Challenge Considerately

Susan Godbold-Smith, Behavioural Change Partner, National Highways:

- Experience working in IBIP within the Smart Motorways Alliance within National Highways.
- Career background within the people space, around performance management/ resourcing and recruitment management.

Forida Yasmin, Assistant Project Manager, National Highways
- Background in Forensic Psychology and accredited interventions within Prison Service
- Experience of working in behavioural management across various sectors including Civil Service

Define Challenge Considerately

Deep dive into how to Challenge Considerately

Risks of too much or not enough challenge

The right & wrong way to challenge

How to give & receive challenges Positively

Introduction to our IBIP behaviours

Small Changes **Big Impact**

Vision - Creating a behavioural culture that will unlock better performance across programme and project teams

What we do:

We help **create High Performing Integrated teams** by collaborating to enable the right environment, behaviours and attitudes to deliver project outcomes and KPIs

How we do it:

We enable **behavioural change** by offering specialist **advice, consultancy, training, tools and approaches** and ways to support teams' progress. We use a behavioural maturity framework to help teams **focus on and develop their behaviours** and measure their progress

Why we do it:

Mature collaborative behaviours **allow individuals to be their best self** and contribute to a high performing team that **delivers successful project outcomes**

Who we benefit:

Everyone involved in Integrated Project Teams - NH, Partners and **ultimately our Customers**

Build Trust

We foster genuine relationships with honesty, openness, and support.

Communicate Openly, Engage Others

We are transparent, listen actively and ask questions to create understanding.

Align Goals, Achieve Together

We unite around a shared vision to drive effective decisions and joint outcomes.

Own It

We are accountable, honour commitments and contribute to collective success.

Challenge Considerately

We are curious, seek understanding and are open to challenge, sharing feedback to drive win-win solutions

Adapt With Intention

We adopt a flexible mindset to reflect, adjust, decide and act swiftly.

Small Changes **Big Impact**

Companies with higher innovation rates show growth in profitability compared to those with low levels (Minor, Brook, & Bernoff, 2017)

Approximately half of all business decisions lead to failure to meet the intended results (Nutt, 1999)

Organisations where challenge is treated as conflict can experience a loss of two hours per week per employee; or 5% loss of productivity (Tjosvold, Wong, & Chen, 2019)

Organisations that report higher than average trust experience gross margins 2 to 7% greater than the industry norm (FMI Consulting & AutoDESK, 2020)

Organisations with effective communication have been shown to achieve 47% higher returns over 5 years (Schneider, 2018)

Organisations that report higher levels of leadership accountability are more likely to be high performing (Molinaro, 2017)

FMI Consulting & AutoDESK. (2020). Trust Matters: The High Cost of Low Trust
Minor, D., Brook, P., & Bernoff, J. (2017). Are Innovative Companies More Profitable? MIT Sloan Management Review
Molinaro, V. (2017). The Leadership Accountability Gap. Lee Hecht Harrison
Nutt, P. (1999). Surprising but True: Half the Decisions in Organizations Fail. The Academy of Management Executive, 13(4), 75-90
Schneider, M. (2018). Costs of Poor Communication Reach $37 Billion. Avoid Disconnects By Implementing These 2 Things.
Tjosvold, Wong, & Chen. (2019). Managing Conflict for Effective Leadership andOrganisations

Defining Challenging Considerately

- What springs to mind when you hear the words **Challenge Considerately?**

- *Share your responses in the chat………*

The Oxford English Dictionary defines Challenge as:

- ***Something new or difficult which requires effort and determination***

- *A demanding or stimulating situation*

- *A call to engage in a contest or fight*

- ***Questioning a statement / demanding an explanation***

- *Taking exception to something*

- ***Raising an objection***

The Oxford English Dictionary defines Considerately as:

"Considerately" means to act in a **kind**, **thoughtful**, and **helpful way**, showing awareness and care for the feelings and needs of others. It implies acting in a way that **avoids** causing inconvenience or **distress to others.**

IBIP DEFINTION: *We are curious, seek understanding and are open to challenge, sharing feedback to drive win-win solutions*

Examples of when I'm living this could include… Everyone…

- **I ask thoughtful questions to test my understanding** before challenging an idea or assumption.
- **I address challenges by focusing on the issue** or behaviours and **avoiding personal criticisms**.
- **I actively invite and embrace feedback**, using them as opportunities to **learn and grow**.
- **I approach difficult conversations with honesty and empathy, focusing on solutions.**
- I reflect on setbacks as opportunities to learn and improve, rather than assigning blame.

