

Managing To Create, Calibrate & Develop to Do "Consultancy" As A Research Oriented Activity in Educational Departments.

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Abstract

This paper, largely management-focused, is about Creation, Calibration & Development of "Consultancy* as a professional engagement of the departments in educational institutions in meeting the knowledge and Skill needs of students pursuing education and the needy employees with deficiency of the skills in them. The narratives and the case-based inputs providing the factor - how to go about - in Consultancy are aimed at efficiently MANAGING TO CREATE, CALIBRATE & DEVELOP TO DO CONSULTANCY AS A RESEARCH ORIENTED ACTIVITY. The model and the briefings help any and every department of institutions to enhance and enrich their capabilities through deliverance of Knowledge and skills which are on demand. The large chunk of Un-organized industrial and Service sector employees and the 'knowledge and Skill deficient students' needing employable skills are the beneficiaries. The paper touches all aspects relevant to different stake holders - Educational Institutions, Departments, Teaching Faculty members, students & Skill-needy employees. Adequate light is thrown on the demand available as well as the potential capabilities to deliver. Utilization of Consultancy will be a highly valuable economic contributor to the qualitative and quantitative indices of any country.

Keywords: Research - Consultancy - Community learning - Teaching Faculty - Skilling, - Re-skilling and Up-skilling - Training & Placement

INTRODUCTION:

Consultancy cannot be just an advice or a process proposal, it could also an act of engagement with the client for a while to guide, correct and develop their businesses, processes, which involve / suggest means as solutions. The

solutions could be manpower, machinery / material / equipment/ process involving training and development provided by a consultant's supervision. It could be defined as a broader solution which could have all the said elements or some of them according to the needs for which the Consultant pitches in for with the

knowledge and professional abilities which could change the working of a production, administration, Sales or any area of activity. It would be a plan and process to move from situation A to Situation B, and such engagement, interaction, training and development support would conclusively result in a financial benefit to organization, simultaneously enabling a healthy working environment to prevail.

What does a Consultant do:

It's again highly variable and depends on the Consultant - what he / she / organization does to show a significant benefit to organizations which is commercially oriented. For Non-profitable organizations, it would be process discipline and reduced spending and a better outcome too.

Some of the consultants work on a strategy which they focus upon. Some of them do travel to the Client's place of business, stay for days to complete a process involving people, material and practices. Some restrict to provide professional advice, strategy and help in recruiting staff to take proposed strategy forward. These engagements with the clients could be one-time arrangements or a package of visits. Again all such engagements will be focused to enable positive and beneficial outcomes to result.

Differences revolve around what the Consultants offer to clients and what results as promised outcomes. In general such offers will be for:

- A Strategic proposal
- Tailor-made solution - product / process / service
- Training sessions (One, two or more)
- Perpetual Coaching

Ref No.1

A Strategic Proposal

Strategic advice is a very specific advice - which need not be a point of suggestion. It would normally be a customized select-plan or a chosen path - involving- inducting of people with the required skill sets, a special path chosen as Client-specific option. The delivery method would be only normal. If the problems are

unique and require an exclusive offer, the consultants pitch in for highly customized solutions. The consultant/s are chosen since they were proven in the field - having provided solutions to a happy list of customers.

Customized Service Package

It's a customized Service package by which the Consultants will provide a packaged service - mostly a service or a process, which will provide the client delivery of total package of service, with which the client would have got his requirement. For an engineering product, providing a kit of material and a visit or two as a total package of solution to deliver the desired result will be a great offer.

Training sessions

The Consultancy could be a focused Training Session - comprising of few hours covering some specific sessions of training - to bring the desired change. It could be a Seminar or a Workshop or an Up-skill session.

- Raising the level of performance capabilities of a Sales team.
- Helping the management of an organization to make a vertical more profitable or make it viable
- A new regulation to make the profits of a product vertical or a channel to climb up to ensure enjoying the lost glory
- 'A mentoring team needs' for fulfillment of an expectation of the CEO, which the internal resources fail to fulfill.

Perpetual Coaching

Coaching being together, working for a protracted period with people who need inputs of basic nature and also Skilling/Re-skilling and Up-skilling. Such engagement as a Consultancy would be of longer duration - The mentor and the team will work as 'on-going-coaching' session for a period of time till the team gets the required level of knowledge and skill to work independently. The Consultant and the team would work for longer duration to ensure that the whole learning team is brimming with confidence. It could also be a case of Consultant

providing personal coaching for a longer period to ensure results which are visible, which means that even One expert member in the departments also could be desirable choice.

