HOW TO HIRE A MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT





...AND GET THE RESULTS YOU EXPECT



Government Edition



History and Authors

The inspiration for this manual came from a similar one developed in 1979 for the Small Business Association of New England by Stewart A Washburn CMC®, FIMC, for The New England Chapter of The Institute of Management Consultants USA (IMC USA). Richard C.TenEyck CMC, FIMC, edited the initial manual for national publication. He later served as Chairman of IMC USA.

Despite numerous fads and changes during the ensuing years, no significant portion of the original content changed. This attests not only to the fundamental nature of the material, but also to the dedication of members of IMC USA to building the management consulting profession.

In selecting management consultants, managers are well advised to seek individuals who meet the profession's standards of *competence* and *ethics*.

This 2006 volume is the first produced for consulting within the government project and procurement area. The Professional Development and Education Committee of IMC USA sponsored this government-focused publication.

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Introduction: Do I Need a Management Consul tant?

Obtaining value from a management consulting assignment requires contributions from both the client and the consultant.

The first question to ask is, do I need a management consultant or other professional advisor?

The following questions will help you to determine your need:

Our Agency/unit/ I could be more successful if...

Over the past twelve months, what has it cost to do nothing about this situation?

Do we have the internal resources to face this situation?

In what follows, the Institute of Management Consultants USA explores various aspects of client-consultant relationships. These sections provide practical guidelines for developing, evaluating and monitoring a consulting project to ensure you *get the results you expect*.



I. Answers to the Twel ve Most Commonly Asked Questions

1. What Is a Management Consul tant?

A management consultant is a professional who, for a fee, helps the management of government agencies define and achieve their goals through improved utilization of resources. S/He may do this by helping to identify problems and/or opportunities, and recommend solutions.

Management consultants not only propose change but also help implement it. As independent professionals, their primary concern is the welfare of the client they serve.

2. What Kind of Management Consul tants Can I Use?

Management consultants are either sole practitioners or members of a consulting firm who work with professional colleagues and a support staff. They may be generalists able to work with top management on a wide range of concerns or specialists, focusing on their particular area of expertise.

Common consulting specialties include:

Business Processes
Financial Planning & Control
Human Resources Management & Labor Relations
Manufacturing
Wage & Salary Administration
Organizational Planning & Development

Logistics & Distribution
Sales & Marketing
Administrative Services
Information Technology
Performance & Compensation
Strategies & Business Planning

3. How Can | Tel | If | Need a Consultant?

There are no hard and fast rules for deciding to bring in a management consultant. Common situations suggesting that a consultant may provide help include:

- Management believes that performance could be better but is not sure what to do to gain improvements.
- Management does not have the specific knowledge and skills necessary to solve the problems it has identified.
- Management has the necessary knowledge and skills but not the time or personnel to solve problems.
- Management's efforts have not produced the desired long-term improvements.
- Management requires an independent, third party opinion, either to confirm a decision or to provide alternatives.

Often a situation will require that a consultant be retained until in-house capabilities are enhanced by a permanent staff addition.



4. How Do I Determine What Needs to Be Changed?

At times, you will be able to specify the issue, such as outdated software or insufficiently trained personnel. Often, however, this will not be possible. In such cases, listing symptoms or desired goals will usually indicate the type of consultant you need.

Be aware, though, that often a consultant's largest contribution is to help clients define problems or opportunities. Your initial conversation with a consultant should tell you if your problem has been properly defined.

5. How Do I Find a Competent Consul tant?

You can turn to many sources for help in selecting a consultant. Your agency's contracting office, your small business office, or other project officers may be a good source of referrals, as may your trade/professional association. To widen your search, you can turn to one or both of the following organizations:

The Institute of Management Consultants USA (IMC USA)

2025 M Street NW, Suite 800 ■ Washington, DC 20036-3309 USA Voice: 1-800-221-2557 ■ Fax: 202-857-1891 ■ Email: office@imcusa.org http://www.imcusa.org

IMC USA certifies the professional competence of individual consultants, accredits professional practices, and certifies individuals within those accredited practices.

