

Claremont Graduate University
School of Behavioral & Organizational Sciences
Human Resources Design
HRD 348 Consulting Skills

Course Syllabus

This syllabus is written to give you an overview of what is planned for HRD 348- Consulting Skills. Please think of the course as your laboratory to learn, grow, be challenged, and to develop a better sense of what you want from the consulting profession or to develop an internal consulting function within an organization. With that in mind, we might make changes to the course segments and/or some content changes as we progress through the sessions depending on your interests and needs.

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This course is designed for the beginning consultant, for the person examining the potential for his/her professional services in the marketplace or for those of you that want to create or improve an internal consulting function within an organization. The purpose for the course is to provide vital information and pragmatic steps for starting, developing, and marketing a successful consulting practice. Whether you are in an organization, part of a larger professional services firm, or out on your own, you should consider that you are running a business with all the accompanying management, financial and business development issues and concerns.

Modern human resources management, human performance improvement, workplace learning, and organizational consulting has developed into a professional service with many facets and roles to be explored. Your responsibility in this class is to come prepared to explore what it is you want to do with the opportunities that consulting affords. Additionally, this class offers you the opportunity to work through your assumptions about consulting and test your notions about what you think or feel consulting is all about.

Some of the aspects of human resources and organizational consulting we will review and analyze:

- Developing the form and structure of the business
- Differing roles of consultants for organizations
- Running a business & the business of consulting
- What is the role of the consultant?

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Keeping the above in mind, this course is intended to:

- 1) Focus on various aspects of human resources and organizational consulting.
- 2) Review the positive and negative characteristics of consulting
- 3) Develop a basic understanding of how to start and run a consulting business (externally or internally)
- 4) Encourage full and active participation
- 5) Facilitate people sharing their background and contributing to the growth and development of class participants
- 6) Consider knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics essential to being successful in consulting.
- 7) Consider theoretical and other constructs of consulting that impinge on our knowledge about how consultants operate

Reading Materials for this class:

- 1) Biech, E. (1999). *The business of consulting: the basics and beyond*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
 - a) Read this book last.
- 2) Block, P. (2000). *Flawless consulting (2 ed.)*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- 3) Weisbord, M. (2004). *Productive workplaces revisited: organizing and managing for dignity, meaning, and community in the 21st century*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Read this book first; this is a “must read” to grasp the field of organization development and consulting.
- 4) **Handouts**, articles, and models: we will cover in class.
- 5) The **Stevens & Cox** handout *How to sell your products and services to the right market* will help you prepare your marketing plan. Read pages 8 through 11 and “Reaching the consultive market” beginning on page 97.
- 6) **Cases**: Please review the Harvard Business School cases included in the reader. You will have some time in class to review them, but it is important to be familiar with the cases so you may expedite your work in class.
 - a) Florida Air, Inc.
 - b) Harrah’s Entertainment, Inc.
 - c) WestJest Airlines, Inc.
 - d) Brinkerhoff International

Supplementary & Additional Reading

For those of you who want to pursue consulting seriously or for those of you who want to delve into the topic a little deeper, I provide this short list:

- 1) Bolman, L. & Deal T. (2003). *Reframing organizations: artistry, choice, and leadership (3rd edition)*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. I almost used this book for

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the class. This is great book to read with Weisbord's book. Use this book to broaden your ability to understand organizational life, your ability to diagnose situations and to help your clients improve their ability to make better choices.

- 2) Bellman, G. (1990). *The consultants calling*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. This book provides you with a good personal account of the journey to become a consultant and approaches the work and business of consulting.
- 3) Putnam, A. (1990). *Marketing your services: a step-by-step guide for small business professionals*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. Good book to use for building a practice.
- 4) Harrison, R. (1995). *Consultant's journey: a dance of work and spirit*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. This book can be useful for you to read and see how a person can change his/her approach to work and life in the profession.

There are great books on consulting such as those by Edgar Schein and the Lippitts. The books above in addition to the seminal works provide a good grounding in the theory and practice of consulting and I hope they help you as well.

One approach to this list is to read Bellman first and think about how you are doing the work or how you will approach the work of consulting externally or internally. Then get Putnam as a reference and guide, and spend a weekend reading and tweaking your marketing plan. Finally, after you have made your first million, pick up Harrison and do some good old fashioned reflective thinking.

