LEARNER GUIDE

MORIPE BUSINESS ACADEMY
Enterprise Development Solutions

DEVELOP OWN ABILITY TO PROVIDE ADVISORY SERVICES FOR SMMEs

Unit Standard 115830

NQF Level 5

Credits 10

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1. INTRODUCTION

As a small business owner, sole trader or contractor you have to wear a lot of hats. But that doesn't mean you need to be an expert in every aspect of running a business.

Getting a business advisor to help in grey areas will save you time, resources and energy in the long run. Your business is also much more likely to grow and succeed.

1.1 WHAT IS A BUSINESS ADVISOR?

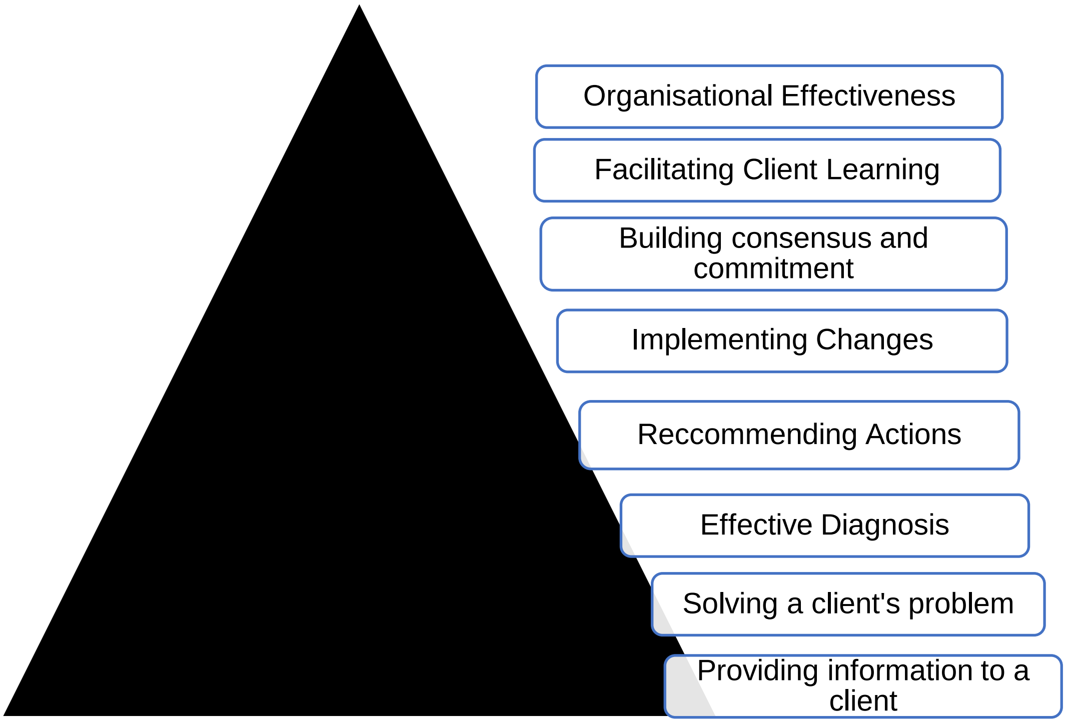
Business advisor provide expert guidance on company strategy, planning, and problem-solving to help their clients succeed in the marketplace. These business strategists often have an extensive background in business management, finance, marketing, or consulting services. As a business advisor, you may work independently or as part of a consulting firm. Your job duties include assessing your clients' business needs, recommending solutions to improve company operations, and planning long-term strategies. You also teach clients essential business knowledge and skills.

In your own words, what is a business Advisor? (4)

1.2 HOW TO BECOME A BUSINESS ADVISOR

To pursue a career as a business advisor, you typically need at least a bachelor's degree in business administration, finance, or a related field and expertise in your areas of specialty. Some positions may require an MBA with specialization in a subject like law or marketing. Since business advisors are often seasoned in their industries, you may also need career experience in management, accounting, or a similar business domain. Additional qualifications include excellent interpersonal, analytical problem-solving, and communication skills, along with the ability to develop a strong professional network and stay up-to-date on business developments and trends.

1.3 PURPOSE OF A BUSINESS ADVISOR



The lower-numbered purposes are better understood and practiced and are also more requested by clients. Many business advisors, however, aspire to a higher stage on the pyramid than most of their engagements achieve.

Purposes 1 through 5 are generally considered legitimate functions, though some controversy surrounds purpose 5. Management and business advisors are less likely to address purposes 6 through 8 explicitly, and their clients are not as likely to request them. But leading firms and their clients are beginning to approach lower-numbered purposes in ways that involve the other goals as well. Goals 6 through 8 are best considered by-products of earlier purposes, not additional objectives that become relevant only when the other purposes have been achieved. They are essential to effective consulting even if not recognized as explicit goals when the engagement begins.

Moving up the pyramid toward more ambitious purposes requires increasing sophistication and skill in the processes of consulting and in managing the business advisor-client relationship. Sometimes a professional try to shift the purpose of an engagement even though a shift is not called for; the firm may have lost track of the line between what's best for the client and what's best for the business advisor's business. But reputable business advisors do not usually try to prolong engagements or enlarge their scope. Wherever on the pyramid the relationship starts, the outsider's first job is to address the purpose the client requests. As the need arises, both parties may agree to move to other goals.

1.3.1 Providing Information

Perhaps the most common reason for seeking assistance is to obtain information. Compiling it may involve attitude surveys, cost studies, feasibility studies, market surveys, or analyses of the competitive structure of an industry or business. The company may want a business advisor's special expertise or the more accurate, up-to-date information the firm can provide, or the company may be unable to spare the time and resources to develop the data internally.

Often information is all a client wants. But the information a client needs sometimes differs from what the business advisor is asked to furnish. One CEO requested a study of whether each vice president generated enough work to have his own secretary. The people he contacted rejected the project because, they said, he already knew the answer and an expensive study wouldn't convince the vice presidents anyway.

Later, the partner of the consulting firm said, "I frequently ask: What will you do with the information once you've got it? Many clients have never thought about that." Often the client just needs to make better use of data already available. In any case, no outsider can supply useful findings unless he or she understands why the information is sought and how it will be used. Business advisors should also determine what relevant information is already on hand.

Seemingly impertinent questions from both sides should not be cause for offense—they can be highly productive. Moreover, professionals have a responsibility to explore the underlying needs of their clients. They must respond to requests for data in a way that allows them to decipher and address other needs as an accepted part of the engagement's agenda.

1.3.2 Solving Problems

Small business owners often give business advisors difficult problems to solve. For example, a client might wish to know whether to make or buy a component, acquire or divest a line of business, or change a marketing strategy. Or management may ask how to restructure the organization to be able to adapt more readily to change; which financial policies to adopt; or what the most practical solution is for a problem in compensation, morale, efficiency, internal communication, control, management succession, or whatever.

Seeking solutions to problems of this sort is certainly a legitimate function. But the business advisor also has a professional responsibility to ask whether the problem as posed is what most needs solving. Very often the client needs help most in defining the real issue; indeed, some authorities argue that executives who can accurately determine the roots of their troubles do not need management business advisors at all. Thus the business advisor's first job is to explore the context of the problem. To do so, he or she might ask:

- Which solutions have been attempted in the past, with what results?
- What untried steps toward a solution does the client have in mind?
- Which related aspects of the client's business are not going well?
- If the problem is "solved," how will the solution be applied?

- What can be done to ensure that the solution wins wide acceptance?

A business advisor should neither reject nor accept the client's initial description too readily. Suppose the problem is presented as low morale and poor performance in the hourly work force. The business advisor who buys this definition on faith might spend a lot of time studying symptoms without ever uncovering causes. On the other hand, a business advisor who too quickly rejects this way of describing the problem will end a potentially useful consulting process before it begins.

