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Thirteen useful hints how to select a consultant and a consulting company

1. Don't start looking for consultancy, when it already goes downhill. Start when things are still running well.
2. Look at consulting not as a threat but rather as an opportunity. Consulting offers an independent view on historically grown structures and acquired habits. Discover your blind spots!
3. Integrate colleagues and concerned staff as early as possible in planning of the consulting process and selection of the consulting firm. Thus support for resulting changes will be much higher.
4. Be specific about the objective of the project. Spend sufficient time for a qualified briefing including milestones, defined deliverables and a precise timeline.
5. Put down objectives, time line, cost, total cost, key performance indicators, consulting team etc. in writing and get a detailed offer. Only this way consulting proposals will become comparable.
6. Make sure that resulting actions are materially as well as immaterially measurable, visible and tangible. Define clear success criteria and check against them at every milestone.
7. Be sure, if a consultant feels only responsible for the creation of a concept or rather for its implementation.

8. Don't rely too much on the brand name of big consulting company. Small specialised consulting boutiques or experts often can deliver individual and more pragmatic results in their area of expertise.

9. Don't choose a consultant only driven by past experience. Good work on a former job is no guarantee for success on a new topic, which might not be within the consultant's area of expertise.

10. Insist on seeing the full project team, including a short presentation of their individual skills and areas of expertise. Thus you will quickly realize if you can work with them on a professional and personal level.

11. Be prepared for resistance within your staff and colleagues. Be patient and open. Changes may hurt, but they must remain understandable.

12. Communicate, communicate, and communicate: Don't get tired to inform about project status and resulting changes. Best case a communication concept is developed together with the consultant in the preparation phase.

13. After finishing the project a detailed, documented review should be done together with the consultant. What can you learn from it for future projects?