

five

The bulletin for marketing communications

The Challenger Issue

What is a Challenger Brand?

Innovative thinking
threatens market leaders

Thinking big

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Challenging the heavyweights

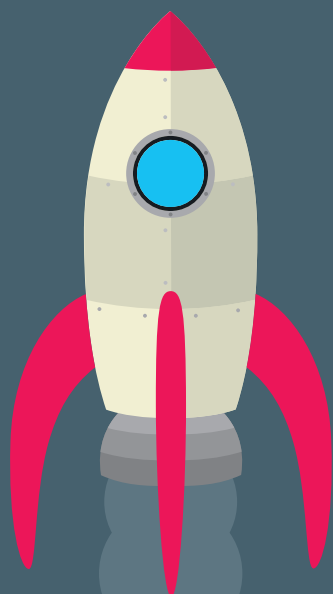
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Introduction by **Brett Donahay** Strategic Director, eatbigfish



At their core Challenger brands challenge. They ask very different questions of the category or broader contemporary culture.

Welcome

I'm delighted to introduce the Challenger Brand issue of the award-winning marketing communications publication – **Five**.

The phrase 'Challenger Brand' tends to generate mixed emotions. For many, the phrase conjures up thoughts of a very public fight, like Pepsi versus Coke, for example. For others it may symbolise a brand with a charismatic founder who is hell-bent on destroying every rule in the book, with complete disrespect for the category around it or the anarchy they create. And to a certain extent, those are both forms of Challenger brand behaviour. But at eatbigfish, we have come to evolve our understanding of what being a Challenger represents.

At their core, Challenger brands challenge. They ask very different questions of the category or broader contemporary culture. They ask these questions in a way that sets themselves up to provide a better answer than the competition. Whether it is Nest Home Heating systems challenging the established drivers of the category by asking, why do thermostat systems have to be ugly? Or Nintendo Wii challenging how the market shops in the gaming category by asking, why does the gaming community not make consoles for people who don't traditionally play games? Or Dove challenging an aspect of broader contemporary culture by asking, why does the beauty industry rob women of their self-esteem?

In the following stories you are going to learn more about the credos of Challenger Brand behaviour in the B2B arena, first made famous in Adam Morgan's book *Eating the Big Fish*. Each of the following credos feels particularly pertinent to the energy industry at a time when stakeholders are beginning to ask different questions of the category.

I hope the following credos and stories provide the fuel for you to ask your own propelling questions of the category. A different kind of question that changes the rules of the game to your advantage.



What is a Challenger Brand?

How innovative thinking can threaten the market leaders

Peter Lyall Group Director Strategy, Fifth Ring

You are the target; you are the prey. Your world is about to be turned upside down.

If you operate in a space where things are comfortable, ordered and structured, then watch out. If you're happy with accepted norms, historical precedent and the established order, then beware. If the status quo lets you sleep soundly at night, then prepare for a rude awakening. You may not know it now, but you're in their sights. You are the target; you are the prey. Your world is about to be turned upside down. Tomorrow's normal will take shape as yesterday's norms take flight. You may be good at what you do; you may be one of the best at serving today's customers, but the Challengers are coming.

There won't be a fanfare; Gandalf won't be visible on a white charger; but you will know they have been, once they've eaten your lunch. You can't argue with them, because they don't speak your language. They're wired differently. They don't even know what they can't do. Your rules just don't apply. They haven't read the books that were on trend when you were young. They do it their way, ripping up time-honoured practices.

If you're using a wooden bat, they've got titanium, and the bat is bigger and the boundary is closer. And they get 26 instead of six for a big hit. And they look different and people look up to them. Why are they in colour, when you're happy in black and white? They have more energy,

more commitment and an irritating capacity to say and do the things you've often considered and discarded.

Secretly you admire them, because they're proving you right. Most annoyingly, your customers are turning to them. But worse, much worse: you were once a Challenger and look at you now. So if you want to regain that zest, that innocence and that ambition, where do you start? Is it just a matter of timing, and you've had your shot?

Actually, no. Warren Bennis, the great leadership writer and academic died recently at 89 whilst working on his next book, his last one having been published in 2010. Age is no barrier; but mind-set might be. So take a moment. In fact, take Five, and have a good look through this very special edition of our magazine. You'll find a huge amount of material and ideas, and the full endorsement of the team from eatbigfish, authors of the ground-breaking work on the what and how of Challenger brands. If you're from Alibaba, taking on the might of eBay and Amazon every hour of every day, or a disruptive technologist upsetting established practice in the risk-averse world of upstream oil and gas, you'll recognise much of this. But if reading this makes you uncomfortable and worried, don't be. The Challengers are all around you, but there's a way to join them. And beat them. Read on.