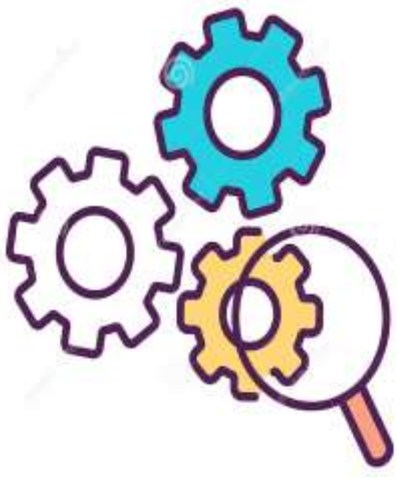
When possible, the wiser course is to structure a proposal that focuses on the client's stated concern at one level while it explores related factors—sometimes sensitive subjects the client is well aware of but has difficulty discussing with an outsider. As the two parties work together, the problem may be redefined. The question may switch from, say, "Why do we have poor hourly attitudes and performance?" to "Why do we have a poor process-scheduling system and low levels of trust within the business team?"

Thus, a useful consulting process involves working with the problem as defined by the client in such a way that more useful definitions emerge naturally as the engagement proceeds. Since most clients—like people in general—are ambivalent about their need for help with their most important problems, the business advisor must skilfully respond to the client's implicit needs. Small business owners should understand a business advisor's need to explore a problem before setting out to solve it and should realize that the definition of the most important problem may well shift as the study proceeds. Even the most impatient client is likely to agree that neither a solution to the wrong problem nor a solution that won't be implemented is helpful.

1.3.3 Effective Diagnosis

Much of business advisors' value lies in their expertise as diagnosticians. Nevertheless, the process by which an accurate diagnosis is formed sometimes strains the business advisor-client relationship, since small business owners are often fearful of uncovering difficult situations for which they might be blamed. Competent diagnosis requires more than an examination of the external environment, the technology and economics of the business, and the behaviour of non-managerial members of the organization. The business advisor must also ask why executives made certain choices that now appear to be mistakes or ignored certain factors that now seem important.

Although the need for independent diagnosis is often cited as a reason for using outsiders, drawing members of the client organization into the diagnostic process makes good sense. One business advisor explains: "We usually insist that client team members be assigned to the project. They, not us, must do the detail work. We'll help, we'll push—but they'll do it. While this is going on, we talk with the CEO every day for an hour or two about the issues that are surfacing, and we meet with the chairman once a week.



"In this way we diagnose strategic problems in connection with organizational issues. We get some sense of the skills of the key people—what they can do and how they work. When we emerge with strategic and organizational recommendations, they are usually well accepted because they have been thoroughly tested."

Clearly, when clients participate in the diagnostic process, they are more likely to acknowledge their role in problems and to accept a redefinition of the business advisor's task. Top firms, therefore, establish such mechanisms as joint business advisor-client task forces to work on data analysis and other parts of the diagnostic process. As the process continues, small business owners naturally begin to implement corrective action without having to wait for formal recommendations.

1.3.4 Recommending Actions

The engagement characteristically concludes with a written report or oral presentation that summarizes what the business advisor has learned and that recommends in some detail what the client should do. Firms devote a great deal of effort to designing their reports so that the information and analysis are clearly presented and the recommendations are convincingly related to the diagnosis on which they are based. Many people would probably say that the purpose of the engagement is fulfilled when the professional presents a consistent, logical action plan of steps designed to improve the diagnosed problem. The business advisor recommends, and the client decides whether and how to implement.

Though it may sound like a sensible division of labour, this setup is in many ways simplistic and unsatisfactory. Untold numbers of seemingly convincing reports, submitted at great expense, have no real impact because—due to constraints outside the business advisor's assumed bailiwick—the relationship stops at formulation of theoretically sound recommendations that can't be implemented.

For example, a nationalized public utility in a developing country struggled for years to improve efficiency through tighter financial control of decentralized operations. Recently a professor from the country's leading business school conducted an extensive study of the utility and submitted 100 pages of recommendations. According to the CEO, this advice ignored big stumbling blocks—civil service regulations, employment conditions, and relations with state and local governments. So the report ended up on the client's bookshelf next to two other expensive and unimplemented reports by well-known international consulting firms. This sort of thing happens more often than business advisors like to admit, and not only in developing countries.

In cases like these, each side blames the other. Reasons are given like "my client lacks the ability or courage to take the necessary steps" or "this business advisor did not help translate objectives into actions." Almost all the small business owners interviewed about their experiences as clients complained about impractical recommendations. And business advisors frequently blame clients for not having enough sense to do what is obviously needed. Unfortunately, this thinking may lead the client to look for yet another candidate to play the game with one more time. In the most successful relationships, there is not a rigid distinction between roles; formal recommendations should contain no surprises if the client helps develop them and the business advisor is concerned with their implementation.

1.3.5 Implementing Changes

The business advisor's proper role in implementation is a matter of considerable debate in the profession. Some argue that one who helps put recommendations into effect takes on the role of manager and thus exceeds consulting's legitimate bounds. Others believe that those who regard implementation solely as the client's responsibility lack a professional attitude, since recommendations that are not implemented (or are implemented badly) are a

waste of money and time. And just as the client may participate in diagnosis without diminishing the value of the business advisor's role, so there are many ways in which the business advisor may assist in implementation without usurping the manager's job.

A business advisor will often ask for a second engagement to help install a recommended new system. However, if the process to this point has not been collaborative, the client may reject a request to assist with implementation simply because it represents such a sudden shift in the nature of the relationship. Effective work on implementation problems requires a level of trust and cooperation that is developed gradually throughout the engagement.

In any successful engagement, the business advisor continually strives to understand which actions, if recommended, are likely to be implemented and where people are prepared to do things differently. Recommendations may be confined to those steps the business advisor believes will be implemented well. Some may think such sensitivity amounts to telling a client only what he wants to hear. Indeed, a frequent dilemma for experienced business advisors is whether they should recommend what they know is right or what they know will be accepted. But if the assignment's goals include building commitment, encouraging learning, and developing organizational effectiveness, there is little point in recommending actions that will not be taken.

A Pervasive Issue

Viewing implementation as a central concern influences the professional's conduct of all phases of the engagement. When a client requests information, the business advisor asks how it will be used and what steps have already been taken to acquire it. Then he or she, along with members of the client organization, determines which steps the company is ready to pursue and how to launch further actions. An adviser continually builds support for the implementation phase by asking questions focused on action, repeatedly discussing progress made, and including organization members on the team.

It follows that small business owners should be willing to experiment with new procedures during the course of an engagement—and not wait until the end of the project before beginning to implement change. When innovations prove successful, they are institutionalized more effectively than when simply recommended without some demonstration of their value. For implementation to be truly effective, readiness and commitment to change must be developed, and client members must learn new ways of solving problems to improve organizational performance. How well these goals are achieved depends on how well both parties understand and manage the process of the entire engagement.

People are much more likely to use and institutionalize innovations proved successful than recommendations merely set forth on paper. Experiments with implementing procedures during the course of a project rather than after the assignment's completion have had very good results. All in all, effective implementation requires consensus, commitment, and new problem-solving techniques and business methods.

1.3.6 Building Consensus and Commitment

Any engagement's usefulness to an organization depends on the degree to which members reach accord on the nature of problems and opportunities and on appropriate corrective actions. Otherwise, the diagnosis won't be accepted, recommendations won't be implemented, and valid data may be withheld. To provide sound and convincing recommendations, a business advisor must be persuasive and have finely tuned analytic skills. But more important is the ability to design and conduct a process for;

1) Building an agreement about what steps are necessary and
2) Establishing the momentum to see these steps through. An observation by one business advisor summarizes this well.

Effective consulting means convincing a client to take some action. But that is the tip of the iceberg. What supports that is establishing enough agreement within the organization that the action makes sense—in other words, not only getting the client to move, but getting enough support so that the movement will be successful. To do that, a business advisor needs superb problem-solving techniques and the ability to persuade the client through the logic of his analysis. In addition, enough key players must be on board, each with a stake in the solution, so that it will succeed. So the business advisor needs to develop a process through which he can identify whom it is important to involve and how to interest them.

