

“Optimism is where I always begin – that mixture of hope, curiosity and passion, the building blocks of personal and collective transformation.”

Charlie grew up in South Africa during the height of apartheid. He developed his belief in working with conflict for positive outcome whilst acting as a peace monitor between ANC, Inkata and the army. In 1996 he left South Africa and went on to build Questions of Difference - a UK based niche consultancy with a turnover of over £1million per year.

Questions of Difference focuses on the following areas:

- Inspiring sustainable change in organisations (within months not years)
- Challenging and supporting organisations to unlock business challenges, conflicts, cynicism and relationships – by helping them to see what is possible
- Embedding the capacity within every person to make a real difference by inspiring them to achieve major change
- Challenging people in a way that prompts them to change their instinctive approach to work and life

Charlie works internationally as a strategic business consultant, and has worked with over 30,000 people across 24 countries. Charlie's focus is on Partnering, Strategic Management and Leadership, Organisational Transformation and Conflict Management. His innovative approach is informed by his work in South Africa.

Projects range from top-end paid consultancy to pro bono work. From a £9 billion Public Procurement Programme in the UK and the USA to a Pan African Leadership Programme across 19 African countries and the UK to working with students in Integrated Education in Northern Ireland.

Since founding Questions of Difference, Charlie has built a formidable reputation for helping senior management and board members to deliver results by paying attention to the long and short-term implications for key stakeholders, including staff, clients and the organisation. Charlie's main business strategy is to work with organisations in a way that builds internal capability and draws on the existing strengths within organisations. One of his specialities is working with groups of leaders in their own environment where he is able to draw on a unique combination of strategic business consultancy, leadership, project and conflict management, team dynamic and inter-personal communication expertise. Unconventional and passionate are terms often associated with Charlie's style and approach.

In 2006 he published his book *'Cash in on Conflict'* which introduces the ethos of *Partnering* - a radical approach to exploiting differences between people in organisations, communities and in our daily lives. Adopting a *Partnering* attitude means working with the reality that the differences between people can be the greatest source of development for you and for them. The book demonstrates how to achieve the changes you want to see and at lightning speed – it contains tools and common sense approaches that are easy to apply and stories that bring them to life.

As a result of Charlie's experience and cutting edge work in facilitation and Partnering business models, he has been appointed Professor of Transformational Dialogue at the University of Middlesex Business School. His work with Middlesex will aim to drive future thinking on how organisations co-operate for 'both-gain' outcomes.

Charlie Irvine

Founder and Managing Director of Questions of Difference



From 2005 to 2007 Charlie was Chairman of Peace Direct, a charity that enables grass roots peace building in areas of conflict across the world.

Charlie was fortunate to contribute to The Elders Project. The Project, headed by Nelson Mandela, includes globally respected Elders such as Archbishop Tutu and the Dalai Lama. Funded by Richard Branson, Peter Gabriel and a group of global entrepreneurs, the aim of the Elders is to bring together a group of individuals who could collectively apply their wisdom and insight to address issues of global significance. Charlie facilitated sessions of international philosophers, mathematicians, community elders, academics, politicians and NGOs to create the terms of reference, proposed projects and infrastructure for the group.

Questions of Difference's clients include organisations such as ACAS, Amnesty International, AstraZeneca, BT, British Council, Coutts, Cabinet Office, Cadbury, Ebay, FT, Inland Revenue, Lloyd's, Lockheed Martin, Merseyside Police, RSA, Royal Bank of Scotland and VSO.

Charlie is described as 'a social enabler' by those who have worked with him, read his words or heard him speak. ***"He is someone who gives people a powerful shock to their imagination and helps them get curious enough to follow their passions."***

For more information about Charlie and the Questions of Difference team contact our office on +44 (0)20 8883 9966 or visit our web site at www.questionsofdifference.com