Thinking big

The eight principles of the Challenger brand

In many industries, being the driver behind a brand with strong ideas or an innovative new technology can mean your business ambitions are greater than your marketing budget. Being the biggest fish in the ocean may not be an option, so it's time to change the rules of the game. It's time to make your size irrelevant.

Being a Challenger brand means you can bring continued innovation to the industry, keeping a competitive edge over the market leaders and their bigger budgets.

The following eight principles are the key factors that allow the little fish to threaten the big ones.

1

Embrace intelligent naivety

The game changers in any market space are often those who are new to it. In order to discover new opportunities it is important to release yourself from the knowledge, experience and cultural norms that guide mainstream established players' strategic thinking. Intelligent naivety defines a state of mind that balances your years of experience with vital creative innocence. You may have an in-depth knowledge of your market space, your competition and the technologies needed to address the issues faced now and in the future. The challenge is being able to take a step back, to see things differently by questioning the basics.

**Why are things done the way they are?
Can't we do them differently?**

As a global leader in grown diamonds, Ila Technologies has single-handedly revolutionised the technique for artificial diamond seeding. With a strong heritage in gems and jewellery, the company took a step back from the mainstream, understanding the pressures of traditional diamond mining, and the reputation of 'synthetic' diamonds.

Ila Technologies invested in six years of research and development before commencing commercial production of the purest diamonds, addressing the global challenge of catching the imagination of consumers and focusing on their desired needs of sustainability, authenticity and value for money.

2

Build a lighthouse identity

In order to succeed you need to have a defined sense of who you are and where you want to be in your marketplace. Are you clear on the real challenges? Has your singular focus delivered a new technology for deepwater, subsea processing or HP/HT? Is it built on an irrefutable idea?

By projecting your offer with intensity and consistency, it becomes the guiding light that your stakeholders will take notice of and follow, even if they are looking elsewhere.

Ascend Performance Materials wanted to define and develop a culture of communication that would create a sense of purpose within the organisation and ultimately deliver increased brand value. Through development of the Inspiring Everyday campaign, Ascend has leveraged a concept into practice by aligning words and deeds with their vision, mission and values. They have reinforced their beliefs through a comprehensive process of empowering employees to engage fellow team members and the communities in which they live, work and play. Whether it is through volunteer activities, supporting employee CSR initiatives or organising direct support for community organisations, Ascend brings people together to make a difference outside of work hours.

For the employees, the company is able to express itself in a different, inspiring way.



3 Become the thought leader

You might think each market has only one leader, the one with the largest market share. In fact there are two, the other being the thought leader. This may not be the one with the largest share, but it's the one everyone is talking about. They get the best media coverage and their people and technologies form the topics for discussion at the world's many oil & gas seminars. Their ideas have momentum and hold promise for the future of the energy sector.

These are the Challengers.

Many companies have positioned themselves in the thought leadership arena in the energy sector - but Lloyd's Register Energy wanted to take it further, to be seen as an agent for action. The international engineering, technical and business services organisation created a series of events to bring top-level executives from leading operators and major service companies together for an exclusive dinner briefing.

Critical to this series of events is the establishment of a group in each region to lead decision and action, and to position both the company - and president of the Energy Division, John Wishart - as conduits for change, leaders and advocates in industry collaboration. The events would be more than just a discussion, they would be an agenda for change.

The first briefing was held in Aberdeen with plans for others to be replicated culturally and contextually in Abu Dhabi, London, Houston, Singapore and Perth. The main aim of the Aberdeen evening was to discuss and explore the opportunity which still exists in the UKCS, in the context of Sir Ian Wood's 'UKCS Maximising Recovery Review', and how the industry could respond.

This event generated a white paper, infographic, blog and a press release on the issues worrying oil executives in the North Sea, which has driven further exposure in the media for the organisation.

4 Create a symbol of re-evaluation

Challengers need to work fast. They need to put a spanner in the spokes of their stakeholders' perceptions.

The Challenger brand will cause a reappraisal of expectations and market demands by articulating a clear differential. This must be reflected in their communications. In an industry like oil & gas that is awash with marketing clichés and red, white and blue colour schemes, a Challenger brand can navigate a course carefully designed to get its offer noticed. Using big, attention-grabbing campaigns that capture and engage not just your customers', but also your employees' imagination with impact and brevity will make them rethink the way they do things.