Business advisors can gauge and develop a client's readiness and commitment to change by considering the following questions.

- What information does the client readily accept or resist?
- What unexpressed motives might there be for seeking our assistance?
- What kinds of data does this client resist supplying? Why?
- How willing are members of the organization, individually and together, to work with us on solving these problems and diagnosing this situation?
- How can we shape the process and influence the relationship to increase the client's readiness for needed corrective action?
- Are these executives willing to learn new business methods and practices?
- Do those at higher levels listen? Will they be influenced by the suggestions of people lower down? If the project increases upward communication, how will top levels of business respond?
- To what extent will this client regard a contribution to overall organizational effectiveness and adaptability as a legitimate and desirable objective?

Small business owners should not necessarily expect their advisers to ask these questions. But they should expect that business advisors will be concerned with issues of this kind during each phase of the engagement.

The relationship with the principal client is especially important in developing consensus and commitment. From the beginning, an effective relationship becomes a collaborative search for acceptable answers to the client's real concerns. Ideally, each meeting involves two-way reporting on what has been done since the last contact and discussion of what both parties should do next. In this way a process of mutual influence develops, with natural shifts in agenda and focus as the project continues.

Effective business consulting is difficult unless the relationship moves farther in a collaborative direction than most clients expect. Successful consulting is expensive not only because good business advisors' fees are high but also because small business owners should be involved throughout the process.

1.3.7 Facilitating Client Learning

Business advisors like to leave behind something of lasting value. This means not only enhancing clients' ability to deal with immediate issues but also helping them learn methods needed to cope with future challenges. This does not imply that effective professionals work themselves out of a job. Satisfied clients will recommend them to others and will invite them back the next time there is a need.

Business advisors facilitate learning by including members of the organization in the assignment's processes. For example, demonstrating an appropriate technique or recommending a relevant book often accomplishes more than quietly performing a needed analysis. When the task requires a method outside the professional's area of expertise, he or she may recommend other business advisors or educational programs. However, some members of business may need to acquire complex skills that they can learn only through guided experience over time.

With strong client involvement in the entire process, there will be many opportunities to help members identify learning needs. Often a business advisor can suggest or help design opportunities for learning about work-planning methods, task force assignments, goal-setting processes, and so on. Though the effective

professional is concerned with executive learning throughout the engagement, it may be wise not to cite this as an explicit goal. Small business owners may not like the idea of being "taught to manage." Too much talk about client learning comes across as presumptuous—and it is.

Learning during projects is a two-way street. In every engagement, business advisors should learn how to be more effective in designing and conducting projects. Moreover, the professional's willingness to learn can be contagious. In the best relationships, each party explores the experience with the other in order to learn more from it.

1.3.8 Organizational Effectiveness

Sometimes successful implementation requires not only new business concepts and techniques but also different attitudes regarding business functions and prerogatives or even changes in how the basic purpose of the organization is defined and carried out. The term *organizational effectiveness* is used to imply the ability to adapt future strategy and behaviours to environmental change and to optimize the contribution of the organization's human resources.

Business advisors who include this purpose in their practice contribute to top business's most important task—maintaining the organization's future viability in a changing world. This may seem too vast a goal for many engagements. But just as a physician who tries to improve the functioning of one organ may contribute to the health of the whole organism, the professional is concerned with the company as a whole even when the immediate assignment is limited.

Name and explain purpose of a Business Advisor. (16)

1.4 ELEMENTS OF BUSINESS ADVISING

Business Advising has three essential key elements that work in an effective business-advising framework. They are:

- Accountability: It is one of the most important elements of business advising. The person seeking business advising is expected to hold himself accountable for the outcome. It makes them responsible enough to account for their own actions and consequent errors. It enables them to keep an open mind and analyse critically, through the relevant information provided in the business advising. The business advisor lets the candidates come up with their own ideas and he then refines them with his experience. The candidates are expected to take the feedback positively and learn to be accountable.

- Direction: Effective business advising forms part of an integrated and well-planned approach to achieve set business goals. People, who are advised, generally incorporate their newly acquired skills to achieve practical results.

- Openness: Openness in communication and continuous learning in relationships provides information regarding the changes that need to be made. It requires a sense of transparency at the management level.

- Inculcating leadership quality: It is one of the key elements of business advising that enables the students to learn leadership. It helps a person to lead the team by being in the team.

The key elements of business advising form the main functional unit of a business. It enables the candidates to rely on their own skills and take charge of their performance, in order to achieve success in the corporate world.

1.5 PROCESS OF A BUSINESS ADVISOR

1.5.1 Analysis

A business advisor begins their work by undertaking a complete and detailed analysis of your company. This includes a review of your assets, resources, infrastructure, business framework, people and the goals, objectives, or aims you intend to achieve through your business activities.

Through this initial step, the business advisor can develop a clear picture of your company's present situation and identify the key factors that need attention.

1.5.2 Identification

Using the information gained through the analysis of your company's present situation, the business advisor then identifies the areas and aspects that require attention based on the goals and objectives you intend to achieve. Through the identification of problem areas, a business advisor can help pinpoint issues of your business workflow that pose higher risks than others and can lead to a loss in the long run. The business advisor can also help identify factors that can be optimized for better performance, leading to cost reduction and more significant gains.

1.5.3 Strategizing

After the analysis and identification of all factors and aspects of your business; where you are now, where you'd like to be and how you'll get there. A good business advisor can then design a phased strategy that can be implemented and executed in multiple steps to your business activities. This strategy is based on the objectives you have defined for the future and can encompass individual departments, your team and workflows. Most business advisors like to work in the background, they are cognisant of being less disruptive to your company's working, and prefer to apply targeted changes to specific issues.

1.5.4 Implementation and Execution

Based on the strategy you have created with your business advisor; the implementation and execution phase of the process can begin. In this phase, each of the changes you have decided to implement regarding the identified issues can gradually be brought to practice across specific areas of your company. This may require additional training or restructuring at smaller scales within your company.

1.5.5 Evaluation

The final step of the process is to evaluate the benefits your company has achieved after implementing the strategy designed by the business advisor. This includes a review of the reduction in loss and risk and the improved revenue or gains that may have been generated as a result of the changes you have made. With this information, the business advisor can suggest further changes to be implemented or create a framework for your company's continuous internal improvement.

Name 5 processes of a business Advisor. (5)

1.6 WHAT IS A GOOD ENVIRONMENT FOR THE BUSINESS ADVISOR?

The business advisor's function is evolving and now supports the client's digital transformation from strategy to technological execution.

The business advisor's problem revolves around the difficulties related to integration into the company as an external business advisor, with expectations being very high. The issue of mobility can also be problematic for some people, not to mention the long working days.

1.6.1 The Business Advisor's optimal workplace

Fortunately, a growing number of companies are becoming aware of this issue and investing in better working conditions in order to create an ideal environment for their business advisors. This win-win situation for both employer and employee are increasingly present in companies.

But what are the ideal conditions for business advisors? A good working environment starts with a highly stimulating intellectual environment. In the same vein, project development and training opportunities are also necessary for employee development. In addition, the diversity of the missions offered, attractive work opportunities and a broad international outlook promote their wellbeing.

1.7 BUSINESS ADVISOR SELF-AWARENESS SURVEY

Business Advisor Name and Surname: ______________________________

Date: ______________

1. What are my God given talent (s)

2. Where I am most effective

3. Where do I add most value?

4. Who you are now:

I want to learn:

I am best at:

I need most help with:

I work best:

Please tick

___independently ___with a group

My hobbies or interest are:

1.8 THE EIGHT BUSINESS ADVISING PROFILES

1.8.1 The Creator - "Creating a better product"

Creators are great at getting things started, and terrible at finishing. They are the high in Dynamo energy, and are always using their quick thinking and imagination to get out of trouble. Their flow comes from expressing their creativity in valuable ways.

