

# Spotlight on Presenting A Case



You must put your head into the lion's mouth if the performance is to be a success

Winston Churchill (1900)

## The Challenge Of Presenting A Case

All leaders need to demonstrate courage, but as this quote suggests, some leaders may need to demonstrate more courage than others!

To present your case you need to be mindful of the challenges you face. What kind of organisation are you working in and how is it likely to respond to challenge?

Challenge is toxic	Challenge is not welcome and a challenger is treated as 'trouble'
Challenge is wasted	Challenge is not valued or ignored
Challenge is liked	Challenge is valued and any suggestions explored
Challenge hungry	Challenge is proactively supported and is motivational

This simple framework can help you to start thinking about your strategy for presenting your case. For example, you may choose to give details to a team or at a management meeting if your workplace likes, and is positive, about challenge. Even though some resistance may be raised against your ideas, you will be able to outline your case and engage in discussions that are meaningful and productive. Where challenge is less welcome, you may want to start discussions with colleagues in less intimidating settings, so that you can build support. Resistance in some settings can be deeply embedded, and persuading others to support you will be a necessary pre-requisite for any challenge.

## How to Challenge Others

Finlay (2015) has identified 10 key principles in psychotherapy that can help you to think about how to effectively challenge others.

The 10 principles have been adapted for use when presenting your case:

1. You must believe in the value of challenge
2. You need to challenge relationally (i.e. present ideas as they can trust you to enable them to be able to cope with them)
3. Your challenge needs to be in the interest of others, and not for self interest

4. You need to empathise with the position of those you are seeking to challenge
5. You need to be proportionate (i.e. challenge people with what they can cope with)
6. You need to be respectful when you challenge and give feedback
7. You need to demonstrate self-challenge
8. You need to focus attention on unused strengths in yourself and others
9. You need to keep your challenge light humoured
10. You need to be open to challenge from others

## Presenting your Case

When presenting your case, either to a group or an individual, you will need to:

- **Be 'a sales person' and 'a champion' for your case.** The more convinced you are of your case, the more likely it is that you will be able to convince others
- **Plan and organise your thoughts, so that your case is presented clearly.** Provide full explanations for your thinking, being open and transparent, and give people time to consider what you are presenting
- **Show how your case is supported** by research evidence, customer feedback, support from your colleagues, and other areas of the organisation
- **Invite criticism**, even if you know that this may provide others with an opportunity to undermine your case, because you need to engage with those who resist
- **Be prepared for such challenges and be open about working with their resistance.** Explain how you wish to work with resistance, so that the best outcomes for the organisation can be achieved. Show how you value things that have been done in the past, but position the future clearly and stay focused on your case. Do not be diverted reframing negative feedback, and staying positive as you move your case forward

It can be difficult to appreciate the amount of courage needed to challenge when you present a case, but don't lose sight of this. Reflect on what you have achieved. You may have achieved more than you had planned.

If your case needs more work, then you will need to consider if you need to adopt a different strategy. In others words; don't give up.

## References

Langworth, R (2011). **Success: What Churchill REALLY said** <https://richardlangworth.com/success>

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