



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?
 - 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?

3 Understanding your org 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 is the 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,
 - Conduct 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"v(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
 - ⊕ 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?"

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 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 if they don't get the results (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 work with the extended team
 - Project Partners help embed the changes and the knowledge within the company

[Click here for infographic references](#)