

Workin' 9 to 5 – what a way to make a livin'

Dolly Parton's succinct observation on the daily grind is certainly something the vast majority of us do and, for those of you placed in a role by The Kage Partnership, is almost certainly perfectly enjoyable!

But, for those of us that haven't yet written the next Harry Potter equivalent, invented the new Dyson or simply won the Lottery, there may yet be an alternative to the usual way of working for some to consider.

Charities, like many other businesses, sometimes need to seek a little outside help and advice, particularly when mounting new or particularly ambitious projects. As a result, there is a market for consultative services within the Third Sector, much like you would find operating in the worlds of I.T. or high finance.

So we, at Kage, in our never ending quest to bring you (hopefully) interesting nuggets of information and personal insight into all aspects of the charity milieu, in all its myriad forms, thought it might be informative to ask a couple of people from either side of the consultant relationship for their thoughts thereon. As such, we approached Grahame Darnell, the Managing Director of Darnell Consulting Ltd, for his take on the consultant's lot in life and Alex Ford, the Chief Executive at Pancreatic Cancer UK, for the employer's eye view. Thankfully, they both said yes!...



Grahame Darnell,

Managing Director,
Darnell Consulting Ltd

What prompted your move into consultancy?

I've always been a bit of an entrepreneur at heart and so having my own business was something I had always wanted to do. Before I made the move, I had put some money aside to bankroll the set up period but was fortunate enough to be able to transition into it via a couple of stable contracts so there was no break in my income.

How difficult was the change?

I think the hardest part initially is the lack of security over income. If you don't have any work you don't get paid. You get used to that as your confidence grows but initially that was always in the back of my mind. We've always had a steady stream of business

but I still have a 'rainy day fund' tucked away so that if something goes horribly wrong my kids won't starve!

What sort of projects have you been asked to consult on?

A huge variety - that is the beauty of the job. We've done everything from developing new fundraising strategies to helping clients pitch for big corporate partnerships and from product analysis to interim management.

Has this required an expanded skill set?

I think you need a broad skill set and the ability to draw on both sector and life experience to be a good consultant. I've been in the fundraising game for over 12 years and I worked in marketing in the commercial sector before that. I draw on all my skills and life experiences in my work.

With this in mind, what sort of person, with what kind of skills, do you think makes a good consultant?

You need to be versatile and adaptable. Being a 'people person' is important, as you have to go into client charities, strike up a rapport and get to the nub of a problem that needs solving. You have to have an analytical mind too, know what questions to ask and challenge the status quo. In short, you can't be all style and no substance but you can't be overly earnest and have no ability to build relationships either. You also need the ability to manage multiple priorities – every client must feel they are your main focus, even when you are juggling several briefs.

How regular is the work for you and how do you go about finding work?

Our work is very regular, largely because we have a cohort of regular/repeat clients. You have to make sure you go the extra mile for clients to keep it that way - I love my job but I've never worked so hard in my life. All new work comes via referrals.

How do you interact with other members of staff, trustees etc.? Can it make you feel like an 'outsider'?

Yes sometimes you do feel a bit that way but it depends on the nature of the client. We try to work as closely as possible with clients but sometimes the brief requires you to be a bit more at arm's length. You have to fit the way of working to each client's needs.

What factors go into deciding the rates you charge?

We have quite a simple charging structure. We base all of our prices on an hourly rate, calculate the number of hours we think are needed for a piece of work and cost it up that way. The rate has been dictated by the market so we are rarely told 'it's too expensive' by any serious enquirers.

Autumn Newsletter

Issue 13 2012



Alex Ford,
Chief Executive,
Pancreatic Cancer UK

Why have you chosen to use consultants?

Consultants can fill skills and experience gaps, particularly in between changes in staff, or add value to existing teams.

How have you found using them and is it something you would do again?

Yes. The important issue is to be very clear about the brief for the consultant and what you want out of the work at the end of the project. I find open-ended retainers less useful.

What do you look for in a good consultant?

The right skills and experience but also an ability to listen to the problem and suggest ways of solving it.

What impact do you see on your other staff, if any?

Staff can sometimes feel undermined or threatened so it's important to ensure they understand the need for bringing a consultant in and feel it adds value to their own work.

Consultants can often be viewed as a costly option - how do you justify the expense?

Again, I think it's about being clear about the unique, added value and the additional output for the organisation that the consultant will bring.



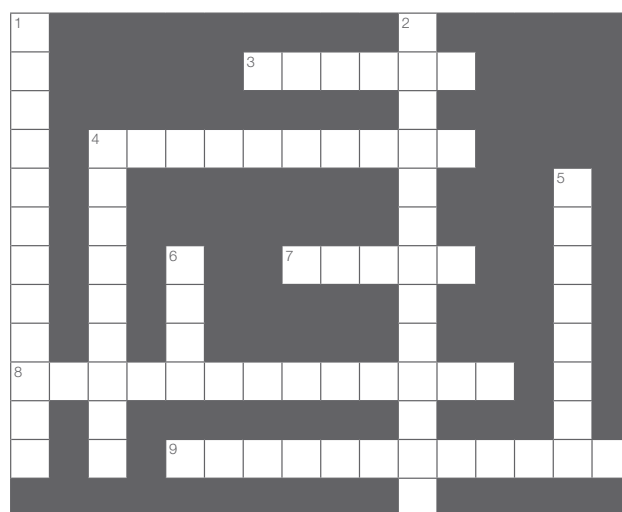
Top Five...CV No-Nos

- 1 Photos – maybe for an acting job...unnecessary for Fundraising.
- 2 Large chunks of text – it's a CV, it needs to be easily digested... use bullet points and save this for your novel!
- 3 Date of Birth – you might ask why not...ask yourself: why?!
- 4 Too little detail – yes, we all realise they probably know what you do just from the job title...but it looks lazy so that's the impression you're giving.
- 5 Artistic flourishes – a CV should be personal and you may well be creative...but the grumpy manager, sifting through two dozen CVs, doesn't see your clipart the way you intended.

Top Five...

We know you've missed it but, fret not, the Top Five is back! And, just to spoil you after its absence last time, we've got a little extra something for you to feast your eyes upon as well, in the form of our fiendishly difficult Charity Crossword.

Which Charity?



Across

3. Some fellows in a hat (6)
4. First female Nobel Prize winner (5, 5)
7. University town beginning...in the morning? (5)
8. Military deliverance (9, 4)
9. Royal credibility (7, 5)

Down

1. Legendary British chat show host (10, 2)
2. Countrywide credibility (8, 5)
4. Scottish hat maker...almost (9)
5. Rouge marks the spot (3, 5)
6. Chocolate bar...for animals? (4)

Answers:
Across: 3 Mencap; 4 Marie Curie; 7 Oxfam; 8 Salvation Army; 9 Princess Trust
Down: 1 Parkinsons UK; 2 National Trust; 4 Macmillan; 5 Red Cross; 6 WSPCA

**If you would like to discuss any aspect of recruitment please do not hesitate to contact us:
020 7928 3434 info@kagep.com**