



SECTION 3

IMC - Nigeria

UNDERSTANDING THE CONSULTANCY PROCESS



Certification
WORKSHOP

Understanding the Consultancy Process

What is consultancy?

The Institute of Management Consultancy (IMC) defines management consultancy as *'the provision to management of objective advice and assistance relating to the strategy, structure, management and operations of an organisation in pursuit of its long-term purposes and objectives. Such assistance may include the identification of options with recommendations; the provision of an additional resource and/or the implementation of solutions'*

Management consultants are *'those organisations and/or individuals that participate in the process of management consultancy within a framework of appropriate and relevant professional disciplines and ethics designed for the activity of management consultancy.'*

Typically, a management consultant will be engaged in providing change demonstrating:

- change management skills
- technical and business knowledge
- business understanding '
- ownership, management and delivery of solutions to clients
- project delivery and risk management
- excellent interpersonal skills
- ability to transfer skills to others
- creative and analytical thinking

- adherence to a code of conduct and ethical guidelines

The IMC has developed a management consultancy competence framework, which presents the knowledge, skills and behaviours that define today's management consultant, all of which are supported by a code of conduct and professional ethics. It sets out three broad groupings of competences:

Market Capability and Knowledge: The application of fact-based knowledge, bringing together the combination of technical skills, business understanding, sector insight and external awareness.

Consulting Competence defines the core consultancy skills, tools, and techniques which are essential in delivering consultancy services.

Professional Behaviours are the entry-level professional behaviours and attitudes which act as 'enablers' in achieving market capability and Consulting competence.

The Consultant's Role in the Process

According Peter Block, a consultant is *a person In a position to have some influence over an individual or group, or an organisation, but who has no direct power to make changes or implement programmes*'.

Sometimes a consultant is asked to take responsibility for implementation - in this case they are acting as a surrogate manager. It can be a legitimate activity, but strictly it is not consulting.

In its most general use, consultation describes any action taken with a system of which the consultant is not a part. Change comes in two varieties. At one level, we consult to create change in the line organisation of a structural, policy, or procedural nature; the second kind of change is the end result that one person or many people in the line organisation have learned something new.

Leverage and impact are what consultants want and what we get paid for. Leverage and impact mean that our expertise is used and our recommendations are accepted.

Each consulting project, however short, goes through five phases:

- **Entry and contracting**

This is a critical stage of any project, to do with the initial contact with the client, including exploring the problem, deciding whether the consultant is the right person to work on this issue, both the client's and the consultant's expectations and how to get started.

- **Discovery and dialogue**

Consultants need to come up with their own sense of the problem, and help the client to do the same; who is going to be involved in defining the problem, what methods will be used, what kind of data should be collected, how long will it take?

- **Feedback and decision to act**

Reporting the data collection and analysis, including setting ultimate goals for the project and selecting the best action steps or changes.

- **Engagement and implementation**

In many cases the implementation may fall entirely on the line organisation, though the consultant may also be involved.

- **Extension, recycle or termination**

Evaluation of what happened in the previous phase. Sometimes it is not until after some implementation occurs that a clear picture of the real problem emerges. In this case the process recycles and a new contract needs to be

Consultants should be trained to apply their technical competence through this process, using the powerful change processes of NeuroLinguistic Programming. In addition, they have facilitative, coaching and training skills to support a comprehensive organisational change process.

QUESTIONS

- I. **What is Management Consultancy?**
- II. **Who are Management Consultants?**
- III. **List and explain the five key phases involved in the Consulting Process.**