

Consulting Process

WHAT & WHY

The “consulting model” is a framework that allows you to ask questions about the customer project and the different phases and deliverables of these projects. Respecting the phases of the model will help you to keep the process and the relationship with your customer SOUND.

Sound meaning :

- Maximizing customer’s involvement
- Creating commitment & buy in of all stakeholders
- Going for causes and not for symptoms
- Fact based decision making
- Sustainable Implementation

It is important to understand that this is not a ‘linear’ process. In each step, information can become available that forces you to go back and redo part of the preceding steps in order to fine-tune the mutual understanding of the issues.

It is also possible that you realize in the analysis, that the initial client is not the actual driver of the process.

BENEFITS

This approach has the advantage to start the analysis from scratch and not take the ‘perception’ of the initial customer for granted. It starts from the assumption that the issues in the organization have to do with the way ‘stakeholders’ work together, how they relate and communicate and how they perceive the issue, their role and the other stakeholders.

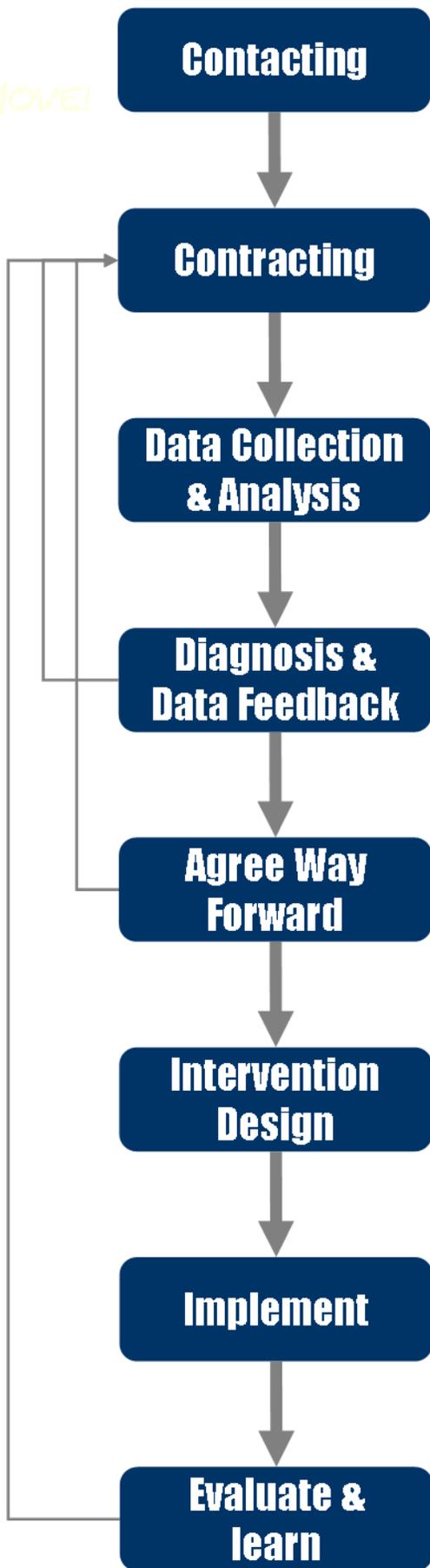
For that reason we do not think a consultant can successfully deliver the ‘solution’. What a consultant can do however is to help the organization setting up an effective process to bring stakeholders together, create a common perception on the issues and the expected outcome, and help stakeholders work together towards solutions. It is the only way to develop sufficient energy and bring all competencies together to effectively implement the changes in the organization.

Main benefits of this approach are :

- **Involve** the people who will be ultimately effected by the changes, as active partners in the process.
- **Challenge** the organization and help them think out of the box. The mindset that helped creating the problem will not find the solution.
- **Gather sufficient and reliable data** (not only objective but also subjective data). Propose further action based on real facts, data and observation and not on assumptions or prejudice.
- **Understand and analyze the whole complexity** of the problem before implementing solutions.
- Use the intervention from the beginning as a **‘learning opportunity’** for the organization. Analyzing issues, creating awareness and agreement, coming up with creative solutions and implementing them is in itself a way to develop competencies in the organization and to become a ‘Learning Organization’. It is not the ‘preparation of actions’ it’s part of the action itself.



MOVE!



Contacting

This is the entry-level phase of the assignment. It covers the initial contact with the client, the relationship, the briefing provided, the initial perception of the issues and the context the assignment will be conducted in.

Contracting

The formal working agreement covering the assignment, ways of working, roles of client and consultant. Definition of the scope and boundaries of the assignment, the stakeholders and outline of the deliverables. At this stage, most of it is 'tentative' and has to be confirmed or denied by further data analysis.

Data Collection & Analysis

Gathering the information necessary to clearly define the customers' 'problem'. Includes the analysis of data against the various hypothesis of the nature of the problem developed by the consultant. This involves the stakeholders.

Diagnosis & Data Feedback

Grouping and clustering of the data and analysis to understand clearly what the nature of the problem is. Feedback the data and the conclusion of your analysis to the client & stakeholders and get mutual understanding and agreement on these conclusions.

Agree Way Forward

Agree with the customer & the stakeholders a strategy which addresses the problem diagnosed and provides a way forward for solving it. Here it is very important to 're-contract'. In the original contract you probably did not foresee the different 'action strategies' decided on after data analysis and problem diagnosis.

Intervention Design

Develop a detailed plan including methodology, involvement strategies, activities, resources, budgets for the identified solution. Clarify the roles of the different 'players' in the intervention.

Implement

Carrying out the action plan generated to solve the problem, implement new technology or processes, etc. This includes communication, training, coaching on-the-job, etc...

Evaluate & learn

Formally close the project, review the activities undertaken and identify learning as appropriate. Look at necessary measures to make the obtained changes and results last.