



Consultants can play a positive role in helping companies reappraise their market opportunities, strategies, and tactics. Consultants provide a client company with an outside-in view to correct the company's tendency to take an inside-out view.

Yet some managers say: "If we are successful, we don't need consultants. If we are unsuccessful, we can't afford them."

We need fewer *consultants* and more *resultants*. Too many consultants give you advice and fail to grapple with the difficult problem of implementing the recommendations. Keep the consultant and pay him or her according to results.

Here is a test for finding a good consultant. Ask each consultant, "What time is it?"

- The first consultant says: "It is exactly 9:32 A.M. and 10 seconds." Hire him if you want an accurate, fact-filled study.
- The second consultant answers: "What time do you want it to be?" Hire him if you don't want advice so much as corroboration.
- The third consultant answers: "Why do you want to know?" Hire him if you want some original thinking, such as defin-

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ing the problem more carefully. Peter Drucker says that his greatest strength as a consultant is to be ignorant and ask a few basic questions.

There is a lot of cynicism about consultants. As early as the first century B.C., Publilius Syrus, a Latin writer, noted: **“Many receive advice, few profit by it.”** Robert Townsend, former CEO of Avis Rent-A-Car, described consultants as **“people who borrow your watch and tell you what time it is and then walk off with the watch.”** William Marsteller, of Burson-Marsteller public relations, added: **“A consultant is a person who knows nothing about your business to whom you pay more to tell you how to run it than you could earn if you ran it right instead of the way he tells you.”**

The cynicism simply means that there are good and bad consultants and your task is to be able to tell the difference.

orporate Branding

There is great payoff in building a strong corporate brand. Sony can put its name on any electronic device and customers will prefer it to the competition. Virgin can enter almost any business and be successful because its name means brings a fresh approach to that business.

The major requirement for corporate branding is for the company to stand for something, whether it is quality, innovation, friendliness, or something else. Take Caterpillar, the heavy con-