

Karen Hough

Founder & CEO, ImprovEdge



Karen Hough is the Founder & CEO of ImprovEdge, www.ImprovEdge.com, and has been using improvisation as a catalyst for business training and consulting since 1998. ImprovEdge won the silver International Stevie Award for Most Innovative Company of the Year 2012, and Hough was recognized in 2016 as an Inspiring Woman by the WNBA's Indiana Fever. Her first book, *The Improvisation Edge: Secrets to Building Trust and Radical Collaboration at Work*, published by Berrett-Koehler, was a #1 Amazon Bestselling author in category and 800CEORead Top 25 Business Books. Hough is a regular contributor to the *Huffington Post* and has been featured in *Inc* magazine and *Investor's Business Daily*. Her second book, *Be the Best Bad Presenter Ever: Break the Rules, Make Mistakes and Win Them Over*, published by BK in 2014, won the Benjamin Franklin Gold Award. Hough's third book, *Go With it: Embrace the Unexpected to Drive Change*, on using improvisation to drive innovation was published in 2017 by the Association for Talent Development.

She is the recipient of the Athena PowerLink Award for outstanding woman-owned business and was named a Semi-Finalist in TechColumbus' Innovation Awards 2011 for Outstanding Service. She is the creator/author of the Yes! Deck, "Managing Tough Conversations: The Everyday Coaching Model," and numerous articles and blogs including publication in ASTD's *T&D* magazine, Mashable.com, and BusinessInsider.com. She is a Certified Speaking Professional and a national conference keynote speaker nationwide on topics such as negotiation, women's issues, change innovation, diversity, leadership, executive presence, and sales.

ImprovEdge is a government-certified Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) and Hough served on the board of Key Bank's Key4Women initiative and the board of WELD (Women for Economic and Leadership Development). Hough was honored as a Deloitte & Touche Wise Woman for their inaugural breakfast event in Columbus, Ohio, and she represented women entrepreneurs for the State of Ohio for the Saitama, Japan, Women's Contingent.

Hough is a graduate of Yale University and La Sorbonne, Paris IV. She worked for many years as a senior sales executive in the network engineering industry in New York and Chicago. She originated and expanded the sales and management efforts of three separate technology start-ups, launched partner programs, and assisted in East Coast and National expansions. Hough has been a professional improviser and actor for 30 years. Her improvisational training and performance credits include hundreds of live productions with The Second City of Chicago, Metraform/Annoyance Theatre, the Organic Theatre and the Purple Crayon of Yale, and many others. She was formerly the International Spokesperson for Stratacom, a spokesperson for Tivoli and Infiniti, and her TV and radio credits include CBS, Miller, Earthshare, Eli Lilly, and S.C. Johnson.

Since 1998, ImprovEdge principles and exercises have been vetted through research projects led by Hough with MBA students at: Wharton School of Business, the Ohio State University, University of Massachusetts, Otterbein University, Capital University, and Franklin University.

Hough is deeply committed to volunteer activities and philanthropy. She is a mentor for the Otterbein Women's Network Initiative. Her volunteer activities include teaching improv classes for high school students in rural Kansas and confidence-building workshops for Chicago inner-city school-children. She is a former board member of the Yale Whim 'n Rhythm Alumnae Association, and is a volunteer for the Yale Alumni Schools Committee and the Yale Alumni Fund. She resides in Columbus, Ohio, with her husband and three children.



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