



FINDING A GREAT EXTERNAL CONSULTANT

The right Consultant can be an invaluable resource to a business and asking the right questions is key to finding a great Consultant. This Info Sheet provides questions to consider when talking with potential WHS/OHS, quality, environmental and risk management consultants.

The Importance of a Good Question

Deciding to use a Consultant and finding the right one is no easy task. A good consultant can be worth their weight in gold, whereas a poor Consultant can cost time, money and affect business efficiency and effectiveness.

If you're going to hire a WHS, quality, environmental or risk Consultant, then choose a great one. The Kitney Info Sheet 'Appointing and Working with Consultants' provides a useful checklist, with the questions below helpful for separating the good from the not so good.

About the Consultant

- What was your work experience before becoming a Consultant?
- What is your industry experience? What roles have you held? Have you held a Management position? If so, when and where?
- How many clients do you have? Who are they? Do you have a reference or testimonial list? What is your reputation?
- Qualifications, education and professional registrations held?

Services and Expertise

- What services do you offer? What are your areas of expertise and interest? What experience do you have for the services required?
- What experience do you have with document based and online (or cloud based) management systems?
- For management system work, how many projects have you successfully lead and finished in the past 3 years?
- What is the most complex assignment that you have ever had? How did you approach this?
- Do you deliver education and training? If yes, what type of training sessions and for how many people?
- Have you published an expert article or presented at conferences? If so, how many and where?
- What is the usual length of your projects or services?

Approach and Cost

- How would you describe your Consultancy style and approach? How do you plan work and ensure services stay in budget and on track?
- How do you cost work? What will be the cost for services? Who will complete the work required?
- How would you approach the services needed by the business?



5 TIPS ON QUESTIONS TO ASK EXTERNAL CONSULTANTS

TIP #1

Be clear on what you need a Consultant for and use this to guide the questions you ask.

TIP #2

Identify possible Consultants and find out as much as you can about them before meeting.

TIP #3

List questions in advance and use them to compare answers between Consultants.

TIP #4

Be persistent. If the Consultant doesn't provide a clear answer re-ask the question.

TIP #5

Take notes and cross-check details if needed.

Questions for a Quality Consultant

- Can you describe ISO 9001: 2015 structure. What mandatory documents are required by ISO 9001: 2015?
- What experience do you have leading the development, implementation, continuous improvement and auditing of a quality management system (QMS)? What is your experience with other standards? How many clients have gained certification?
- What are the most common issues experienced in implementing or improving quality management?
- How do you approach design and development, production and services, outsourcing and customers in quality management?

Questions for a WHS/OHS Consultant

- Can you describe AS/NZ 4801, ISO 45001 & ISO 31000. What mandatory documents are required by ISO 45001?
- What experience do you have leading the development, implementation, continuous improvement and auditing of a WHS/OHS management system? What is your experience with other standards? How many clients have gained certification?
- What are the most common issues experienced in implementing or improving WHS/OHS management?
- What experience do you have in legal obligations for the jurisdiction and industry? What is your experience in establishing responsibilities for duty holders?
- What experience do you have in identifying hazards, risk management and the management of change?
- What is your experience in incident investigation and continuous improvement of systems and processes?
- What experience do you have on the use of indicators for goal setting, resourcing and reporting on WHS/OHS performance?

Questions for an Environmental Consultant

- Can you describe ISO 14001: 2015 structure? What mandatory documents are required by ISO 14001: 2015?
- What experience do you have leading the development, implementation, continuous improvement and auditing of a quality management system (EMS)? What is your experience with other standards? How many clients have gained certification?
- What are the most common issues experienced in implementing or improving environmental management?
- How do you approach risks and opportunities, environmental objectives, operational planning and emergency preparedness and response?

With the time available to talk with possible Consultants it won't be possible to use all of the questions above. Use them as a base to guide the conversation and to compare answers between consultants.

5 THINGS TO ENSURE WE ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

SUPPORT FROM KITNEY

Consultancy Services:

Health and safety, quality and environmental and risk services delivered by professionals: www.kitney.com

- General consultancy
- Manuals & systems
- Audits & reviews
- Events & training
- Coaching & mentoring

Kitney Toolkit:

Health and safety, quality and environmental resources:

- Manuals & systems
- Toolkits
- Individual documents

Free to access Info Centre: www.kitney.com/learning

- Info sheets
- Online self-assessments
- Videos

This document is provided for users in Australia who are working under the harmonised Work Health and Safety legislation. We aim to provide content that is correct but make no representations about its suitability, timeliness, completeness and accuracy, or that of anything contained on any linked web-site. We accept no liability for any loss, damage or consequence resulting directly or indirectly from the use of any content provided. The content is provided "as is" without any expressed or implied warranty. To the extent that liability cannot be completely excluded, by accessing this content you agree that your remedy is limited to the amount of money that you paid to us for the content, even if that amount was zero. This document is not professional advice, should you require professional advice please contact us regarding the provision of consultancy services. Links to websites are inserted for your convenience and do not constitute endorsement of material on those sites, or of any associated organisations, products or services. You use links at your own risk.

Published by Kitney Occupational Health & Safety Pty Ltd.