The International Council of Management Consulting Institutes (ICMCI)

P.O. Box 1058, 3860 BB NIJKERK ■ The Netherlands

Voice: +31 33 247 34 70 ■ Fax: +31 33 246 04 70 ■ Email: <u>icmci@mos-net.nl</u> http://www.icmci.org

ICMCI, the global association of national management consulting institutes, provides referral resources worldwide.

6. How Do Management Consul tants Charge for Their Services?

A management consultant's fee will be influenced by a number of factors, including the client's need for special knowledge and experience; the consultant's reputation; and, if known, the benefit to the client of a successful outcome.

Various fee arrangements exist. The important consideration is that the fee is in writing and both parties agree. Some consultants may charge a portion of the total fee when the project begins and throughout the project (including any adjustment) until completion and/or acceptance of the final report. Management consultants who have previously engaged in projects that resemble yours may quote a flat fee. The fee may be payable in advance or paid according to a benchmark-related schedule, e.g., Firm Fixed Pricing with milestones and Time and Materials costing, with a ceiling, are used by government contract officers to better manage the cost on projects.

When the management consultant serves in a purely advisory or coaching capacity, it is traditional to charge a retainer, hourly or flat fee for each advisory session.



Sometimes the consulting arrangement will involve a not-to-exceed figure or a figure that when reached triggers a joint evaluation of results-to-date and an estimate of the time needed to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

Management consultants generally bill separately for expenses (reasonable out-of-pocket, travel, communications, and special services) as they accumulate.

7. How Do I Screen Recommended Consultants?

There is usually a pre-screening step requiring a written proposal. Of greatest importance in this screening is the documented past performance of the consultant relevant to the requirements described in a Statement of Work (SOW).

Select for oral presentation of best-and-final evaluation two or three consultants whose experience comes closest to matching the SOW you have defined. It is very important to determine that each consultant, not just his or her firm, displays a thorough familiarity with the situation. The reputable case studies and references each candidate provides should confirm the consultant's previous success in a similar context. You will want to learn the outcomes of relevant consulting engagements, whether the consultant used honesty and tact when making recommendations, and how well he or she worked with an organization's people.

In addition, you will want the following information: the consultants' experiences in handling similar situations, what their references say about their ability to make things happen, and whether they have established personal rapport with management during their initial evaluations. Experience is important but not to the exclusion of the other considerations.

8. How Do I Make the Final Selection?

Once each consultant's experience has been confirmed and references checked, use the following considerations to make your final selection with key project personnel in attendance:

- Breadth of experience that encompasses and goes beyond the situation as defined.
- Demonstrated ability to complete assignments within budget and on schedule.
- Demonstrated past performance ability to develop practical recommendations and, when requested, to have them implemented successfully.
- Demonstrated ability to work with people diplomatically and effectively and to minimize disruption of ongoing operations.
- Degree of trust and rapport established with reviewers during initial contacts.
- When you have weighed these considerations, a final proposal may be requested from the
 consultant if costing was not originally included, or a change to the SOW was made during
 the evaluation. There may be a negotiation of the price and work being considered.





9. What Kind of an Agreement Do I Make With a Consultant?

The consultant's proposal should spell out in as much detail as needed such things as:

- The objective and scope of the assignment.
- What the consultant will do, what the client should do, and what they will do jointly during and following the project's completion to assure its success.
- The nature of completion or agreed upon evidence of delivered value.
- The anticipated charges, basis of charges, expenses, and terms of payment.
- The conditions under which the client or the consultant may cancel the agreement.

Review the proposal with the consultant and resolve all the questions you may have. Portions of the proposal may have to be rewritten to provide desired assurances and clarity. The consultant should be made aware of and understand the governmental regulations. (For example, federal contracts are subject to Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) guidelines – www.acqnet.gov).