Creators can't resist creating. They keep creating long after they've run out of resources, money, and other people's patience. In fact, they have their greatest creative breakthroughs after most others would have given up. Before Walt Disney's first animated movie was finished, his distributor went bankrupt. Before his second movie was finished, he ran out of money himself. To produce the now famous "Steamboat Willie" featuring Mickey Mouse in 1927, strapped for cash, he wrote to his brother Roy: "Slap a big mortgage on everything we got and let's go after this thing in the right manner."

Many Creators fail because of their over-optimism as to what their business and their team can achieve. This optimism has led many to take on far too much, leaving them little time to do what they do best. Successful Creators have delegated everything except the creative process itself – and they focus on creating new products, or new companies, while others take care of the day-to-day business.

Successful Creators include Walt Disney, Richard Branson, Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, JK Rowlings, Sara Blakely, Jack Ma and Elon Musk.

1.8.2 The Star - "Creating a better brand"

Stars are excellent promoters and are high in both Dynamo and Blaze energy. They are quick on their feet and can sometimes seem to dominate the conversation. Stars are best when they use their sparkle to shine the light on others more than themselves.

The Creators set the stage, and the Stars steal the show. Stars get their most valuable feedback in the limelight, and find their flow while on their feet. As a result, they are able to evolve their attraction on the fly, and it is their personal magnetism that is their greatest value.

Stars are naturals at creating a unique identity for themselves. It is their personal brand that attracts others. By magnifying their brand, they quickly magnify their attraction. Failed Stars do not realize this and have been attempting to build their wealth by improving their products, their systems or their teams – none of which come as naturally. Stars also get frustrated that others can't do what they can do, and so make poor managers without the right deputies. Successful

Stars are happy to leverage on the products and platform of others in order to perform their magic. They lead from the front with their name shining in lights, while others count the receipts.

Successful Stars, who share the same winning formulas in their path to success, include Oprah

Winfrey, Paul Newman, Arnold Schwarzenegger, David Copperfield, Hillary Clinton,

1.8.3 The Supporter - "Leading the team"

Supporters are excellent with people, and will always be found in the middle of the party.

They are strong Blaze energy and often distracted supporting others. Their flow comes from being actively involved in leading others in fun and worthwhile adventures.

While Stars are busy shining, Supporters are busy lighting up others. Supporters are the strongest leaders, as they can translate value into action through people. They are masters at energizing teams by giving them the confidence they need to succeed. They supply the glue without which great plans would crumble.

Many Supporters struggle to find the right business to start, despite their fabulous network. This is because they are asking themselves what business they should start, when they should be asking themselves which value creator they should support. Steve Ballmer has led Microsoft, giving Bill Gates the space to create, and his shares in Bill's company now give him a net worth of over $1 billion. Some of the most successful Supporters can also be found in their own businesses – such as in public relations, headhunting and consulting where others will pay big bucks for access to the people they know. Where others would take months to find the right person, it often takes Supporters just one phone call.

Notable Supporters include Jack Welch, Michael Eisner, Steve Case, Steve Ballmer, Meg

Whitman, Sheryl Sandberg, Howard Schultz and Ginni Rometty.

1.8.4 The Deal Maker - "Bringing people together"

Deal Makers are strong in Blaze and Tempo energy, so they are down-to-earth. They have a strong sense of timing and loyalty, and always make sure everyone is OK. They are best when connecting people and ideas together for everyone's benefit.

Like Stars and Supporters, Deal Makers leverage by magnifying out in front. While Stars are high in the sky, Deal Makers have their ear to the ground: Creating value through timing, not innovation, and living in the present. Successful Deal Makers tend to catch the imagination of the business world, with their sweeping gestures that make millions in a moment. Of all the profiles, the Deal Makers rely most on the relationships around them.

While a Star's value grows as they become less accessible, a Deal Maker's value grows as they become more accessible. They are constantly on the phone and on the move. They create their wealth by spotting connections in the market. Once the deal is done, the new value created enriches everyone involved. Struggling Deal Makers are often stuck trying to start a business or caught up in detail, as the idea of wheeling and dealing, wining and dining, just sounds like too much fun! Every successful Deal Maker has picked a niche from which to attract the best deals in their market.

Notable Deal Makers include Donald Trump, Rupert Murdoch, Masayoshi Son, Charles Koch, Susan Wojkcicki, Lynda Resnick, Sheldon Adelson and Jorge Paulo Lemann.

1.8.5 The Trader - “Buying low, selling high”

Traders have their ear-to-the-ground, with strong Tempo energy. They will always know who upset whom, and how to keep things fair. Quiet by nature, they will often only share if asked, and find their flow in keeping the peace and keeping things on time.

Traders are masters of timing but, unlike Deal Makers who make their money by bringing assets and resources together, Traders will buy and sell the assets and make their money from the spread. Extrovert Traders will do this where they can influence the price through hard bargaining. Introvert Traders prefer to trade through analysis rather than face-to-face bidding, and include many of today’s successful market traders. While Creators need to immerse themselves to create their wealth, Traders need to detach themselves. If markets were symphonies, the Creators are the composers while the Traders are the conductors. Value comes from waiting for and surfing the right wave while others get caught in the current.

Many failed Traders have never taken control of the trade. As reliable and hard-working employees, they may see either the buy side or the sell side of a transaction within the company they work for, but often never the two together. Only when they are in control of both sides will Traders become aware of the natural talent that they have.

Famous Trader profiles include George Soros, Jim Rogers, Carl Icahn, Azim

1.8.6 The Accumulator - “Collecting appreciating assets”

Accumulators are excellent project managers and researchers. They have strong Tempo and Steel energy, and are always careful in their work. Don’t expect them to be overly creative. Their flow comes from collecting and organising what’s already there.

While Traders create wealth by accelerating money flow, Accumulators create wealth by decelerating it. Rather than making money by buying and selling off waves, they make money by buying and holding on rising tides.

Steady and dependable, if the profiles were compared to a football team, the Stars would be the strikers while the Accumulators would be the keepers. While Stars are quick to spend,

Accumulators are quick to save. Accumulators often fail as a result of keeping too much to themselves, rather than building the advocates who will network on their behalf. They rarely act on impulse, and fail if they have not set the criteria to take action. Accused of procrastinating, they simply need more data to make an informed decision.

Once Accumulators connect to the right team, they are quickly uplifted while keeping the team grounded. They ensure that everything is in order and that what needs to get done gets done on time. Successful Accumulators are happy to remain down-to-earth, holding the kite strings while others fly.

Successful Accumulators include Warren Buffett, Benjamin Graham, Carlos Slim, Li Ka Shing,

Gina Rinehart, Helen Clark, Leonardo Del Vecchio and J.

1.8.7 The Lord - "Controlling cash flow assets"

Lords are great at the detail, with strong Steel energy. They won't be the loudest voice in the room, but are the best at researching and studying information and coming up with considered decisions. They are best when looking after all the details.

Lords love the detail, and are renowned for their thrift. They can squeeze out the cash flow from assets without needing to own the assets. Rockefeller became a billionaire in the oil industry without needing to own a single oil well. Mittal became a billionaire in steel without needing to own a single mine. Whether commodity Lords or land Lords, they have the patience to collect and crank up every cent of cash flow they find.

While extrovert Supporter's value people over numbers, introvert Lords value numbers over people, and don't have time for politics or niceties. Lords love certainty and hate risk. They prefer to keep to themselves, and those who haven't yet found their wealth often fail to see their analytical skills, risk aversion and need for control as their greatest strengths.

Successful Lords are unrelenting once they find their niche, with the ability to consistently generate cash flow without the need for either innovation or timing, weathering market conditions and acquiring the competition until they are dominating entire industries.

Successful Lords include Andrew Carnegie, Sergey Brin, Larry Page, Robin Li, Angela Merkel,

1.8.8 The Mechanic - "Creating a better system"

Mechanics are the best at completing things. They are high on Steel and Dynamo energy.

