

Five things you must know before you hire a Consultant or Coach:

Consultants do not come cheap for their time and expertise. Especially for small businesses and charities, the money they sometimes have to fork out for consultants' help with particular problems can cause not-so-small a hole in their budget. Parkinson's Law of work expanding to fill the time also sometimes applies to consultancies as well. We therefore advise our clients to do some pre-work before they hire us, whether it's to develop a business growth strategy or to support leaders in increasing their personal effectiveness to take the organisations to new heights.

Five questions you need to ask before you approach us for initial (free) consultation:

- 1. What exactly do I/we want to achieve?** We often come across clients who know what they are unhappy with or what they do not want, but can't quite put their finger on what exactly they want. It is difficult to answer this question without a precise time frame in mind; we therefore ask clients to define what they would like to achieve in the next 12 months (or 24 months). It is worth bearing in mind that sometimes you may only have a hazy idea of what you want. That's fine. We will work with you and help you identify what you really, really want.
- 2. Why are these goals (as defined in 1 above) important for me?** What will achieving these goals do for you, personally, for your business, for your charity? How important are these in terms of your own values or in your organisation's growth? What will be the consequences in 12-24 months if you did not pursue these goals?
- 3. What is currently stopping me/us from achieving these goals?** There may be many factors which come in the way of achieving your goals, but it will be cost-effective for you to know which are the most critical ones. Like in acupuncture, rather than trying to target the whole body, it is best to concentrate on the pressure-points of your business/organisation. You do not want your acupuncturist to prick needles into every part of your body and charge you for the endless therapy.
- 4. Do I have internal resources, within myself or within my organisation, to address the blockages?** We go into organisations and find huge amount of in-house expertise often going unrecognised for their potential to provide internal consultancy because of one simple fact that we all tend to undervalue what resources we may already have.
- 5. How ready am I /are we for a change?** Moving from the current state to your desired future state does mean making changes either for the business owner/leader personally or for teams, and some of these may be major. Are you really prepared to give it what it takes to reach the goals in the next 12 months? There may be fears or negative thinking that is holding you back. We will work with you to overcome these.

If you have answered these questions as best as you can - we recognise that some of the answers to these questions will remain *work in progress*- you will find that either you can move ahead on your own, or that you need to talk to us.

Remember, in order to get any goal, you need three things. You need to *want to get it, know how to get it, and give yourself the chance to get it.*