10. How Do I Assure the Successful Completion of the Project?

You can assure the successful completion of a consulting engagement by doing the following:

- Make certain that everyone in the organization will provide what the consultant needs in order to gather information and make recommendations.
- Inform all concerned, either through a general meeting or personal memos, that a consultant has been engaged, and explain the nature or purpose of the engagement.
- Allay any anxiety that may result when people learn that a consultant has been engaged, e.g., communicate to people why a consultant is being hired.
- Set up a schedule of deliverables that may include progress reports.
- Be available to the consultant to review progress, clarify information, or help in resolving temporary difficulties. Candidly voice concerns to the consultant.
- Avoid pressuring consultants to discuss findings or recommendations until they have thoroughly researched the situation and are ready to do so.

11. How Do I Assure Confidential ity and Avoid Conflict of Interest?

All reputable consultants consider the detailed knowledge they gain of a client's operations and personnel to be confidential. Such information is not to be discussed with, or disclosed to, a third party without the client's expressed permission. Further, an ethical consultant, if working with two competing firms, informs each firm of the situation. These are requirements of the codes of ethics to which all reputable consultants subscribe (See Code on Page 14).

12. How Do I Eval uate the Project's Success?

The success of a consulting project can be measured in many ways. Frequently, the change that results from an engagement is obvious; for example, measurable savings realized, new workplace efficiencies, or delays eliminated.



Some projects, however, may have payoffs that are only realized gradually. In such situations you should be able to see progress in achieving the project's goals.

To gain a subjective appraisal, ask the question, "On balance, and considering everything, would I hire the same consultant again?" If the answer is "Yes," the project can generally be considered a success.

How to Hire a Management Consul tant and Get the Resul ts You Expect

II. How to Achieve Fit and Compatibility

The process of making certain that a consultant is on the same page with your needs includes considering the set of values, competencies, and approaches that will take you and your Agency where you want to go.

The following questions are designed to help you identify consultants who fit your needs and are compatible with your business unit. They help you to prepare for and subsequently evaluate your meeting with prospective management consultants.



Your Needs

If this engagement were successful, in what ways would the Agency be different? For example, more competitive, better positioned, better focused, more effective, run smoother, operate faster or have a brighter, more sustainable future.

What would be the same? What characteristics of your Agency are highly valued? For example: Our team approach has helped us gain accolades from the Administration. We have a collaborative environment, which has been key to our success.

What would be the value of this project? How would the changes it brings benefit the Agency?



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Consultants fill various function function(s) you would like the	ons. Here are options to consider when deciding which consultant to perform:
Do the work Lead the work Act as mentor & advisor Transmit knowledge Be an independent observ Serve as a facilitator Other:	Act as change agent Manage projects Provide recommendations Implement solutions Serve as a technical expert Collaborate with management
Your Expectations	
therefore we need a team-building	For example: Our need is to improve morale within our divisioning program. Poor employee morale, however, can be the symptoned processes, inadequate tools, and among staff,
Let the consultant ask questions	to determine the root causes of your issues or problems.
Did the consultant ask questionsituation?	ons that helped you clarify or think differently about your
Did they probe to ensure adeq	uate understanding of your situation?
Did the consultant "jump to a	solution" before discovering your unique circumstances?
	n making your Agency better, or was the focus on their own "canned" or unique to your needs?
Did the consultant question yo	our data and assumptions?
Did the consultant work with y engagement?	ou to develop objectives measures of success for the



Competence to Perform the Work

The questions that follow will help you to evaluate your meeting with a prospective consultant.

Was the consultant able to cite engagements that addressed challenges similar in type and scope to yours? What was the consultant's role in those engagements?

Was the consultant comfortable discussing the specifics of an engagement without divulging confidential information?

Did the consultant portray a positive attitude and demeanor regarding past client assignments? Was she candid about difficulties and responses to unexpected events? Could he provide lessons learned?

Fit and Compatibility

Did you feel comfortable divulging sensitive or confidential information about your organization?

How do you expect to work with the consultant? For example,

- How do you want to be informed of progress?
- How frequently do you expect to interact with the consultant?
- Did they appear willing and flexible to work with your needs?
- How do you want to receive bad news?