Be different and be the symbol for a new way of doing things.

With a new leadership team in place Viking Moorings had a vision to expand their offer to include a more comprehensive service, including a higher value consultancy for their customers. In order to change industry perceptions they created a new term, SeaTech services, which provided a platform on which to tell a new brand story. The company was rebranded as Viking SeaTech and their story was articulated in a multi-channel campaign designed to make people see familiar ideas from a new perspective. Following significant growth, the Actuant Corporation acquired the company for US \$225million as part of their expanding oil & gas portfolio.



5

Sacrifice

Not everyone has the resources of Halliburton, Schlumberger or any of the leaders in each of the energy market segments. They may have multitudes of product and service lines to talk about, but you can focus on one. As a Challenger you have the advantage of being able to sacrifice and concentrate your business focus, communications and actions. You can adapt and respond quickly to the ever-changing needs of your customers.

Success for a Challenger comes not from prioritising but by sacrifice and absolute focus.

Completions company, Tendeka, formed from five specialist organisations, competed in a market space dominated by the major oil & gas service companies. With a fraction of their available marketing budgets they focused on being seen as a viable alternative. They invested in a global exhibition programme with an emphasis on being seen alongside the majors. They developed a unique booth design giving them immediate visibility, with a well articulated offer centred around the idea that completions were their sole focus and how this provided the customer with flexible solutions to optimise their well flow. They are now firmly positioned as a major player in the completions market space.

6

Overcommit

Following on from sacrifice and a clear focus on what key activity to drive forward, the Challenger must overcome the problems of resistance and stagnation. In a risk-averse industry everyone wants to be second. You need to be able to assure customers and push them to be pioneers, potentially foregoing some shorter-term gains. This will come from a determination to overcome the barriers by managing risk, demonstrating the proof points and making your offer irresistible.

This doesn't come from commitment - it comes from overcommitment.

It is widely accepted that the oil & gas industry needs innovative ideas and technologies to increase the amount of accessible hydrocarbon reserves around the globe. This is counter to the culture of the industry that has a risk-averse attitude to new technologies.

One energy services company, Proserv, has taken a different approach in order to challenge accepted practices and pioneer new ways of doing things. This was succinctly articulated in their tagline - 'ingenious simplicity' - based on the premise that they used tried-and-tested technologies in new and ingenious ways. This was a testament to the ingenuity of their engineers and their approach to problem-solving. The company has enjoyed impressive growth and expansion and, from its formation in 2011, is now established as a major force in oil & gas, responsible for some game-changing technologies in subsea production systems.





7

Enter popular culture

A challenger needs to do more with less. Orthodox communications are not enough; they must capture the imagination of the audience. Campaign ideas integrated with the right publicity that get people talking about the brand are the most powerful ideas a challenger has at its disposal, not just for their marketing communications but as a brand asset.

Be disruptive. Don't play by the same rules as your competitors. Change the game by engaging your customers with the content they want. If your customers start relaying your brand story across social media platforms they become your brand ambassadors.

In the world of marketing communications this is gold dust.

With significant brand recognition in the Latin American sector, our client – a leading supplier of tubes and piping – wanted to gain greater engagement through already established social media channels, to build awareness and reputation levels in the USA. We worked on a new content strategy to capitalise on the uniqueness of each channel and its audiences. Localised content, specifically targeted to the oil & gas market, proved successful and delivered tremendous results. In the first three months of the campaign, we saw a 51.7% increase in followers on facebook. This significant growth can be attributed to the new content strategy as well as the quality of the content.

Working closely with the client to share their brand story has been successful and in partnership, we continually look for ways to creatively share their product innovation across the most culturally relevant channels.



8

Be ideas-centred

The danger of success is that it can inhibit those behaviours that brought success in the first place. The Challenger can maintain the momentum of its business and its brand by retaining a focus on generating and implementing new ideas. Continuous development of new products, new technologies and new ways of doing things will bring critical innovations and solutions to problems that established market leaders are not addressing. Instead of your business being customer dependent, constantly renew your brand experience and make the customer dependent on your ideas. They look to Challenger brands for what comes next.

Do you have an answer?

When Drum Property Group embarked on a plan to create a new business park for oil & gas companies in Aberdeen it was critical to differentiate the project from the current landscape of industrial and office complexes in the region. In order to achieve this it had to be centred on a core idea that was new and fundamentally different.

