

Dilemma in Relationship of Consultant and Client

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Abstract: Consultants are hired to solve problems, develop strategies, overcome hurdles, and meet goals. Accordingly, most consulting projects will be judged by the success or failure of their strategic or financial objectives. *A number of Interrelated issues can arise in consultant-client relationship in O.D activities and they need to be managed appropriately if adverse effects are to be avoided. Relationship between client and consultant depends on: Consultant competence : the longer the consultant are able to provide innovative and productive intervention the more longer the relationship will be Clients resourcefulness and capabilities in OD Organizational factors like: Internal power struggle Crisis Top management support. There are certain issues of O.D in consultant-client relationship that have been explained in this paper. This is a review based study. On the basis of past research researcher has proposed certain myth to deal with these issues.*

Key words: consultants, clients, Entry & Contracting, client system

I. Introduction

But on another level, success as a consultant hinges on how much mutual integrity, trust; communication and understanding are brought to the business relationship (Burdg, H.B. 1998). In other words, what kind of bond or connection has been established between a consultant and a client?

By definition consulting is a client-centric business. That means a relationship-oriented business. The best consultants and firms never forget this. They have an outward focus on the market and on clients. They go to bed thinking about their clients and they get up in the morning thinking about their clients. What more can we do? How can we serve them better? How do we get them to like us better? Where did we go wrong? How can we make it up? Have we anticipated all their needs?(Rynning, M., 1992).

Here our senior consultants explore the challenges involved in telling clients what they need to hear, when it is not necessarily what they want to hear; or how to bring expertise to the table without appearing arrogant or bruising egos. They reveal how most clients want answers, not process, and have little interest in watching a room full of background research unfurled before them. We learn how the best consultants take the long view on their work, understanding when to get out of a project or association, sacrificing short-term income for long-term credibility.

There's some consultant folk wisdom here, too. Like, never give your client a nickname, because it just might slip out. And here as well are just some colorful recollections of a few among the many interesting characters and personalities met along the way.

In a sense, consulting is about creating a story, as one of our contributor's concludes, not finding the Holy Grail. Creating that story requires a toolbox of skills, technical expertise, and business experience. But effectively engaging clients in the strategic scenario you've created also requires a certain proficiency in the story telling arts. The best consultants learn to speak in a language that people understand. That is, they translate their broad expertise into the local vernacular of their clients' corporate culture.

II. Consultant take chance to challenge change

Consultant take chance to change the consulting firm's challenge is to constantly figure out how to generate more client value per dollar of cost, and to demonstrate this. Company would sometimes tell a client that a proposed project would save the client a specific amount. If it failed to do that, Bain would make up the difference. They attracted a lot of clients that way.

III. Some universal problems

Most client-consultant relationships have problems for largely non-technical reasons, including: Lack of effective communication about how the project will proceed Improper expectations setting i.e. too high or too low Lack of follow through on small yet important details Under estimating project complexity or scope Failing to understand user requirements like entry & Contracting, Ethical Standard In O.D etc

3.1 Entry & Contracting

Entry & Contracting O.D consulting Contract can occur in various ways through telephone call to face to face meeting. The potential client may be present the problem and the consultant tries to fix the problem The consultants and clients begin to sought out what group should do in order to start the logical O.D intervention. When both the parties agree this becomes part of the overall psychological contract between consultants and clients. Contracting, in both psychological and financial sense, occurs over and over in OD consulting.

3.2 Defining the Client System

Defining the Client System 1st Model: The initial single manager is the client but as the trusts and confidence develops between the key clients and the consultant both begin to view the manager and his/er subordinate team as the client and then mangers total

Organization as the client 2nd Model: The top management team comprises the initial client group. 3 rd Model: the client might be in a steering committee comprising of representatives from different levels and functional areas. In this case, if the CEO is not a member, the consultant will need to be sensitive. Client , actually is more to do with interactions, interrelationships and Interfaces than to specific persons or units.

3.3 The Trust issue in consultant client relationship:

The Trust issue in consultant client relationship A good deal of interaction between consultant and client is implicitly related to developing a relationship of mutual trust Client's Trust on the consultant: Key clients may be Fearful that- Things will get out of hands with an outsider intervening in the system Organization will be overwhelmed with petty complaints People will be encouraged to criticize there superiors Consultants trust of the client may start as neutral Understanding clients mitive Trust and resistance problem aslo centers on good guy bad guy syndrome Confidentiality must be maintained

3.4 Consultant's Expertise:

Consultant's Expertise It is possible and desirable for the consultants to be an expert. Giving substantive advise will tend to neglect the OD Consultants effectiveness hence: Ad OD Consultant need to resist the temptation of being a content expert & need to clarify his/her role "Purchase-of-expertise" or "Doctor-Patient Role" – The overriding desire to please the client may reduce her/his effectiveness Objective of the OD expert to help the client to develop its own resources. The expert role creates a kind of dependency that does not leads to the internal development " Seduction into selling role " is dangerous because such condition may lead the consultant to be no longer in exploring the problem Trust factor Expectation

3.5 The Consultant Model Consultant acts as a role model for the client:

The consultant should practice what he/she preaches The consultant may advocate open system but suppresses his or her own feelings about what is happening in the client system The consultant should give out clear messages

3.6 The Consultant Team as a Microcosm:

The team must set an example of an effective unit to enhance its credibility Practitioner should also focus on continuous growth and process renewal The team should have effective interpersonal relationship Team maintenance