Examples of when I'm not living this could include… Everyone…

- I get defensive when other people question me or offer feedback.
- I prioritise harmony over honest dialogue.
- I **am overly critical when I challenge, disrupting progress instead of adding value.**
- I focus on highlighting obstacles instead of exploring possibilities.
- **I challenge for the sake of it rather than for the best project outcomes.**

We are curious, seek understanding and are open to challenge, sharing feedback to drive win-win solutions

Additional manager/leader focus… Examples of when I'm living this could include

- **I role model curiosity by asking open questions** and listening more than speaking.
- **I call attention to instances where colleagues fail to listen actively before responding or challenging.**
- I create an environment where team members feel safe to challenge respectfully.

Additional manager/leader focus… Examples of when I'm not living this could include…

- **I challenge others harshly, disregarding their perspectives and the impact on the team**.
- I stay quiet when challenge is needed, role modelling that avoiding difficult conversations is acceptable.
- **I ignore inappropriate challenges** and fail to guide the team toward constructive dialogue.
- I criticise team members without providing clarity or support.

What are the risks of either:
not enough challenge or **too much** challenge?

Between 1999 and 2015, more than 900 sub-postmasters were wrongly prosecuted due to faulty software.

1. **Content** – Is the challenge meaningful? **Not challenging for the sake of it**. Do you have relevant knowledge or experience?

2. **Constructive** – Is the **challenge open to the success of the idea** or is it just **dismissive**? "*I want this to work ….but I am concerned about this part*"

3. **Considerate**- is the challenge thoughtful, and helpful way, **showing awareness and care for the feelings and needs of others. Avoiding distress to others should be at the forefront of the challenge**.

4. **Language** – How is the challenge **phrased**? Negative language doesn't generally lead to positive responses. **Don't start with negatives**.

5. **Body Language** – Hand gestures, movements, tone of voice, style of delivery and eye contact can all impact **how your challenge** makes people **feel**.

It's how you do it!

The language you use is important but so is your body language and the way you use your voice, your tone. It is important for you to look and stay calm whilst you are working through each step and to sound as empathetic as possible. Some examples are shown over the next slides:
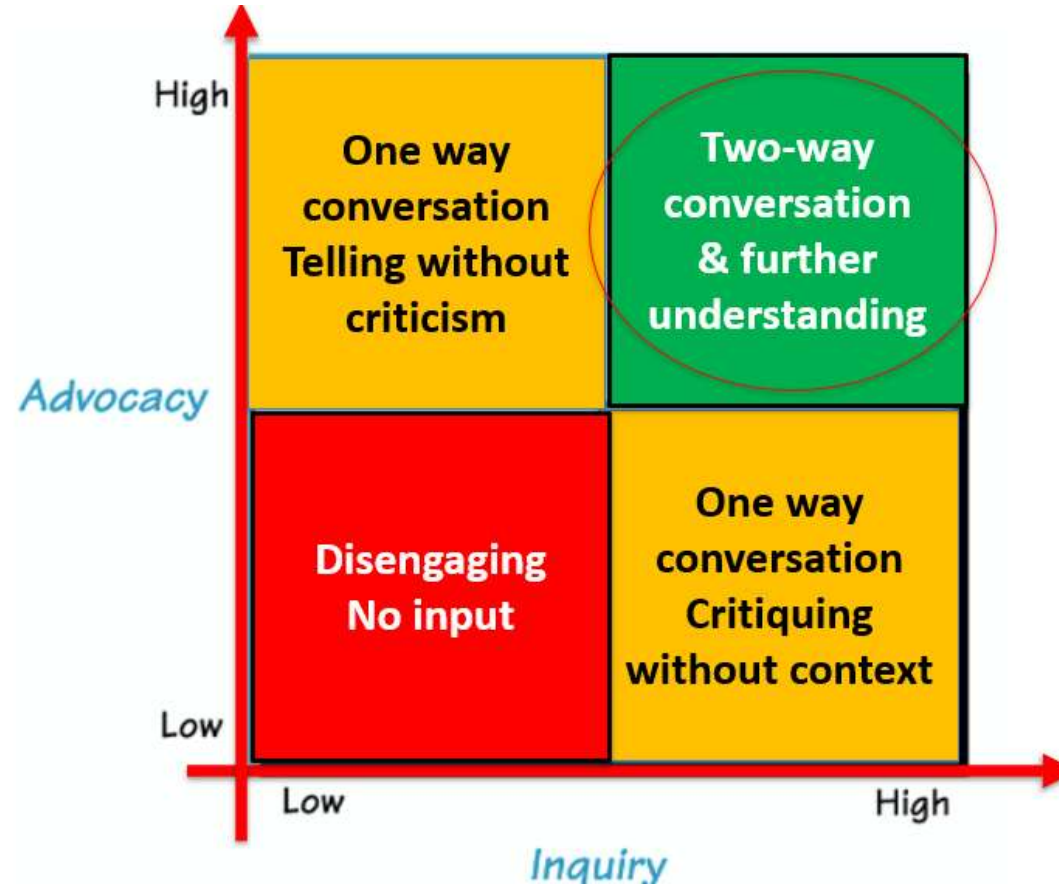
	Unhelpful Challenge ☹	Challenge Considerately ☺
Tone of Voice	• **Loud tone – maybe shouting.** • Abrupt. Sarcastic • Fast speech **Or…** • Too quiet, broken or hesitant. • Too many apologies	• The tone of voice is balanced, even, relaxed and sincere • Appropriate volume