Scheduling:

We will have 2.5 full days together: It is important that you are committed, comfortable, and courageous. The class is structured in the following way-

- 1) Introduction - Conceptual Framework for Consulting
 - a) What is it?
 - b) What goes on?
 - c) Do organizations use consultants/
 - d) What do you think you are doing?
- 2) Skills & Talents for Consulting
 - a) Skills, knowledge, abilities needed
 - b) Assessments
 - c) Assumptions
 - d) Assignments as a consultant
- 3) The Consulting Business & The Business of Consulting
 - a) Starting
 - b) Legal form
 - c) Marketing
 - i) Sales vs. Marketing
 - ii) Resistance
 - d) Transition into consulting

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- e) Flawless consulting
- f) Performance consulting
- g) Executive coaching
- h) Results orientation
- i) Delivering
- j) Organizational resistance
- 4) Running the Business
 - a) Business & Marketing Plans
 - i) Yours?
 - b) Your niche?
 - c) Your billing & Your money
 - d) Contracting
 - i) Skills for
 - ii) Proposals
 - iii) Contracts
 - iv) Negotiating
- 5) Your Business Plan
 - a) Conceptualizing
 - b) Developing
 - c) Writing it – yours that is!

Class Assignments:

- 1) ***Do the reading first!*** We will use what we read as a base for our discussions about consulting, the myths and realities, and whether or you want to continue to pursue consulting as a career.
- 2) **RE: the Stevens & Cox** handout, *How to sell your products and services to the right market* – become familiar with it, start working through it, do as much as you can. Read pages 8 through 11; pp. 49-56 and “Reaching the consultive market” beginning on page 97. Come prepared with issues, concerns, and questions. They provide a structured approach to marketing services that will serve you well. The work in this handout will form the basis for your marketing plan in your business plan.
- 3) **Prior the first class**, prepare some type of business plan and be prepared to share it with the others in class – verbally and in writing. You will be required to give copies to other class participants. You will need to obtain your own resources for the business plan. I believe Office 97 has a template for a business plan if you want to use it and the Biech book has a resource for that as well. The purpose of this assignment is to “jump start” your thinking about how you will think about your business, how you will present your services to potential clients and/or funding sources (if you have not already done so), and how you want to be perceived by clients and funding sources. You will be expected to collaborate and help your colleagues during class.

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- 4) **Before the first class**, prepare a bio for yourself. Be prepared to share with the class – verbally and in writing. You will be required to provide copies to the other class participants. Consider the biographical summary as part of your presentation to potential clients or funding sources.
- 5) Your final assignment is to re-work your business plan, professional bio, and presentation, based on what you have learned. This will be turned in after the last class, prior to the semesters end.
- 6) On the last day of class you will be required to make a marketing presentation to a management group considering hiring a consulting firm. You will have time during class to work on this. The length of the presentation is dependant on the number of people in class on the final day. However, expect a 20 minute presentation. In the past, several people have banded together to form a consulting group. If you know other people in the class and want to do a group presentation that is fine, just let me know by the end of first day of class when we discuss the assignment. This is your opportunity for practice, creativity, and fun. You will need to find your own resources for this assignment, but if you started working through the Stevens & Cox handout and if you begin your business plan work, you will be well on your way!
- 7) Be ready to participate and cooperate with each other.
- 8) Be ready to share with each other – your wisdom and experience.

Grading:

This is a two unit graduate level course. When we all commit to mutually pursuing excellence and collaboration, the best is usually achieved. Grading is as follows:

Participation & Collaboration	50 pts.
Professional Bio	25 pts.
Professional Presentation	25 pts.
Business Plan	50 pts.
Total	150 pts.

Do's & Don'ts

I know I might not have to write this, but please read this:

- 1) All assignments are typed.
 - a) Be consistent in style and format – think consulting and think making a living at it!
 - b) Double spaced with appropriate margins (2" on all sides is not appropriate) and fonts (an 8 point font is not acceptable).
 - c) When you send me assignments by USPS, include a SASE if you want your assignment returned to you.
 - d) Include you name on all submissions.
- 2) Do be on time, unless you have checked and cleared it with me first.
- 3) Do dress comfortably.
- 4) Do your best to contribute and help others.
- 5) Do plan to spend the whole time allotted for class, in class, and *expect homework*.

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- 6) Do read the required material. It makes discussions a lot livelier.
- 7) Do have fun with this!