

The Ins and Outs of Hiring a Consultant to Help Grow Your Business

While small businesses have to be ever vigilant in how they spend their money, a consultant can be an effective resource for pushing the business into the next stage of growth. A consultant can also offer a valuable outside perspective for companies who are struggling.

Think of it this way. Often a financial advisor or consultant plays the role of a CFO. Many small businesses can't afford a full-time position dedicated to assessing the financial impact of important business decisions. Outsourcing this task to a respected, qualified and known consultant can give you valuable insight into critical financial and business decisions—everything from how buying a large piece of equipment will affect the business financially to how effective specific growth strategies may be for your specific business.

But you want to be very careful

not to be swept away by fast-pitching business consultants who use high-pressure tactics. If someone comes on super strong and makes you feel uncomfortable, listen to your instincts. Remember this is someone you will need to trust and work with closely. After all, you are entrusting him/her with your business and your livelihood. You need to feel confident with the advice and suggestions the person offers. You need to trust this person has your best interests in mind and not his/her wallet.

Business consultants offer all kinds of services, so be sure to investigate. Be clear about what you're looking for (i.e. professional development training for you or your team, financial advice, organizational development, business development or marketing skills) and enquire about the person's experience. Do not hesitate to ask for references. Don't just rely on their

marketing materials.

Talk to current clients to get a sense of how the person works. Ask a prospective consultant for a list of referrals. Remember to enquire about ongoing support. It's not enough to have a plan in most cases. You will want to make sure there will be support or help available if you run into trouble during implementation. Negotiate fees for this support before signing a contract. Clearly outline what kind of support (phone, face-to-face, repeat training etc.) and the charges in the contract.

For more information on hiring a consultant, please email us at consulting@eversrobinson.com or call us at 602.230.9480.

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