

How To
BEAT THE COMPETITION

EMERALD POINTS

**BECOMING A
MANAGEMENT
CONSULTANT**

Key Steps to Success

JAMES D. SPINA

BECOMING A MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

This page intentionally left blank

BECOMING A MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

Key Steps to Success

BY

JAMES D. SPINA, PhD



United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India
Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Emerald Publishing, Floor 5, Northspring, 21-23 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4DL

First edition 2024

Copyright © 2024 James D. Spina.
Published under exclusive licence by Emerald Publishing Limited.

Reprints and permissions service

Contact: www.copyright.com

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. Any opinions expressed in the chapters are those of the authors. Whilst Emerald makes every effort to ensure the quality and accuracy of its content, Emerald makes no representation implied or otherwise, as to the chapters' suitability and application and disclaims any warranties, express or implied, to their use.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83797-039-1 (Print)
ISBN: 978-1-83797-038-4 (Online)
ISBN: 978-1-83797-040-7 (Epub)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



To my "Kids"
Laura Beth, Lee Ann, Philip and Holly

This page intentionally left blank

CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures and Boxes</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
Introduction	1
1. What Do Management Consultants Do?	5
2. What Do You Need to Know About Management Consulting Tools?	9
3. Let's Roll!	15
4. How to Write a Consulting Proposal	23
5. How to Enhance Your Consulting Sales Skills	37
6. Improving Key Instructional Skills for Adult Seminar Presentations	41
7. Effective Ways to Attract New Clients	47
8. Two High Demand Consulting Areas	51
9. Instructional Models for Training	57
10. Future Trends for Management Consulting	63
<i>Appendix A – Details of Leadership Models</i>	75
<i>Appendix B – Sources and Recommended Readings</i>	79
<i>Appendix C – Success Story: Selling Consulting Products</i>	81
<i>About the Author</i>	85
<i>Index</i>	87

This page intentionally left blank

LIST OF FIGURES AND BOXES

Chapter 6

Fig. 1.	Round Table Problem-Solving.	42
Fig. 2.	Using Limited Presentation Space.	43

Chapter 9

Fig. 3.	Connect the Dots.	58
Fig. 4.	Unusual Dot Solutions.	59
Fig. 5.	Creative Dot Solution.	60
	Late Lori J. Spina.	69
	The "Beat the Competition" books co-authored by Lori and James Spina.	69

Chapter 2

Box 1	Leadership Theoretical Models.	11
-------	--------------------------------	----

Chapter 3

Box 2	Decision Making Guide (Forced Choice Analysis).	16
-------	---	----

Chapter 5

The Less Formal Letter Proposal	26
How to Continue to Differentiate <i>the Ideal School of Business</i> From the Competition While Generating Revenue & Enhancing the Brand Globally	27

Chapter 6

Presentation Slide Text Example	49
---------------------------------	----

This page intentionally left blank

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Editing: Frank S. Spina, Esq.

Senior Content Reviewer: Dr Donald Cipriano

Reviewers:

Carlton Becker

Tom DiMartino

Alexandre Giroud

Dr Mike Lawless

Rejeana Mathis

Alex Rhue

Dr Oliver Schake

Dr Robert Sheehan

Gary Yerkes

This page intentionally left blank

INTRODUCTION

There is nothing like the feeling of freedom that you experience on the first day you open the door of your office to launch the beginning of a new consulting business.

—JDS

Using “time tested research”¹ and key steps to success, this book explains what it takes to become an independent management consultant and how to launch, grow, and maintain a potentially successful and profitable problem-solving consultancy with a focus on management of talent. In addition to providing all the “nuts and bolts” found in Chapters 1–10 needed for success, the Appendices detail proven methods for enhancing communication and sales skills, add knowledge of leadership models, and build instructional and marketing skills. Many other “How To” consulting books fail to cover these critical areas.

There are more than 15 books currently offered that claim to show readers how to become a management consultant. However, some of them are very academic and textbook-like. Others require readers to adopt a “one-size-fits-all” specific consulting model. Most tell you what to do, such as “call a client today,” but do not elaborate on the reason for doing so nor how to carry it out.

Our primary audience is aimed at executives who have the ability and skills to make strategic decisions to ensure the sustainability, growth, and desired direction of an organization. At the same time, they continually look for new and creative ways to develop a business strategy, enhance management skills for recruitment, and to retain talent. New ways to train and develop people are on their “to do” lists. They always encourage the improvement of critical thinking skills of the talented.

1 Note some research is indeed timeless, see Guilford, J. P. (1942). *Fundamental statistics in psychology and education*, that resides in higher education libraries today.

PREMATURELY PLATEAUED?

To be specific, we assist those readers who have reached a point in an organization to explore new career options when they feel prematurely *plateaued* by the closely held succession system in place. For example, consider a general manager of a for-profit retail business unit that has continued to meet or exceed all goals set for his or her position. However, for some reason, is confidentially ranked as “not ready” to move up to lead a more demanding business unit. Reasons for the ranking can be wide or even inaccurate, yet the manager can sense that advancement chances are slim. They are perfect candidates for seeking alternative careers.

