



Ghilaine's User Manual

Learn a little more about this here <https://www.littlechallenges.com/ghilainechan>

When is Ghilaine most useful?

Working out what to do next and how, you can't decide what is important vs urgent

You need to hand over responsibility to others; They don't know what you know and it turns out Common Sense is not so common

You understand that you need more support but don't feel you know where or what; The one person "team" is unable to cope with the workload, how do you expand the team without losing consistency and reliability.

You don't know how to motivate and measure a high performing person or team; You need to turn around a poor performer and empower your team to shine.

You want to be a better people, project or product manager; you want to improve or create your customer service and success teams.

My style

I am direct, sometimes to the point of tactlessness. I like to take people as I find them and hope they return the favour. I don't and can't read between the lines. I do swear a lot.

I have been raised to be a 360° human being. My creativity has not been clipped and I have been given the privilege of confidence in my own ability to be whatever I choose to be. The language of my family is sarcasm and humour.

I sit in ambiguity and chaos, putting it into some coherent structure for others to work with. I am most energized when I'm connecting dots/people/resources that solve the problems at hand. I am curious and constantly learning, voraciously gathering information from trusted sources.

My high expectations are matched by my commitment to support people in meeting them. I believe in giving people freedom and flexibility and equipping them with the tools they need to uncover and develop their potential.

I start each day by doing "my one thing" when my energy and attention are strong.

I'm determined to prevent my attention and time from being hijacked by technology and interruptions. I look at my inbox 2 to 3 times a day and I don't partake in social media unless I am using it to communicate directly with someone who I can't contact in alternative ways.

What I value

Openness; Honesty; Responsibility; Recognition; Curiosity; Diversity; Autonomy; Excellence; Generosity; Experimentation; Resourcefulness and proactivity.

My time. I hate mine and others' being wasted. We all have the same 24 hours in the day, don't hijack my most valuable resource.

Saying no to the things that don't energise or am not able to deliver. Do what you say you will do. Ask forgiveness rather than seek permission.

My relationships are the most important thing, I will move mountains for those I care about. I value my privacy and only really open up when I feel I know someone well enough. I am not hiding anything, just find it hard to talk about myself.



I value effectiveness and efficiency: I touch each email only once (respond, delete, delegate, or delay), and live by Pareto's law of 80/20.

I expect others to value efficiency as well. Before doing something 'The way it's always been done', question why you are doing it that way or scan for an easier, cheaper, simpler way. Before starting something from scratch, ask if it's already been tried.

Self-care is the key ingredient to becoming our best, most productive and happy selves – whether sleeping enough, leaving work early to exercise, meditate, or spend time in nature.

My weekends are sacred, they are time for me to switch off and not think about anything but spending time with friends and family, don't be surprised if I wait until Monday to respond.

What I don't have patience for

Dishonesty; being something you are not; blaming others

I default to trust, but if my confidence is shaken, it's hard to rebuild. Ways to lose my trust: Lying; not following through; withholding important information; avoiding hard conversations; talking about others behind their back or treating others with disrespect.

If you make a mistake or something is heading off the rails, tell me before the crash. Failure is fine (as long as you learn quickly); surprises are not.

I get frustrated with hypothetical musings and over-analysis. I learn best through experience and experimentation and just getting on with things, whilst having a solid eye on the risks involved. Saying something won't work without trying.

How best to communicate with me

Text based, asynchronous means you don't interrupt me unnecessarily. When urgent: SMS or WhatsApp. If you really need to speak, then phone me, but I prefer to plan calls in. Face to face for meaningful personal conversations.

Be short and straight to the point, start with the headlines. I prefer bullet points to prose. Ask the question and run away, after making a careful note of the answers to any questions you asked.

I love to solve problems, remove barriers and help others get on with what they are best at. Come to me not just with problems, but with plausible solutions and your recommended course of action.

If I say something you disagree with, tell me, I am hungry to be challenged in thoughtful and constructive ways. I respect people who have the right blend of confidence and humility to know when to question someone, and when to defer to another's expertise.

How to help me

Assume nothing!

Tell me what I need to know, not what you think I want to hear. I am likely to miss a lot of things, if you think I have, I would rather explain that I haven't, than actually miss it.

Tell me how you expect to receive something. If you already have an idea in your head about what I need to deliver, please tell me, otherwise I come up with it in a form I think is most helpful.

If you don't understand, ask me to explain myself in a different way. Make a note of the answer, I struggle to answer the same questions more than 3 times.

Give me as much notice as possible if you want some of my time or want to reschedule or cancel. Value my time and I will value yours.





What people misunderstand about me

I am an introvert, posing as a professional extrovert. Don't confuse my tendency to work alone in my office with being disengaged. My door is always open. Just because I don't ask about your life, doesn't mean I don't care.

Just because I don't like small talk doesn't mean I don't like chatting and getting to know people. But if we need to get down to something, let's chat once it is completed. I don't follow popular culture so ask me about what I have just read if you want to get started.

I have strong opinions that are weakly held. I'm open-minded and always delighted to be shown a better way. I make decisions quickly, but if you give me reasoning or data that points in another direction, I'll happily change course.

I may be very organised, but I am not inflexible. However, urgent is not a default setting, your lack of preparation does not constitute an emergency on my part. I will bend everything for a true emergency.

Why I do what I do

I am curious! About people, about systems, about how things work. I love to know why people do what they do. I love to find better ways to do things, either by making it easier, quicker or just more enjoyable. Because I am a perennial student, I love to learn. With my engineering mindset, I break things down and build them back, improved.

I want to leave the world better than I found it. The only way I know how to do this is to play to my strengths and be as useful as I can be to as many people as I can, one person at a time, if necessary. I want to be useful.

I believe business can be used as a force for good and that making money for doing something useful, and that you are good at, is the best way for the world to work. However, this should not be done at the expense of community, the environment and people's dignity and health. So, I work to improve businesses for the sake of all the people they serve and are served by.

I am a natural planner and organiser, I am drawn into complexity and chaos so that I can feel the most use mapping, organising and simplifying. I feel that I can bring calm to people by finding a way they can live that honours their commitments and energy, makes time for the important things and gives them the information they need to determine what they should continue doing and what they should say "no" to.

Please Feedback

The points are not an exhaustive list but should save you some time figuring out how I work and behave.

Please make me aware of additional points you think I should put on a revised version of this 'user's manual. I am a messy work-in-progress. I'm committed to always getting better at my job, and to becoming a wiser, kinder and more impactful human.

