

## Why did I hire the consultant any way?

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We tried and tried not to get stale by doing things differently and keeping the office fresh. We had lunches with all new staff members monthly and lunch with a couple of different staff members once a week. We asked a lot of questions of the staff all the time. We wanted to know what they thought of our process and what they would do differently if they owned the firm. We wanted it to sound like a town hall meeting (a trick I stole from one of our consultants).

When we brought in consultants, we brought in people to review the collection operation, the legal operation, the work flow, the call center and so on and so on. We told the consultants that we were looking to have someone from the outside review our process to see what we may have been missing. We realized that since we lived inside the cocoon environment of the law firm every day that we may have developed tunnel vision.

Consultants are much like doctors; if you go in and tell them that something does not work, generally you will get an answer like, "can you describe the symptoms?" Being able to come up with a more general "help statement" is going to get you farther to solving the overall problem than just being vague.

If you can figure out what you are looking for help with, it does a couple of things. 1) It limits the scope of the engagement thereby reducing your total cost of the engagement, 2) it helps to focus the work that the consultant will perform, and 3) it will allow the consultant a starting point to begin their investigation.

What you think is wrong, may not actually be wrong, but by offering a specific item for the consultant to dive into, they can look for not only the root cause, but also periphery causes as well. When you go to the doctor with leg pain, the doctor will most likely look at your back as well as your leg, since there is a strong correlation leg pain and the lower back.

The value of hiring any consultant should be viewed by the result that is produced the month after the consultants suggestions are put into place and the next month as well. We always used a rule of thumb that 10 times cost equals profit. So, if the high priced consultant cost us \$10,000.00 for the visit, travel and other direct expenses, we wanted a \$100,000 increase in fee for each of the next two months. That type of return can only be achieved if you follow the recommendations of the final report, and listen to the implementation instructions of the consultant.

Now picture this, you spent \$10,000 to make \$100,000.....would you do that again and again and again.....I know that I would and I did. It is part of what made us very successful.

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