

# Appendix

## Using Irony to Move on from Controversial Issues

Episode No.	ISSUE & CONTEXT		IRONIC CONSTRUCTION OF INCONGRUITY				PROCESSING INCONGRUITY		OUTCOME OF IRONY			
	Issue	Nature of discussion	Condition 1: Speaker Expectation	Condition 2: Insincere violation of norms	Condition 3: Negative emotion	Ironic / insufficiently ironic	Incongruity created	Establishing position	Modality of action	Counterfactual	How the issue is moved on	Pathway
47	Ten year service awards.	The team discuss forms of recognition for staff who have served for 5 or 10 years or longer.	Long-service awards 'like a clock or a piece of glass' are regarded as reasonable.	Gifts will be cheap ('plaquey things').	The CEO mocks and says it would be 'too hard' for him to work out, and says the gifts offers little 'bloody incentive'.	Ironic	The importance of long-service recognition is contrasted vs the cheap nature of service gifts being given.	The CEO says the scheme offers little 'bloody incentive' as a challenge to the Company to address it.	The CEO says is 'too hard' for him (to work out a solution) and expects action from the Company itself.	The team might have continued to elaborate how existing gifts could be improved to make them commensurate with a decade of service.	Challenge voiced to company to invoke radical action.	<b>Acquiescing</b>
5	Wooden Dollars	The team discuss contracts that colleagues Nick and Paul Atkinson have signed off.	The contract has been signed off following 'forthright' discussion with the customer.	The CEO and COO say the shareholder is 'changing his mind' on the contract.	CEO says the customer is a 'tosser'.	Ironic	The previously stable relationship with Government is contrasted vs them changing their mind.	CEO concludes Government is accumulating 'wooden dollars' (hollow promises), challenging team to stick with, but be aware of the situation.	CEO and COO establish the Government customer's contrariness, and expect them to take action.	Bradley and Mike might have attempted to blame other members with the result the latter become defensive, cutting discussion short discussion.	Internally challenges team and stimulates awareness and perseverance.	<b>Acquiescing</b>
75	Targets	The team discuss their commitment to financial targets.	COO says he expects them to reach targets.	He also says they are doubting themselves.	The COO is frustrated that they are 'rowing back' and changing their minds.	Ironic	The doubts the team is displaying over their target is contrasted vs the commitments expected to targets being met.	COO says that despite their doubts, they are being 'leaned on' by someone significant from Head Office.	Pressure from Head Office might mean they need to be more committed going forward.	The COO might have attempted to ask team members to simply meet established financial targets.	Establishes external expectation and presses team members to progress.	<b>Acquiescing</b>
43	Inappropriate emails	The team discuss disciplining a female supervisor who has circulated pornographic material around the business via email, including to a female trainee.	Employees don't circulate inappropriate material.	The HRD says the supervisor has 'something of a reputation about town' and that the email has gone to about 'four thousand people'.	He calls it an 'epidemic' and says the 'whole workforce' may need sacking.	Ironic	This 'inappropriate email' is contrasted vs the normally good behaviour of employees.	HRD exaggerates by saying the email has gone to over 4,000 people.	Whips up need for urgent and widespread action.	HRD might have treated the case as isolated and needing only proscribed action.	Creates need for urgent internal action.	<b>Acquiescing</b>
41	New leadership at Rubrix	The team discuss new leadership at one of their suppliers, Rubrix.	The new leader will bring clarity.	He is described as 'French' and 'bloody hard to understand'.	The CEO said he 'couldn't understand a fucking word' [of the new leader].	Ironic	The difficulty of understanding Rubrix' new leader is contrasted vs the importance of their contracts.	The Rubrix contract is important to DSI but the new leader there may jeopardise it.	CEO makes team aware of need to handle new Rubrix leader with caution.	The CEO might simply have emphasised the importance of the Rubrix contract.	Underlines importance of project and cautious treatment.	<b>Acquiescing</b>
93	Electronic Support Measures (ESM) -- Reprise	The team re-assess progress on the ESM deal, because slow progress is potentially putting the Osprey Project on a 'critical path' (see episode 12).	Osprey's progress cannot be put at risk, but expectation is not absolutely clear.	DoO's intimidation that people feel ESM is doing a 'good job' is only expressed weakly.	There is no negative emotion expression evident.	Insufficiently ironic	The importance of ESM contract is only weakly constructed vs the importance of Osprey as the company's most significant project.	The DoO expresses doubt that ESM is working well.	DoE fails to establish ESM as a credible threat to Osprey.	The importance of ESM might have been argued straight forwardly.	Irony is not acute enough. No movement.	<b>Acquiescing (failure)</b>
85	Agreeing a realistic cash position	The team discuss the cash position of their business.	The business unit is expected to maintain clarity over it's cash position.	The CEO says he is anticipates some 'robust' discussions in the forthcoming meeting with the Group CEO from the UK.	He describes the Group CEO as 'very histrionic'.	Ironic	The recent 'unrealistic' views is contrasted vs the lack of clarity over cash position.	The CEO describes the Director as 'histrionic' to imply that he will not accept their equivocality over their cash position..	The team is urged to be more realistic on cash.	The CEO might have simply asked the team to develop a more certain and committed approach to their cash position.	Exaggerates external view of significant other to press team to change view.	<b>Acquiescing</b>
14	Osprey	The team talk about progress of the major Osprey production project against its 'critical path', because of delays in parts for Electronic Support Measures ('ESM') for electronic warfare (or 'EW').	Osprey is the most significant contract and it is on schedule.	It is said that the supplier is 'posturing' and threatening progress.	The CEO urges them to 'stick with it' and 'get their reward in heaven'.	Ironic	The supplier's 'posturing' is contrasted vs the significance of the Osprey contract.	The CEO uses the 'posturing' of ESM to imply a threat to the Osprey contract.	The team is urged to 'stick with' and mitigate threats.	The CEO might have simply stated the importance of maintaining progress on Osprey.	Exaggerates threat to press for progress.	<b>Acquiescing</b>
25	Implementing expansion of the graduate scheme	Discussion focuses on creating a more integrated and better co-ordinated graduate programme.	The CEO has already agreed Margaret from Communications will take on the coordinating role, but others don't know.	He asks rhetorically 'who would I go to' to prevent the problem, then answers saying 'if in doubt go to Margaret'.	COO contends 'She's actually quite a nice person'.	Ironic	The ineffective management of graduate development vs the size and form of the graduate training scheme.	The CEO rhetorically paints a picture that Margaret is the only one to go to.	The CEO's ironic joke places the responsibility on Margaret to oversee the graduates.	Mike the CEO might have simply asked Margaret face-to-face in the meeting in front of the whole team, to take on responsibility for the Graduate scheme coordination.	Boosts her credibility, providing a challenge to her to say no in front of the team and lose face.	<b>Channelling</b>
56	Contracting L3	Reference is made to 'L3' a leading provider of maritime systems and solutions.	The CEO know the L3 leader is good.	He suggests that his colleague should not have talked to him.	He says cuttingly 'Well, then you don't need to talk to us then, do you?'	Ironic	L3's leader is competent, vs he is not up to the standard of their own CEO at DSI.	The CEO doubts his colleague who has gone around him.	He tries to stop him acting in this way saying 'Well, then you don't need to talk to us then, do you?'	The CEO might have told his colleague concerned to no longer talk to the L3 leader directly.	Implies his colleague's approach is inappropriate and boosts his own standing.	<b>Channelling</b>
77	Project status	The team query the status of a project.	The project is as reported.	The CEO stresses that it is not, and highlights the need to 'check' and 'maintain' their position.	CEO says the financial details he has given are 'sub-edited' and partial.	Ironic	Financials details are correct vs those of the project are wrong.	CEO highlights the team need to 'check' and 'maintain' their position.	He challenges the speakers actions of editing and implies he should not do it in the future.	The CEO might have told his colleague not to [mis]edit data.	Lays down that as CEO he wants the 'full picture'.	<b>Channelling</b>
45	Frank's team.	The CEO reflects on his recent meeting with a local team.	Frank's part of the business is performing.	CEO says Frank's team gave him a 'bum steer' and that he was 'opposed' to change.	He describes Frank as 'dopey'.	Ironic	Frank's team can get behind change more vs his team is working well.	The CEO says Frank is 'opposed to change'.	The action implied is Frank needs to smarten up his team's act.	The CEO could have simply said he would enforce the change.	Casts doubt on the capability of Frank, saving the CEO from issuing a directive.	<b>Channelling</b>
66	Surprise findings in the staff leadership survey.	The team discuss the findings of the leadership survey.	They will be performing well measured against others.	The HRD says 'Finance is a surprise' and others concur.	CEO dismisses the findings, saying 'There's no surprise and nothing in it for me'.	Ironic	The national survey of company leaders by Telford is a surprise vs does it does not have anything to tell them.	The Finance function is responsible, because of poor leadership.	The CEO concludes the data contains no surprises and no action is needed.	The HRD might have explicitly stated that the Finance function's poor leadership explains DSI's poor showing in the Telford Survey.	The CEO implies he already knows that Finance is responsible and flags it needs to do better.	<b>Channelling</b>
