

LEARNING FROM PRACTICE: OPENING THE BLACK BOX OF CONSULTING ENGAGEMENTS

What is consulting, in a nutshell?

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Why are consultants hired?

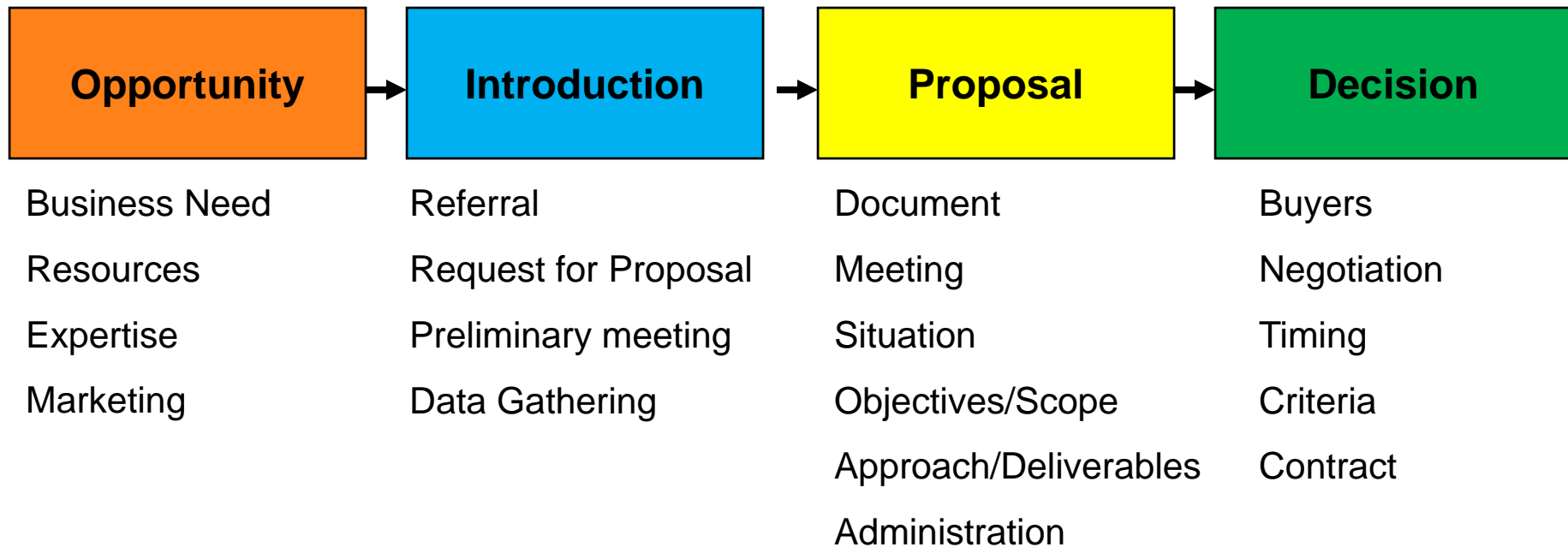
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- The 5 “E”s:
 1. Expertise
 2. Experience
 3. External Perspective
 4. Efficiency
 5. Extra Validation