As perfectionists they sometimes seem take longer to get things done. Their flow comes from taking things apart and finding better ways to put them back together.

If Creators need to have their head in the clouds, then Mechanics need to have their finger in the pie. While Creators are great at starting things, Mechanics are great at finishing things. They are perfectionists, which is why they cannot resist finding ways to do things better. While Stars twinkle, Mechanics tinker.

They get hands-on with their systems and prefer to study how to improve things with their hands dirty. Many Mechanics have yet to get going because they are still trying to figure out what business to start.

Many Mechanics have companies with better systems than their competitors, but they have not leveraged these systems with stronger products produced by others, or their business is limited by their autocratic management style and high staff turnover.

Successful Mechanics remain hands-on, fine-tuning their systems long after they have delegated many other areas of their business to others. This is where they see the greatest results, and where they gain the most satisfaction.

Successful Mechanics include Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos and Christine Lagarde, along with

Henry Ford, Ray Kroc and Sam Walton.

2. TYPES OF SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORS

2.1 STRATEGY ADVISORS

Developing a business strategy includes planning, workflows, action plans, and projections across every discipline of running your business.

Strategy is the high-level component of launching new products, opening new departments, hiring key leadership roles, and entering new markets.

Due to the broad set of disciplines covered in the scope of business strategy, advisors focus on the bigger picture. They often work alongside the CEO or the COO and collaborate with other niche consultants for specific initiatives (which we will review further).

The most important reasons businesses look for strategy consultants are:

- Employing the right processes in new ventures
- Aligning and optimizing processes or resource allocation internally (often together with operations consultants)
- Safely launching new ventures without harming the rest of the organization
- Validating initial concepts and business plans proposed by senior management
- A key component in applying business strategy workshops successfully is conducting SWOT analysis horizontally (across the entire organization) and vertically (focusing on upcoming ventures or initiatives on the roadmap).
- Running a business solo (or even with a co-founder) is not an easy feat.

2.2 MARKETING ADVISORS

Skilled marketing advisors' profile in customer behaviour, identifying unique selling propositions, and packaging them across the right channels. There are multiple approaches to marketing. While consultants in the field are generally familiar with the broader categories in the field, specialization is often applicable.

Some advisors in the world of marketing profile in mom-and-pop shops or restaurants and local marketing.

Digital marketing consultants help to develop a digital strategy or lead digital transformation initiatives.

Outbound marketers often engage in advertisement activities or PR campaigns.

Branding advisors shape the messaging of the business, slogans, digital identity, the company's vision and a lot more required to grow a team successfully, attract the right talent, and amplify messaging for the right customer audience.

Marketing advisors can help with both traditional marketing initiatives and shifting into digital marketing as well. Proficient marketers are well-aware of your industry, being able to identify new monetization channels, partnership opportunities, and the most effective short-term and long-term strategies to skyrocket your business in the coming months.

2.3 FINANCIAL ADVISORS

The term "financial advisor" is used for several different initiatives in the accounting and investment fields. Some popular examples include:

- Investment portfolio advisory and guidance
- Bank account consulting (and handling deposits or other internal investments)
- Financial planning, projections, and estimations both short-term and long-term
- A de-facto outsourced function of a part-time CFO
- financial consultant

In the context of company consulting, financial consultants (or advisors) review past data and future projections regarding your business model and apply industry-grade patterns for risk management and safe allocation of resources (both investing in internal initiatives and managing all expenses, from rent through salaries to stock distribution).

In the event of existing additional capital (for continuously profitable businesses with healthy net margins), an advisor may build a separate portfolio investment plan that yields healthy ROI from funds that are yet to be distributed elsewhere. This may include anything from the stock exchange through forex or penny auctions to purchasing gold or art or real estate investing.

Additionally, financial advisors often help with personal finances too. This covers dividends vs. salaries, what is eligible as a company expense, and different investment paradigms for long-term sustainability.

2.4 OPERATIONS ADVISORS

Operations consulting is a branch of management consulting that profiles in solving operational and efficiency problems within the organization.

Unlike the “bigger picture” component of the business strategy, operations concern the day-to-day activities in a business. Once the strategy has been established and distributed, operations advisors dive deeper into the execution components of accomplishing tasks, allocating resources, the practical workflows, revising the supply chain from beginning to end.

In a traditional manufacturing or eCommerce business, operations experts are invaluable in establishing the most effective workflows in production, shipping, warehouse management, logistics, and maximizing efficiency throughout the process.

In an agency’s context, operations consultants dive into the most expensive component of running an agency (staff, since salaries form the major expense) and the proper in-team management – anything from reporting through meeting scheduling, feedback reviews, day-to-day assignments for team members, the structure of a team, feedback loops, retention opportunities and efficiency paradigms for maximizing output or free time between projects.

2.5 MANAGEMENT ADVISORS

Management advisors are the strategic planners behind operations consultants (who are in charge of execution).

Traditional management consultants (and advisors) are MBAs who have spent a decade or more in the corporate space.

Funnily enough, this is mainly dictated by the background of “management consulting”. This isn’t a popular title in the start-up ecosystem and most founders haven’t gone through this process in the first place.

Which is why a lot of traditional management advisors dive into a certain specialty for SMBs and start-ups and rely on the following titles instead:

- Digital consultant
- Growth strategist
- Start-up consultant
- An advisor for start-up’s
- Business consultant for start-up’s

Management consultants are expected to help organizations improve their operations performance, head analysis of existing organizational issues, and develop plans for improvement.

2.6 TAX ADVISORS

Tax advisors leverage their professional expertise on tax legislation to help clients handle their taxes in the most efficient manner, and leverage any tax advantages or exemptions.

There are several different types of companies one can register locally, a variety of payment methods (wire transfers, credit cards, payment providers, aggregated services), separate options for paying dividends vs. fixed salary, possible shares distributed across the senior team, and other payment structures that could be founded for different divisions (or products) across the company.

Working with a tax advisor early on enables businesses to run smoothly as tax advisors can take care of tax forms and CPA services and communicate with tax authorities on behalf of their clients. In particular, these tax experts provide consulting on the two main types of tax advice: corporate or personal.

Corporate clients often refer to large companies or enterprises while individual clients who need advice on their large assets need personal tax advice. Just imagine the complex structure of Google or Facebook, registered simultaneously in various countries, and transferring funds back and forth with different taxes in every area.

Here are several areas where tax advisors can facilitate the financial work for an organization:

- Corporate tax
- International and customs duty
- Personal tax (for executives)
- Trusts and estates
- VAT (or corresponding tax laws in different countries or states)
- Tax advisors often have the following responsibilities:
- Prepare and optimize tax returns
- Resolve potential tax issues
- Comply with company tax requirements
- Save on taxes owed under lawful regulations
- Advise on financing and legal issues

Tax advisors can work with accountants, lawyers, or other financial advisors and create a formidable team of experts who will help you battle financial woes and even prevent any sort of issue from happening. In the context of a 50+ company, they work closely with both the CEO and the CFO of the business.

Once you identify the initiatives you need help with, look for the right advisor in the corresponding field and get ready to transform your business.

2.7 LEGAL ADVISORS

A legal advisor is essentially an in-house lawyer that specializes in providing advice on matters concerning the law applicable for the company (area, country, state, or even city in some cases).

Corporations often have a legal team comprised of legal experts while smaller companies have a legal advisor on-call whose primary tasks include the following:

- Draft and negotiate contracts with vendors or clients
- Ensure compliance with local and international corporate laws
- Provide counsel for employee and management conflicts

- Conduct legal analysis and research (especially for newer areas such as CCPA or GDPR)
- Review acquisitions, mergers or negotiations and their legal implications across the organization (including possible non-compete clauses, non-disclosures, or possible monopoly cases)
- Formulate legal responses to settlements of disputes
- Monitor and refine the implementation of the legal clauses and policies within the organization

Legal advisors are particularly helpful in making sure that companies arrive with legally appropriate conflict resolutions whenever there are labour or contract disputes, compensation issues, harassment suits, and other employee and management conflicts.