87	Larry's 'straw man' over Project Managers.	Here the team is discussing the shortage of good Project Managers in the company. Several members of the team had told us directly that DoO Will had developed something of a reputation for 'hogging' what is rare expertise in DSI (i.e. Project Managers), at the expense of other projects in the business, and this tension is surfaced within the discussion.	There is no shortage of project managers.	Their misuse will be recognised in 2-3 weeks when the contract is signed.	CEO directs criticism of DoO by putting an 'easy action' on DoE as a 'straw man'.	Ironic	Questioning of project manager sufficiency vs Will is 'hogging' them.	Will is over-using project managers.	The DoE is asked to produce a 'straw man' to reveal how they are being used/misused.	The CEO could simply have agreed that DoO Will is hogging project management resource.	He says there is no shortage, but by directing Larry as DoE to develop a 'straw man' proposal that will likely find that Will is indeed monopolising the resource, he neutralises and mitigates potential criticism.	<b>Channelling</b>

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81	Project targets	The team discuss income targets for key projects.	CEO seems to expect that projects will 'up their game'.	A colleague describes current project performance as a 'baseline'.	The CEO criticises performance, suggesting a 'gap' they will need to 'actualise' over the next year.	Ironic	Projects are underperforming vs compared to target.	The CEO criticises the poor performance of one project concluding all colleagues and their projects will need to 'up their game'.	The 'gap' identified by the CEO is left with colleagues to 'actualise' over the following year.	The CEO could have criticised the performance of key projects and/or their leaders.	By saying there is a gap in performance, he implies expectation of performance is not fixed, mitigating criticism and motivating them to do better.	Channelling
28	Facilities negotiation	The team negotiate with a property management company, regarding its sale to packaging company Cormac.	The consultant will advise them well about their building needs.	CEO implies the [poor] advice they are receiving is costing \$350k.	He criticises them, saying "we can give them a bit of consulting advice..." ourselves [for that price].	Ironic	Weak advice from consultants vs the DSI team could teach them a thing or two about consulting.	The CEO argues they are not doing a proper job for what they are charging.	Consultant's advice to acquire expensive offices compared to their own 'cheap and frugal' offices is used to imply they are asking too much for their services.	The CEO might have simply criticised the consultancy for charging too much for poor advice.	By implying they could give better advice themselves, the consultancy is undermined without the CEO losing face.	Channelling
82	Dependency on Singapore.	The team focus on a contract with the Singaporean government.	The Singaporean project is critical and needs therefore needs to work well.	A gap in sales from Singapore will need closing.	The CEO cynically refers to the gap as a 'deferred dependency', thus quietly criticising the DoO.	Ironic	The shortage of sales vs the importance of the Singapore project to the business.	The CEO emphasises the importance of the project to the company, blaming the DoO.	By describing the shortfall as a 'deferred dependency', the CEO maintains pressure on the DoO to eventually achieve it.	The CEO could have directly criticised the DoO as being short on sales for Singapore.	Expectation for Singapore is made clear while mitigating blame.	Channelling
61	Salary increases in the business	The team talk about the implications of agreed salary increases.	Those who get salary increases will deserve them.	CEO says he 'recollects' it was the same last year, as if no-one has earned one.	He describes colleagues as 'under achievers'.	Ironic	The salary increment scheme is working as it should vs it is not because of the quality of Management judgement.	The COO says salary increases are rewarding 'under achievers'.	The CEO accuses the DoM, implying it is his area where most of the 'under achievers' are to be found.	The CEO may well have stated unequivocally that many salary increases are unwarranted.	Rather than criticising overtly, he implies the bar needs to be raised.	Channelling
3	Automatic supervisor level guidelines	The team is discussing automatic delegation of certain responsibilities to individuals required by the parent company.	Delegates are appropriate.	HRD says delegations are going too far.	DoE suggests that there is "no smoke without fire" in terms of engineer calls for clarity.	Ironic	Questioning of whether team is doing what is needed to make things work is contrasted vs the automatic delegation of responsibilities by the HRD.	DoE says engineers are calling for clarity on the position, and contends the HRD is not doing his job.	The DoE uses a metaphor to mask his criticism of, and blame, the HRD, implying that automatic delegation isn't working and he needs to do something about it.	The DoE could have accused the HRD directly for not doing his job well.	The metaphor enables indirect criticism of the HRD by resetting expectation.	Channelling
80	Harris's mobile	The CEO Mike asks DoF Harris about his mobile phone.	The CEO's expectation is not made apparent.	He draws attention to a 'colleague' decision to leave the room.	It is not clear if he is 'having a go' at him, or making a point about attention to the meeting in general.	Insufficiently ironic	It is acceptable for staff to take calls while in a meeting, vs it is not acceptable to do so.	The CEO draws attention to a colleagues' decision to leave the room, as if to take a call, to make his position that isn't acceptable.	It is unclear if he is 'having a go' at him, or making a point about attention to the meeting in general.	The CEO might have been clearer as to whether he is criticising the DoF directly, or colleagues more generally.	The criticism of behaviour falters because the target of irony is unclear.	Channelling (failure)
88	Project Management deployment	COO Bradley resists a task he was actioned with regarding Project Managers and how they are deployed.	Bradley is to take the minutes of the meeting.	He contends 'it's not quite the way we discussed it' (at the last meeting), explaining 'my task was to work out' if it were possible.	The CEO asks mischievously 'Did you not write the minutes, Bradley?'	Insufficiently ironic	Bradley volunteered to write the minutes vs he did not.	Bradley the COO resists and contends what was asked and agreed. When asked by the CEO he continues his resistance, saying "Not this one".	The interchange fails to clarify whether or not the COO was asked to report on the issue and CEO attempt to direct him seems to fail.	The CEO could have directed the COO to take the minutes.	COO Bradley's contention of the meeting minute resists the CEO placement of the task.	Channelling (failure)
68	You Need Drugs	Corporates worldwide – not just in DSI – believe that a knowledge of the strategic direction of a company is a good thing for employees because it serves to align their effort and resources toward a common goal. In this interaction, we see the team grappling with that very issue. Here the team focus on the results of the staff survey which ask staff if they understand the strategy of DSI.	Staff understand the strategy.	Anna the HR consultant shows staff do seem to understand it. COO responds saying 'Well, you've cracked it, Mike' as if disbelieving. HRD adds Mike has 'sacked people for not knowing'.	CEO Mike implies he needs to use incentives as a carrot as well as force, but to 'beat' them with it or use 'drugs' to excite engineers about strategy.	Ironic	Staff understand strategy vs DSI's leadership is seen as not good.	By saying the CEO has 'cracked it' the COO intimates that DSI leadership is ok and the CEO does not need to do anything.	The belief is that nothing needs doing.	Team members might have flatly disagreed with, or politely raised concerns about, Anna's assertions from the survey. Open disagreement might have damaged relationships with Telford, or portrayed senior management as unable to take criticism.	Instead, irony allows the team to pay lip service to their 'woeful score' on the survey while 'kicking the can down the road' by undermining its credibility.	Dismissing
64	Relationship with Consolidated Aerospace	The team discuss their relationships with companies involved in the HIC consortia, principally Consolidated Aerospace. The HIC (Hornet Industry Coalition) is a collection of industry partners working with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) concerned with a structural modification to the Hornet aircraft.	The HIC is working.	DoO suggests that the HIC isn't working and that there is a "fair bit of drama" and saying the Commonwealth is "doing its normal thing... [by being] out of control".	The COO resists the action' the DoO tries to put on him by saying he 'did not get that action'.	Ironic	Maintaining control over HIC vs it is important to them.	DoO makes clear his view that the Commonwealth is 'out of control'.	The COO denies the DoO putting the action on him, saying he 'did not get that action'.	The DoO could have said that the Commonwealth was not coordinating HIC properly, and insisted COO follows it up as requested.	The 'drama' described conveyed the situation and Commonwealth was out of control, albeit that the put of the task on the COO did not 'stick'.	Channelling
51	Core business Outsourcing	Reprising the earlier topic about childcare provision, the team talk about its outsourcing.	CEO is clear that they should not become childcare providers.	There is no danger of their business changing to this extreme.	CEO derogates their existing facilities saying 'we don't even provide our own bloody catering'.	Ironic	Childcare could be outsourced to improve provision vs not doing childcare work themselves.	The CEO says DSI is not a 'childcare provider' and that they should stay focused on engineering.	He draws a parallel with the fact that they don't even do their own catering, to imply that they should do nothing.	The CEO might well have said simply that they do not 'outsource' functions central to the business.	Irony is used to underline their position as an engineering company rather than a 'childcare provider', to imply a need to stay focused.	Channelling
59	Bradley's taking the Minutes	The Company Secretary is not present at this meeting and the COO Bradley has been asked to stand-in and take the minutes that he normally produces as a note of what is agreed and the actions specified.	The COO says he has been given a menial task as 'minute taker', and that he should not do it.	Other's say it is a 'big responsibility'.	COO resists, saying that his minutes will be 'minimal'.	Ironic	Someone needs to take the meeting minutes, vs the task is too menial for the COO to do it.	The COO pushes back on the CEO's request.	He says his own minutes will be 'minimal'.	The COO could have refused point blank to take the minutes.	Saying they would be 'minimal' enabled him to resist while not contending the direction from the CEO.	Channelling
