



Choosing Your Perfect Consulting Service Provider

1 Why hire consultants?



- Provide a fresh perspective**
 - Looking at the same problem over and over often masks the obvious
- Unburdened by emotional attachment**
 - Consultants are outside the political constraints of the organisation
 - Consultants can help develop solutions without bias or self interest
- Offer expertise not currently available in house**
 - Consultants bring with them experience gained in a wide variety of industries, companies and firms
- Add temporary resources to help out**
 - Consultants usually have the luxury of focussing on key deliverables, internal resources often have to run projects on a part time basis
- Introduce a new capability that can become permanent**
 - By working with client staff new competencies are introduced that can become permanent

2 Defining your needs



- What problem are we trying to solve?**
 - Help **develop a business model and strategy**?
 - Prepare for **Operational Readiness**?
 - Help **implement a strategy**?
 - Improve our **project delivery capabilities**?
 - Upgrade our **operating discipline**?
 - Lift **productivity**?
 - Embed **Continual Improvement (CI), systemically**?
 - Improve our team's **collaboration skills and processes**?
 - Introduce **new technologies and manage associated change**?
 - Understand **Bottlenecks** and develop a **mathematical change assistance model** (e.g. a Value Driver Tree) of our business?

3 Understanding your organisation culture



- Why is this important?**
 - If you are seeking cultural or behaviour changes, ensuring a cultural compatibility with your consulting partner is critical, in fact it's similar to finding a spouse - **Shared Values are key!**
 - E.g. if you proclaim to see your **people as your key asset** and you partner with a ruthless firm who treats their own people shabbily (watch for the tell-tale signs), you're in for a rough ride!
- How do we know what our culture is?**
 - You can...
 - Assess your culture informally within your leadership team,
 - Compare your stated values with actual, lived values by conducting simple but effective cultural surveys using tools such as the [Barrett Cultural Values Assessment \(CVA\)](#),
 - Compare your systems and culture to [Birkinshaw's Four Dimensions of Management](#), and there are many more methods.

4 Searching for a good fit



- Large vs. small
 - "No one ever got fired for hiring IBM" (but perhaps they should have...)
 - The myth that **'big = safe'** has well and truly been **shattered** over the last couple of decades, here are some examples how *large* can simply equal *large disastrous outcomes*:
 - In 2013 [Queensland Health hired IBM for a payroll project](#), which resulted in thousands of employees not getting paid properly.
 - In the 1990s McKinsey & Co devised the 'Hunter Strategy' for Swissair, which contributed heavily to [Swissair's ultimate demise](#)
 - Deloitte has similar black spots in its history, such as Marin County, CA, [suing them over failed ERP projects and others](#)
 - Large vs. Small
 - Larger firms
 - ⊗ Access to **more resources**
 - ⊗ Not always the A-grade consultants
 - ⊗ Over-reliance on supposed **methodology that doesn't always really exist**
 - Smaller firms
 - ⊗ **More agile** - can rapidly adapt to client's changed circumstances
 - ⊗ Usually **more seasoned consultants** vs new graduates learning their craft
 - ⊗ Consultants are **known quantity** rather than who is on the bench at the time
 - ⊗ Tend to have **broader experience base** rather than being too highly specialised
 - ⊗ Less access to resources
 - Beware of **'body hire shops'** without any **methodology**
 - Some firms provide consultants but **lack methodology**, while others have great methodology but **lack the firepower** to make it happen
 - Ask your prospective firm
 - "What is your methodology for our particular problem?"
 - "Can we interview your proposed consultants?"

5 Contracts: Think partnership or bust



- A consulting partner is different to any other supplier. Why?**
 - Success is interdependent:**
 - Consultants can only be successful if the **client actively collaborates and ultimately takes ownership** of the 'New State'
 - Consultants are change catalysts**
 - They actively work with the client to mastermind, facilitate and implement the change, but...
 - Leadership belongs to the client and cannot be delegated!**
 - Not a Zero-Sum game, win-win is the goal:**
 - Some clients believe the more they can 'screw' their suppliers the better off they are. This fallacy doesn't work for any customer-supplier relationship but definitely not with our consulting partners. **Would you treat your doctor that way?**
 - 'At Risk' fee structure:**
 - Looking for evidence of any successful, win-win-based projects, where the consultants got paid more based on their 'success' is like looking for hens teeth or rocking horse droppings - by definition - non-existent
 - Fundamentally, this approach drives an **unhealthy focus on measurement instead of process and engagement.**

6 What makes it work?



- How to work with consulting partners for best results**
 - How not to behave:**
 - Don't leave your consulting partner firm unsupported, thinking you can always sue them if they don't get the results (believe it or not, we've seen it happen)
 - Like everything in life, you get out of it what you put into it:**
 - Put your best people forward to be part of the extended team
 - Project Partners help embed the changes and the knowledge within the company

[Click here for infographic references](#)