

Challenge Workshops: An Outline

A way of tackling a particular challenge facing the organisation and developing leadership in a management or political team during the workshop

1. This type of workshop draws upon the **ideas emerging from leadership in handling complex situations**.
2. We have **used the approach successfully and extensively with corporate and senior management teams as well as political cabinets and executives** across local government.
3. The **essence of the approach is a practical method** which:-
 - **Addresses a specific complex, intractable problem or challenge**
 - **Provokes new thinking** to the problem (often through the stimulus of a significant external input)
 - **Creates task teams for the day to work up practical solutions to the challenge** and present these by the end of the workshop
 - **Provides opportunities for learning several techniques** appropriate to the challenge (different members of each team may learn different techniques) and there is opportunity to apply them to the challenge and compare the practical results
 - **Offers a range of external expert/experienced 'witnesses'** who are questioned during a witness session for 30-45 mins. (whether physically present or electronically connected). These may be from the public, private and third sector but must be well informed and in turn challenging. (Different team members cover the range of 'witnesses' and compile the results and apply them to the challenge.)
 - **Draws upon other available resources (e.g. data sources) within the organisation** as the team work up their practical solutions
 - **Creates real pressure on each task team to innovate in their thinking and behaviour and to present their 'solutions' at the end of the day** – in short, practical action that can deliver change.
4. We have run a successfully range of workshops for many local government management teams, housing management teams, cabinets/executives and the Local Government Association.
5. The Challenge Workshop **provides two results:**
 - **several worked up ways forward on a complex challenge facing the organisation**
 - **the skilling up of individuals and teams.**
6. The format can readily be adapted to a variety of situations but the core must be a real and difficult challenge for the organisation that must be tackled.