Did the consultant provide information you may not have liked, but needed to know?

Who will actually perform the work when a team or firm is contracted?

Will the consultant work simultaneously with various levels of the organization? Have they handled this kind of assignment successfully?

Did the consultant provide a written summation of your discussions about approaches, fees, and deliverables? Was it consistent with your understanding?

NOTE: Your confidence in a consultant is enhanced by assurances of competence, experience, and adherence to high standards of professionalism and ethics. The Institute of Management Consultants USA's certification requirements and Code of Ethics reflect international standards and can be valuable resources when selecting a management consultant (see pages 13 and 14).



III. Getting the Most Value from the Rel ationship

How a consulting engagement begins is a key factor in assuring a beneficial outcome. Your situation should have been defined carefully, and you should have a clear agreement with the consultant regarding objectives, deliverables, fees, and responsibilities. Moreover, keeping in close touch with your consultant helps to assure the project's success. You should be able to discuss anything the consulting engagement reveals in an open and candid fashion with your consultant.

The following guidelines will help you get the most value from the engagement.

What If the Fee Exceeds the Budget?

You may be able to reduce the fee by narrowing the scope of the assignment, providing more leeway in scheduling the work, or having government personnel assume some of the tasks in the project. Turning the assignment into phases of activity can also spread the payments.

Research, Results, and Feedback

After the start date is set, the management consultant will probably meet again with you and project personnel, your key associates, and anyone else who will be involved with the assignment. Your consultant will use this post-award orientation meeting to introduce the consulting staff, describe the plan of action, and to be certain everyone is on board together. After this meeting they will begin the process of generating as much information as possible in a limited period of time. This could entail:

- One or more methods of data collection and review
- Analysis of the findings
- Testing of assumptions
- Development of alternative solutions
- More testing of viability and practicality
- Drawing conclusions

Throughout this process your consultant should provide you with continuous, informal feedback so that you understand what is being done and why. You also should receive and review the findings and conclusions before he delivers recommendations. Once the recommendations are in your hands, they should provide you with clear guidance on how to proceed, either with or without further assistance.

Once the Assignment Is Underway

After you've informed employees about the consulting engagement, focus on establishing an effective working relationship with your consultant. Be straightforward in relating your concerns, expectations and working style, and identify the liaison on the project. The liaison may be you or someone on your staff. Make sure this individual understands the consultant's work plan so that they can provide any needed introductions or resources.



When the consultant reports their interim findings, listen carefully even if you don't like what you hear. If any conclusion is not well founded, direct the consultant to an internal source who may provide additional information.

In getting to the heart of a problem, your consultant may uncover other issues that need to be resolved. Some may be prerequisites to resolving the issue at hand, but many will not. It is tempting to add these new issues to the project, but if meeting your original schedule and budget is important, do not ask the consultant to include them in the current assignment.

When it is necessary to expand the scope of an assignment be sure the consultant tells you what impact this will have on the project's schedule and fee.

How to Eval uate the Consul tant's Advice

When the consultant presents their recommendations, ask yourself these questions:

- Has the consultant delivered what was promised earlier?
- Have the real issues been addressed?
- Are the recommendations logical, and will they work in my organization?
- Do I understand the steps to take?
- If there are potential savings involved, do I know how to achieve them?
- Have our employees learned how to find and solve problems on their own?
- Will our unit be stronger as a result?
- When will the consultant return to check on the success of the project?

If you are not satisfied with the answers to any of these questions, ask the consultant to give you the additional information you need. A good consultant would rather put in additional effort than leave a client dissatisfied.

Act Immediately on the Recommendations

To make sure you get maximum benefit from the efforts of your organization and the consultant, implement the consultant's recommendations before they are lost in the inertia of your organization. Tell your staff to report in one month on the progress they are making, and call for regular reports until the work has been completed. You can expect the consultant to take an equal interest in seeing that their recommendations result in benefits.