Small to mid-sized businesses often can't utilize a lawyer full-time (and it's too expensive to hire one) which is where legal advisors are extremely helpful.

Additionally, legal advisors work with multiple businesses (often 15-20 at a time) and provide a broader overview thanks to their experience with other clients dealing with similar challenges.

2.8 IT ADVISORS

IT advisors are a separate branch of consultants that profile in one or more of the following areas:

- Infrastructure development
- Hardware systems
- Networking
- Software engineering
- Web development
- Building and/or scaling development teams
- Product development
- Compliance (for banks, governments, and companies working with security agencies)

IT advisors are often former CTOs or VPs of technology who transitioned to consulting, enjoying the variety of working with multiple clients at a time.

Some of them profile in a specific area of work – such as facilitating the preselection and recruitment process of technical teams or facilitating a company to outsource a complex product (by contracting the right agency).

ISPs or SaaS companies that are eager to migrate to a large cloud infrastructure like AWS or build their dedicated server centre can also contract the right IT advisor and initiate the planning and transition process accordingly.

Smaller businesses often partner up with IT advisors when they don't want to build an entire technical team in-house. In this case, the IT advisor acts as a part-time CTO or works alongside the CTO on initiatives outside of their core expertise.

2.9 RECRUITMENT ADVISORS

The recruitment process is one of the most impactful areas of scaling a business successfully. About 56% of companies in a study reported that a candidate rejected their job offer in 2012 Of the 20,000 new hires, 46% of them failed within 18 months 89% of those who left failed due to a mismatch of values 11% failed because they lack the necessary skills

Hiring the wrong fit often costs 6 figures (let alone missed opportunities and the limited progress due to delays)

Hiring issues may vary but when downplayed, scaling can be a very costly endeavour.

Recruitment advisors provide support and in-house consulting for both internal hiring and liaison with staffing firms (or other outsourcing companies).

Working with a recruitment advisor will grant you access to a broader number of reliable recruitment agencies, thus bridging the gap between companies and applicants.

Basically, the following are the responsibilities of a recruitment advisor:

- Negotiate job profiles, contracts, and fees
- Headhunt and screen candidates for a job
- Interview prospective employees alongside the team leads
- Organize the selection process in a smooth, easy-to-follow manner
- Advertise job vacancies across internal networks

These recruitment advisors help companies streamline the staffing process, hiring and onboarding staff efficiently.

2.10 SALES ADVISORS

Sales advisors navigate the sales processes within the organization—building in-house sales teams, streamlining the internal sales processes, improving the funnel development process with the marketing team, refining pricing, and more.

79% of consumers prefer interacting with salespeople who are trusted advisors. This is why it is crucial to have a trustworthy sales advisor in a company, whether in B2B or B2C.

And if you manage to hire an industry leader who is a known player in the space, this can facilitate your recruitment process, too.

The responsibilities of a sales advisor vary depending on the industry and the products or services offered by the company. eCommerce businesses may count in a professional sales advisor in various areas:

- Negotiating better vendor terms and delivery orders
- Managing sales promotions, discounts, prices, and return terms
- Outreach for sales and partnership opportunities (including wholesale and retail)
- Processing sales transactions alongside the team
- Handling customer concerns and complaints for high-tier customers
- Assisting in sales pitches and product presentations
- B2B businesses can fully offload the sales process after the first several months and delegate sales meetings, trade show demos, and other strategic relationship deals to their advisor.

Nowadays, 50-90% of the journey of a buyer with a B2B company is complete before the buyer interacts with a sales representative. Although the nature of tasks differs, all sales advisors share a common goal: increase the likelihood of a sale by providing sales advice and creating an appealing environment for decision-makers.

Some of the common trait's companies look for when looking for a sales advisor are:

- Proven experience in the industry (preferably with other companies in the field)
- Digital know-how for leading webinars or product demos
- Customer-oriented and results-driven
- In-depth knowledge of products and services advising on
- Great communication and interpersonal skills
- Great organizational skills
- Team-building skills for nurturing an in-house sales team
- Vision and product understanding enabling them to expand monetization opportunities together with executives

2.11 DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION ADVISORS

The digital universe has been growing rapidly over the past 20 years – with a good number of Fortune 500 companies predominantly offering digital products or services.

This led to the slow transition of traditional businesses to the web in various disciplines:

- Moving in-house systems to the cloud
- Deploying modern CRMs, ERPs, marketing automation solutions
- Modernizing hiring with application tracking systems and innovative processes
- Digitalizing services and solutions previously offered offline
- Building eCommerce solutions where applicable
- Transferring on-site onboarding and training processes to online training platforms
- Coaching and mentorship sessions with different groups of employees on the new technical suites (and other concepts around data privacy or personal security)

- Digital transformation advisors excel in these areas and help businesses transition to the modern web with minimal friction in the process.

They often operate alongside marketing teams to allow for a seamless process without interfering with existing operations in the works. Especially in the context of traditional offline marketing, offers are being transferred in their digital equivalent, including the adoption of tracking systems like Google Analytics, advertising solutions from Facebook, Google, Taboola/Outbrain, or even Instagram, marketing automation suites (and more).

As online visibility has become a selection standard for most millennials and Generation Z consumers, digital transformation advisors have been extremely helpful in attracting young talent and in making sure that the company shows progress in adopting the latest tech and industry-grade standards for the web.

2.12 PR ADVISORS

It’s not rampant among small businesses to employ a PR advisor but having one can have a huge positive impact on your branding and marketing efforts.

PR advisors are professionals who take care of your brand image and reputation. Specifically, PR advisors help out with:

- Gaining experience is not a solo adventure, and learning from the best is a shortcut that many people underuse.

For business owners and executives who are wise enough to seek help, they work with and learn from a reliable business consultant. Those who are much wiser take hints from how consultants work and what business advisor skills make them highly valuable to a company so they can benefit from adopting such skills.

Often, your consultant does not need to have a similar background with you in order to be valuable or worthy of emulation.

Tech businesses can benefit from non-tech consultants quite a lot. Running a business is rarely about tech alone. There’s recruitment, branding, marketing, sales, business development, positioning, pricing, building successful funnels, PR, networking, legal, and finances among many others.

There are others who discredit consultants for not owning an actual business (or any business at all), However, consulting a company with 1,000 employees would otherwise require a similar background as a business founder. It is extremely complicated and just a handful of people have ever done that.

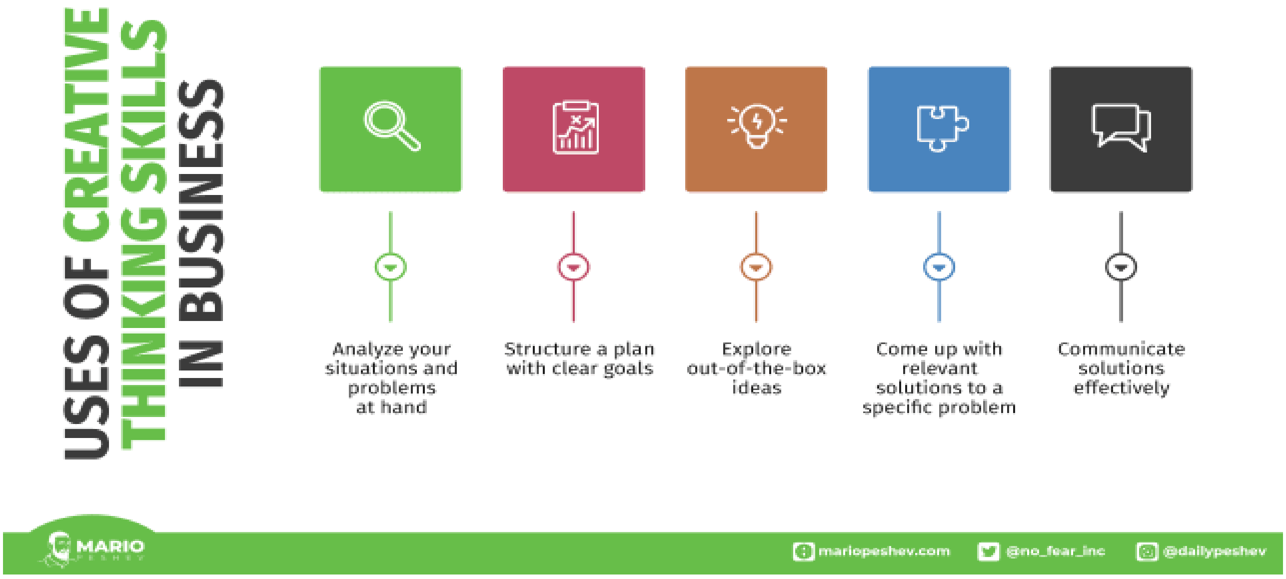
Name 5 business Advisor Skills. (5)