34	Mike's presentation	The discussion is about the CEO's talk at the graduate dinner.	His normal presentation is sufficient.	CEO responds to making his presentation more interactive as if they are getting 'carried away'.	Critically, he pushes back and says 'software' could be written to do what they are suggesting.	Ironic	The sufficiency of his normal presentation is contrasted vs the advice he is hearing.	The CEO says his team is getting 'carried away' with its suggestions.	The CEO pushes back on the suggestion what he should do.	The CEO might have simply refused to accept that his presentation needs further refinement.	By saying the team is getting 'carried away' with suggestions, the CEO acknowledges their ideas but does not commit to admitting they are necessary and taking them on board.	Channelling
84	Cash position	The team continue discussing the finances with Cary from Finance, concentrating on the cash position of DSI.	The cash positions of each project is good.	In contrast, Cary says to the team that 'you can see a large decrease' in cash.	The CEO adamantly resists saying 'We're giving them no cash...'	Ironic	The cash positions of each part of the business are held as realistic, vs sales shortages in key areas.	The adamance of the CEO ('we're giving them no cash') resists the position taken by the Finance manager Carey ('you can see a large decrease' in cash in the business).	The resistance of the CEO urges he team to act differently and use cash effectively.	The CEO could have openly contended the Finance Manager's view on the company cash position.	Instead, he contended the relinquishment of cash by his team urging them to use cash more effectively.	Channelling

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16	Where's the Secretary?	The CEO is checking attendance at the start in the absence of the Company Secretary, Mark. He asks HRD Adam to do so while people are arriving late.	Everyone is there.	CEO knows who is missing already.	CEO makes snide comments about this not attending and that someone has 'fucked off...to get himself a cup of tea'.	Ironic	Whether or not people are doing all they can to attend is contrasted vs regular attendance.	The CEO acts ignorant, asking if someone is missing when he already knows.	He pushes people to attend but his expletive acts to mitigate his criticism.	The CEO could have accused a particular person – the Company Secretary – of not attending.	He belittles his absence for a trivial task (tea-making), embarrassing him, and making a general point about team behaviour that they should all be in attendance.	Channelling
2	Salary Adjustments	The team discuss sensitive data covering grades across all levels of the company, people's positions, and the effects of adjustments made to reward and retain graduate employees.	CEO says he expects team to be well-behaved.	He says some staff seem to be pretending to be 'graduates' in survey.	He describes them as 'masquerading'.	Ironic	Misbehaviour of some colleagues to inflate salary increases is contrasted vs them being earned.	CEO says some colleagues are 'misbehaving' and 'masquerading' as graduates to influence salary awards.	CEO and HRD support each other to establish how they'd like colleagues to behave.	The CEO could have been more direct and accused colleagues of not making salary adjustments properly.	Rather, by exaggerating their behaviour in theatrical terms, he pushes them to behave more appropriately.	Channelling
83	Friggin' Mystical Conversation	The conversation on sales targets on projects turns to the specific target for the Singapore project and DSI's contribution to the Consolidated Aerospace contract for the 737 Early Warning Aircraft for Singapore on a major project known as 'Osprey'.	Colleagues will defend their position and make excuses.	The CEO dismisses excuses by saying 'I'm not even listening to this'.	He uses metaphorical expletives (e.g. 'friggin' mystical conversation') and scenarios (e.g. 'dreamed up by accountants' and 'it's like bloody Al Qaeda or something') and show his incredulity towards their excuses.	Ironic	Excuses vs Osprey is 'short' on sales.	The CEO resists the excuses (saying 'I'm not even listening to this') and dismisses them.	His use of strong expletives and scenarios invokes the new behaviours he wants to see (e.g. clear, straightforward and solid figures).	The CEO could have forcefully denied team members' excuses.	Instead, he discredits the positions of the DoO and Accountant by saying they are exaggerating cost rises as if they are 'mystical terrorist threats'. He blames them for not controlling costs so that they concede.	Channelling
1	Anonymity of responses	The CEO says despite what has been agreed with the researchers, being anonymised in recordings isn't advisable.	CEO expects people to be responsible for what they say in front of the researchers.	Review processes had solicited a range of anonymous opinions.	CEO described these anonymous comments as 'mischief-making'.	Ironic	Anonymity in response vs the need to be responsible and frank in front of researchers.	CEO says those who are 'mischief-making' should not hide but act responsibly.	CEO says he 'wouldn't expect anyone around this table to make mischief'.	The CEO might have insisted that colleagues in his team do not given anonymised views to researchers.	Rather being seen as threatening, the CEO derides their irresponsible behaviour as making mischief.	Channelling
8	QBR Agenda	The team raise the forthcoming Quarterly Board Review (QBR) chaired by the main board director from the UK.	Everyone in the team will attend the QBR.	The CEO says he does not expect all of them to be <u>not</u> there.	CEO says he is 'committed' to attending, suggesting others are not.	Ironic	Apparent ambivalence of team to attend is contrasted vs the CEO intention to attend.	The CEO implies others are not as committed to attending as him.	CEO says his is not expecting them all to attend, somewhat mitigating his criticism.	The CEO could have said he insists on all colleagues attending the QBR.	Contrasting his commitment to attend with the ambivalence of others, it helped him instil a responsibility for people to attend.	Channelling
53	The OCD (Operational Concept Demonstration) and FPS (Functional Performance System).	DSI is committed to a culture of 'Total Performance', encompassing a customer focus, execution of programmes, financial performance, and responsible behaviour to enhance the company reputation. OCD is important to this as a means of finding out through 'field trials' to get feedback.	Systems are in place to give feedback.	The CEO says trials are not giving feedback, and adds 'So, at least there is an OCD and an FPS'.	He calls one collaborator a 'sleeping partner' and says they work with others, 'in theory'.	Ironic	Progress is as expected, vs progress isn't what it should be.	Progress hasn't been what it should be (CEO).	He says the team have to make the trials work.	CEO could have accused his team of not making progress.	By describing their partner as 'sleeping' he rejects the idea that the answer lies with them, instead saying it is their own responsibility to ensure trials work.	Dismissing
55	Teaming for 'big business' bids	The team discuss how they bid.	CEO argues they need to make the right choice of who to work with.	He intimates the quality of bid leaders varies, saying 'Pull up a chair...' so he can show how it is done.	He sardonically dismisses the view of the Government official saying 'No, you'll get <i>much</i> more than that from the future' – as if he in his experience, knows better.	Ironic	Alternative chairs vs their own CEO has more experience to do it.	They need to make the 'right choice' of bid chairs based on their experience.	Find a chair with the experience of their own CEO.	The CEO could have insisted on them making the best choice of chair.	It enables the CEO to disregard the idea that anyone can chair their bids, instead setting himself as the threshold.	Dismissing
6	The Boardroom coffee machine	The question is raised over the installation of a coffee machine and the team highlight the barriers to it happening.	The coffee machine ought to have been installed as requested.	The COO accuses the Group CEO from Head Office in the UK of overruling it being installed.	CEO disregards the explanation of external interference, saying instead that the company is no longer 'awash' with money for such tasks.	Ironic	The machine is needed vs Head Office says it is not.	The CEO overrules the rumour, explaining that cash isn't available for such purposes.	He offers no real explanation and extinguishes the accusation.	The CEO might well have overridden the Head Office decision as beyond their remit.	Instead, the CEO denigrates blaming the Company for the decision, and explains that the cash situation has changed and doesn't allow for such tasks now.	Dismissing
49	Should Executives be included in recognition schemes?	A discussion about staff rewards (pay rises) turns to their own eligibility as senior executives.	Executives on the Board should be just as entitled to rewards as other staff.	The HR advisor says the fact awards had not been received by senior executives might suggest that their claims have been viewed as ineligible.	There is no apparent emotional incongruity beyond his statement.	Insufficiently ironic	As the senior management team, they are eligible for the recognition scheme awards, vs senior leaders are dealt with separately.	Not being eligible would explain why previously awards had not been received.	Absence of emotional incongruity undermines any push for action.	The HR Advisory could have said that as a senior management they are <u>excluded</u> from the recognition scheme like other senior leaders.	The senior team implied they ought to be <u>included</u> in the scheme, but irony was neither used as a 'weight' to carry forward their idea, nor that of the HR Advisor.	Dismissing (failure)
69	How Chief Executives communicate internally	The team refer to what the results of the Telford survey says about the way in which the CEO chooses to communicate. The consultant compares CEO Mike's results with this of a CEO called Devin in the company MarketInfo.	The CEO's leadership is fine.	The CEO is self-effacing saying that the results suggest CEOs 'communicate seven times a month with their own employees', even though he doesn't.	He derides Devin, the subject of his comparison, describing him as a 'Lazy bastard'.	Ironic	Some company leaders seem good vs how does their own compare.	The CEO infers his counterparts' approach to internal communication is excessive.	As a team we should see through the fallacies in the comparisons.	The CEO may well have chosen to argue that his own leadership is appropriate for the situation they are in.	He denigrates his comparator by implying his communications are excessive, yet incongruously calls him 'lazy'.	Dismissing
