

Are You Trapped by Your Life as a Consultant?

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Before We Start

Two Great Books on Consulting

1. The Consultant's Calling – Bringing Who You Are to What You Do

Geoffrey M. Bellman

Jossey-Bass – 1990

2. Flawless Consulting (2nd Edition)

Peter Block

Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer - 2000

Why Become a Consultant

Think about....

- **Can I capitalize on a certain skill or talent that I can bring to the table?**
- **In what way am I an expert?**
- **Do I consider my consulting business a “practice” rather than a job?**

Why Become a Consultant

If not....

- **I may simply end up doing tasks that a company doesn't have time to do on their own.**
- **I may twist like a pretzel to convince them I am everything they are looking for.**
- **I may be picked because I am cheap and available.**

Why Become a Consultant

Ask yourself...

- **Does being a consultant fit who I am or is it simply be a way to earn a living?**
- **Am I subverting my needs to serve my clients?**

Why Become a Consultant

Remember....

**As a consultant you are always
looking for a job!**

Trap 1

You Just Think You Have Power

- **The power is *with* your clients not over them – a lateral relationship (Block)**
- **Power, needs and wants of the relationship must be equal**
- **Understanding this frees you from doing what makes the client happy**

Trap 1

You Just Think You Have Power

- **Client's investment in your unique combination of abilities = your investment in client's unique combination of opportunities**
- **Otherwise, it's just a way to make money**
- **"If you cannot say no, can you really say yes?" (Bellman)**

Trap 2

It's Fusion *not* Balance

“Don't treat your business and family as two separate worlds....Instead recognize that your commitments to these two spheres should enrich one another.”

Eric Freedman
“Your So-called Life:
The Overachieving Entrepreneur's
Guide to Making Time for a Real Life”
www.entrepreneur.com

Trap 2

It's Fusion *not* Balance

- **Separating your two worlds is more difficult if you are a consultant**
- **Learn to flow smoothly between your two lives**
- **Home-based offices are ideal for this, but be aware.....**

Home-Based Office Yes or No?

No

- 1. Need to leave home to work effectively**
- 2. Need daily contact with adults**
- 3. Need status of out of home office**
- 4. Clients need to visit you**
- 5. No control over who enters your office and what they do in it.**

Home-Based Office Yes or No?

Yes

- 1. You can work anywhere with any distraction**
- 2. You visit your clients**
- 3. Adult interaction annoys you**
- 4. Office status not your concern**
- 5. Kids and pets are “trainable”**

Trap 3

It Isn't Always Fun

- **Am I not passionate enough?**
- **Ask yourself - Do I love my children when they are writing on the walls?**
- **Is there enough fun work to make it worthwhile**
- **Keep track of your time – how much is spent in tasks you dislike?**

Trap 4

You Might Not Get Rich

- **Are pencils really that expensive?**
- **What everyone else makes isn't always relevant**
- **What you charge doesn't have anything to do with what you are worth**
- **Know your percentage of billable hours, average hourly rate when billable, and average overall**

Pricing Strategies

- **How much to get by/to be comfortable?**
- **Start in the middle – getting by gets old fast**
- **Know what others are getting, but use it only as a guide**
- **Stick with initial rate for at least a year – make sure you can live with it**

Trap 5

The To-Do List Never Ends

- **“I love what I’m doing – it doesn’t seem like work!” becomes “Do I really have to work all those hours?”**
- **Take advantage of slow times to recharge and refocus**
- **Know how you spend your time and change it if necessary.**

Trap 5

The To-Do List Never Ends

Try This –

- 1. Pick 5-7 tasks you perform that earn money**
- 2. Calculate how many days/hours in a month you earn money**
- 3. Calculate what %-age of your billable time goes to each task.**
- 4. Is this OK with you?**

Trap 6

Workaholics Are Not Entrepreneurs

- **How does your ego get stroked?**
- **Is being “so busy” how you define your importance?**
- **Avoid other consultants who always want to know how busy you are.**
- **“I believe that work, though essential to life, is not life.”
(Bellman)**

Trap 7

Delegation Works

- **You can't be everything to everyone – if you don't do good work, everyone will know**
- **How much is your time worth?**
- **Only so many hours in a week – when will you hit the income ceiling?**
- **Subcontractors vs. employees**
- **Think of it as "coaching"**

Trap 8

The Bonus Trap

“...what began as a calling at some point became a business....As we succeed, we get pulled from the work itself and get drawn into managing the work. The pressure to sustain and succeed pushes our attention from how to deliver a quality service to how to build a successful business.”

Block

Trap 8

The Bonus Trap

- **Think carefully on how you measure your success.**
- **Focus too much on sales volume, profit margins, growth targets**
- **You will take work you shouldn't or don't really want to do.**

A Closing Thought

“Our task is to define the consulting role with ourselves and our clients in such a way that it fits who we really are.”

Bellman

**Are You Trapped by Your Life as a
Consultant?**

Thank you!!!