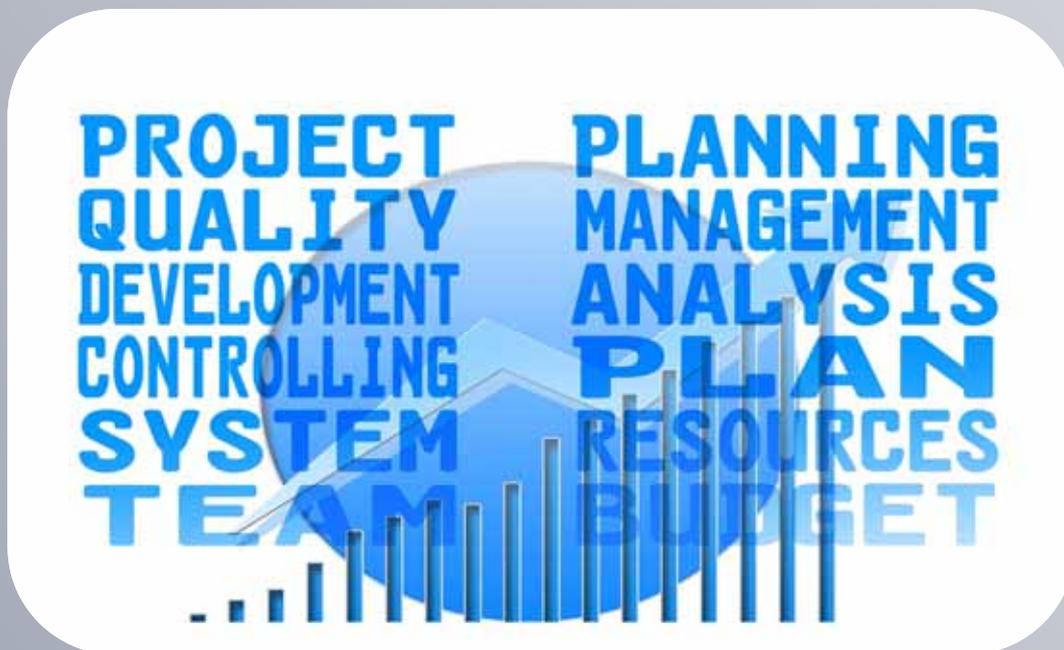


9 Essentials for Managing Consultants

How to manage consulting projects effectively



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Managing consultants properly influences an engagement's success:

It sometimes happens that consulting engagements are managed poorly. Deadlines are allowed to slip, deliverables are badly defined, etc. One of the most important lessons from this experience is: Don't leave consultants to their own devices. The client organization or the client's project team has to be in the driving seat. When clients manage the consultants and stay focused and determined to deliver a successful project, consultants will deliver real value.



Return on Consulting:

Quality of outcomes and value of consulting projects (return on consulting) are dependent on various factors which can be influenced and managed by client organizations.

Management & controlling of consulting projects (project governance):

- ✓ Client organizations which systematically manage and control consulting projects achieve higher project goal achievement rates and higher return on consulting projects.
- ✓ The top-3 key performance indicators of consulting projects are:

1

Project organization & team staffing

2

Project management & project controlling

3

Selection of consultant

Source: Return on Consulting Best Practice-Study Cardea AG

1

Project organization: The right project team members

Staff your internal and external project team and important project steering bodies with people who have the right qualifications and sufficient time to be involved in the project.

-  How much resources have to be supplied by the consultant?
How much resources have to be supplied by the client organization?
-  Which qualifications do the internal and external project manager have to bring to the table?
-  How do you have to staff the internal and external team in terms of expertise, seniority, functions/ roles and skills?
-  Which individuals/ key stakeholders have to be involved in the project?

2

Contracting: Terms of contracts

Make sure that you set up and sign a consulting agreement which specifies the terms of the engagement between you and the consultant before the project starts. The contractual terms delineate the relevant project parameters which are necessary to agree in order to effectively manage and control the project..

