



"If you don't ask,  
you'll never hear 'yes.'"

**Matthew R. Lawrence**  
**Advertising, 1996**  
**Owner/Creative Director and Producer**  
**Canadian Improv Showcase**  
**[canadianimprovshowcase.com](http://canadianimprovshowcase.com)**

Matthew R. Lawrence is shaping a new future for Canadian theatre - where the theatre comes to the audience, not the other way around.

Having caught the acting bug when he was in high school, Lawrence took up performing again after college. Frustrated with the little acting work he was getting, he sought to create an outlet for actors to hone their craft and stay creative between gigs.

Seven hundred shows later, his business, Canadian Improv Showcase, has become a premier touring company

specializing in interactive improvisation comedy with a Canadian focus. Lawrence has provided more than 100 actors with paid work over the last 16 years.

He says his advertising background from Georgian College helped make his company a success. He understands how to sell his group and how to acquire a special niche in the marketplace.

Lawrence's biggest challenge is balancing his creative role as an actor and director with his business role as a producer. Since taking on the producer

role, he has quadrupled his workload, having to book enough work to allow his actors to make a livelihood. But that is where his greatest reward comes from.

"The biggest reward is when my talent is thrilled by the opportunities I can provide to them. It's when they say thank you for giving them the opportunity to perform in front of audiences that aren't just other actors," he says.

Lawrence encourages other entrepreneurs not to be afraid to ask. "If you don't ask, you'll never hear 'yes.'"