

Will I Survive as a Consultant?

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Do I have something to sell?

	Yes	Maybe	No
I know exactly what services I will sell. I do not have just a vague idea that I will do more or less what I did when I had a full-time job in the past.
I can describe in two sentences how my services will help clients.
I am respected in my company and in the industry as one of the best people in my field.
I know my strengths and weaknesses compared with my competitors.
I am willing to spend several months a year improving my professional skills.

Is there a market for my skills?

I know exactly who will be interested in employing me, and why they will want to.

The people who need my services are willing to pay for them.

I have done market research.

There are many consultants making a living doing something similar.

There are no consultants making a living doing something similar. In spite of this, there is strong reason to believe that clients will buy this service.

I know what fees to charge.

Can I sell?

I have proven success in selling.

... ..My ex-employer will give me some work.

I have contacts in many companies in the industry.

I can sell my services to firms I have never had any contact with in the past.

I can market my services in other parts of the country and to other industries.

I have a network of friends who will introduce me to clients.

I am willing to spend four months a year telephoning prospective clients and cold calling.

I have experience of cold calling and I know I can do it.

I can get appointments with people who do not really want to see me.

I have a marketing plan.

Have I the necessary consultancy skills?

I recognize that I do not even know what skills a consultant needs. I am determined to learn.	...	...	...
I know how long it takes me to do a given job.	...	...	...
I know what I can do well and what I cannot do well.	...	...	...
I can work on short-term projects. I do not need the routine of a job that I know very well indeed.	...	...	...
I can listen.	...	...	...
I write reports that impress people and persuade them to take action.	...	...	...
I can be endlessly patient if necessary.	...	...	...
I can tolerate rudeness, idiocy and hostility.	...	...	...

I always keep confidential matters confidential.

... ..I am tactful. I can be highly critical of a situation without upsetting everybody in the organization. I can appear to be 'constructive' when I am saying 'scrap everything and start again'.

I recognize that most prospective employers are very different to the people who have employed me in the past.

I can explain complicated technical processes or analysis to intelligent or less intelligent laymen.

I am a quick learner. In a week I can learn enough about a new product, a new industry, a new process to understand what I am told, to make useful recommendations and to persuade the client that I am not totally ignorant. I recognize that this is a very different skill from being the world expert in widgets.

I can instantly get the confidence of other people, even when I secretly realize that I do not know a lot about the subject.

I know that the human relations skills needed are very different from those for someone working in a full-time job.

I always examine any job I do, to see what I did well, what I did badly, and why it was a success or a failure.

Can I stay solvent?

I have enough savings to keep going until the business gets going - six months at least. During that period I can keep up appearances, with car, telephone, fax, computer, stationery, etc.

I can manage my personal and business finances without a monthly paycheck. I can manage a feast or famine cashflow.

I have the guts to turn down a job I know I cannot do well - even when I have no money in the bank and there are no jobs on the horizon.

... ..I am absolutely certain that I will not give up consultancy after six months, whether because I am bored, because I do not like the selling, or I cannot take the stress.

I fully realize that if I want to go back to a full-time job, it will be very difficult indeed to get one in today's job market.

I have a support network.

My partner will give me full moral support.

My partner has a job.