

**ASK<sup>®</sup>**

# What is **CONSULTING?**



**Acting as a trusted advisor to  
enable organisations to deliver  
sustained improvement in their  
business performance**

**UNASHAMEDLY  
BUSINESS  
PASSIONATELY  
PEOPLE**

# MAKING THE CHANGE

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Over 20 years, ASK® has worked across industry sectors, helping organisations large and small to review their current position and implement strategies and interventions that change behaviours and improve performance.

In short, we use proven processes to apply bespoke interventions that help our clients identify and rectify problems to which they cannot see the solution.

You are surrounded by simple, obvious solutions that can dramatically increase your income, power, influence and success. The problem is, you just don't see them

JAY ABRAHAM

# WHAT IS CONSULTING?

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Used across every industry sector, consulting incorporates a range of roles such as management consultants, recruitment consultants and business advisors, to name just a few. Organisations ranging from complex multi-nationals to smaller bespoke businesses have drawn on consultancy support for many decades, to receive objective feedback and assistance on strategy, structure, management and operations in pursuit of culture change, and to achieve defined objectives and performance improvement at all levels.

As consultants, we provide an objective perspective and external advice that requires specialist expertise. The support you receive may include identifying practical recommendations, transactional or coaching interventions, provision of additional resources and implementation of solutions.

Consulting involves building a long term relationship in which the consultant is viewed as a trusted advisor. But client involvement in the project is essential and the organisation must play an intrinsic part in the process, from initiating the change to ongoing analysis of the agreed performance measures

No two situations are exactly the same and a universal model cannot be routinely applied. ASK® can, however, provide a robust framework; working with you and helping you identify not what you may initially believe you want but what you actually need. Our 'trusted advisor' status is essential for success, allowing you to see an opportunity, to be open regarding your need for help and to share real problems as well as the symptoms.

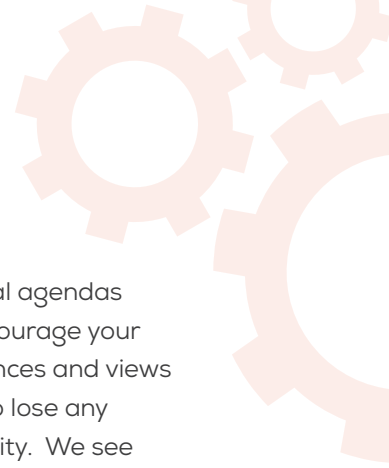
# THE ASK® APPROACH TO CONSULTING

For ASK®, consulting is a process in which your organisation works with an expert consultant to review your situation, identify problems, agree appropriate solutions and implement a plan that will improve your business performance.

We work face to face with senior managers and operational teams, either in groups or one-to-one, to build a true picture of your organisation.

In creating this picture with you, we look at your organisation's culture, behaviours, systems, communication and processes, all of which impact not only on current performance but ultimately on where you want to take your organisation - and on the sustainability of the changes you are seeking to implement.





## **WORKING TOGETHER**

Our consultants don't work to personal agendas or tell you what to do. Instead, we encourage your team members to share their experiences and views – as long as they are relevant – and to lose any 'we've always done it this way' mentality. We see consulting as more than simply a good discussion that may produce an amended vision. For us, it means embedding ourselves in your culture, asking the 'stupid' as well as the wise questions and, above all, not being afraid to offer an honest appraisal that is informed by facts and empirical data.

## **WHY IS OUR APPROACH DIFFERENT?**

We would never seek to apply a universal framework in exactly the same way with each client, and we take the same approach to consultancy. We use data, observation and open, honest discussions to make recommendations that we agree with you before we design bespoke interventions.

## **THE CONSULTING JOURNEY**

We follow a flexible, phased approach to consulting: each stage of which is broken down into sub-phases, during which multiple activities may take place at the same time. While the framework provides structure, we take care to ensure that it is applied flexibly and with imagination.

The framework's role – like that of the consultants – evolves during the project. In the initial stages, its purpose is to provide a shared frame of reference within which we can discuss project goals, methods, evaluation and learning. But the framework will also evolve in parallel with the project: communicating these on-going modifications and ensuring they are understood are vitally important.

# THE CONSULTING JOURNEY



## ENTRY

- Preliminary diagnosis
- Desired outcomes
- Project parameters
- Assignment proposals



## DIAGNOSIS

- Problem analysis
- Fact finding and discussion
- Current performance
- Feedback to client



## ACTION PLANNING

- Develop solutions
- Evaluate alternatives
- Build on existing best practice
- Evaluate and present proposal



## IMPLEMENTATION

- Assist with implementation
- Prepare for the unexpected
- Build in contingencies
- Solution delivery



## EVALUATION

- On-going support
- Feedback – client and consultant
- Setting and agreeing commitments
- Plans for ongoing follow up

## ENTRY

This phase lays the foundation for everything that follows, directly influencing the quality of work in subsequent phases. We discuss with you what you need to achieve or change, looking beyond currently visible symptoms to identify the factors that are feeding them, and agreeing the project scope and reporting process. Put simply, what does success look like for your organisation?

## DIAGNOSIS

Effective analysis requires more than a review of data and metrics; it involves 1:1 or group discussion with employees at all levels. Where there are multiple dimensions, for example, which will have the greatest impact? Attitudes are also vital: is the need for change appreciated and understood by everyone?

## ACTION PLANNING

While possible solutions may start to appear at this stage, premature decisions may pre-determine relevance and quality: each solution is only as good as its potential impact and longevity. We emphasise a rigorous and systematic approach, eliminating proposals that could lead to unnecessary changes or greater resistance. Human factors must also be anticipated, as it is vital to overcome opposition and to gain support and impetus for change.

## IMPLEMENTATION

During this phase, the relevance and feasibility of proposals are put to the test: changes turn into reality, behaviours start to change, performance improves and resistance may fluctuate as employees begin to see the benefits. On-going monitoring and managing of implementation are vital, potentially activating the contingencies identified during the Action Planning phase to ensure agreed targets are met and internal teams have the requisite skills to continue the change journey.

## EVALUATION

Evaluation takes place throughout the project life cycle in the form of agreed reviews, drawing on presented data and reports prepared to pre-agreed formats. We openly assess performance (including our own contributions), the approach taken, changes made and results achieved, and define ongoing support to continually improving the change journey.



ASK® has over 20 years of experience in helping organisations manage complex programmes of change, while ensuring that our clients take full ownership of resulting objectives and outcomes. If you need consultancy that drives improved performance without overlooking the human aspects, our contact details are below.



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