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COURSE BROCHURE

Director Challenge and Critical Thinking Training Course

17 – 21 January 2027
Dubai

Director Challenge and Critical Thinking Training Course

Ref: 3055_115931 **Date:** 17 – 21 January 2027 **Location:** Dubai **Fees:** 4600 GBP

Director Challenge and Critical Thinking is a 1-week training course for directors and senior executives who must test the strategic proposals put before them, with each participant building a director challenge brief for a live proposal. Proposals now arrive with optimistic forecasts, thin evidence and pressure to decide quickly. Jupiter Prime Training offers this course on director challenge and critical thinking.

Why Director Challenge and Critical Thinking Matters Now

Three forces shape director challenge today: investors and regulators expecting boards to show that they questioned management rather than simply approved, proposals arriving with more data but not more insight, and top teams that share the same blind spots after years working together. Good challenge catches flawed assumptions before money is committed; poor challenge rubber-stamps weak cases or blocks sound ones. The course draws on established practice in argument analysis, evidence appraisal and decision quality, described in plain terms.

Who Gains Most from Director Challenge and Critical Thinking

- Non-executive and independent directors who scrutinise management proposals
- Executive directors who sponsor investment cases and must anticipate hard questions
- Committee chairs who steer audit, risk or investment discussions towards a sound conclusion
- Senior executives who sit on investment or steering committees and approve major commitments

A board or investment committee that sends several members together gains most, gaining a shared standard for evidence.

Director Challenge and Critical Thinking Capabilities

Participants move from reacting to board papers on instinct to dissecting and grading them.

- Map the argument of a strategic proposal into claims, reasons and hidden premises — the board's approval decision
- Grade the evidence behind forecasts, market sizing and benefit cases — the investment committee's confidence in the numbers
- Test critical assumptions with reversal and pre-mortem questions — the sponsor's revision of the proposal
- Recognise bias, groupthink and anchoring in top team deliberation — the chair's handling of the discussion
- Design challenge questions that are firm, fair and specific — the relationship between board and management
- Build a director challenge position with conditions for approval — the final resolution and its follow-up

Key Director Challenge and Critical Thinking Terms

- Constructive challenge — questioning a proposal firmly and respectfully so that it improves.
- Critical assumption — a belief that, if wrong, would overturn the case for a proposal.
- Evidence grade — a judgement of how reliable, relevant and independent the support for a claim is.
- Pre-mortem — an exercise that imagines a decision has failed and works back to its likely causes.
- Groupthink — the tendency of a cohesive group to suppress doubt and converge on a view without testing it.
- Conditional approval — an endorsement that releases commitment only when stated evidence, milestones or safeguards are in place.

Director Challenge and Critical Thinking Day by Day

Day 1: The Director's Duty to Question

- Board Oversight Duties — What Directors Owe Owners When Approving Proposals
- Approval Versus Challenge Balance — Avoiding Both Rubber-Stamping and Obstruction
- Board Paper Anatomy — Where Weak Cases Usually Hide Their Gaps
- Information Asymmetry Review — What Management Knows That Directors Do Not
- Personal Challenge Style Profile — How Each Director Habitually Questions

Day 2: Dissecting the Argument

- Claim, Reason and Premise Mapping — Exposing the Logic of a Proposal
- Hidden Premise Detection — Unstated Beliefs That Carry the Case
- Logical Fallacy Spotting — Sunk Cost, False Choice and Circular Reasoning
- Alternative Explanation Search — Other Stories That Fit the Same Facts
- Option Framing Check — Whether Real Alternatives Were Ever Considered

Day 3: Weighing Evidence and Numbers

- Evidence Grading Grid — Reliability, Relevance and Independence of Support
- Forecast Plausibility Tests — Growth Rates Against Past Performance and Peers
- Sensitivity and Break-Even Questions — Which Variables Decide the Outcome
- Benefit Case Scrutiny — Double Counting, Timing and Attribution Gaps
- Reference Class Comparison — How Similar Ventures Actually Performed

Day 4: Bias, Group Dynamics and the Top Team

- Cognitive Bias Checklist — Anchoring, Optimism and Confirmation in Proposals
- Groupthink Warning Signs — Silence, Haste and Pressure on Dissenters
- Pre-Mortem Facilitation — Surfacing Failure Causes Before Commitment
- Devil's Advocate and Red Team Roles — Structured Dissent in the Room
- Chair's Discussion Sequencing — Hearing Independent Views Before Senior Ones

Day 5: Practising the Director Challenge Brief

- Live Proposal Argument Map — Applying Premise and Fallacy Analysis
- Evidence and Forecast Review — Applying the Grading Grid and Sensitivities
- Challenge Question Drafting — Firm, Fair and Specific Questions for Sponsors
- Peer Board Simulation — Directors Testing a Sponsor Under Time Pressure
- Director Challenge Brief — Questions, Evidence Gaps and Conditions for Approval

Applying Director Challenge and Critical Thinking After the Course

- Take the next major board paper and produce an argument map and evidence grading before the meeting, sharing the three critical assumptions with the chair.
- Run a thirty-minute pre-mortem with the sponsor of a pending investment case and record the conditions that would justify approval.

Director Challenge and Critical Thinking Questions FAQ

What is director challenge and critical thinking and why does it matter now?

Director challenge and critical thinking is the discipline of testing the logic, evidence and assumptions behind proposals before approving them. It matters now because owners expect boards to show real scrutiny while proposals grow more complex and decisions are made faster.

Which roles gain most from director challenge and critical thinking?

Non-executive directors, executive directors, committee chairs and senior executives on investment committees gain most. Each approves or sponsors major commitments and must question cases without damaging trust.

How does director challenge and critical thinking differ from a strategy formulation course?

Director challenge and critical thinking focuses on scrutinising proposals rather than creating strategy. A formulation course builds options, while this one tests the arguments and numbers others bring.

What do you bring back from director challenge and critical thinking?

You bring back a director challenge brief for a real proposal: an argument map, graded evidence, sponsor questions and conditions for approval.

Director Challenge and Critical Thinking: The Way Forward

The director challenge brief first informs whether a live proposal is approved, approved with conditions or sent back. Directors and committee chairs use it to prepare questions, while sponsors use its conditions to strengthen their case. After its first use, the perspective worth revisiting is group dynamics, because challenge depends on how the room listens.