By looking at the existing office space in Aberdeen and its surrounding environments, it became clear what was lacking and where Drum Property Group could change the paradigm. The essence of their proposition focused on a managed and serviced environment, using sympathetic architecture in natural landscapes with people-orientated layouts. The design stimulated social interaction. It introduced the concept of an international-class business park as a serviced community of amenities and office space and ultimately provided a better work-life balance that suited modern busy lifestyles.

From this, the core-concept of 'bringing life to work' was born.

Prime Four was launched in phases and is now established as a major global hub for the energy industry. It has raised the bar for business parks and working environments across the country and set a new standard for the expectations of employees across the region.

Challenging the heavyweights

The competitive mentality

Himanshu Verma Managing Director, Fifth Ring APAC

The smaller companies that punch above their weight category have always shared a way of thinking that keeps them competitive, even though their rivals may appear to outclass them on paper. Looking at the Challenger brands that have impressed him the most in recent years, Himanshu Verma explains what gave them knockout power.

Challenger brand as a state of mind

Avis car rental was an embodiment of the Challenger brand when I studied marketing management. Their simple tagline, 'We try harder' communicated their brand philosophy and commitment to their customers in possibly the most succinct manner ever seen in a brand campaign.

Audacious by attitude

Luckily for me, my first job was with The Times Group, working for one of the largest-selling English daily newspapers in the world. The company was, and continues to be, a Challenger++ brand, if you will. They were audacious enough to declare themselves the market leader through a well-articulated, hi-spend campaign in Delhi, where their circulation was approximately one-fifth of the sales leader's.

Times' campaign simply argued that they sold well in areas that mattered: South Delhi, where the decision-makers of the city and country lived. An equivalent of West London, South Delhi delivered for them. It took The Times about 10 years to circulate more than half a million copies daily in Delhi alone, matching the distribution of the erstwhile number one.

The sheer audacity of the brand paid off. The question now is whether they can retain that Challenger title.

Size does not matter

Challengers don't see or recognise size. They don't see themselves to be small or their competitors as larger than them. Richard Branson perhaps never thought of how big British Airways was when he decided to start Virgin. The son of a barrister, and a first generation businessman, Branson actually ran into a series of disputes with BA,

ultimately making the behemoth pay large sums of money as a settlement, which he distributed among his employees as 'BA Bonus'.

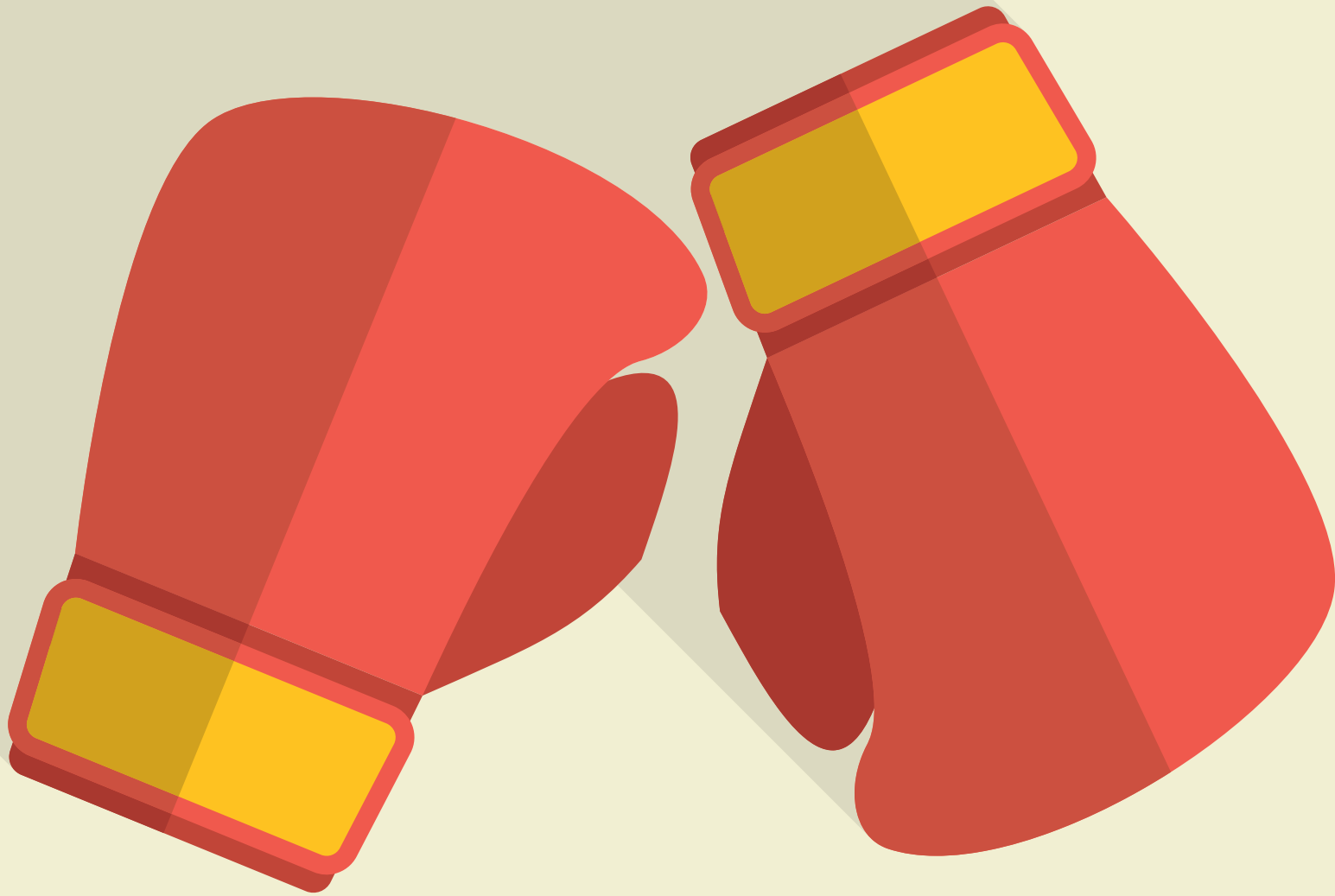
On the flip side, Virgin Airlines is now among the most established airlines in the world and it continues to behave like a Challenger brand. Richard Branson is still the most visible symbol of the brand, an embodiment of Virgin's brand values and a consumer favourite. Antics like Virgin America's safety video, which trended on social media and received over 10 million views on their own channel, continue to reaffirm Virgin's brand as one that challenges the norm.