3. BUSINESS ADVISOR SKILLS

Here are the top 10 business advisor skills that your company can benefit from:

1. Creative Thinking Skills
2. Problem Solving Skills
3. Communication Skills
4. Negotiation Skills
5. Sales and Marketing Skills
6. Financial Management Skills
7. Strategic Planning Skills
8. Management Skills
9. Time Management Skills
10. Public Relations Skills

3.1 CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS



Lots of unique business problems come up for growing companies. Some hit a plateau at some point and need external advice to approve these problems creatively and keep scaling.

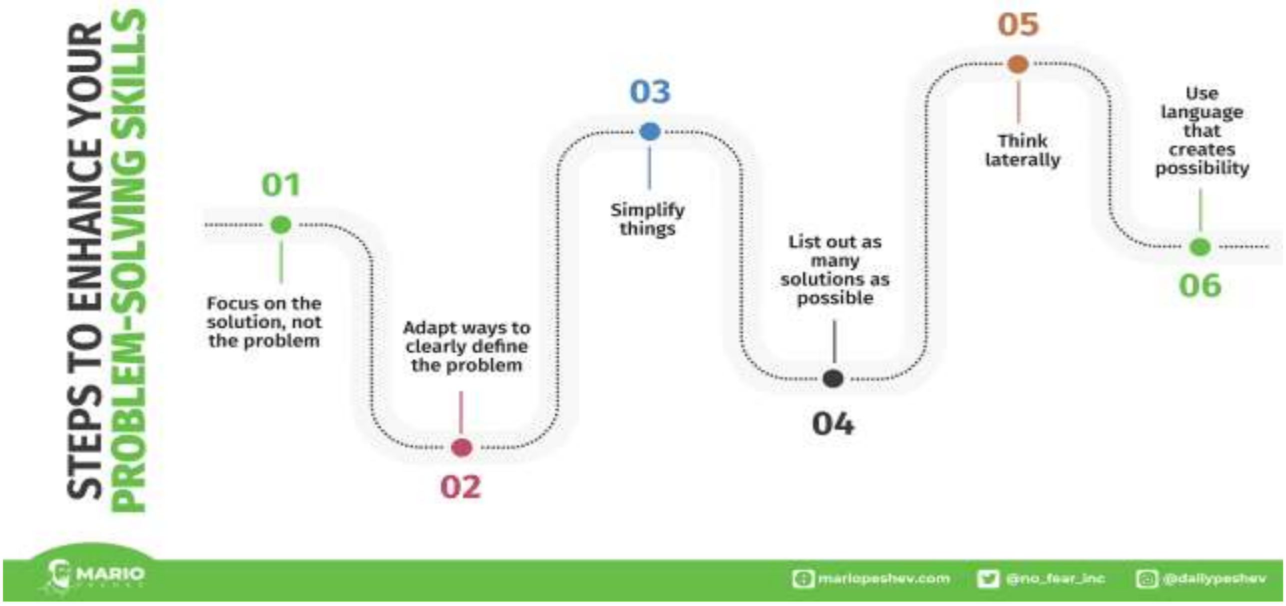
These problems, unique as they are, need to be viewed from a creative perspective because most of them lack existing data or studies that will guide you in making decisions.

Your creative thinking skills will help you:

- analyze your situations and problems at hand.
- structure a plan with clear goals
- explore out-of-the-box ideas
- come up with relevant solutions to a specific problem
- communicate solutions effectively

What consultants do is that they lean on their intuition for out of the box ideas and innovations. They also gather up a think-tank from the different departments of a company so you can get a fresh perspective and an inclusive approach.

3.2 PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS



The ability to handle difficult situations that are usually unexpected and complex in nature is what problem solvers have.

What makes most business advisors effective is their inherent penchant for solving problems that others would keep away from as much as possible.
To be great at problem-solving, you will need an analytical mind that is good at critical thinking, organizing ideas, and identifying patterns, as well as noting details. This is one trait consultants and business people share in common because most of the time, those who have decided to run or start a company are those that thought of a problem they wanted to solve.
According to Lifehack, you can take the following steps in order to enhance your problem-solving skills:

3.3 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

According to Workforce, 60% of companies don't have a long-term strategy in place for their internal communications. Business operations falter when communication channels are broken or ineffective. When all of a company's stakeholders' value proper communication, it results in the following:

- stronger relationships
- more innovations
- efficient team processes
- better customer experience
- growth and transparency

Consultants must be excellent communicators to successfully land a client. The job requires that they manage teams, deliver presentations, and coordinate. Failure to do so may cause a project to stagnate or the client to leave.

3.4 NEGOTIATION SKILLS

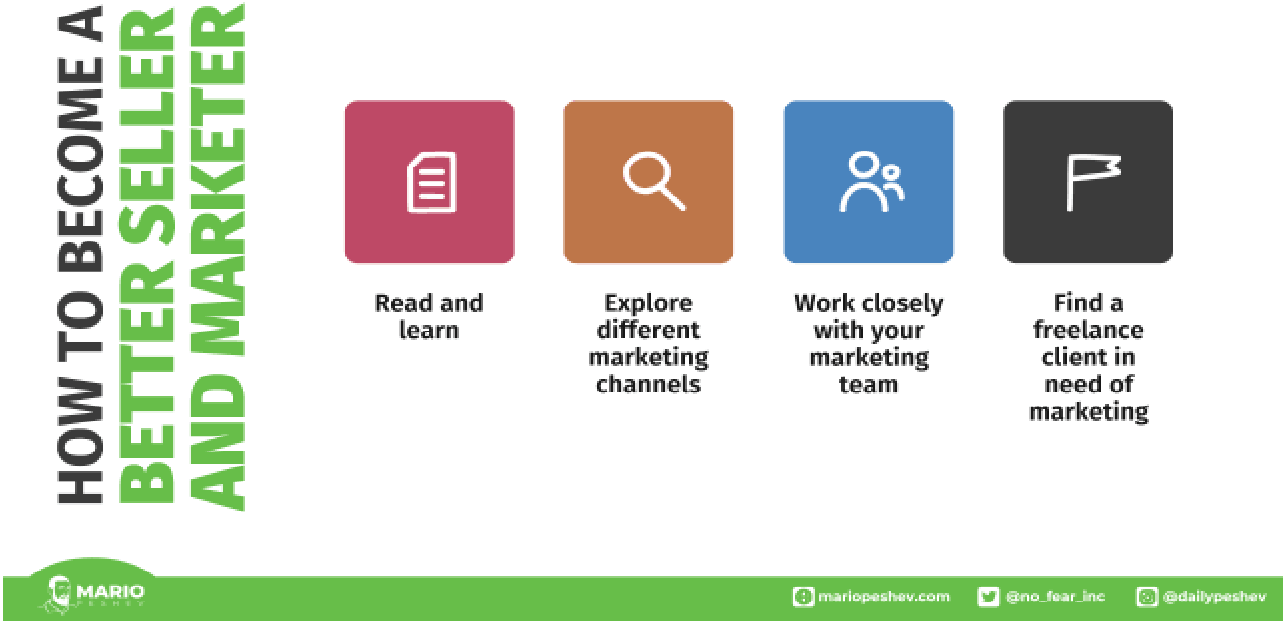
While you can learn how to negotiate overtime, the most successful deals often happen when you involve a great negotiator. What separates a great negotiator from the rest is experience.