54	Relationships with other companies in making bids to Government.	The DSI team talk about their relationships with two defence companies – Rubrix (an Australian engineering and construction company) and Pantheon (a US defence contractor specialising in weapons and communications) - with whom they work in making bids for Australian Government defence business contracts.	Partners only have resources to make one bid between them.	The CEO cynically disparages Rubrix as 'blackguards' (scoundrels) and describes their leader as 'unreliable'. He adds the leader of Pantheon is a 'puzzle'.	He asks caustically do they 'think we are stupid'?	Ironic	Both partners are important to DSI, vs they can only work with one to make a credible bid.	All their partners have issues – which is Pantheon is less of a problem than Rubrix.	Work with Pantheon going forward.	The CEO could have said forthrightly than Pantheon's leader is better than that of Rubrix's.	Instead, he undermined both, conveying one as a scoundrel and the other as unreliable, to highlight the lesser of two evils and establish they need to make whichever relationship they choose to work.	Dismissing

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	Issue	Nature of discussion	Condition 1: Speaker Expectation	Condition 2: Insincere violation of norms	Condition 3: Negative emotion	Ironic / insufficiently ironic	Incongruity created	Establishing position	Modality of action	Counterfactual	How the issue is moved on	Pathway
65	Results of the staff leadership survey.	Anna from the consultancy, Telford, starts to take the team through the results of the staff leadership survey, which gauges how employees in a host of Australian companies view their own leadership teams.	HRM Anna appears to expect a hard time from the team, who will expect findings to reflect the way they work.	She uses space she has to say that while the HRD is sorting out his slides, they had a reasonable 30% participation.	She belittles the HRD Adam asking him to move to slide 9, saying that is 'nine clicks'. The CEO retorts he hasn't got 'enough fingers' to count.	Ironic	Leadership is important to DSI, vs we need to listen to what the HR consultant has to say.	The HR consultant knows more than the HR Director on the matter.	What she is telling them needs action.	The HR consultant might have said that the HRD's put down of the survey does not tally with healthy 30% participation.	She subtly belittles him to weaken his view instead.	<b>Dismissing</b>
29	Location of the new building	The Facilities consultant has joined the meeting and the team clarify where the planned building will be sited.	The consultants are there to present in response to a request from the team.	Earlier discussion prior to the consultant's arriving made it clear the team don't view this agenda item as a priority. The team fantasise shopping for, and assembling, their own IKEA furniture from the nearby store, for the new building.	The CEO snidely asks 'Across from IKEA, is it?', and adds 'You'll probably get your furniture there'.	Ironic	Is the new building needed vs the consultant and their advice is not sound.	The CEO mocks the consultant's credibility.	No action needed; it is up to the consultant to address.	The CEO could have said straightforwardly that they do not need a new building and/or that they had issues with the locations offered.	Instead, their recommendation was derided by imagining shopping for furniture from they adjacent IKEA and assembling it themselves.	<b>Dismissing</b>
30	Benefits of a new building	The consultant outlines the benefits of the new building.	The building development is a priority.	The CEO jokingly describes the new building as 'shiny' and says staff don't see it as important.	Despite the fact that staff are 'unhappy all the time' he says it 'Wouldn't matter where you put them!'	Ironic	Staff don't want a state-of-art building vs one is being planned.	The CEO scoffs at the proposal saying it "wouldn't matter where you put them!'	The team make the proposal sound incredulous and without saying it, undermine the consultant.	The CEO could have said they did not need a new office building.	It enables the CEO to imply that a building did not matter because staff would never be satisfied wherever they were located.	<b>Dismissing</b>
31	Potential relocation sites	The consultant summarises DSI needs and options.	All proposals have been discussed by the team.	The consultant says they discussed a particular site with colleagues outside the DSI team in Melbourne, saying 'it went up to London, I think, 4 months, maybe 5 months ago'.	The CEO says the consultant 'Certainly bypassed me, if it went to London'.	Ironic	Consultant is looking at sites for their expansion, vs they are going about it in an irregular way.	The consultant is not working in an acceptable way.	They need to involve the CEO in the future.	The CEO could have accused the consultant of bypassing him and talking to Head Office in London instead.	It enables direct criticism of their behaviour and warned the consultant.	<b>Dismissing</b>
32	The part of the site that is ready	Here the team find out which bit of the site under consideration would be ready and available for them.	Things are going to be confirmed.	The consultant is steering us towards 'easier' sites.	COO Bradley caustically refers to the site as a 'nuclear holocaust'.	Ironic	Proposed site is ready for them, vs it is not.	Using the metaphor of a 'nuclear holocaust' is used to argue that the development is a mess and not ready.	The need for immediate action by the consultant is implied.	The COO could have bluntly stated that the relocation site is not ready.	It was implied that the site's readiness is self-evident when taking into account the 'nuclear holocaust'.	<b>Dismissing</b>
40	The 'Wee Wunz'	The team discuss a consultant (called 'Wee Wunz') advising them on approaches to employee childcare.	The consultant is going to help advise them on a matter crucial to employee retention.	The team – which has already agreed to reduce time on this item before the consultant joins them – disparage the quality of the consultant by sarcastically referring to their name, 'WeeWunz'.	The CEO casts aspersions (with two fingers on each hand drawing 'hooks') and saying 'brackets... consultants'. Others murmur to show concurrence.	Ironic	They need to address crucial retention issues, vs they don't like what they hear.	The CEO does not believe that the consultant is worthy of attention.	The mocking of the consultant puts down their advice.	The CEO might have chosen not to meet with the childcare consultants, as all the team prior to them joining had suggested it was wasting their time doing so.	It undermines the credibility of this particular consultant, even though they know childcare is wanted to recruit and retain employees.	<b>Dismissing</b>
52	Surveying staff about childcare.	The team is discuss the childcare consultant's report, benchmarking DSI's provision relative to that of other major companies.	Their position in the survey reflects the importance firms attach to childcare.	The CEO says companies like ABC, refer to their children mechanistically as 'units'.	A colleague adds derisively in agreement 'ABC... how many units do you own?'	Ironic	Childcare is important vs the survey is unreliable.	The ABC comparison shows that the survey is not reliable.	No action by team required.	The CEO and team could have directly confronted the credibility of the survey.	Results at ABC are used to denigrate the benchmarking survey.	<b>Dismissing</b>
27	Progressing the Meeting	The team discuss whether to move on to the next agenda item, or take a brief break before the rest of the meeting.	The next item is a full one.	CEO says 'we now have a decision to take' as if it is a no brainer, to bring forward or shorten the next meeting. The COO says "Not a decision"!	CEO exaggerates saying they might want a 'quiet period' or to have some 'breathing exercises' before they decide, thus belittling the next speakers as 'only estate agents'.	Ironic	We are due to talk to the consultant about our facilities, vs but is it worth the time.	We don't want to waste time on something we don't feel is important.	We can cut the next agenda item short to reflect that feeling.	The CEO might simply have said that he is cutting the discussion short.	The issue of the new building is questioned and the status of the consultants ('only estate agents') is called into question. Attention is refocused on how they can better use their time.	<b>Empowering</b>
60	Winston's stressed	The CEO also points out to the team that one of the University researchers is also present at the meeting.	Everyone is on good behaviour in meetings.	The CEO draws attention to the researchers' present to alert the team that he expects good behaviour. Colleagues say one of the researchers is 'stressed' because of his house renovation and his wife, and the COO says 'just so everybody knows'.	There are no explicit words that suggest reaction to the incongruity, but the overall tone of the interaction is 'jesty', making fun of the researchers to draw attention to them as something to watch out for.	Ironic	Team behaviour is appropriate, vs can we watch what we say with externals present.	Enhanced expectation that we need to behave well in meetings when outsiders are present.	An improvement in behaviour is implied / called for.	The CEO could simply have said that he wanted colleagues to be careful what they say in front of the researchers.	More careful behaviour is called for, masked by making fun of one of the researchers.	<b>Empowering</b>

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71	Learning from Devin's leadership	The team reflect on what DSI can learn from comparing CEO Mike's perceived leadership with that of his counterpart Devin from MarketInfo, citing how he communicates at Christmas to staff.	Mike could learn a lot from leaders of other companies.	Adam the HRD talks about his visit to MarketInfo where he saw their CEO in an open board room signing Christmas cards to everyone. He hints that they are themselves not doing these things and says that 'It does work...for that organization'.	Harris excuses Mike saying Devin does this 'Because he doesn't have email'. The HRD retorts that 'Mike does that electronically', with the sentiment of his messages to staff being 'Have a good Christmas, you bastard'.	Ironic	Mike leadership is effective, vs it is not.	Senior colleagues in effect tell Mike that as CEO he can learn from other leaders and improve his approach.	There is a sense communicated that Mike either needs to communicate more, or do it differently.	The HRD could have said to Mike that, as their CEO, he isn't communicating enough, or in an appropriate way.	Colleagues collectively 'boost' Mike, jokingly implying that there are ways that they can help him improve his communication. Any implied criticism is mitigated by expletives that disparage his counterpart at Devin.	Empowering