	Unhelpful Challenge	Challenge Considerately
Body Language	• Vigorous movements. • Points finger or slams down fist. • Stands too close or leans over someone • Invades others' personal space **Or…** • Unreceptive - withdrawn. • Poor eye contact. • Creates a barrier when talking (e.g. crossed arms). • Turned slightly away • Head may be down • Steps back when spoken to • Nervous hand movements.	• **Body language is relaxed and open** • Composed, still • **Good eye contact** • Head held up, shoulders back • Mirrors other person's body language • **Shows empathy** • Smiles

	Unhelpful Challenge	Challenge Considerately
Language	• Judgmental or belittling • **Talks over others** • Doesn't listen • Sarcastic • Belligerent or offensive • Asks leading questions • **Opinions stated as facts** Or… • Doesn't share own views • **Uses weak statements such as: "it doesn't matter really", "Don't worry" "I'm afraid I…", "I'm sorry but…"**	• **Clear, brief, to the point** • Lots of "I" statements • Offers suggestions rather than advice • **Gives feedback objectively without judging** • Enquires - asks lots of open questions • **Offers win-win solutions or compromises** • Gives space to the other person's voice

How to Challenge Considerately

Presenting Your Viewpoint
(Advocacy)

Advocacy vs Inquiry

While Simultaneously Seeking
To Understand Others'
Perspectives (Inquiry).

High

One way
conversation
Telling without
criticism

Two-way
conversation
& further
understanding

Advocacy

Disengaging
No input

One way
conversation
Critiquing
without context

Low

Low   High

Inquiry

The Advocacy & Inquiry model. Chris Argyris
and Don Schon (1996)
Peter Senge (1990).