IV. Useful Tools and Resources

A number of useful tools and resources exist for verifying, selecting and evaluating a management consultant. They include references, certification and adherence to professional and ethical standards.

References and selection have been discussed on page 4 and provide one means of independent verification that a consultant has competence to perform, has carried out similar assignments and has worked well with the organization's personnel. Considerations such as working within budgets, practicality of recommendations, ability to make things happen and honesty and tact help you assess competence, fit and compatibility. Asking individuals who have worked with this consultant will help you to assess your conversations with the consultant and the management consultant's assertions. However, there are additional means that help you find and choose a management consultant.

Peer eval uation and certification provide another avenue of verification and independent evaluation.

Has the consultant passed peer assessment through a professional association that verifies references, reviews working knowledge, and requires continuing education and sets standards of conduct?

Professional associations can provide access to a larger talent pool and individuals who are engaged in management consulting as a profession. Management consulting is not something left to amateurs or individuals looking for temporary work "between jobs." Ensure your organization has proven talent through independent verification of competence and professional standards. The internationally recognized professional standards for certification of management consultants are provided on page 13, "What's behind the CMC®" (Certified Management Consultant).

Professional standards and ethics.

Adhering voluntarily to ethical values are extremely important to ensure:

- Standards of conduct and competence
- Impartiality
- Confidentiality
- No conflicts of interest
- Integrity
- Agreements in writing

The IMC USA Code of Ethics provides a standard of conduct to expect from a management consultant that exceeds the law. All members of IMC USA pledge in writing to abide by the Code of Ethics on page 14. CMC®s (Certified Management Consultants) conferred through IMC USA must pass a written examination of their ability to recognize and handle ethical situations that impact a client assignment.





V. Workshops Avail abl e for Your Organization, Trade or Professional Association

So that every client gets the most value from their consulting dollar, IMC USA's Professional Development & Education Committee developed an interactive course for helping you or your Agency better use consulting services.

Conducted by seasoned consultants, this one to two hour workshop will help you apply this material to your distinct situation.

The workshop:

- Covers screening and evaluating potential consultants
- Provides tips for keeping the project on track once it's begun
- Offers advice on ways to ensure successful completion of your project
- Furnishes a written manual with evaluation worksheets.
- Answers your questions.

With twenty-four chapters throughout the US, IMC USA can cover almost any location or need.

To discuss your workshop needs and location, contact:

Executive Director of IMC USA 1-800-221-2557 office@imcusa.org



Workshops Available

Workshops are interactive and involve participants in learning to better select and work with management consultants.





VI. What's Behind the CMC®*

Certified Management Consultant

Certification

When you see the initials CMC® following a consultant's name, it means that he or she is a Certified Management Consultant and has met the strict certification requirements of the IMC USA. The Institute was founded in 1968 by the principal associations in the consulting field to establish publicly recognized standards of competence and professional conduct for the individual management consultant. Applicants for certification undergo a thorough investigation of their consulting experience: They must first pass a written examination demonstrating their familiarity with the Institute's Code of Ethics and one on the common Body of Knowledge in the field. Then a panel of senior consultants interviews them to verify their technical competence.

A Code of Ethics

CMC[®]s pledge in writing to abide by the Institute's Code of Ethics. Their adherence to the Code signifies voluntary assumption of self-discipline above and beyond the requirements of law. Key provisions of the Code require that CMC[®]s:

- Safeguard confidential information.
- Render impartial, independent advice.
- Accept only those client engagements they are qualified to perform.
- Agree with the client in advance on the basis for professional charges.
- Develop realistic and practical solutions to client problems.

The Institute enforces the Code by receiving and investigating complaints of violations and by taking disciplinary action, including revocation of certification against any member who is found guilty of Code violation.

