



## Mike Bonifer

Bonifer is the co-founder and CEO of GameChangers, which uses improvisational game design to help its clients communicate, collaborate and transform.

He grew up on a farm in Indiana that his family turned into a theme park built around a stable of rescue horses. It was an upbringing shaped by the transformative power of play. What he learned in the heartland has become the heart of his life's work.

After graduating from the University of Notre Dame, where he was a member of the famed Irish Guard and helped turn "Bookstore Basketball" into school tradition, he began a journey that, within two years, took him from selling Jif peanut butter for Procter & Gamble in Effingham, Illinois, to writing *Out of Bounds*, a critically acclaimed book about Notre Dame football, to a job as the publicist on the groundbreaking motion picture, *Tron*.

During a long and productive alliance with The Walt Disney Company, Bonifer was a founding producer for The Disney Channel; pioneered the use of video press kits in motion picture marketing; shot the first TV series (*Disney Family Album*) on Sony Betacam video; shot the first underwater Betacam (*Splash*); and produced Disney/Pixar's first movie website (*Toy Story*).

He has written a television mini-series on the life of Walt Disney, and books on the making of *Tron*, and the motion picture, *Dick Tracy*. He has written and produced film and television projects for most of Hollywood's media companies, including Disney, Warner Bros., Fox, Universal, Nickelodeon and MGM.

During the Dotcom Era, he headed the creative departments for pioneering internet production companies, BoxTop Interactive and iXL, where he helped develop some of the very first internet projects for The Smithsonian, Mountain Dew, Franklin Covey and Merrill-Lynch Japan, among others.

He later co-founded, with Kevin Wall and David Asarnow, the streaming media company, Network LIVE and, in 2007, served as Chief Storyteller for Wall and Al Gore's Live *Earth* concerts for the environment.

And after realizing he'd been in the gamechanging business all along—

He wrote and published *GameChangers – Improvisation for Business in the Networked World* and, in 2008, in partnership with Dr. Virginia Kuhn of USC's School of Cinematic Arts, launched GameChangers, where his exploration of storytelling continues.



Today, he helps clients by showing them how improvisation improves their ability to solve problems and create stories collaboratively. He sees these to be critical sensemaking skills in a world where nonsense distracts us at every turn, and unexpectedness is the norm.