Another common situation occurs in nonprofit governmental function where an administrator is “parked” in their slot. There is no place to pursue above that rank even though the individual has built a unit that leads all others in effectiveness and efficiency. This manager may be ready to make a career change.

In both for-profit and nonprofit organizations, problems continue to flow in from headquarters by way of computer, smart phone, or other devices and systems. When used correctly, they do not require executives to make a 45 minute to a 2-hour trip to that “old office” to receive instruction for the day.

Companies begin to let office space leases expire and communities begin to close and consolidate workplace locations to allow remote or hybrid work schedules. Remote pay rates remain the same although the “grapevine” talks about reducing it because living outside the city limits is less expensive. Loss of job or pay reduction becomes a threat and worry and may reduce job satisfaction of organizational staff.

So... why not move forward on your own and keep the lion's share of revenue generated? After all, your six-figure salary plus benefits are both great but when compared to the 15 million dollars in revenue that you made for the organization it looks pale. If you are in a tax based or charitable nonprofit situation, consider the cost savings you created from your hard-working efforts and ideas. Why not charge other nonprofits for doing the same thing? Are you ready to make that move?

While the information in this book cannot guarantee your personal business success, it provides you guidance to envision life when transitioned to become an independent professional, i.e., how to help other organizations

flourish and incumbent managers succeed as they maintain their traditional career tracks. It also will help the reader to make that decision as it presents the risks, myths, pros, cons, and adventures that line the path to an independent consulting practice.

REFERENCE

Guildford, J. P. (1942). *Fundamental statistics in psychology and education*. McGraw-Hill Book Company Inc.

This page intentionally left blank

WHAT DO MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS DO?

Build Knowledge...Find Success.

—JDS

ROLES AND ACTIVITIES

You may be surprised to learn that high performing independent management consultants sell their services and products. They make great salespeople. The first words that you may utter after reading those first two sentences are, “Are you kidding me? I hate salespeople. They always try to sell me something I don’t want or need like a car repair warranty for a car I no longer own!”

Okay, hold on. That is not the type of salesperson referred to as the world of consulting is opened to the reader. Professionals sell the knowledge, skills, and products needed by a client to solve the problems faced by an organization. Unfortunately, many individuals looking for a career change from working for someone else to being self-employed do not realize that regular sales lead to success.

Consider this actual story of an executive who wanted to open a consulting business but did not have a clue that it involved sales. He contacted a highly respected firm that supplied assessments that identified the leadership styles known to implement successful changes in an organization. The gentleman attended a training session on how to use the assessment data to create educational programs for managers needing to change their cash and fear leadership styles to a win/win approaches to making organizational changes. He purchased a kit with the assessments and directions for conducting training

sessions. After the 2-day training session ended, he returned home to begin a new part time business. When 2 weeks passed, he contacted the assessment company to complain that no one had called to hire him. He was shocked to learn that he had to market (sell) his new skills and products to prospective clients. The business never got off the ground and wasted time, money, and energy. This sad story is somewhat akin to a person who self-publishes a book and ends up with 500 unsold copies stored in the basement of the house after giving copies to friends and family. In Chapter 5, we will return to the important discussion of sales skills for management consultants and details on the other roles that successful consultants fulfill.

TIME FOR NETWORKING

Another eye-opener is the fact that to develop a successful consulting business, a nascent enterprise often requires the new consultant to talk with many people every day. These are people who may provide hot leads for new business opportunities or can introduce the consultant to connections that lead to new relationships in different industries.

TIME FOR RESEARCH

A third consideration is to understand that it is an absolute necessity that consultants adopt a system for learning about current changes in the business world while keeping up with cultural changes in the general society. This requires setting aside time every week to read publications that open the door to new business trends and to devote time each day to “old fashioned” business-focused newspapers and magazines that supplement the 20 second headlines of television, radio, and questionable social media information platforms. It is critical to read such publications or watch mainstream media that you do not necessarily agree with philosophically. Start with the *Wall St. Journal*, *New York Times*, and *The Economist* for contrasts.

A CONSULTANT'S WORK WEEK

Another area to keep in mind is that successful independent consultants are on the job 7 days a week and often come to hate weekends because it is often hard

to make money then. Business cards are always made to be carried and distributed to people you talk to when the time is right to do so. Such a demanding schedule can lead to disagreements within a family when a significant other makes the comment, “All we do is work even when we are out to enjoy an evening or sit poolside at a resort. I’m tired of all this business stuff.”

In addition to talking with lots of people every day and reading to keep up with the fast-moving society that we all enjoy, you might find it necessary to enhance your marketing skills to beat the competition. It is a fact that all consulting engagements come to an end and continual marketing is required. A long-term engagement may suddenly end, and unless you have planned the next one, your firm may be in financial trouble. If you build a network of qualified associates, this problem may be avoided.

Also, management consultants will spend significant time teaching others how to employ the knowledge often in small classroom type sessions. Instructing others can be a difficult activity in terms of making engaging presentations or in one-on-one coaching sessions.

Note: Knowing some of the responsibilities that consultants need to carry out and what they need to know about how to carry them out are two different things. The next chapter addresses this issue.

This page intentionally left blank