A growing start up needing a strong team in place needs a separate team working to set the team on a strong footing working with full efficiency.

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

There are two kinds of Consultancy areas distinctly adopted by institutions - **One in Research based areas** and the **second Consultancy Services to the Community**. The latter one is ideal to be adopted initially and could later Research based Consultancy be adopted too, in case of difficulty to start off with the first

➤ Department is providing consultancy in Research Methodology, SPSS and Guidance and Counselling etc.

□□Many of the Faculties of the Department are members of Review Committee, Evaluation Boards, Board of

Studies, Admission Committee, Research Committees etc through which they provide Consultancy

Services to the Community.

Ref.No.2

University and the Departments - as Resource Centres

Universities and the educational institutions are supposed to be storehouses of knowledge and expertise. The Industry-experienced members in the departments bring much more needed practical experience as inputs to provide visible knowledge to make the learning more enriched. So it is not difficult to derive that every department could churn out a small team of 2-3 members, if not more, to form a 'Consultant-team' and prepare a ground with offerable knowledge, skill and experience as impartable / deliverable packages of knowledge, and skills. Such teams could turn out to be great Consultancy-teams, using whom the University/departments could do consultancy -

covering Training & Development, On-going-training sessions,

Understanding the pulse of the market and identifying the needs and packaging as marketable knowledge sessions will need only an insight into what is needed for knowledge-yearning groups of members who knock the doors for employment; and those who are working already in organizations. Working member groups' knowledge & Skills needs could be offered as Corporate-based needs.

There are umpteen number of Micro, Small and Medium sized companies, where the employers/management would be too happy to welcome such offers and considering the needs of the employee groups to Skill / Re-skill / Up-skill them enabling them to be more productive quantitatively and qualitatively. These organizations - most of them - will have HR departments or Personnel departments, where the officials and the management above would have identified the needs of the groups of employees in terms of their skill needs in the areas of PRODUCTION, INVENTORY MANAGEMENT, PURCHASE, ACCOUNTS AND FINANCE, MARKETING & SALES, PERSONNEL, ADMINISTRATIVE, ETC. The needs in these organizations will be specific and clear, and therefore it would be easier to form packages of knowledge-sessions, skill-sessions, soft-skills, communicative skills and a variety of very specific and core skills based knowledge needs. All these areas of needs when fulfilled would enhance the overall value of the organizations - the production, administration, operations, etc. Every value addition in every area will have clear and vivid reflection in the customer satisfaction - through product offerings, distribution and customer handling. The organizations will derive multiple benefits through the undertaking to accept such Training sessions. IT IS ONLY THE VALUE FOR THE PRICE THAT THE CONSULTANCY-TEAMS OF DEPARTMENTS OF INSTITUTIONS OFFER MATTER.

The departments could identify areas in order to package sessions based on their department core areas. Now that the interdisciplinary subjects

are also offered as Allied ones, the strengths in offering in them also could be identified individually or together with the core subject areas together with the allied ones. For example - Economics Department having one allied subject with Marketing Principles - They could probably package - a broader Concept based “Economics-cum-Marketing” - packaged training sessions. The office employees and the senior production staff could have an overview in these areas. What their company is producing and offering to customers to meet their needs, the general demand, production, distribution and consumption concepts will give them a greater back-end knowledge, since the company’s contribution to the economics of the state and the country and their own contribution to the company in the collective effort will make a meaningful knowledge - working from their back end of the mind. The staff, employees and production staff having their over-all view could enhance their output qualitatively and quantitatively with committed outcomes. The managements of the companies will like to have such sessions with a couple of sessions on soft-skills. They would know that such efforts bring out highly disproportionate outcomes of employees with better commitment and loyalty.

Ref.No.3

The Benefits that the Teaching faculty derives from Consultancy - not only those at the entry level, for that matter at any stage of their career, needing continuous up-gradation of knowledge, will be amply met. The team of Consultancy within the department will not only inspire the other members, but also could train them directly offering in-house sessions and also indirectly through interactions.