Power of self-belief

My father was a talented engineer and he used to say, "Engineers and MBAs can help grow a company at a rate of 15-20%; entrepreneurs are limitless in their thinking and therefore limitless in their achievement." Michael Dell was one of those entrepreneurs. He believed that Dell would be better off as a private company. After spending US \$24.9 billion taking his company private, he was reported by The New York Times to be "... gleeful ... to be done with Wall Street." The article quotes, "This morning on the treadmill I was watching Bloomberg and CNBC, all the circus clowns."

Michael Dell challenged the market when he started the company, introducing and running a distribution model, which was unique to his company and unique to the industry.

The company is largely driven by him, and remains a Challenger. It works. According to IDC, a tech-industry analysis firm, Dell has shipped 9.7% more computers this year than last year.



Saying no to the status quo

On one hand, the oil & gas industry employs some of the world's greatest innovators and technological thinkers, producing a wide range of disruptive technologies. On the other hand, the industry eyes early adoption with extreme caution and the 'race to be second', particularly in technology uptake, prevails. In such an environment, Challenger brands are few and far between.

However, AIMansoori Specialized Engineering breaks the norm. When founded in Abu Dhabi in 1977, and driven by the charismatic CEO, Nabil Alalawi, the vision was to challenge convention. At the time, oilfield service companies were typically American or European. Yet AIMansoori transformed itself into an entity that was entirely different from the 'agent-like' oilfield service companies that were in the region. The company invested in people, equipment and its competencies to pioneer a path to becoming a genuine service company, as we know them today.

In the early 2000s the organisation then went on to challenge the status quo again, this time positioning itself

as a Middle East-based, but global, industry player. Despite facing strong competition in other regions, it successfully took its existing service offering into new markets.

Alalawi's commitment to the region was recognised in 2006 when he became the first Arab Middle East oil baron. Although AIMansoori's activities are predominantly based in the Middle East, it is continually expanding its operations in North Africa, the Far East and South East Asia, as well as in the North Sea through acquisitions and joint ventures with other internationally-recognised companies. AIMansoori now has a workforce of more than 3,000 across 27 countries.

Fifth Ring is celebrating its tenth year of working with AIMansoori, from creating a brand identity and the creation of the Always AIMansoori strategic principle through to printed collateral, proactive PR campaigns and exhibition support. Working together we have helped AIMansoori change perceptions and challenge the status quo.

Want to be a Challenger?