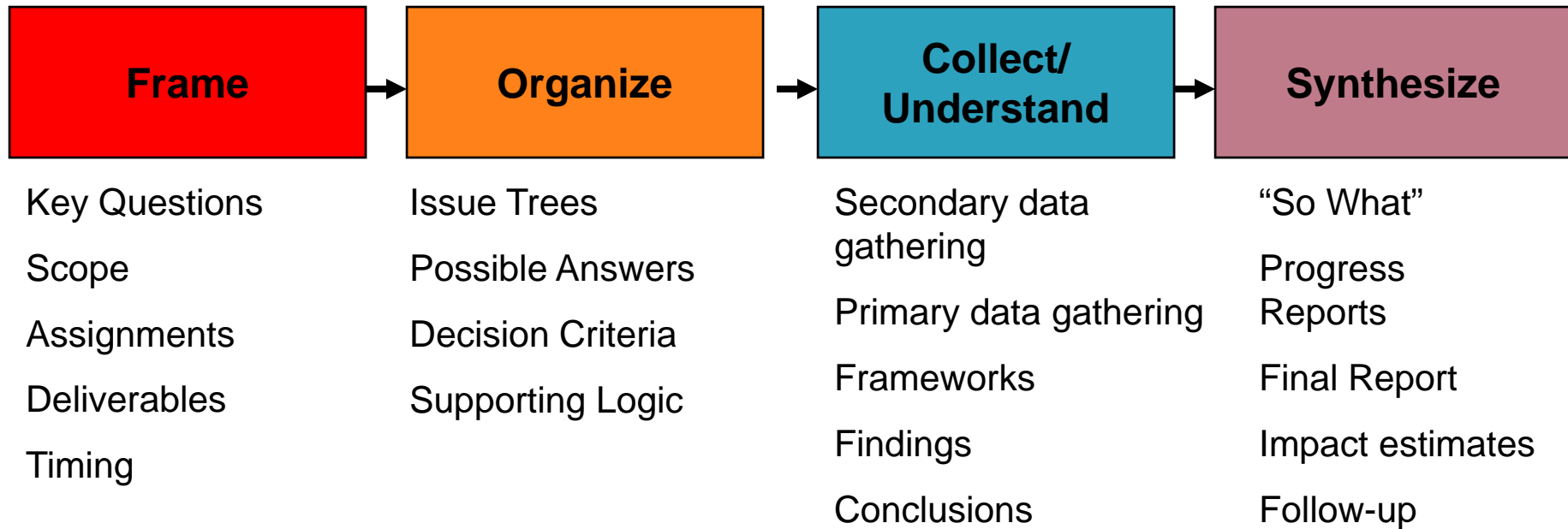
The Consulting Selling Process

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The Consulting Delivery Process

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TEAM FOCUS – Consulting Rules of Engagement

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TEAM					
	Talk	Evaluate	Assist	Motivate	
FOCUS					
	Frame	Organize	Collect	Understand	Synthesize
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss group dynamics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify unique motivators 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the key question Develop the issue tree Formulate hypotheses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a high-level process map Create a content map to test hypotheses Design the story line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design “ghost charts” to exhibit necessary data Conduct meaningful interviews Gather relevant secondary data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the “so what(s)” Think through the implications for all constituents Document the key insight on all charts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain input and ensure buy-in from client Offer specific recommendations for improvement Tell a good story



Discussion Questions

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1. How are engagements changing?
2. How do projects affect the strategy practice of companies?
3. How can academics (A), business people (B) and consultants (C) work together more in this space?



How are consulting engagements changing?

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- More practitioner involvement to ensure buy-in
- Perhaps an increase in “Extra Validity” purpose
- Increase in public sector and not-for-profit work (can be more work but at lower prices) – much in US is competitive bid
- Companies are becoming more mature in the use of consultants
- Different groups and levels within a company will use varied approaches
- More work for free from consultants – especially up front and given macro economic conditions
- Immediate work – quickly – may sacrifice quality or scope



How do projects affect the strategy practice of companies?

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- Will vary within the organization (e.g. planning vs. implementation)
- At times the consultants actually become part of the process
- Small projects may have less of an impact on the ongoing practice
- Macro environment plays a role – e.g. more uncertain leads to more scenario
- Will vary based upon the formality of the process – e.g. more exploratory and co-generative based upon the consultant and the company
- Do they lead to good processes or bad processes?
- Do some consulting firms sometimes miss the point and mess up?
- Will vary based upon the size/approach of the consulting firm
- Different types of companies will integrate practice ideas in varying ways (e.g. level of hierarchy, size, involvement of employees, etc.)
- Some companies are not open to advice and take-aways (e.g. level of past involvement with consultants)



How can academics (A), business people (B) and consultants (C) work together more in this space?

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- ❑ “Professor in Residence” – on assignment with the consulting firms and share with the classroom (e.g. Shell)
- ❑ Do more real projects within the companies (A,B,C and students play all roles)
- ❑ Realise that companies don’t just “take” a report – they evaluate and pick and choose different bits and pieces –
- ❑ SMS could establish outreach efforts and academics offer perspectives to practitioners and consultants in the process (e.g. local chapters)
- ❑ Problems – academics are more “problem” based rather than “solution” based
- ❑ Have academics join more boards – for profit or not for profit and watch the engagement of the A,B,Cs
- ❑ Realize that we share some common interests or do we (e.g. reflection, more things than just profit)
- ❑ Try to get specific in the design of the connections (e.g. phenomenon language such as M&A)
- ❑ Connect with practitioner and consultant associations (e.g. Association of Strategic Planning)



Slides will be available on the Practice IG Wiki

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□ www.practiceig.pbworks.com