Standards of Competence

Every step leading to the CMC[®] designation has been designed to verify the candidate's professional competence. A Certified Management Consultant has:

- At least three years of experience in the full-time practice of management consulting, with major client responsibility at least one of those years.
- Multiple references, most of them officers or executives of client organizations. These references have been investigated to assure that the consulting relationships were satisfactory.
- Provided written summaries of five client assignments (disguised to protect client identity).
- Passed a qualifying interview by senior CMC[®]s, demonstrating professional competence, currency in areas of specialization, application of experience, and understanding of the management consulting process.

The Mark of Excellence

The CMC® is a certification mark registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. The CMC® is recognized worldwide by the International Council of Managing Consulting Institutes (ICMCI) (www.ICMCI.org). Certification by the Institute of Management Consultants is the mark of excellence among management consulting professionals. In selecting management consultants, it is good practice to seek individuals who meet the profession's standards of competence and ethics.



IMC USA Code of Ethics

All IMC USA members pledge in writing to abide by the Institute's Code of Ethics. Their adherence to the Code signifies voluntary assumption of self-discipline above and beyond the requirements of law. Key provisions of the Code specify:

My Commitment to My Clients

- 1.0 I will serve my clients with integrity, competence, independence, objectivity, and professionalism.
- 2.0 I will mutually establish with my clients realistic expectations of the benefits and results of my services.
- 3.0 I will only accept assignments for which I possess the requisite experience and competence to perform and will only assign staff or engage colleagues with the knowledge and expertise needed to serve my clients effectively.
- 4.0 Before accepting any engagement, I will ensure that I have worked with my clients to establish a mutual understanding of the objectives, scope, work plan, and fee arrangements.
- 5.0 I will treat appropriately all confidential client information that is not public knowledge, take reasonable steps to prevent it from access by unauthorized people, and will not take advantage of proprietary or privileged information, either for use by myself, the client's firm, or another client, without the client's permission.
- 6.0 I will avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of such and will immediately disclose to the client circumstances or interests that I believe may influence my judgment or objectivity.
- 7.0 I will offer to withdraw from a consulting assignment when I believe my objectivity or integrity may be impaired.
- 8.0 I will refrain from inviting an employee of an active or inactive client to consider alternative employment without prior discussion with the client.

My Commitment to Fiscal Integrity

- 9.0 I will agree in advance with a client on the basis for fees and expenses and will charge fees that are reasonable and commensurate with the services delivered and the responsibility accepted.
- 10.0 I will not accept commissions, remuneration, or other benefits from a third party in connection with the recommendations to a client without that client's prior knowledge and consent, and I will disclose in advance any financial interests in goods or services that form part of such recommendations.

My Commitment to the Public and the Profession

- 11.0 If within the scope of my engagement, I will report to appropriate authorities within or external to the client organization any occurrences of malfeasance, dangerous behavior, or illegal activities.
- 12.0 I will respect the rights of consulting colleagues and consulting firms and will not use their proprietary information or methodologies without permission.
- 13.0 I will represent the profession with integrity and professionalism in my relations with my clients, colleagues, and the general public.
- 14.0 I will not advertise my services in a deceptive manner nor misrepresent or denigrate individual consulting practitioners, consulting firms, or the consulting profession.
- 15.0 If I perceive a violation of the Code, I will report it to the Institute of Management Consultants USA and will promote adherence to the Code by other member consultants working on my behalf.

The Institute of Management Consultants, USA, Inc. (IMC USA) adopted its first Code of Ethics in 1968. Since that time IMC USA has modified the wording of the Code for additional clarity and relevance to clients. The current Code was approved February 3, 2005. It is aligned with the International Code of Professional Conduct published by the International Council of Management Consulting Institute (ICMCI) of which IMC USA is a founding member.



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ABOUT THE INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS USA, INC.

The Institute of Management Consultants USA, INC., a 501(c)6, nonprofit, was founded in 1968 to establish management consulting as a self-regulating profession meriting the same public confidence and respect as medicine, accounting and law. Its primary purpose is to assure the public that its members possess ethical standards, professional competence, and independence required to practice as management consultants. Those individuals who meet the strictest professional requirements are designated Certified Management Consultants and may use the designation CMC after their names.





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