The five fundamentals that pit you against the market's major players

Rhea Hussey International Clients Services Director, Fifth Ring

It's all very well understanding the principles of being a Challenger brand, and even how to get into the 'Challenger mentality', but when it comes down to it, what can you do to challenge your marketplace, segment, and most importantly, your competition? **Here are my top tips on how:**

Determine where you can make a difference

So you are not new in the marketplace and you have competitors that do the same thing as you. You are not alone, and finding a real credible differentiator can be hard. However, if you are going to be different, you need to find a hook; something that will give you a rational and emotional connection to your clients – ask yourself this: "What problem are we trying to solve for our clients?"

When you know what you are trying to achieve it is much easier to craft a strong proposition that can be executed through your marketing and communications strategy. Being clear on what you want to say to the marketplace makes it much easier to drive the conversation, or actively engage with key audiences.

Tell your brand story

Traditionally B2B brands don't really tell their story to the outside world. Yes, they'll explain what they do, but what's missing here – and in so much of B2B communication – is the human part of the brand. We all love Apple, and for those who don't it is unlikely that you can dismiss the power of the brand. And what has Apple done to achieve this? It's focused on the how and why we buy, not what we are buying.

Touchy-feely it may be, but regardless of the channels you ultimately use to deliver your communications strategy or campaign, getting that connection to your stakeholders is vital.

Be disruptive and no 'buts'

Having worked out what we want to say and who we want to say it to, we have to express it visually and verbally in a way that will turn heads. This is where the best approach you can take is to be completely open and let those creative juices flow. Our rule here is no but's! You can ask questions of your colleagues and challenge their views, but always evaluate ideas properly – never just throw them away. If we did that, we wouldn't have been part of a record-breaking ice cream-making experiment, or a stunt bike video in our client's yard!

If you are going to challenge the norm then you have to find something different and you will have to be bold.

Stand up and be counted

In the oil & gas sector there is often a 'race to be second' but to be a Challenger in your communication you must have courage and be prepared to take the first step.

We are now so exposed to different channels of communication that it takes clever campaigns, multi-channel approaches and constant repetition to claim that competitive edge.

Some of our greatest successes here have been in developing completely new segments for our clients to own. But that's not right for everyone, so clever campaigns, strong storytelling and understanding where you will have the most impact is key.



The ultimate goal is to be seen as the leader and not a follower, so look and listen to the sector and your competitor activity. Don't lock horns with them, be smarter and politely step over them to cut through the noise and gain the premier position.

There's no time like the present

In a world where news breaks in an instant and something can become viral in seconds, if you want to challenge the norm you have to be able to move quickly. Responding to market conditions, news and events, and being seen and heard to comment and engage on these issues, will again help to gain vital ground as a leader and an influencer.

Be confident and committed in all that you do and say. Be selective with your channels so you are engaging with the right audiences, and of course, the standard rules of common sense apply. But don't wait to see where the conversation will go. If you do, you'll miss your chance and the next one may not come so easily.



A beautiful constraint

The key to creative thinking

Brett Donahay Strategic Director, eatbigfish

Businesses face an ever-increasing array of constraints. Whether it is the constraints of our available resources, capabilities, time, or everyone's favourite – budgets. Regardless of one's size or position in the market, constraints are something that we are all too familiar with and we are taught that constraints are bad, right? Well a Challenger brand may beg to differ.

In fact, we see a generation of Challengers in the world who would believe that the opposite is indeed true. Challengers who believe constraints can be a fertile and enabling source of creativity and even find them desirable. For the Challenger brand will always have ambitions that will radically outweigh the resources available to them (sound familiar?)

Arguably, the energy sector, like many other industries, is operating in an age of simultaneous scarcity and abundance. On one hand we have unprecedented access to insights of opportunity. Never before have we been so directly connected to customers' lives. And the ever-changing digital landscape means we can access and share knowledge and ideas with our colleagues in an instant with one poorly-spelt, thumb-typed email. And we need to have access to all this opportunity due to the constraints that surround us. We are all under extreme pressure essentially to do significantly more, with less. Pressure to manage a number of growth opportunities available to us, with smaller teams, tighter timelines and leaner budgets.

So what can we learn from the Challenger brands that 'make constraints beautiful'? Those who sit at the intersection of constraints and opportunity and choose to turn lemons into lemonade? The following thinking is taken from our new book *A Beautiful Constraint*, and we will talk about the mind-set and behaviours Challengers adopt to find opportunity that others don't see. Of the 11 themes discussed in the book, I'm going to cover three here, namely how to 'ask propelling questions'; the power of 'Can-If' thinking and how to see resources you don't have by 'creating abundance'.

