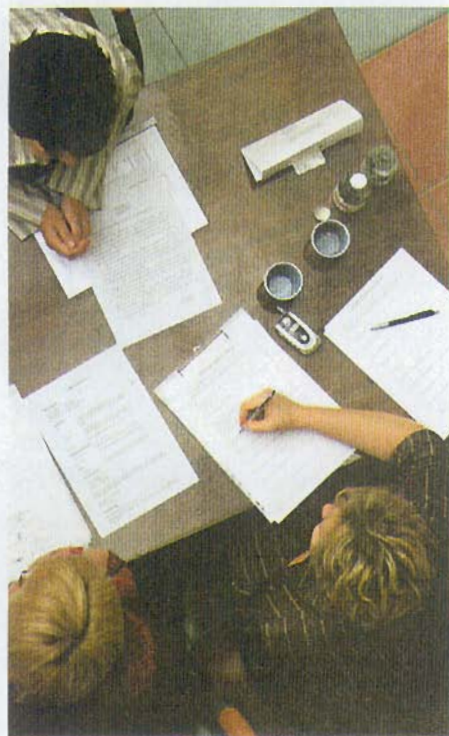


Good Advice for the Right Price

By BARBARA REŽEK

We need only to take a quick look at the most successful companies in Slovenia to discover the fact that behind every good leader is an excellent consultant.



capacity, which is very important particularly in the realization phase of the project, where the theoretically sound plans, aims and activities need to be practically implemented and enforced. The company which relies solely on its own human resources, can often find itself short of motivation and/or time, since the workers are overloaded with work as it is," said Zoran Vaupot, partner and director of SIGEM Business Consulting and a director of the Slovenian Consultancy Cluster.

It is with these things in mind that companies choose their consultants, while also relying on good references. Companies are aware of the help they need. In many cases though, mostly with strategic decisions, clients tend to forget that in order for the consultant to be most efficient, they will have to make all of the relevant information available to him or her. Many companies do not like to let outsiders into their private world, and only relent when they realize that they cannot make it without extra help.

Using Foreign Consultants

Our market is small and everybody in certain field knows each other. That is one of the reasons that companies choose to use foreign consultants from different businesses. "These consultants bring knowledge to Slovenian clients which they do not have within the company itself. They also offer an insight into European and global trends in cases where the client does not have its own resources to do so. With consultants, clients also gain access to a network of co-workers, experts, and foreign and domestic partners, which can pave the way for sales in foreign markets and finding reliable strategic partners," said Irena Rezek, director of WOTRA, a company for entrepreneurial and business consulting.

Considering the growing presence of foreign companies in Slovenia, domestic consultants have also been busy. Irena Rezek adds: "Foreigners mostly look for a local partner and consultant who will enable them an efficient entry into the Slovenian market or a geographically close one. In this way, the client also gains a reliable partner in executing larger international projects in the region."

The better, the more expensive

Prices for consultant work in Slovenia are around 30 to 60 percent below prices in the developed countries of the West. They depend on the difficulty of the project, the level of expertise necessary, the experience of the co-workers, the size of the project itself... "I can say we never go below 500 euro per day for consultancy

work, and we rarely exceed 2,000 euro per day," explains Zoran Vaupot.

In general, the prices depend on the degree of difficulty and complexity of the order, the time period involved, and the reputation of the consultant. The prices are different for everyone, and of course depend upon the skill of the negotiator. In addition, when the cost is the most important factor, some clients possibly select from among those who offer different discounts for their work. For instance, we found an interesting offer on the internet from one of the consulting companies, where a client is charged an annual fee in exchange for their consultancy work and a club membership. Another company appeals to potential clients with offers of gifts and consulting over the phone - a 090 number - where you only pay per minute of conversation. Overall there are only a few companies with excellent reputations, but they cost the most.

"Tie-break" situation

Consulting companies are indispensable in so-called "tie-break" situations, when the owners (usually of companies with scattered ownership structures) and the management disagree in regards to strategy implementation, believes Zoran Vaupot. "In theory, this should not be a problem, since the decision is, as a rule, in the hands of the management, which is appointed by the owners. In practice, things are often different and in such cases the consulting company is invaluable if not absolutely necessary to resolve the "tie-break" situation.

