and a large pizza?"

A: "The pizza can feed a family of four."

A financial ratings specialist is filling in a job application form. "Have you ever been arrested?" is one question. He writes: "No."

The next question, meant for people who answered "Yes" is "Why?" He writes: "Never got caught."

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