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Choosing a Consultant by Ben Hughes

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We live in a world of inter-connectedness and increasing specialization. The Internet allows an individual to market to the world. Part of this revolution is a ratcheting down of costs while at the same time a ratcheting up of available skilled solutions. Welcome to the world of specialized consultants that can revolutionize the way you do business. The key to unlocking this new world is the proper discovery & incorporation of these services into the products and services you provide.

Speed is essential, as delivery times on all services have plummeted since the early-1980s. Back then, auto body shop repair times were dated by the archeological layers of accumulated Bondo dust, â€œ5-7 business daysâ€• for package delivery was considered good, and airline tickets were mailed to you. My how times have changed! Now, a business can outsource consulting services or analysis and quickly receive it back within 24 hours! This quick analysis turnaround can be crucial to landing the sale, solving the delay in the solution, or avoiding a career- or business-ending decision.

When outsourcing analytical services, one should carefully select a consultant who has the real-world experience and education to handle the task. Despite its transactional nature, one should consider the selection to be of a relationship, since your time is too valuable to constantly be spent re-acquiring consultants â€“ after all, theyâ€™re supposed to be helping you! The consultant should have an inquiring mind, a business mind, and a can-do attitude. They should be a quick-study of problems and be easy to communicate with. Reports should be presented in a logical, methodic, prioritized, and comprehensive manner. The consultant should have a mechanism in place to facilitate the anticipated transactions on a repetitive basis (submission of task, delivery of work product, and payment). And the consultant should be user-friendly with high service standards (guarantees).

Have the consultant relate back to you your own business model to insure the consultant understands the business he is servicing. Make sure the consultant always comprehensively defines the problem before offering solutions. Itâ€™s also great to know the consultant is looking at the entire big picture, and not just the narrow focus that may have been initially identified. The presented solutions should be practical (capable of implementation) and consistent with each other.

The successful companies of tomorrow are taking advantage today of the transformative â€œflatteningâ€• of the world brought about in part by the Internet. Innovators constantly evaluate the possibility of outsourcing all but their most competitive competencies. Choosing to do so can reduce their costs and improve the quality of their products and services. Consultants exist because they effectively and efficiently fulfill a need. Are you taking advantage of this opportunity?

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