-  What are project scope, project content, activities and objectives?
-  Who is responsible for what? How much time will each member of the consultant's team commit? What are extent and means by which the consulting team will interact with your staff?
-  Which deliverables and results are expected when? What quality and performance measurement criteria are utilized?
-  Which decision and control mechanisms are applied? Which commercial terms are agreed?

3

Communications: Get your message across

Communication is one of the most important component within any project. Project communications refer to the specific behavior and techniques used to motivate, lead, delegate, and report back to all stakeholders working on the project. Communication and human interaction can make or break a project.

-  Who to communicate to? Who are the individual project stakeholders and what are their requirements for project information?
-  How will you communicate with your project team, the members of the project steering bodies and other relevant stakeholders?
-  What are the information requirements of your targeted audiences?
-  How do you ensure that you get the correct information across to the project stakeholders?

4

Processes: Client-consultant interaction

Client–consultant interaction is the most important factor for the success of consulting projects: Ensure that the consultants can access relevant information and get the support needed from the internal project members in order to avoid time delays, additional costs and unresolved issues.

-  How does knowledge sharing between the client and consultant takes place? How does decision making occur?
-  Which role does the consultant have in the client-consultant relationship? Which role does the client organization have?
-  Which position does the client organization has when it comes to having an influence on the outcomes/ the problem solution?
-  How do client's resources and activities influence the service provider's ability to create value?

5

Controlling: The right KPIs and measures

Successful projects begin when proper planning and procedures are implemented systematically with an ultimate goal of achieving predetermined objectives. A project management plan should be supported by project control processes that monitor work and identify whether the work is proceeding according to plan. To make that determination, project controls personnel assess the data and determine actions to prevent or correct issues.

-  Which information and KPIs are required to monitor work and project progress?
-  Who is responsible for providing this information (client's resources, consultants, joint PMO)?
-  How is it ensured that the project manager and his team gains full control of their project?
-  What happens if project success is at risk? How are performance and resource management issues solved?

6

Managing the value of deliverables and outcomes

Agree together with the consultant the approach how to achieve the project's objectives, determine the outcomes and solution options and control the deliverables before they are finally approved.

-  How do you ensure that outcomes and solutions meet your expectations?
-  What outcomes do you and your organization value? Are the expectations reflected in the achievements?
-  Which performance measures related to quality of outcome do you utilize?
-  What happens if outcomes and solutions do not meet expectations and do not deliver any value?

7

Using milestones to track progress

Project planning for typical milestones is an important component of project scheduling. Mark specific points along a project timeline and formally approve deliverables (e.g. analysis, reports, implementation plans, etc.) to track project progress and accomplishments.

- What are specific project events along the project's timeline?
- What are important decision points along the project's timeline?
- Who is responsible for reviewing milestones and deciding whether milestones have been met or not?
- What actions will be taken to manage "missed" and "about to be missed" milestones?

8

Adoption: Gain acceptance, implement sustainable solutions

Seek individuals to back or sponsor the change from throughout the organization. Look for individuals whose experience or position enables them to provide support, resources or influence and make the change effort work.

-  How do you get your employees to buy in on change?
-  Which roles and tasks do you have to appoint to individuals who are responsible for planning, directing, and implementing the change ?
-  Which roles and tasks do you have to appoint to the consultants who support planning, directing, and implementing the change ?
-  How do you involve individuals in the change process, ensure that they understand the 'why' and that they are willing and able to adopt the change?

9

Performance measurement: The right conclusions

Measure project performance against key project performance scope, schedule, quality, cost and risk criteria. Also think about measuring the performance of the internal and the consultant's team and the process. Involve different key stakeholders when assessing project and team performance.



Gain agreement on key metrics vital to measure project performance. How do eliminate confusion about what actually should be measured?



Which key performance indicators (KPIs) will tell you whether you have been or are being successful or not and to what degree?



Which performance indicators contributed to what degree to the performance of the consultant?



Which performance lessons can be captured and share after reviewing project and team performance?

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For more than a decade, he knows the challenges in the consulting world in national and international markets. His qualifications and experience in virtually all consulting topics are the basis for the efficient and thorough evaluation of consultants.



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