1. Asking propelling questions

How successful we are in answering the question 'how does one see opportunity within constraint?' depends on how successfully we frame the question between the two opposing dimensions. We call these 'propelling questions'. That is, a question that contains a bold ambition and a significant constraint. The existence of the two dimensions

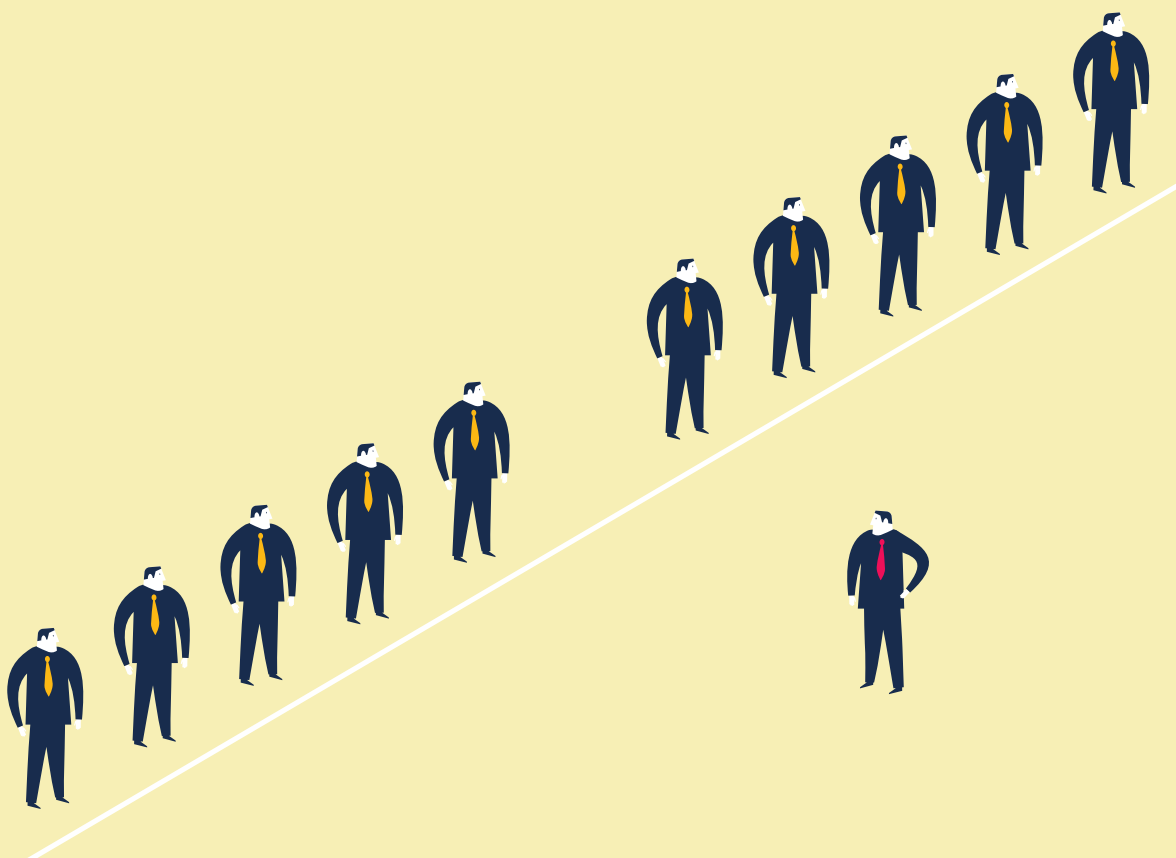
in the same question means that we are propelled to answer it in a very different way than we have answered the existing category question before it.

When Audi entered the Le Mans 24-hour race in 2006, the traditional question of the racing industry was how can we build a faster car? Faster car equals winning team, right? Well the problem was that Audi were competing with teams with bigger budgets and a longer history in Le Mans who were also trying to build the fastest car. So Audi had to ask itself a different question. A propelling question that closely linked their ambition (to win the race) with their constraint (lack of resource to build a faster car). "How could we win Le Mans if our car could go no faster than anyone else's?" This propelling question saw them enter the R10 TDI, a diesel fuel powered car. For the answer to their propelling question was fuel efficiency. Regardless of your car's top speed, it doesn't move very fast when you're stopped for fuel. Audi found a way to win Le Mans with a slower car by simply stopping for fuel significantly less often than their competitor. Audi went on to win three Le Mans for the next three consecutive years.

2. Can-If thinking

Propelling questions naturally force us to find solutions outside of our area of expertise and look for different sources of inspiration. But asking the question alone is of course not enough. We need to find the answer to the seemingly impossible question.

