

Dentist for an Accountant

Consultant is a Doctor for your business

By Anatoli Naoumov

'Specialized dentist for accountants', 'family doctor with experience in treating lawyers,' '10 years experience in selling painkiller drugs to designers' Sounds strange, eh? Even ridicules? I would prefer dentist specializing in root canal treatment to one with 'experience in serving accountants'.

When simple with teeth, let's relate it to consulting. Consultant is similar to a medical doctor – he helps businesses become healthier from the managerial perspective. Strangely enough here the situation unexpectedly changes – when some businessmen think of selecting a management consultant – industry experience comes to the first place. But isn't seeking a professional advice in the field of management on the basis of 'industry experience' instead of 'problem solving experience' similar to seeking a 'dentist for an accountant'? 'What can you do for me?' somehow transforms into 'What have you done for other guys in my trade?'

Does consultant know more about your company and your business and is he capable to run it more effectively than you? If he claims so – why isn't he in your chair? Does he have more knowledge and skills in helping businessmen like you solve particular managerial issues? Most probably. Could you have acquired similar qualifications? Perhaps, but then you would be missing industry experiences you poses now.

If you know how to treat your company – what's the point in inviting a consultant? Do-it-yourself or outsource! When you do have difficulties in solving a particular situation that needs to be solved and are prepared to accept an external support would you seek for 'industry specific experience' in consultant or look at 'situation specific' experience? How would you qualify your own situation? Following the medical analogy – when you feel sick, do you go to a doctor or to a drug store? When you feel something hurts in the stomach do you seek a doctor with "stomach treatment experience" or one who works with people of your trade? Or, perhaps, the one who is a specialist in a particular drug, working on a commission of a pharmaceuticals company?

Isn't it the same in treating your business?

Another aspect – innovation.

Do you want to innovate just for the sake of innovation itself? Innovation carries risk and brings pain to the company. Who needs it? But do you want to be a step ahead of competition and pick up fat cream from the market? – Then you may count only on innovative solutions.

Where to find them? – Most of what a man can think of has been already invented or tried in one form or another. So the further you look – the better solution you might discover, although the more efforts it may require to implement. Is an industry specialized consultant your sure resource in this case? Decide for yourself how far behind you want to leave the competition – when Mercedes Benz decided to develop a mini car the company turned to Swiss watch manufactures for experience in micro mechanics.