



Is Consulting in Your Future?

Written by consultants2go

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As the owner of a consulting company, of course I get numerous inquiries into how we operate and what one needs to do in order to begin consulting with us. There is always an element of surprise, and annoyance, at my response. I don't typically give a quick "how to" procedure of signing up with us, but ask some questions of you to see if this is a stop-gap measure (which I totally get) or a career that you really want to build utilizing the expertise you have acquired. These questions help you understand if consulting is in your future or if you really need to get a permanent job.

- **How much money do I have saved?** So, you might want to say "none of your business!" but I'm not really asking you to give me a number. What I'm asking is that you take the time to really look at your situation. Consulting is a "some-timey" business, meaning you can get an assignment that lasts for one year, or you can get an assignment that you thought was going to last for one year but got cut short after a few weeks or months. The reasons for this are numerous and can include that the client simply ran out of budget. Do you have enough money saved to tie you over until your next assignment? How long will your emergency slush fund last, if you have one?
- **What do I have to offer?** In Marketing 101, this is your value proposition. What are you bringing to the consulting table? There are thousands of independent consultants and contractors with whom you will compete. Many have been in the game for a long time and this is their business. Why would a client select you over them? A simple answer is that you have recency in experience in a hot area like social media. There is no right answer, but you should have an answer.
- **With how many companies have I worked?** Take a look at your resume. If you have worked for the same company for 20+ years, make sure you can show that you had different job functions or increased responsibilities during that time. We are looking for consultants we can place in any industry on different assignments. That consultant will need to know how to navigate themselves when they are in a new company, culture, or industry. Are you comfortable with that?
- **Am I a self-starter?** Are you accustomed to taking information from other people and improving on it, or are you someone who can take a blank sheet of paper and turn it into an organized, thoughtful piece of work? If you were a senior level executive in the corporate world, you will not have secretaries and direct reports to help you so you must be able to jump in and do whatever is needed.
- **Do I have a great network of people on whom I can call?** Consulting is all about people who know people. But you will run out of people to call or start to annoy those you know by calling them way too much. But know that it is not about your nicely typed resume on good paper, but more about whose hands you can get that resume into who will influence the decision to select you. If you do not have a great network, then consider signing up with agencies or companies that can help you find assignments.
- **Do I truly understand consulting?** How prepared are you to give up or do some or all of the following: give up your unemployment check, get medical and/or liability insurance, make phone calls to ex-colleagues to whom you have not spoken since they got downsized, not being invited with your team to the company picnic, work without specific instructions or directions from your client, ensure you deliver projects on time, invest in a home office for virtual assignments...

It sounds daunting and scary. Making the decision to consult is the same as deciding to hang up a shingle and telling the world that you are ready to do business. You are now an entrepreneur and a small business owner. Of course, this is not a

comprehensive list of tips but it's a good start to get you thinking about a new world. But from what you know, are you ready for some consulting?

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Sandi Webster is one of the principals of Consultants 2 Go, a marketing company that provides consultants to Fortune 500 corporations and midsize companies. As such, she has spent years advising clients on the latest trends and strategies in marketing. She has over 20 years of experience and has managed all facets of new product launches, created and executed national direct mail campaigns, website

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