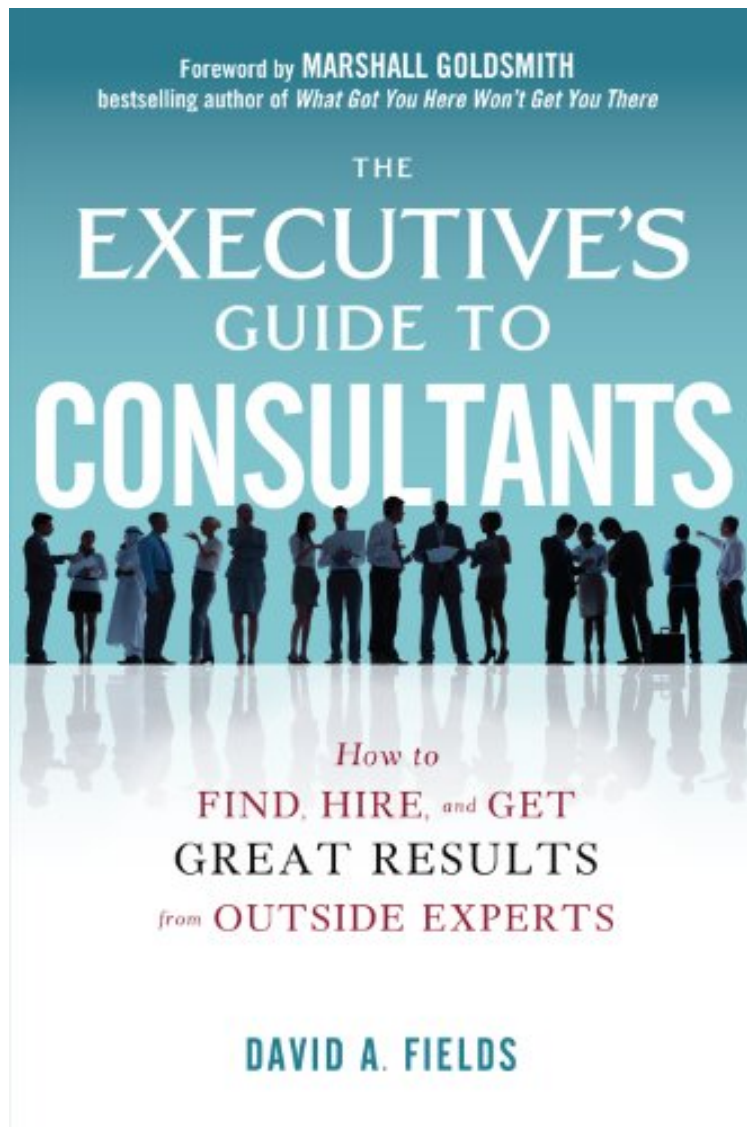


[FREE] The Executive's Guide to Consultants: How to Find, Hire and Get Great Results from Outside Experts

## The Executive's Guide to Consultants: How to Find, Hire and Get Great Results from Outside Experts

David Fields

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**David Fields : The Executive's Guide to Consultants: How to Find, Hire and Get Great Results from Outside Experts** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Executive's Guide to Consultants: How to Find, Hire and Get Great Results from Outside Experts:

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. A guide to making transparency work in consulting engagements  
By Michael A. Dalton I'm reviewing the book from the perspective of an independent consultant--even

though the primary audience is executives looking to improve the results they get when hiring consultants. Of course, the book's client-centered perspective is exactly the reason I wanted to read it in the first place. Also, unlike some of the early reviewers, I haven't met nor have I worked with the author before. With that said, *The Executive's Guide to Consultants*, provides a fresh external viewpoint on how to make sure you are truly adding value for clients while minimizing execution risk and as a result getting the fees you deserve...and most importantly minimizing the friction inevitable in doing so. Now, it's the rare consultant-written book that doesn't get some criticism as being self-serving in trying to benefit his own consulting practice, but that would miss this book's essential benefit altogether. The author's approach creates a win for both sides by advocating a fair and transparent approach to sharing in the value created by any engagement. He starts with a clear picture of the value created (what he calls "Why bother?") and then factors in an apportionment of the value between each of the different projects involved (including those the consultant isn't involved in); the relative contribution of both the client and the consultant, and the risk involved. He then suggests a financial pie split (my terminology) that provides clients with a better return than they could get elsewhere while still appropriately rewarding the consultant's contribution. He also shares some useful implementation practices that can be built in early to minimize execution risk. The book would have been even better if it had included a set of downloadable templates (context document, proposal formats, checklists, etc.) to help the reader integrate them into their own practices more easily, but that's a nit. In summary, the *Executive's Guide to Consultants* brings value to both clients and consultants by showing how aligning their mutual interest for fast and flawless execution in a way that traditional "butts in seats" pricing never could. I'd highly recommend it for any consultant that wants to move beyond just selling hours.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. By FAR the best practical tool for structuring win/win outcomes