Challengers go about this by starting their sentences differently. How many times have you heard the phrase "we cannot do that because ...", or "we need to be careful we don't ...". These tend to be answers that block opportunity.



A Challenger, however, tends to start their sentences with the phrase "We Can If ...". It forces you to answer the propelling question by focusing your thinking on how things might be possible, not simply finding barriers or risks.

Colin Kelly, Director of Research & Development at Warburton's, forces his team to answer questions with 'We Can If'. For example, We Can If we think of it as ...; We Can If we use other people to ...; We Can If we remove x to allow us to y; We Can If we access the knowledge of ...; We Can If we substitute x for y ... etc.

Can-If thinking makes us focus our answer on the propelling question. It forces individuals to find solutions, not simply identify barriers or risk. And it creates a mindset and culture of optimism, energy and productivity.

3. Creating abundance

The 'rules' in which categories tend to operate can sometimes blind us to opportunities and resources that are quite often under our noses. Challengers tend to look at resources very differently. Rather than view them as something that they 'control', they view them as something they can 'access'.

IKEA is the master of creating abundance. As the story goes, IKEA founder Ingvar Kamprad was strolling through a food market in China looking at the abundance of plucked chickens. Now, where I would be deciding what type of spicy noodle soup I would order for lunch, Kamprad was

looking at something else. Or rather, the absence of something else. The feathers. What happened to all the plucked feathers? He then struck a deal with the farmers to sell their excess waste to him at a small cost for stuffing for his range of pillows and duvets. The farmers made money on their waste and IKEA had found a way to sell high quality, warm comforters at a fraction of the price of the high-end competition.

So I'll leave you with three thoughts ...

... if you link your audacious ambition with your significant constraint, what propelling questions can you create for your business that will force you to look for different sources of inspiration?

Try banning the word 'but', or the phrase 'we cannot because' in your meetings and replace it with 'we can if ...' and see how that changes the way in which individuals focus their thinking.

Create two columns. Column A is all the resources you control, and column B is the resources you could potentially 'access'. How are they different and what new opportunities does column B potentially represent?

You can read more about how Challengers turn constraints into opportunities in a new book by the founders of challenger brand thinking, Adam Morgan and Mark Barden, 'A Beautiful Constraint' www.abeautifulconstraint.com

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Get involved

Five aims to provide compelling, thought-provoking and meaningful insight and commentary on all things marketing and communications. Our contributors are recognised for their expertise and fresh ways of thinking – but the more the merrier. We want to hear your thoughts on Five and we always welcome new contributors who want to share their own thoughts on industry, tools and talent.

Get in touch with the **Five** editorial team at five@fiftring.com



As a marketing communications agency with a strong track record of supporting clients of all sizes in competitive markets, Fifth Ring has experience helping Challenger brands work smarter than their competitors.

Since 1991 we have been continuously honing our toolkit for the delivery of strategic communications, combining our key disciplines to strengthen clients' market positions, whether they are agile startups or established giants. Through brand and strategy, digital media, creative, public relations, advertising and exhibitions, we have the marcomms expertise to develop strategies that will connect our clients with the right people at the right time.

We have spread to the world's energy centres, with offices in North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia Pacific, giving us a wide base of culturally diverse ideas that strengthens our creative offering. Membership of the Business-to-Business Network extends our reach even further, providing access to 16 of the world's top B2B marketing agencies and expanding on our cultural knowledge and cross-industry expertise.

A fundamental part of our service is the ability to identify and utilise clients' challenger characteristics. In the notoriously cautious environment of the oil & gas sector, we have found that even the biggest players can embrace aspects of their identity or practices that challenge the norm. Through strategic research and brand positioning, we have helped clients to discover the ways in which they can disrupt the industry, reinforcing that offer in their messaging through efficient and effective campaigns.

That's a shift in perspective that is vital for energy companies in the current market. As oil price fluctuation tests the industry and rapid changes result from the growth of unconventional gas and renewables, the ability to adopt the principles of a Challenger brand will prove invaluable. As our experience with clients has revealed, showing how you bring continued innovation to the industry – whether it's in the form of leading technology on the seabed or creative communications – can turn a volatile and uncertain marketplace from an atmosphere of threat into one of opportunity.

And you're not being preached to by the unfaithful. At Fifth Ring we regularly ask ourselves how we can best utilise our own challenger characteristics. We are continuously trying out new products and technologies to develop our toolkit, so that we can continue to be an important partner to our clients.

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