76	The C4ISR contract.	The team is checking on the terms of contracts before they are submitted. C4ISR stands for the full life-cycle of "Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance for land, sea and air defence platforms that aims to ensure the success of missions for global users.	There are no issues with the contract.	CEO Mike asks rhetorically 'Are we still happy with the terms C4ISR? Is that how the customer still refers to it?'. He says 'in a pinch you could put Nulka into that category', implying the customer is seeing the category differently than they are.	Paul describes the project as a 'liability', and Mike admits 'That's what I was thinking'.	Ironic	The C4ISR contract is acceptable, vs customer expectations are changing.	The customer needs have changed and this contract is now no longer attractive to us.	We could make it work by recategorising this type of business.	The CEO could have said straightforwardly that this type of contract is a liability.	Instead, they suggest other business could be added to the category to make it work.	Empowering
44	Bad behaviour and company Roadshows	The team discuss employee behaviours and how to deal with them.	Colleagues will behave appropriately on such occasions.	The CEO and DoC refer to an email from a senior company director which is alluding to poor behaviour in DSI Australia.	As if 'men behaving badly', CEO refers to 'inappropriate emails', the DoC criticises an Irishman (probably the CEO); and the HRD describes the North Ryde site as full of 'grumpy bastards'.	Ironic	Consistent and appropriate behaviour is important, especially at roadshows, vs what can we do to tackle bad behaviours.	We don't take this accusation seriously, that's why we are having a go at each others' behaviours.	Setting of awareness of need for improved behaviour when 'out and about'.	The CEO and/or DoC might have said behaviour needs of staff needs to improve when they are out.	Belittling of each other enables the team to suggest there is scope for all their behaviours to improve, effectively resetting expectation that they will do so.	Empowering
50	Cost of recognition gifts	The discussion about service awards ends with a brief interchange about the costs of operating it.	The costs to enhance the scheme mean it can be funded.	In hearing that DSI has already 'outsourced' the scheme to a named company, HRD jests that 'Maybe they'll (that is the outside company) put in some (additional) money'.	The CEO mocks the HRD, saying 'Or maybe Adam can offer up some of his budgetary savings' from HR, which he infers is significant.	Ironic	The reward scheme is resourced well, vs can it be strengthened.	The service awards scheme is under-funded and can be readily addressed.	Joking implies they could even fund it internally.	The HRD and/or CEO could have said that the scheme to recognise staff contributions is under-funded and not working properly.	Humorous suggestions show a willingness to make up the funding themselves and that they are serious to find a way.	Empowering
57	Security breach	The CEO tells his colleagues about a recent security breach in the company.	Security schemes are effective.	The CEO cockily says he knows how to get procedures 'waved'. A colleague relates a story about the CEOs interaction with a farmer by a company site, where they got around security.	Bruce says 'Bloody security came up...'; Paul that the guys had 'pulled balaclavas' (as if they were terrorists); and that the problem could be 'nipped in the bud'.	Ironic	Security processes at sites works well, vs does it need strengthening.	There are ways around security processes and they need strengthening.	Jesting enables them to acknowledge ways that security could be improved.	The CEO could have said simply that site security is now what it should be.	The team self-deprecate to elaborate how security can be improved.	Empowering
46	The transparency of the performance recognition scheme.	The team discuss the performance scheme designed to incentivise employees.	The company performance awards work well.	A colleague says you have to 'rob Peter to pay Paul'; the CEO talks about the effect of 'rounding errors' on salary increases; and others describe the reward gifts as poor 'Tupperware', 'key-ring' tags, 'blinged-up', and 'weapons of self-destruction'.	CEO Mike cuts to the chase to say 'I mean money. People like money' to conclude that the scheme is a diversion and is missing the mark.	Ironic	The company performance reward scheme works reasonably, vs can rewards be made more meaningful.	The performance recognition scheme is not working.	The team fantasise about how the incentive scheme might work/what it needs to work.	CEO Mike could have said the staff incentive scheme is important and needs to be properly funded.	They mock the nature of existing gifts and fantasise about the type of gifts needed to act as an incentive.	Empowering
15	Working remotely	When Executives in the team are away from head office, they endeavour to join team meetings remotely, by conference call. HRD Adam is on the phone remotely from North Ryde in Sydney (where he lives) and the rest of the team, as normal, is in the Adelaide boardroom at their HQ. HRD mentions to Greg Gillard that he bumped into Mike Sutton at the company base at Williamstown, next to a Royal Australian Airforce base near Newcastle in New South Wales, some 160 km from where he himself lives in North Ryde, Sydney.	All are present at the meeting.	DoP intimates HRD Adam is 'Probably in the coffee shop', but the HRD adds (through the teleconference speaker) 'no, I'm in North Ryde, in Sydney...Do you know where that is?' He tells Greg he met Cary Sutton yesterday.	Adam suggests to Greg that Cary 'can't bring himself to mention your name' – but instead calls him 'That other bloke from DSI'.	Ironic	As a leadership team we are knowledgeable, vs do we get out around the business enough.	We are all committed but do we get around the business enough?	Prompts Greg and others to show that they <i>already</i> get out and about.	Members could have simply criticised each other for not getting around the business enough.	It is used to show how they are getting out, and the type of criticism that comes if you don't – hence challenging colleagues' behaviours.	Empowering
20	Graduate forum -- thanks	The HR Manager present outlines the format the graduate event took, participation, and thanks Executive Team members involved.	The HRD says that team want to know how the Graduate Forum is working.	COO asks the graduates 'Did you give him [the DoC] a score?' referring to his presentation to them. HRD says he has a 'Lovely smile'.	DoC accuses them of 'taking the piss' and asks rhetorically 'where were you lot?'	Ironic	The graduate scheme is important, vs can we improve the graduate programme for you.	Some of us have been meeting with the graduate trainees.	By asking 'where were you lot?' the DoC challenges the team members to get involved more with the graduates.	The DoC could have said simply colleagues are not getting involved enough in the Graduate Forum.	It challenges colleagues to do more with the Graduates.	Empowering

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22	Graduate placements	DSI has been struggling to retain talented and young engineering graduates, most of whom would appear to prefer working in larger cities -- especially Melbourne and Sydney. Here, the team continue the discussion around graduates and the management of their placements in different parts of the company.	Graduates need to be moved around the business and they expect to be moved.	CEO asks if the necessary mobility of graduates is a 'trial of fire thing, or what?'	A colleague implies that the graduates masochistically 'enjoyed it' -- the trial of fire thing -- and benefited from it.	Ironic	Development needs to take them to different parts of the business, vs their expectations are to stay in the main cities.	They have to realise they need to move beyond the main cities for their own good.	We need to just keep challenging their presumption that they don't need to move around.	The members could have said that the Graduates are not prepared to move around in the business enough.	It emboldened them to challenge the graduate assumption that they didn't need to move around the business.	Empowering
38	The standing of customer employees	Senior team members share their relative knowledge of the military customer.	We know what the Ministry wants.	CEO Mike describes the man in the Minister's office as a 'covert supporter' of his and the COO says he 'has 2 stars', as if he knows more than Mike.	There is added ambiguity between the views of the CEO and COO and a lack of emotive engagement with each other.	Insufficiently ironic	We have to understand the Ministry needs, vs we already know what they want.	We don't know the Minister as well as we imply.	Lack of clarity over who has the closest relationship with him.	Either the CEO or COO could have said that they know exactly what the Ministry wants from them, and what they are not currently doing.	Contesting positions and usurping each other added to ambiguity and there was no follow-through and attempt to involve other from either person so as to champion a view.	Empowering (failure)
24	Deeper engagement with the Graduate programme	The team focus on how the Graduate Programme can help them deal with recruitment and retention challenges.	The graduate programme 'rounds off' individual graduates.	Graduate Emily implies that 'if someone did have that coordinating role', then the graduates would need to work with them to make it work.	CEO places the task forcefully saying 'And that would be (with) Margaret!'	Ironic	DSI takes graduate development seriously, vs there is room to improve it.	Margaret will take on the role of coordinating graduate development.	We will push her to take it on, even though she is resisting doing so.	The CEO could have asked others to get involved and work with Margaret to enhance the scheme.	Others 'boost' Margaret in her new (as yet unconfirmed) role and in the process, start to get involved.	Empowering