By REGI have an MBA from a top tier school, I read voraciously, and I have read many many consulting books (Alan Weiss, Peter Block, etc etc etc) and this book simply blew me away. I wish every Exec I've worked with (as an employee and external resource) had used this process. While it is incredibly valuable for executives, if the executive has not done the necessary work, it is a guide for a potential service provider to lead a prospect through a high value, trust and credibility building interaction (possibly deciding that using external resources is not a good fit- a benefit to you both!). David Fields covers key concepts such as establishing a risk-adjusted project value, deciding if the organization can and should do the work themselves, finding and selecting the right resources, addressing risk (critical!), using the most appropriate fee structure, and much more. My frustration with other books is that while they claim to be practical, they still stay too high-level and generalized to really be useful. David Fields practices what he preaches and delivers incredible value for the price with this book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Terrific advice for both executives and consultants

By Andrew Sobel Executives are often attacked for using too many external consultants and advisors. Those same consultants are in turn criticized for overselling themselves and then under-delivering. But the fact is, most corporations are now pretty experienced users of outside help. They aren't just out there, willy-nilly, hiring consultants they don't need. David Fields, in his new book "*The Executive's Guide to Consultants*," has put his finger on the real issue, which is the following: Clients need to get better at deciding which projects to use external advisors on, structuring those engagements properly, and then creating a productive working relationship with their chosen experts. What I like about Fields' book is that he avoids cliches and stereotypes and offers solid, practical ideas and frameworks for getting the most out of consulting engagements. In short, he delivers on his promise. In major sections of his book he covers how to choose the right projects, finding the most appropriate consultants, how to structure fees and contracts, and how to successfully implement. All of the material is equally valid for executives who hire consultants and consultants who are trying to improve their client relationships. I like his first chapter a lot, which asks why you think a project or program needs to get funded and implemented in the first place. Both companies and consultants would do well to ask this question again and again, and to stay away from low-value, low-priority initiatives which will have no major impact. Fields' writing is clear and breezy, which sets it apart from the stiff, halting prose of many business books. I've researched and written four books on professional-client relationships, most recently *Power Questions: Build Relationships, Win New Business, and Influence Others*, and I really do feel this book is the best guide I've yet seen on how to enhance the executive-consultant partnership. Highly recommended.

**Maximize Your Return on Expertise** Research shows a high proportion of consultants fail to deliver results on time, on budget, and on target. Rare is the project that exceeds your expectations. But help is here. *The Executive's Guide to Consultants* explains how to ensure that every project delivers measurable benefits every time. This book will help you find experts, invest wisely, accelerate change, and achieve your most important goals by tapping into the genius of others. *The Executive's Guide to Consultants* contains breakthrough ideas covered by no other book, including:

- Sophisticated new contract structures that maximize your ROI
- Essential methods for reducing project risk
- Cutting-edge techniques for making change stick after the consultant leaves
- You will also learn to: Spot "chameleons" and other low-quality consultants who peddle tired ideas and deliver disappointing outcomes
- Get better results faster, while lowering fees
- Find the ideal consultant, coach, agency, or advisor for your precise situation
- Enforce accountability with outside experts and your own internal team
- Imagine if you could collect the wisdom of dozens of

the country's top CEOs, combine it with the experience of a hall-of-fame consultant, and add a bucketful of unconventional thinking. You'd have *The Executive's Guide to Consultants*. Easy to read and packed with examples, checklists, templates, and guidelines, this book is the ultimate toolkit for maximizing your ROI from outside experts. Get extraordinary results from every consultant you hire "An extraordinary book. Clear, comprehensive, and eminently readable, it is THE book on how you can extract true business value from outside experts." -- Scott Cotherman, Chairman, TBWAWorldHealth, subsidiary of Omnicom Group, Inc. "This is the Master Class for those who are smart, innovative, ahead of the pack, and who intend to stay that way. If you're not yet in that league, you should read this book twice." -- Alan Weiss, author, *Million Dollar Consulting* and *The Consulting Bible* "A terrific guidebook, with much of the advice equally applicable in managing your organization's internal talent. It's an easy, engaging read with a wealth of insights and detailed action steps--I highly recommend it." -- Brian Walker, President and CEO, Herman Miller, Inc. "A powerful antidote to the strained relationship between consultants and clients." -- Garry Ridge, CEO, WD-40 Company "This book shows you how to make your consultants' work stick. No more major investments in experts or programs that evaporate after only a few months or years." -- De Lyle Bloomquist, President, Tata Global Chemicals "Fields's messages are delivered in the way that all executives would like our outside resources to do it: capably, with straight talk and incredible insight." -- Ralph Scozzafava, Chairman and CEO, Furniture Brands

"A valuable tool for consultants looking to bolster a client list and develop better relationships." In the Black 20130201 "[A] careful, thoughtful, thorough approach to every aspect of the consulting project, alerting you to issues that you might be overlooked but can cause problems." Globe Mail 20130101 About the Author David A. Fields is the founder and managing director of The Ascendant Consortium, a unique organization specializing in maximizing the ROI from consulting engagements. He writes a monthly column for *IndustryWeek*, and his commentary has appeared in *USA Today*, *CNN Money*, *Investor's Business Daily*, *Advertising Age*, *BusinessWeek*, *SmartMoney*, and other publications.