Making sure your challenge is well informed and appropriate

Informed & Innovative Decision Making

4 Find a joint solution

1 Enquire & listen

3 Advocate & challenge

2 Empathise Show respect

Raising your challenge

Making sure your challenge is well received and not combative

ibip
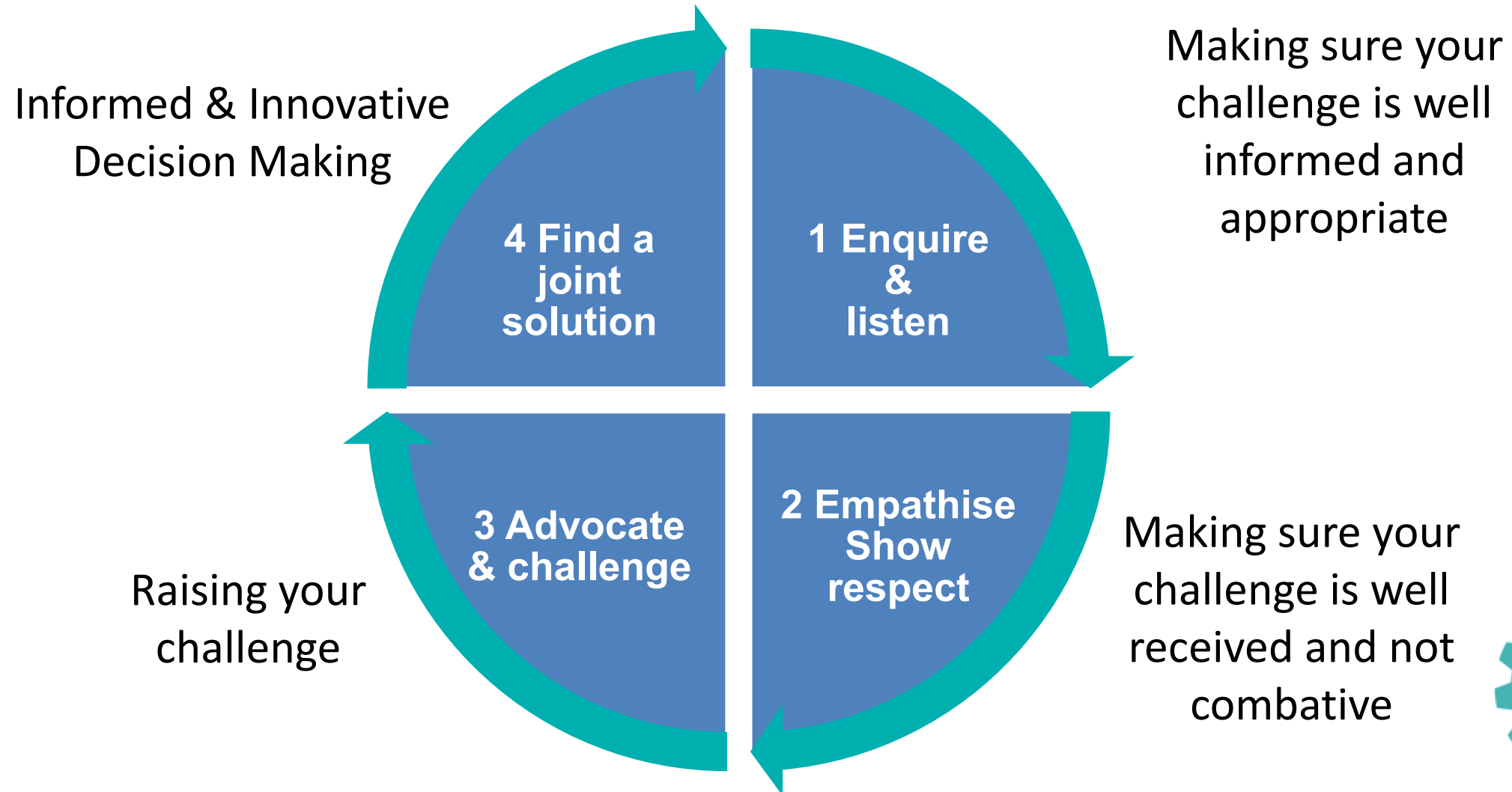
Open questioning

- **What** are your needs?
- **When** do you need it for?
- **Who** is the best person to do it for you?
- **Where** is the best place for that to happen?
- **Which** of the options is best?
- **How** do you think we should do this?
- **Why** is that so important right now?
- **Tell** me a bit more about that
- **Describe** what it is you need
- **Explain** that in a bit more detail for me

Small Changes **Big Impact**

Empathy vs Sympathy

Empathy	Sympathy
I can tell you feel that's wrong	Yes, how wrong of him!
You seem angry about that	How annoying!
You're obviously upset	Oh, you poor thing!

Understanding another persons feelings	Sharing another persons feelings

Negative Language

- States opinion as fact
- Uses "you" to apportion blame
- Focus on the problem
- Tells the recipient what cannot be done
- Is judgemental
- Includes words like "can't", "won't", "unable to" etc
- Stresses worst case scenario

Positive Language

- Uses "I" to frame challenge as an opinion not a fact
- Focus on solving the problem
- Tells the recipient what can be done
- Suggest alternatives and choices
- Sounds helpful and encouraging
- Stresses positive actions and consequences

- This is the final stage and the "test" of the challenge

- Ideally both parties feel satisfied with the outcome, it works for both, a "win/win". ==The IBIP definition highlights the need to "*drive win-win situations*"==

- You could either offer a solution or ask for one depending on whether you have a solution or not

- If you can offer a choice - it helps the other party feel part of the solution

Small Changes **Big Impact**

ibip

How could the following scenario have been delivered better?

Scenario:
- The project timescale is impossibly tight and the PM is driving everyone hard, ignoring wellbeing issues within the team.

Response:
- *This is ridiculous! I worked until 10pm every night last week. We will all burn out and go off sick if you don't start bothering about us.'*

Improved challenge:
- Should be held in a 121 conversation. Discuss the idea that working over hours isn't ideal, how could resources be used to better support

"I'm struggling with these tight deadlines as I've been working longer hours repeatedly recently, it's starting to impact my wellbeing. Is there anything that can be done? Could we look at how the resources in the team are currently being managed, as I suspect this could help the situation"

How to Receive a Challenge

Small Changes **Big Impact**

Typical reactions to challenge

Shocked Surprised

Angry Defensive Denying

Clarifying Verifing

Accepting

Small Changes **Big Impact**

ibip

Mindset is key – it's always useful, even if you disagree!

- ✓ **Listen carefully**, repeat back what you think you've heard to make sure you have it right
- ✓ **Ask questions** - ask for examples
- ✓ **Thank the person** for the challenge
- ✓ **Stay calm** and **open to solutions**

Key takeaways:

- Better understanding of challenging considerately

- Knowledge and ideas around how to approach or receive a challenge in future.