

## Why Use Consultants

By Drive, Inc.

In our careers as consultants, both as internal consultants as well as external with our consulting business, we have seen many different types of engagements, such as:

- The local team that is genuinely interested and engaged in change.
- The team that thinks they are doing well enough and doesn't need to change.
- The team that thinks they can do it themselves without the need for outside support.
- The team that is only "doing" it because the corporate executives are making them do it.

Which team do you suppose has the most success, historically? Not a difficult question, correct?

### THE NEED FOR CONSULTANTS

Many companies have resources in their business with transformation experience, but for whatever reason, they can't seem to get things done. Sometimes "a prophet can do no good in his home town." When asked why we were recommended by a senior business leader to another business leader, the leader explained that he recommended using consultants. In his opinion, once someone is hired, the sense of urgency that is caused by using 'expensive' consultants is lost. Therefore, the consultancy ends up bringing more value. Since the consultant is being paid, the work gets priority. While some businesses believe that they don't need consultants, we argue that everyone benefits from highly experienced support and coaching. Even the best athletes in the world have coaches to help them become better. There is value in having that outside accountability and follow-up to help one focus on "being better tomorrow" versus simply just "being good today." At DRIVE, we also utilize consultants for items with which we are not experts, such as Customer Journey Mapping and Social Media Marketing.

### THE FALLACY OF INDUSTRY OR SEGMENT EXPERIENCE

One pitfall companies make is that they assume they need a consultant with deep experience in their industry. This isn't always the best approach. Often times, industry insiders suffer from the "curse of knowledge." The curse of knowledge is when one knows too much about or has been too close to the topic and may overlook opportunities for improvement. Sometimes it is good to get an outside set of eyes to look at one's business. Although it isn't always realized, there are industry-wide paradigms that exist. Often, the consultants that are the best fit do not possess those same paradigms. Remember, processes are processes. People that are trained to analyze and improve processes do not need to be experts in the process that they are reviewing. In fact, having deep knowledge of the process is often a detriment to the analysis process.



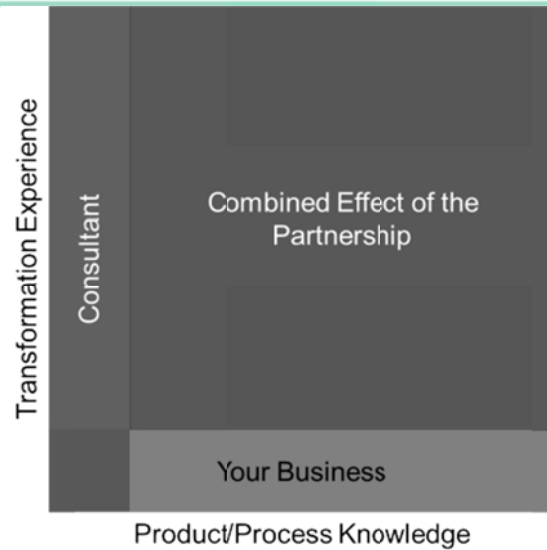
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The graphic above shows the combined effect of partnering with the right consultant. The consultant should have proven experience in transformation processes. The experience should be well in excess of what the client currently possesses, otherwise, the consultant will not be respected by the business leaders. That same consultant should have an understanding of the organizational, cultural, and technical aspects of the change that is needed. When we put all of these understandings together, we get the combined effect which leads to transformation and breakthroughs in thinking.

The value of experience was well explained by a close friend of mine. In a conversation with his oldest son, my friend asked if his son thought he was smarter than his younger brother. The older son stated that he was smarter. My friend then proceeded to ask why his son thought that he was smarter. My friend asked, "Was it because he was born smarter?" The oldest son stated "no". "Then why are you smarter?" probed my friend. The oldest son argued that he was smarter because he was older and had more experience. My friend questioned, "Are you telling me that experience makes you smarter than your brother?" His son replied, "Yes." My friend continued to ask, "If you are smarter than your brother because you have two more years of experience, do you think I am smarter than you because I have had 20 years more experience?" Silence! This same example applies to the value a consultant can bring a business. A good consultant will have many more years of experience in conducting transformation in many different environments. Simply conducting transformation in one industry or company can limit the value of experience.

### THE CONSULTANT AS A CATALYST

Often times, there is no impetus to change, so the presence of an outside consultant can provide that catalyst for change. The consultant should also serve as an unbiased part for the change initiative. True consultants have the abundance mentality and seek to grow others versus taking the credit for themselves. A good consultant knows that a paid invoice is their recognition, so all additional recognition goes to the transformation team.



## **CULTURAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ELEMENTS OF CHANGE**

The elements of the transformation process are: Organizational, Technical and Cultural. The right consultant will not be limited to only the technical aspects of change. While technical change is the easiest to implement, the real changes to support that technical change is organizational and, even more importantly, cultural. Organizational and cultural change is what enables the technical changes to be sustained. We often see the most pushback when attempting to change the organization and culture.

## **DISCUSS THE UNDISCUSSABLES WITH LEADERSHIP**

Consultants must be honest with the leadership. We tell the leaders what they need to hear, not always what they want to hear. Leadership tends to be far more apt to listen to the consultant than one of the employees that report to them. A great consultant doesn't tell the top leaders what they want to hear even at the risk of being asked to leave the business. Consultants can also tell you what your people are afraid to tell you. You may not think your associates are afraid to tell you things, but we can assure you this is a normal occurrence in any business. We can also say what the CEO is thinking, but can't say. At times, we have served as the mouthpiece, as long as it was aligned with the long-term direction of the transformation, for the CEO to the rest of the organization.

## **YOUR CHOICE**

Some will choose to struggle through the transformation process on their own. Doing this is better than doing nothing. However, if one wants to accelerate learning and improvement, one should find a consultant that one can trust and make them part of the transformation process. This person should have the ear of the top leader at the site as well as the C-suite.

Is your organization transforming at the rate you require or desire? Have your transformation efforts stagnated? Are your internal consultants not making progress like they did when they were first hired? If your organization is ready to expedite their transformation, Drive can help. We have a team of proven experts in improving business performance, and we offer a 200% guarantee on all investment, effectively eliminating risk. For a no-obligation introduction meeting, please contact Paul Eakle at [paul.eakle@driveinc.com](mailto:paul.eakle@driveinc.com) or 865-323-3491.