42	Doing an 'Avalon'.	CEO Mike quizzes DoC Greg about his attendance at the Australian International Airshow, held annually at Avalon near Melbourne.	DoC will be attending the airshow.	DoC says he will be going but doubts she (the Minister) will be 'up for seeing me before', adding 'she's nice'.	HRD Adam says 'she always want to see you...' and that 'She's bumped you five times'.	Ironic	Greg needs to attend the Avalon air show, vs will he attend.	We want DoC to attend the show to see the Minister.	DoC sees the value in attending too, but we need to persuade him.	The CEO could have given him a directive to go to the airshow.	The DoC feels not only that he should go, but that his colleagues really want him to go and see the value in doing so.	Empowering
78	Explaining Henry's stand-in	The CEO contextualises the meeting for a colleague's stand-in, who is an outsider but known to the team.	Having a stand-in is ok.	The CEO asks Andrew (Henry's stand in) and says 'Do you know who they are, by the way?' (pointing to the researchers). He then asks 'Do these remarks' (from Henry in the previous meeting) have to be attributed to you?'	Mike jokes saying the researchers are 'from the government', then says 'the University...in the depths of the northwest of England'.	Ironic	The stand-in is aware of researchers present vs he is not.	The stand in is alerted to researchers being present, as well as the fact that the CEO probably does not agree with some of his predecessor's points.	Action implied is to be careful what you say.	The CEO could have told him that researchers are present.	The stand-in is brought up to speed and understands that he needs to be careful as to what he says.	Empowering
58	Harris's en route to the meeting	The CEO Mike talks with the Director of Finance Harris on the phone at the start of the meeting.	Everyone is present.	CEO asks Harris on the phone where he is. Others suggestively say he is 'at the roundabout, again'; 'sitting in the car park', and COO asks Harris if he is 'happy with the Universe'. The comments dig at him and signal he should be there.	Harris seems to admit defeat to the CEO and knows he should be there.	Ironic	Attendance at meetings is good, vs could it be better.	Attendance at meetings needs to be better.	Others recognise that they need to improve their attendance.	The CEO could have simply said he wanted improved attendance.	Picking on Harris makes the CEOs expectations visible.	Empowering
90	The Ford Hill proposal	Ford Hill is a suburb in North East Adelaide where DSI has a facility. The suburb is named after 'Ford's Hill', a name given to a certain road extension in 1855. The road ran through land owned by Mr. S. Ford, who was an avid fan of Ford vehicles. The DSI site at Ford Hill also has an Artillery Orienting System (AOS) to provide the army with the capability for ground troops to determine their orientation and position in all weather independent of using Global Positioning Systems. The site is the Electro-Optic centre of excellence for DSI and a training ground for apprentices.	Ford Hill continues in its normal role.	CEO Mike asks for someone to 'send me the stuff' about the investment proposal at Ford Hill site to 'have a look at it'. A colleague from the site says simply 'We'd love to have you'.	The CEO says 'I know you would. I know you would', adding 'And I love going to Ford Hill'. His fawning causes others to laugh before he exaggerates it would lead to a 'A whole new sense of life and freedom'.	Ironic	Ford Hill has a clear role vs it could do more.	The CEO is aware of the proposal.	He is willing to look at it and visit.	The CEO could have made the decision to invest, or say the team will look at it.	By agreeing to visit, the CEO underlines his commitment to considering the proposal from Ford Hill.	Empowering
7	Larry's back from leave.	Larry is the Director of Engineering and he's just joined the meeting after finishing his vacation.	The DoE is away on vacation.	DoE says he is 'still on it' (the task) and has 'put a file in for the salary stuff', even though he is still away.	CEO jests asking if he has 'raised a satellite mast somewhere out there' (in the bush), and has you 'Got your parakeet with you?'	Ironic	On holiday vs he is present and committed to DSI.	As DoE Larry is ever-present and reliable.	No action needed as the DoE already taken it.	The CEO could have asked the DoE to submit the salary work that has been requested..	The job has been done without asking and the team understand Larry's commitment.	Empowering
11	Female executives	The presenter highlights how few females are employed in the company. The brief interchange is brimming with tension between a self-painted 'alpha male' boss and a 'heavily pregnant' HR Executive'.	Female participation levels are acceptable.	By labelling 20 women in the executive workforce as a 'disgrace' and asking 'how did it get so many?!', the CEO intimates while the problem is actually worse, they are doing better than they think.	Hermione explains they are better than the rest of the company, but the CEO calls it a 'Total disgrace'.	Ironic	His ambiguous response intimates he is at fault as CEO.	Female participation is not what it should be.	They need to find ways to do more.	The CEO could have stated categorically that he wants a significant increase in female executive numbers.	Adds gravity to the situation, and while masked by humour, intimates that the CEO does not find the position acceptable.	Empowering
12	Positive discrimination	The HR discussion moves on to how gender imbalance might be addressed possibly through positive discrimination.	Female participation is ok at 20%.	The CEO joking accuses the male HRD saying participation has only increased because 'You've stopped harassing them?'	Hermione says the performance of those females is 'very good' and that they might be being overlooked.	Ironic	There is a gender imbalance in DSI, vs are we doing enough.	Female participation is lower than we want it be.	They need to do more going forward.	The CEO might have put a number on acceptable female participation and puts a timeline on it.	Set against the CEOs own commitment, the mocking of the HRD underlines his responsibility to resolve the imbalance.	Empowering

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13	High potential employees	Talk continues about advancing 'high potential' people (so-called personnel who are rated as 'Golds') within the organisation as future leaders.	We don't have sufficient 'Gold'-ranked employees.	COO describes the 25% women who are Golds as a 'big population', and intimates there is not an issue.	The CEO tells Hermione to 'Take the rest of the day off!', as if to acknowledge her pregnant state and his understanding as her boss.	Ironic	We have enough 'Gold' rated employees, vs we need to make more of the rising proportion of female 'Golds'.	Female employees are important to future leadership at DSI.	No actions are established.	The CEO could have put a clear target on female leadership participation.	He hows he understands and is sensitive to promoting female leadership.	Empowering
23	Wee bit of a challenge	The graduates talk about their experiences of working in the company.	The graduates are well catered for.	Recognising that their development is not challenging the graduates enough, the CEO says the challenge in re-orienting them is 'communication'. Graduate Forums are telling us they feel 'lost' in the programme.	The CEO adds '... Margaret' softly to the description, as if to compliment her, saying 'We really would like to give you those sort of scenarios' (to resolve). When she tries to push back he forcefully denies her with 'That options no longer open to you!'.	Ironic	Graduates are disoriented, vs someone needs to manage their development.	Someone needs to actively manage the graduates' development.	The CEO 'invites' Margaret from communications to coordinate their development which he sees as part of communications.	The CEO could have announced Margaret will take the lead on coordinating graduate communications.	The fawning CEO and compliments from graduates and others makes Margaret feel valued and wanted.	Empowering
26	Closing down discussion about the Graduate programme	In this last part of the Graduate programme exchange, discussion is brought to a close.	Graduates need to know we are committed to addressing this issue.	The CEO puts down DoC saying he was only the '2nd choice' speaker at the graduate forum event.	He describes him as part of the 'B team'.	Ironic	We are done talking about the Graduate Forum, vs we still want to engage you going forward.	The 'A Team' will be taking care of you as graduates in the future.	The meeting is closing now.	Mike as CEO might have said they have run out of time and need to end the graduate discussion.	Intimating the 'A team' will see the graduates next makes them feel valued, even if the discussion had to stop.	Empowering
33	Company event day	The team members react to a summary on a proposed internal 'event' day that will include Graduate Trainees. The event will end by asking them who they regard the best two leaders in DSI.	The team regard their leadership as ok.	CEO says the HRD Adam is worried saying 'You think no one'll vote for you?' The team trade compliments and proffer support for each other.	CEO says 'Well, I live in hope' that someone will vote for him (the HRD).	Ironic	Leadership is important, vs asking graduates who the best leaders are is legitimate.	We are committed to finding the best leaders to help you.	Legitimation of voting on views of leaders at graduate event.	The CEO could have told the HRD which two leaders he wants to attend the next graduate event.	A competitive spirit is engendered, in which even the CEO and HRD begin to vie as candidates to speak.	Empowering
37	Nurturing relationships	The team talk about the nature of their relationship with the military customer.	The relationship with L3 is good.	CEO implies L3's leader contacted him today for help.	He describes him as 'Mr \$3bn turnover man' and 'too low [short] to drag me into anything'.	Ironic	Relationship with L3's leaders is crucial vs our own CEO is the key.	We need to drive the relationship with L3 as we can't rely on their leader to do so.	L3 think they're better so we need to show that we can drive the relationship.	The CEO could have told colleagues to take hold of the L3 relationship and make it work.	The CEO belittles and denigrates this counterpart at L3 to argue that only DSI can take the lead.	Empowering
