

## Beyond the Walls: Tapping into Outside Expertise • December, 2002

*Advice collected from program participants*

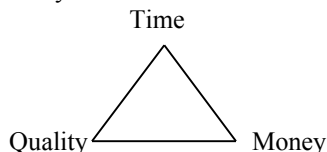
### ADVICE FOR CONSULTANTS

1. Even though it's usually all fine print, read and understand your contract. It's best to be informed.
2. It's difficult to estimate the number of hours you might spend on a project. It's always a balancing act between being affordable to your client and not paying to work.
3. As tedious as they are, compile meeting notes. It will keep everyone on track and appear as if you are very organized.
4. If things aren't going as planned, strategize a creative solution. Analyze the problem (poor communication, misunderstood goals, unrealistic schedule), and propose a unique solution (develop a new language, re-write goals together, confiscate everyone's calendar).
5. Know when to call it quits. Sometimes partnerships don't work out, and it's best to acknowledge this at the first sign of genuine discomfort.
6. Document your final product with hard copies, photos, computer files, etc.
7. Consulting is like dating: you're only supposed to have one boyfriend / girlfriend. Unfortunately, this doesn't pay the bills. Do your best to make each client feel as if they are at the top of your list.

### ADVICE FOR WORKING WITH A CONSULTANT

1. Go to see their work even if it's old (better to sample durability and relevance). –GIZMO
2. They have to have a real understanding of budget – there are only so many eggs in the basket. –GIZMO
3. When hiring a consultant, the most important thing to do is to determine how well you will work together. Do this by talking to references and really talking to the consultant. Do you feel comfortable?
4. Be clear with the consultant about deliverables.
5. If the deliverable is inadequate be clear with the consultant about how they should correct it.
6. Ask for samples of previous work.
7. Be open and honest about problems you're having.
8. The joint project may change over the course of the contract. Client and consultant should keep each other posted often.
9. Be clear and consistent regarding the project calendar. Your consultant may be squeezing you in to a full schedule. Always be communicative regarding schedule changes and needs.
10. Prototype everything just cause you think its cool...
11. Hire consultants early in the process. It's easier to make changes in words than in objects.
12. The hardest part of the process is deciding. Figure out how your organization will handle that part first before you talk to anyone about anything.
13. Resist pressure from the money people to finish everything all at once. You'll learn more about your audience incrementally.

14.



The consultant can deliver a high peak on only two of these elements. Rarely does a project have lots of time, plenty of money, and deliver high quality. Mostly if there is no time – the cost is high and the quality can still be good. Or if the cost can be low – high quality can be achieved in more time. Also, the best projects have the best communication.

–Gloria Nusse [www.clayandbones.com](http://www.clayandbones.com)

15. Write a clear scope of work.
16. Be aware of what your consultant's scope of work is. If you ask for something additional, be prepared to pay for it.
17. Clearly assess what you (as the client) can and cannot do as part of the project – then stick to it.
18. Have conversations with potential consultants prior to the proposal process so you can get a better feel for the company and if it would be a firm you can collaborate with.
19. Don't expect your consultant to be able to drop everything to meet a new demand you have put on them. Remember they have other clients too.
20. It is impossible to emphasize enough the need for your staff to have thoroughly thought-out concepts and to keep close control of every aspect of the program. – Ed Von der Foster