Market defines success

A good consultant must have practical experience in certain fields, must be familiar with the local environment within which the company (the client) operates. The consultant must be physically present at the client's location and

have short response time. "We do our best to please each client, to adapt to the client needs in all phases of our cooperation. The quality of service is rewarded by the client's satisfaction. Also in consultancy the market works within the basic laws of economics. The market price is the best indicator of the quality of services," says Irena Rezek.

Zoran Vaupot adds that the key person for quality control of the services rendered is the project leader, who must be responsible directly to the director of the consulting company itself. The consultant's motivation to do quality work is based on simple logic: good work = good results for the company = good pay = good relations = good motivation = good work... Of course the opposite also applies, which the consultant is always subconsciously aware of as well. The manager of the consulting company is responsible for keeping the consultant motivated and aware of everything that is going on. ■

The help of consultants is most appreciated in the fields of marketing, human resources and IT development.

Slovenian market is small and everybody in certain field know each other. That is one of the reasons that companies choose to use foreign consultants from different businesses.

Consultants' knowledge, experience, ideas and far-reaching webs of international connections provide companies with a big advantage in every day business as well as in times of strategic decision-making. They do not come cheap, but when people listen to their opinions, their help surely pays off.

Companies in our region have recently been using more and more business consultants because the market now demands more specialized knowledge, which is often lacking within the company itself. Besides the big players, more and more smaller companies are taking on independent consultants or consulting companies. Their help is much appreciated in the fields of marketing, human resources and IT development. Companies also need it for production optimization, where there is a need to cut expenses or increase profit through organization of the key support functions and the introduction and management of changes to the production process. In addition to having someone provide them with expert information, companies appreciate having someone who will teach them how to work, someone who encourages them and achieves the wanted results with the selected team of co-workers.

Additional Intellectual Capacity

"The benefits of using consultants are various. From our company's experience, I can say that besides new knowledge and new uninhibited views, we bring additional intellectual ca-



Fields of information-communication technologies and management are a subject of never-ending changes, which users find increasingly difficult to follow. For this purpose, we present IPMIT d.o.o., a company that can help you with that.

What environment is IPMIT working in as a consulting company?

Rapidly changing environment, in which we operate, does not wait for anyone. Immediate adaptation is necessary. For those who can meet market opportunities quickly, the industry offers many rewards. Still, the market is perspective and it is growing. IPMIT has become the largest independent consulting company in the field of ICT and management in Slovenia. We offer our clients topmost professional services. Our market includes all demanding environments, from Public to Private Sector, in Slovenia and abroad, which are searching for efficient solutions in the field of ICT and Management.

How can one conform to never-ending changes and new trends?

IPMIT consultants are professional, highly educated, and reliable and work towards the fulfillment of our client's expectations. We supplement our theoretical knowledge with practical work on different projects, with constant education and monitoring of current trends. We also conform to the changes and trends which influence our client's requests with the development of new services. IPMIT has a certificate

ISO 9001:2000 for consulting in the fields of ICT, project management and business analyses. Our experts participate in different expert associations and present their articles in numerous expert meetings.

How does IPMIT cope with its client's challenges?

References and experience gained enable us to offer our clients complete consulting services. In our line of business, professionalism, experience, quality and ethics are the most important elements when selecting a consultant. When providing our services we cooperate with several companies, organizations and experts from the field of our work. This way we can assure qualitative services in the fields that require settled accession, whether it is about strategic plans or just basic assistance with their realization. We offer services in the following fields: Strategic management of Information science and IS, Project management, ICT Consulting, System Integration, Complete solutions, IT outsourcing, Business studies, Business processes optimisation, Acquiring of EU funds, Public Procurement and Training. We try to respond quickly to our clients' requests and to perform our services as



ALEKSANDER NOVAKOVIC, DIRECTOR IPMIT D.O.O.

professional and qualitative as possible. By performing qualitative services we achieve our clients' trust and satisfaction, which enable our existence, development and growth. We aim to show our clients the best way to achieve their goals. According to the statements gained from our clients, we are successful.

What are the reasons for success of a consulting company, like IPMIT?

Reasons for our success are as following: a good combination of specific knowledge; stimulative internal culture, motivated and experienced employees, orientation towards results and a desire to reach benefits for our clients.

More information: www.ipmit.si

IPMIT (Institute for Project Management and Information Technology) d.o.o., Kotnikova 30, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia; Telephone: 01/3009 800, E-mail: info@ipmit.si

ADVERTISEMENT