3.7 Diagnosis & appropriate interventions:

Intervention should be appropriate to diagnosis DEPTH OF INTERVENTION In Roger Harrison's terms, depth of intervention can be assessed using concepts of : Accessibility: data is public versus hidden Individuality: self-perception of deviation Consultant's dilemma : "to lead and push, or to collaborate and follow" Performance units DOI = STUDY of formal, informal systems and self

3.8 On being absorbed by the culture:

Avoid the trap of seeping into organizational culture Incomplete [mis] communication of fears Comprehensive feedback then is off limits Companion vs. collaborator Internal change agents more susceptible

3.9 The Dependency issue and terminating the relationship :

The termination of relationship is directly proportional to the dependency relationship between client and consultant The more dependent the client is on the consultant the more difficult it is to terminate the relationship If the consultant is in the business of assisting client to internalize skills and insights –then it is

making client less dependent on it and in such case terminating the relationship is not an issue Thus the consultants role as a facilitator creates less dependency and more client growth

The Dependency issue and terminating the relationship Consultants role as a part educator-this involves consultants intervention on an on-going basis. It requires open communication with client about objective of interventions and about sequence of planned event. Relationship between client and consultant depends on: Consultant competence : the longer the consultant are able to provide innovative and productive intervention the more longer the relationship will be Clients resourcefulness and capabilities in OD Organizational factors like: Internal power struggle Crisis Top management support

IV. Action Research:

4.1 Steps Followed in Acton Research Model:

Steps Followed in Acton Research Model A preliminary diagnosis and action Data gathering from the client group Data feedback to client group Exploration of data by the client group Action planning by the client group Action taking by the client group Evaluation and assessment of the results of the actions by the client group

4.2 Generic Process In OD:

Generic Process In OD The key aspects of model are diagnosis, data gathering, feedback to the client group, data discuss and work by the client group, action planning, and action. The sequence tends to be cynical, with the focus on new or advanced problems as the client group learns to work more effectively together. This process is iterative & cynical It is a sequence of events and activities within each iteration (data collection, feedback, and taking action based on the data); and it is a cycle of iterations of these activities, sometimes treating the same problem several times and then moving to different problems.

Key executive perception of problems Consultation with behavioral scientist consultant Data gathering and diagnosis by consultant Further data gathering Feedback to key client or client group Joint action planning Data gathering Feedback to client group Discussion and work on data feedback and data by client group Action planning Action Data gathering Feedback Discussion and work on feedback and emerging data Action planning Action Etc.

4.3 Five Common Myths about Engaging a Management Consultant:

Only large companies and organizations use management consultants. Companies only use consultants when they are having problems. Once contracted, a consultant will often move quietly through the organization stirring up concern with employees. Small and medium sized companies cannot afford consultants. Consultants just skim the surface and advise but they don't do anything.

Myth#1- Only large companies & organizations use management consultants:

There is and has been a growing trend for small and medium companies to use consultants. Savvy business owners are utilizing consultants as temporary and unbiased resources in a variety of ways: to conduct market research; to guide in the recruiting and development of a professional and effective sales organization; to identify and resolve human resource issues; to assist in designing an ongoing training process; to guide the strategic planning exercise; to facilitate team building and team performance activities;

Myth#2– Companies only use consultants when they are having problems.:

“Don't wait until you are thirsty to dig your well.” Successful business owners “Know what they don't know” and they anticipate issues that will come up in the future. Today companies are pro-active, and rope in experienced professionals to give an external perspective.

Myth # 3 – Once contracted a consultant will move quietly through the organization stirring up concern with employees.:

The message will be conveyed that you are taking the next steps to be a successful and well run organization.

Myth # 4 - Consultant fees are only affordable by large companies.

Contract on need basis. Investment in a consultant is far less than what you would pay to hire an inexperienced, unknown employee. With a seasoned consultant you are receiving many years of successful management experience and implementation skills.

Myth # 5 – Consultants just skim the surface and advice, but they don't really do anything.:

Look for professionals who have real-world experience walking in the shoes of business people like you and have wrestled with similar challenges. The best consultants are those with many years of operational experience who are skilled in clearly identifying the problem and solution areas that are important to you. This breed of consultant can not only provide expert advice, but can also roll up their sleeves and help you confidently implement the solutions.

V. Conclusions

Managing the client-consultant relationship requires diligent work. When clients and consultants communicate frequently throughout the all phases of the process and hide nothing from each other, the relationship can be a good one. In addition, there is a big benefit for clients if they can successfully manage this process: they can lower system development costs. For the clients reading this and doubting me, think about the problem from the consultants' perspective. Consultant's don't want to lose money on a project and they don't want to spend "hassle" time with the client. If the client can arrange a relationship in which the consultant is guaranteed to make their profit and the client is guaranteed quality software, the consultant will be less likely to employ pricing games to make back lost money on bad projects. When the relationship is based on trust, both sides can streamline the communication process and save money that would otherwise be spent on screaming, yelling, accusing and complaining.

VI. Recommendations

Consultants should also look at it from the clients' perspective. Clients want software that works reliably built on time and within the budget allocated. Don't wait until the end to see if the software does what it is supposed to do. Get a good design specification! Test the product design specification, the product prototypes and the release candidates. Make sure the product meets client requirements. When requirements are clearly documented, change orders can be negotiated more easily. When the design specification is determined early, it is much easier to build software on time and within budget. Client's goals are in complete alignment with others goals- personal growth, career growth, creation of personal wealth. Under commit- over deliver Say when we're going to do it- 'THEN DO IT!' Don't be afraid to tell the client that we have a difference of opinion Offer knowledge transfer in the form of coaching and mentoring Socialize

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