73	Creating a buzz.	The team continue to gauge what to do in response to the Telford Survey.	Our leadership is not rated as highly as it is elsewhere.	HRM says we 'make a lot of promises' and there is a lot of 'variability' of how people respond. Mike jokes and says 'There was one guy who said "I don't need to say any more because I'm resigning", to which HRD Adam says 'And one guy said "I wouldn't tell them'.	HRM Anna plays their self-criticism down, saying she is just playing 'devil's advocate' to say that people are wanting 'more of a buzz...than what there is today'.	Ironic	Leadership approach is working vs it is not.	We need leaders that create a buzz.	We need to develop an approach to improving leadership.	CEO Mike might have said their leadership doesn't cut it.	He sets the team thinking about the nature and purpose of leadership and how they can improve.	Empowering
9	Employee retention	At the beginning of a presentation by Hermione from HR on employee retention, reference is made to her imminent pregnant state.	Hermione is heavily pregnant and due to give birth soon.	CEO says nothing is going to happen during the meeting and she says 'I hope not! Can't guarantee anything, of course'. She asks him if he is 'feeling uncomfortable'.	He says he is ready with 'hot water and towels' to cope, adding he can always 'delegate' it.	Ironic	Retention of employees is important, vs are we doing enough to retain them.	The CEO shows his personal understanding of her pregnant condition.	The CEO fantasises about being ready for action if she gives birth in the meeting.	The CEO might have said they will make tangible improvements in things that aid retention, as with pregnant employees.	Through his own embodied commitment, the CEO underlines support for improving staff retention.	Empowering
17	Childcare facilities	We know that employee retention in DSI is important to their continued success given the competitiveness of the regional and inter-state labour markets for engineers. Here the team discuss progress on the childcare facilities and the use of a specialist consultancy company to help them move forward.	We may need better childcare facilities for employees children.	The HRD says they (DSI) don't run childcare centres.	DoC says they are 'not subject matter experts at all', and HRD adds that a few of their employees actually have children.	Ironic	We can provide childcare ourselves, vs do we need childcare specialists.	Involving specialist consultants demonstrates that we take childcare of employees seriously.	They need to bring in expert help.	The CEO could have said he wants childcare resolved.	Intimating it is not their business and that they need specialists underlines his support and commitment to address it.	Empowering
92	Mike's health.	DoM Mike is off ill and the team discuss his health.	Mike is recovering.	DoM is asks how JH is doing, given he's been off ill. The stand-in says all the medical tests are 'clear' but there is a problem they have not diagnosed, which means he looks 'surprisingly healthy'.	CEO quips and adds '...Despite evidence to the contrary' (i.e. that he is not healthy). Harris adds 'Obviously, the doctors haven't asked for our opinion', as if he is implying that they know better.	Ironic	DoM is off ill, vs he may not return.	The team now know that his condition may be worsening.	Showing genuine concern.	The DoM or CEO might have asked how Mike is.	They show they are asking after him in a wry fashion, which makes their concern sound genuine.	Empowering
63	Thanking the HR manager.	The CEO expresses appreciation for the HR Manager attending the discussion on the phone, and calls her 'Fran'. He then repeats his thanks and her name.	The CEO is appreciative.	As if realising he has got her name wrong, the CEO jokes and says 'Stop changing her name, you're confusing me'.	She thanks them in return and hangs up, laughing as she does so.	Ironic	The CEO appreciates the HR Manager's input, vs he does not.	Margaret has made a difference in that role.	The CEO and team show appreciation.	Nothing might have been said, and the CEO might not have admitted he got her name wrong.	The CEO admitting he got her name wrong, and blaming it on her shows fallibility and sincerity.	Empowering

# Appendix

Episode No.	ISSUE & CONTEXT		IRONIC CONSTRUCTION OF INCONGRUITY					PROCESSING INCONGRUITY		OUTCOME OF IRONY		
	Issue	Nature of discussion	Condition 1: Speaker Expectation	Condition 2: Insincere violation of norms	Condition 3: Negative emotion	Ironic / insufficiently ironic	Incongruity created	Establishing position	Modality of action	Counterfactual	How the issue is moved on	Pathway
18	Welcome to the Graduate forum	Graduate presentations to and discussions with the Executive Team of the company is viewed as a good thing to keep in touch. Here, generation Y graduate employees are brought in to talk about their experiences of working in DSI.	The graduates will be nervous.	CEO exaggerates and says 'Bring them in!' (as if to slaughter)	A colleague adds it is like on the television programme The Gladiators, and repeats the CEO's saying 'Bring them in!'	Ironic	Young graduates are here to talk about their development, vs are we aware enough of their needs.	Graduates are important.	Making a song and dance to receive them reveals the team take their welfare seriously.	The CEO could have simply told the Graduates how important they are to the Company future.	Rather than receiving platitudes, the upbeat introduction boosts their standing in their own eyes.	Empowering
19	'Guinea Pigs'	The CEO explains to the graduate employees why researchers are in the board room.	We need to put the nervous graduates at ease.	Instead of explaining, the CEO describes the researchers present as 'external examiners'.	DoO mocks the graduates by describing them as the 'guinea pigs'.	Ironic	There is a gulf in the meeting between senior executives and new trainees, vs the team can help the graduates.	We are ready to talk at your level as 'guinea pigs'.	Open to conversation.	The CEO could well have told them they are just starting with basic graduate development.	Saying they are 'guinea pigs' masks the basic position encourages them to become involved in improving their lot.	Empowering
21	Heavy breathing	As the meeting with the graduates continues, the team is distracted by funny sounds on the line from those attending remotely on the teleconference facility.	The graduates will assume we are 'straight laced'.	COO asks if colleagues on the phone are 'breathing quite heavily' and others join in the innuendo.	DoC accuses one of 'breaking into a sweat', and the CEO suggests they 'stop the breathing for a while'.	Ironic	We are formal, vs we work very informally.	We are an accessible team and have fun working.	Tone encourages graduates to join in.	CEO might have asked them to join in discussion.	Candid, open and honest approach indicates sincerity.	Empowering
4	Workshare allocations	Discussion about redressing apparent inequities in work share allocations between individuals. It begins with the manager saying she is "having problems" operationalising it.	Work share allocations are fair and equitable.	COO says they are 'not going to resolve the work share issues long-term'. He says the problem is intractable. The DoO adds they haven't got the 'desired employees'.	CEO retorts that this does not mean 'give it all (the resource) away', and COO says it is not worth 'dying in the ditch over'.	Ironic	Managing work share allocations for bids is straightforward, vs there is a need to be more pragmatic.	There is a work share issue that needs to be practically managed.	Need to focus on management of resources rather than work share per se.	The CEO and COO could have simply said that work sharing isn't the answer to their problems.	Underlines the scarcity of good human resources and need for careful approach to their deployment.	Empowering
10	Ageing workforce	In the HR discussion retirement is raised and compared with that in other companies. This is important in the tight South Australian labour market, where there is strong demand for engineering skills.	Our engineering employees have an ageing profile.	CEO says if the average age of their retirement is '72, I'm not very worried'. The CEO says the retirement age increases every year...	CEO jests 'Sounds like our Osprey schedule' (which is constantly overdue).	Ironic	Retaining elderly engineers is important to the business, vs do we fully understand how to keep them.	They might have an ageing profile, but staff are committed and staying on.	It is a problem that they will need to keep working on.	The CEO might have stated he wants a plan to address the ageing workforce issue.	The metaphorical comparison with delay over the valuable Osprey project implies that just like that, they need to keep working at it as it won't go away.	Empowering
48	Long service	The team discuss what constitutes 'long service' as opposed to simply 'service recognition', and what an appropriate award might be.	The long service award scheme needs to change.	The CEO asks sarcastically, "If it's not long-service, what is it?" A colleague says people don't want 'another gold watch'. He stresses it will have to be something they need.	Three colleagues fantasise enthusiastically about products they would find desirable. They talk about a 'vacuum cleaner' – even a company one with your 'name on the back', a 'Mercedes', or a 'Mercedes vacuum cleaner'.	Ironic	The long service awards are appropriate, vs but can DSI make them better.	Long service awards need to be improved.	No hard action, but a sense that the parent company needs to do something to address the issue.	The CEO could have committed to addressing the issue, or to approaching the company to do so.	By fantasising over what might make the awards scheme work, the team engage in grounded brainstorming that might prove useful to that debate. It also reveals concern.	Empowering
62	Sign-off of conversations with line managers	The team talk about how to best ensure that line managers have signed off on their accountabilities by completing the form concerned. Currently this does not ask for the line manager's signature but there is a proposal that should be changed.	Sign-off conversations are on accountabilities work well.	CEO accuses saying 'we need to ensure that...each line manager, each supervisor takes responsibility...' DoO jokes there are easy ways around that ensure sign-off, like 'putting two signature blocks' into the form that includes the CEO's and asking the manager to sign it off. It is as if he is showing the process is weak.	Mike says he is 'happy' this is occurring but adds 'we've got to make sure that people take accountability'. HRD claims that it is a 'good idea' and 'that (it) was mine!'. Others jest with him for doing this, with Harris suggesting the 'Chairman's award' for Adam and that he should be 'bronzed'.	Ironic	We need to be more stringent in our signing-off of accountabilities, vs how can it be improved.	Accountability sign-off needs to work better.	We need to more consciously work at improving sign-off.	The CEO could have insisted accountabilities are signed-off appropriately by team colleagues.	It is implied signing-off is working, but the discussion challenges the team to make sure staff understand how to deliver their accountabilities.	Empowering