”One definition related to the training of university teachers can be found in the Report of the Ministry of Education on the professional training of university teachers in Spain, training is a process of a voluntarily embraced professional development process, promoted by means of advocacy and persuasion, and subject to the criteria, needs and characteristics of various university departments and institutions. This definition reveals three features: a) training as „a professional development process”,

understood as a process which does not fall within a predetermined period, but one that turns into a learning perspective over the entire duration of one’s life; b) “its voluntary nature” renders training into a non-mandatory action; c) it attempts to cover not only individual needs, but also those of the organisation. These features serve a series of general principles for the education of professionals, since they rely on three aspects: a) all individuals should take part in a continuous professional development, not only based on their personal experience, but also by means of periodical update and training; b) most professionals must take into account that a large portion of their activity shall be developed while teaming up with other professionals; c) the vast majority of professionals should be aware of the fact that they are due to face ethical issues during the performance of their activity.”

Ref.No.4

Consultancy team and ‘Within-the-department Training of Students’

Slow Learners - to become a diminishing a curve

‘Slow learners’ is the labeling that is often termed to those who “who cannot learn at the same pace as other children do”. They require more time to understand and learn, the reasons for which are not learning disabilities. So it is a case of being unable to learn at a certain pace. So the labeling of the students having low level of interest, involvement and inclination to learn need to be stopped, as it is a matter of counseling and knowing their interests and inclinations to help them channelize their focus in order to attain the best in their desired fields.

To put misconceptions to rest, slow learning is not a learning disability. It is used to describe a student with the ability to acquire all academic skills at a rate below than that of the average student.

No student is weak or bright by birth; it’s the way we feed the knowledge and how they imbibe it which makes them so.

A slow learner needs more time, more repetition and more resources from teachers to be successful. These students do not have intellectual disability, but it takes them longer to understand and grasp concepts.

Ref.No.5

Enhanced abilities of the teaching faculty as to how these students having low learning at a different pace (which is not on account of their ability but due to factors affecting externally) could be trained adopting the methods that address the students' need to derive better outcomes, would be a value addition. The techniques, the methods and more than these the empathy-based efforts are needed to bring them into the mainstream learning, which the non-Consultancy members could gain from these Consultancy-teams.

Creating the team of Teaching Faculty members as a Consultancy group - selecting those members, who are experts in their own fields and those who have the outgoing ability to transform others with a focus on work using customized tools, is the order of the day. This is quite possible from a team of members within the same department or a couple of allied departments. It would be the right option to start off with the Consultancy offer to the community.

How to go about forming the Expert Consultancy Team and make them work on a focused agenda:

1. Identifying a core team of Faculty members who are knowledgeable, skilled and experienced, apart from being extremely confident to be the members of the group
2. Formalizing the team with Objectives - strong and focused
3. Creating, Calibrating and developing different packages of Learning sessions covering - Knowledge, Skills with possibility to Re-skill and Up-skill the student / groups of organizations.
4. Having the packages of sessions, their titles, objectives, syllabus and the expected outcomes - checked by a profession and getting the same tweaked

wherever and however required to address with extreme focus on the market needs.

5. Determining the right number of sessions / hours - differently for different needs.
6. Pricing each of the packages ideally - beneficially - competitively - without much of commercial perspective, though monetarily it is important to have profits which cover all costs + a healthy percentage more. Here the cost of benefit of experience in doing the activity in terms of value escalation that happens for the department / institution - is not accounted, which would be an additional incentive.
7. Rightly focusing communications to the Students and other Corporate groups - more especially the MSMEs - who have groups of employees needing Skilling, Re-skilling & Up-skilling together with soft-skills, to pull them to get interested for the beneficial sessions.
8. Scheduling sessions with utmost care and delivering most carefully and comfortably to the groups and build image for the programs.
9. Through Feedback, periodical self-audits and mentor group opinions and interactions, reworking, revisions, revitalize the programs' inner strengths making them better and better with ever new session/s.

Thus it is possible to create, calibrate, develop and deliver the benefits through the Consultancy from the departments of Institutions (Universities or Colleges)

CONCLUSION:

It is very obvious and clear that Consultancy is one strong mode of deliverance that the departments could think of delivering the expert knowledge and skills. The demand is more because there are huge needy groups of students

and other employee groups who could take advantage of knowledge and skill acquisition along with soft-skills. Thus the engagement through Consultancy through **Creating, Calibrating, Developing and Delivering the knowledge and skills** sessions would be on one side optimizing the strength of the departments and on the other side meeting the needs of those groups which are huge and who could benefit from. The engagement will thus be more fruitful and highly beneficial. The results will be far and wide spread in terms of qualitative and quantitative terms enhancing the overall quality of every segment of people to deliver their contributions reflecting in the country's economy and strengthen the social fabric which is the foundation for lives and living together.

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Who are slow learners? Here's how we can help them