



2) FINDING A GOOD CONSULTANT

There are times when a business may seek external assistance and a good consultant can be invaluable for one-off projects or as an ongoing resource. This Info Sheet provides insights on using external consultants.

Why use an external consultant?

There are many reasons for using an external consultant, such as a need for specialist knowledge, lack of internal time, an independent view and a recognised expert to address an issue.

A consultant wouldn't generally get involved in day-to-day operational work items, however recommendations from a consultant may rely on business processes and operations in order for recommendations to be put into practice.

OHS/WHS, Quality and Environmental Consultants

The range of consultants available to support a business are as wide as the range of industries and business sizes and types. For businesses needing OHS/WHS, quality and environmental support, consultants can provide general advice and a wide range of services, including:

- Advising on and introducing new products or processes
- Providing training, coaching or mentoring
- Complaint, issue or incident investigation
- Independent audits and reviews
- Specialist advice and risk assessments
- Giving strategic guidance
- Designing and implementing management systems
- Gaining accreditation to recognised standards

Signs of a Good Consultant

It's important to know how to identify a good consultant from a not so good consultant. Characteristics of a good consultant include:

- They understand (or take the time to understand) their clients business.
- They present options and let their client choose what will work for them.
- They keep their clients business confidential.
- They put their client's interests ahead of their own.
- They look for ways to help their clients- 'going the extra mile'.
- They look for solutions and know things aren't 'black and white'.

What are the costs for external consultants?

External consultants can work full time, on one-off projects or may be used for a few hours a week or month (such as a retainer) to provide



5 TIPS TO HELP YOU FIND A GOOD CONSULTANT

TIP #1

Be clear on the reason for using a consultant and the type of consultant needed.

TIP #2

Establish options for costs, based on the services and availability of the consultant.

TIP #3

Apply good business practice (and objectivity) to identifying and selecting a consultant.

TIP #4

Look at the consultants 'fine print' and practices to see how they work

TIP #5

Give feedback on what's working and what's not – address issues early.

support on an ongoing basis. Consultancy fees will vary depending on the skill, experience, qualifications and availability of a consultant. As a general guide, consultants charge for services in one of three ways:

- An agreed fee for a specific outcome
- Hourly rate (invoiced with a breakdown of time spent)
- On a retained basis, where the organisation commits to a minimum number of hours/services each month

Deciding on a Consultant

The 10 key steps in Kitney's Info Sheet 'Appointing and Working with Consultants' provide a checklist for choosing on consultant. These are important, as it's not just the services consultants provide but the way they work that is important. Key considerations are:

- Competence and ethics – Check the qualifications, experience and professional membership of the person who will do the work.
- Conflicts of interest – Ask for these to be declared.
- Rapport – Meet consultants face-to-face and ensure they can do the work and they are someone you want to work with
- Insurances – Check their Professional Indemnity and Public Liability Insurance provides cover for the work they will do
- Copyright and intellectual property – Check ownership rights to documents, tools or techniques developed during the work
- Practicality - Ensure the consultant can offer practical, business-minded solutions (check with referees or ask for examples of previous work)
- Materials – Confirm how materials will be provided, such as through a cloud based share folder. For electronic materials, will these be editable for future use by the business.
- Follow-up – Establish what support, if any, you will get after the work has been done

Working with a Consultant

Once you have chosen your external consultant, there is still work to be done to make sure you get the right outcome for your business:

- Ensure the consultant understands the brief and scope, and you understand the work they will do or solution they propose. If their language is confusing, ask them to explain in terms you understand.
- If there is an emphasis on cost, then work with the consultant to identify what tasks you can retain in-house.
- Be clear on deadlines, costs and what work will be included. Understand the consultant's expectations of you and your organisation. Get everything important agreed up-front.
- Ensure the consultant has access to information they need and agree on communication so you can monitor their progress. Be mindful of scope creep as this can increase costs.
- Once work has been completed, check against initial expectations and provide feedback. If they haven't delivered on what was agreed, give them the opportunity to fix it.

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5 ACTIONS TO FIND A GOOD CONSULTANT:

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