67	Focus of the staff survey	The team discuss with Anna whether the leadership survey could focus on sites and functions, or is more about 'the top' level of the Executive Team.	The survey focuses on top-level leadership.	The CEO admits that people might be thinking "we're not seeing much of them (senior leaders)", and the HRD adds that might just mean him as CEO.	HRM Anna sympathises with site employees, as if they were hearing them say 'do I feel heard?', 'do I feel people value employees' contributions in this organization?' 'Or is it ...all about the bottom line?'	Ironic	All leadership matters, vs central senior leadership is more important.	Leadership is wider than just senior leaders; it also includes people on sites.	As a team they need to be more visible around company sites.	CEO Mike might have asked them to visit sites more regularly.	Getting out and about to sites is not cosmetic, is about staff feeling genuinely heard and engaged.	Empowering
70	What else can Mike do to improve perceptions of his leadership?	Aided by the team, the CEO reflects on what he can learn from the survey, and what he can do to improve perceptions of himself as DSI's leader.	The CEO's leadership is viewed as fine by staff.	The CEO outlines all they do to improve their accessibility as leaders, ending with 'Maybe the bastard (referring to the task) is just a nightmare'.	The HRM says the scores don't mean the leaders are not doing any of this, to which the CEO pretends and says 'I'm very hurt...', saying 'Maybe they just don't understand me', adding that 'If you ask me wife...oh, she doesn't understand'.	Ironic	The CEO leadership style could be better vs it is acceptable as it is.	The CEO knows he can improve his leadership style.	Members of the team are willing to help him.	HRM and team members might have told the CEO his leadership style needs to change.	His feigning of being hurt saves loss of face, but shows that he is hearing what they say.	Empowering

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72	Getting employees 'excited'.	The team continue to grapple with the results of the Telford Leadership Survey and focus on what they can do as leaders to excite staff going forward.	Staff like their leadership.	Mike as CEO admits 'It's a woeful set of scores no matter how you look at it'. Said in this way, he appears to set the bar higher to challenge the team to respond. Harris adds that they don't know how to 'excite' employees, and maybe they should just ask how they install 'confidence' in people.	The CEO reacts saying 'That's as excited as Harris gets', and the HRD Adam says DSI is 'conservative' compared to the 'hippies' at MarketInfo where Devin is based.	Ironic	Staff like our leadership, vs it needs to change.	We have to improve our leadership approach by 'exciting' people.	We need to take steps to improve leadership is implied.	The CEO could have followed up his statement that their leadership scores are 'woeful' compared to others, and insists it is addressed.	Improvement is required that will 'excite' employees rather than just lead them, in a way that competitors do not.	<b>Empowering</b>
74	Engineers are complicated people.	The team discuss the culture in DSI and how they might adapt.	There is nothing wrong with the culture at DSI.	DoE Larry says the results are because their culture at DSI is dominated by introverted engineers culture view leadership. As a lawyer, the CEO argues a need to do a 'mass personality test' on employees.	He says they should preface each question with 'in an introverted way...' to cater for engineers.	Ironic	The culture at DSI is fine vs the culture is different.	Appreciation that the culture needs improving, but that might be helped by tailoring the questionnaire to engineers.	Action to take steps on adjusting the questionnaire is implied.	The CEO might well have said that DSI is dominated by engineers and thus is different.	Displays understanding to the company's different position and culture of introverts, which needs sensitivity.	<b>Empowering</b>
89	Any Other Business.	DoE Larry raises an additional item, the process for reviewing authorisations.	The authorisation for process reviews works well.	DoE offers a 'straw man' to challenge the DoO Will, and invites others to add weight to the argument that Will is hogging resources. The CEO asks when he has to sign the project managers' contracts and COO says in 'about two weeks'. This implies a pressure to resolve as soon as possible.	DoE Larry retorts cynically that the project managers are 'part of the problem'. The COO ignores his idea and says 'I think we really ought to let Larry get on (to develop a plan)' to resolve it.	Ironic	We have enough project management expertise vs it needs to be fairly shared across projects.	Some directors (i.e. DoO Will) are hogging this valuable resource.	We need to be less selfless in project manager deployment.	The CEO could have told Directors, and especially Will, not to hog them.	Tightening up on process review authorisations depersonalises the criticism by putting selfless behaviour centre stage.	<b>Empowering</b>
91	Greg's 'delegation'	The team talk about the need to replace Director of Contracts Greg with one of his team while he is away.	There is a gap that will need filling by someone.	Greg joins the meeting by phone and says a member of his team is moving on to Infosys, so a short-term delegate needs agreeing. Mike asks Greg if he is away on holiday and then cynically says that 'Progress might be made then'.	Someone from Greg's team says 'I'll sign anything', as if Greg's absence and his stand in will make life easier. The 'piss-taking' boosts his stand in.	Ironic	There is no gap vs there is a gap that needs filling with a short-term delegate.	The team is aware of the gap and the need for a stand-in.	We need to push things through the weaker delegate in the meantime.	CEO Mike could have told the stand-in that he needs to help them make faster progress.	It let's the team know that the CEO sees an opportunity to change things by taking advantage of the stand-in.	<b>Empowering</b>
79	External roles	The CEO declares an external role at the University of South Australia that might generate conflict of interest with the company.	Colleagues won't have an issue with external roles.	The CEO declares his role on the University Council and a colleague asks 'Is there a doctorate attached to this?' (implying Mike might be doing it to gain recognition).	Mike exaggerates saying 'Maybe! then jokes 'Donations. Degrees for cash, and all that stuff'.	Ironic	Being CEO is Mike's only job, vs he has other non-executive positions.	CEO's wider commitments are recognised as important and there are no conflicts.	Jokey acknowledgement implies that the team want to know what he achieves in these roles.	The team could have asked Jim why he is taking on the role and how it will help DSI.	Recognition that Mike is being asked because of his standing, which the jesting atmosphere serves to boost.	<b>Empowering</b>
35	Building 'Plan B'	The team summarise the likelihood of Plan B occurring for a new building	The planned Building looks promising.	The team reflect on an earlier meeting with a Main Board director, who was supportive. One member says 'we're stuck with your Plan B'.	Emotive reaction from the CEO is weak, saying 'In the event' the new building is a 'baseline'	Insufficiently ironic	We would like a new building, vs is there only a weak counter-argument.	Our building plans are inadequate.	We need to do better with our planning for building B.	The CEO might have insisted they need a new building but does not engage emotively to 'prove' it.	Counter argument against the need for a new building is weak, and the CEO does not voice it with strong conviction.	<b>Empowering (failure)</b>
36	Stable bid resources	The team discuss progress on OMS (Operational Mission Simulator) that the DSI business unit in Australia has agreed to buy from Consolidated Aerospace in order to train airborne 'early warning' mission crews, and whether or not the resources to make the bid work are stable.	There is no shortage of good people to chair bid team reviews.	CEO says the choice is 'in theory' as there is a shortage of good people.	There is little or no emotion generated from weak irony to drive home the implied shortage.	Insufficiently ironic	DSI has too-few people skilled in bidding, vs no counter-argument	There is a shortage of good reviewers.	Can the shortage be proven?	The CEO could have asked for figures to show bid teams are short.	The CEO fails to argue that it is the quality of expertise in the bid teams that matters more than quantity.	<b>Empowering (failure)</b>
86	Ferrett's expertise	The team is talking about the type of person they might appoint into the Finance function to sort out their financial challenges.	They want someone with regular financial expertise.	Mike suggests Ferrett could solve their financial problems but is being wasted 'sorting out his Amex expenses' in his current role. DoO concurs his talents are being wasted at Osprey.	There is no real emotive disagreement with the incongruity of someone good being wasted in a less senior post, so the issue does not appear to be driven home.	Insufficiently ironic	A sound finance person is needed to help sort out our challenges, vs can we find the right person.	We know someone who would be good for us in finance.	There is no follow-through outlined to reveal to the team that Ferrett is the solution to their Financial expertise.	CEO Mike might have suggested Ferrett is a strong candidate for the post and should be appointed.	The CEO fails to convince colleagues.	<b>Empowering (failure)</b>
39	The Policy Committee	The team discuss who they need to seek approval from, and the chair and membership of the Policy Committee.	The CEO knows who chairs the policy committee.	The CEO starts 'Right, well...' and asks who is on it, revealing his lack of knowledge.	The DoC 'So no women' and a colleague responds disparagingly with 'What, you want a cup of tea?'	Insufficiently ironic	CEO doesn't know who is on the Policy Committee, vs without knowing, it will be hard to seek approval.	No one is clear who is on the committee.	Lack of emotive engagement and willingness to find out.	CEO could have asked who are on the Committee.	Gendered comment undermines seriousness of the issue.	<b>Empowering (failure)</b>