You may have found yourself more than once on the receiving end of the negotiation table, being subjected to hard-bargaining tactics such as the following:

- extreme demands from aggressive opponents
- “My hands are tied”
- “Take it or leave it”
- good cop, bad cop
- bluffs and lies

Having effective negotiation skills has a lot to do with a person’s communication skills. Those who are experienced at negotiating know how to say the right words at the right time. One must know how to package an offer in a way that is appealing to all parties, but actually more favourable to you.

3.5 SALES AND MARKETING SKILLS



Learning about sales and marketing became a need for me when several of those I had worked with in the past failed to deliver their basic commitments. Consultants I have talked with via Clarity were the most helpful during that time. I also got a lot of help from other business and agency owners who went through a similar ordeal.

In another article, I have enumerated 4 ways a business executive can become a better marketer:

- Read and learn
- Explore different marketing channels
- Work closely with your marketing team
- Find a freelance client in need of marketing

Although selling is a different activity from marketing, your sales skills and marketing skills often get intertwined because they both revolve around convincing prospects to get so interested in the products and services that you offer to the point wherein, they would actually make a purchase.

- Product Knowledge
- Communication skills
- Prospecting Skills
- Relationship-Building Skills

3.6 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Allocating resources for operational expenses without neglecting overhead costs and potential risks requires serious financial management skills. Not all businesses have the luxury of hiring a team of financial experts who can handle this aspect of the business.

Financial consultants review past data and study future projections as well as create investment plans. According to Investopedia, successful financial advisors share the following qualities.

- Passion for Financial Planning and Wealth Management
- Deep Analytical Ability
- Professional Salesmanship
- A Belief That Interests Must Be Aligned
- Curiosity

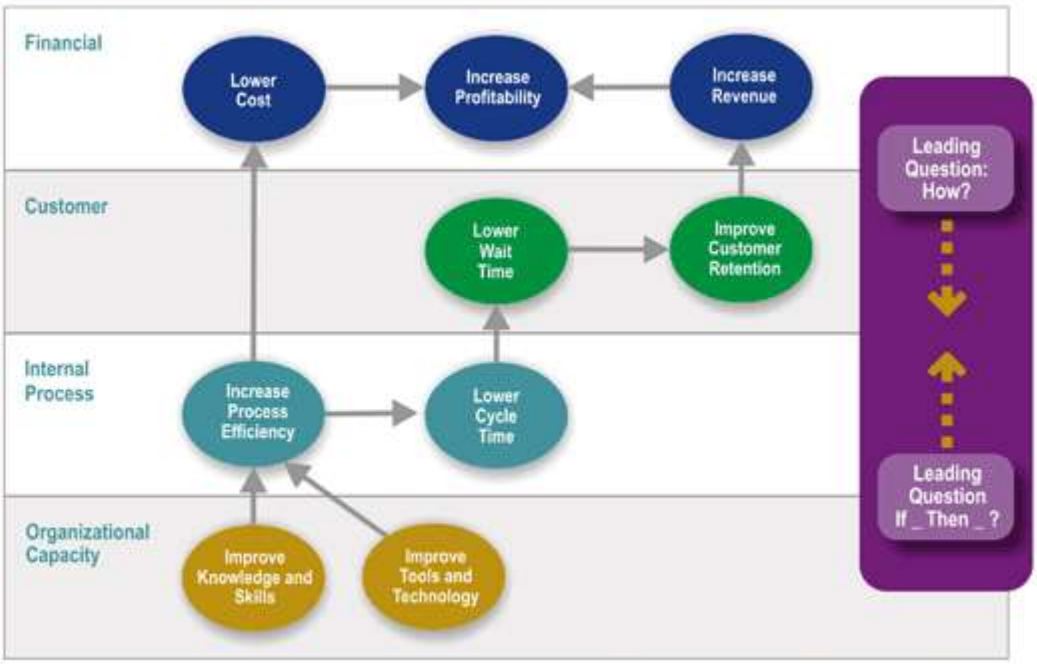
Navigating around financial challenges usually have the same qualities and some detective work on the part of the business owner or executive.

3.7 STRATEGIC PLANNING SKILLS

Solopreneurs must think like a 10-person team from the start. Strategically planning this way positions the business for success.
Studies show that 95% of a typical workforce doesn’t understand their organizational strategy. Several organizations fail to employ a strategic approach in their future direction resulting in problematic transitions and misalignment among team members.

You can use a strategy map as a graphic representation of the strategies you have discussed with your planning teams in consideration of the following four perspectives:

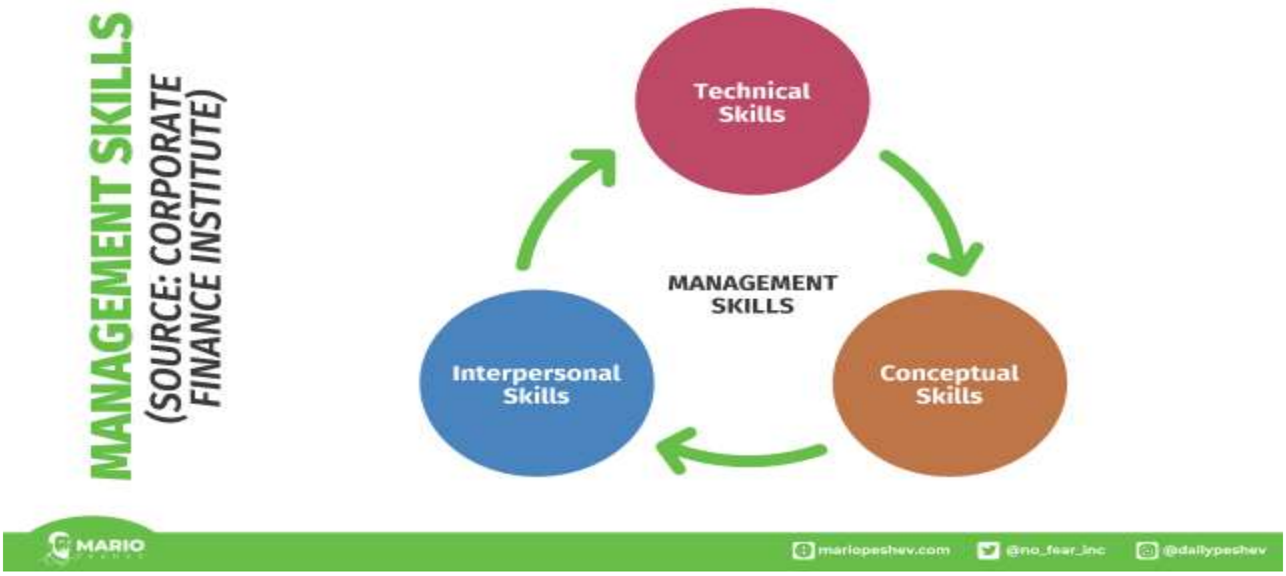
- Financial
- Customer
- Internal Processes
- Organizational Capacity
- Here’s how a typical strategy map looks like:



Reference: The Institute Way: Simplify Strategic Planning & Management with the Balanced Scorecard.

Note that the more stakeholders or teams involved, the more encompassing your strategic plan development will be.

3.8 MANAGEMENT SKILLS



According to research conducted by Gallup among 7,272 U.S. adults, 50% of employees leave their companies because of their managers or supervisors. Although there is more to the stories of these employees, one cannot just disregard the necessity of making sure that those who own a business or run one must have management skills.

According to American psychologist Robert Katz, there are three basic types of management skills and these are:

- Technical skills
- Conceptual skills
- Human or interpersonal skills

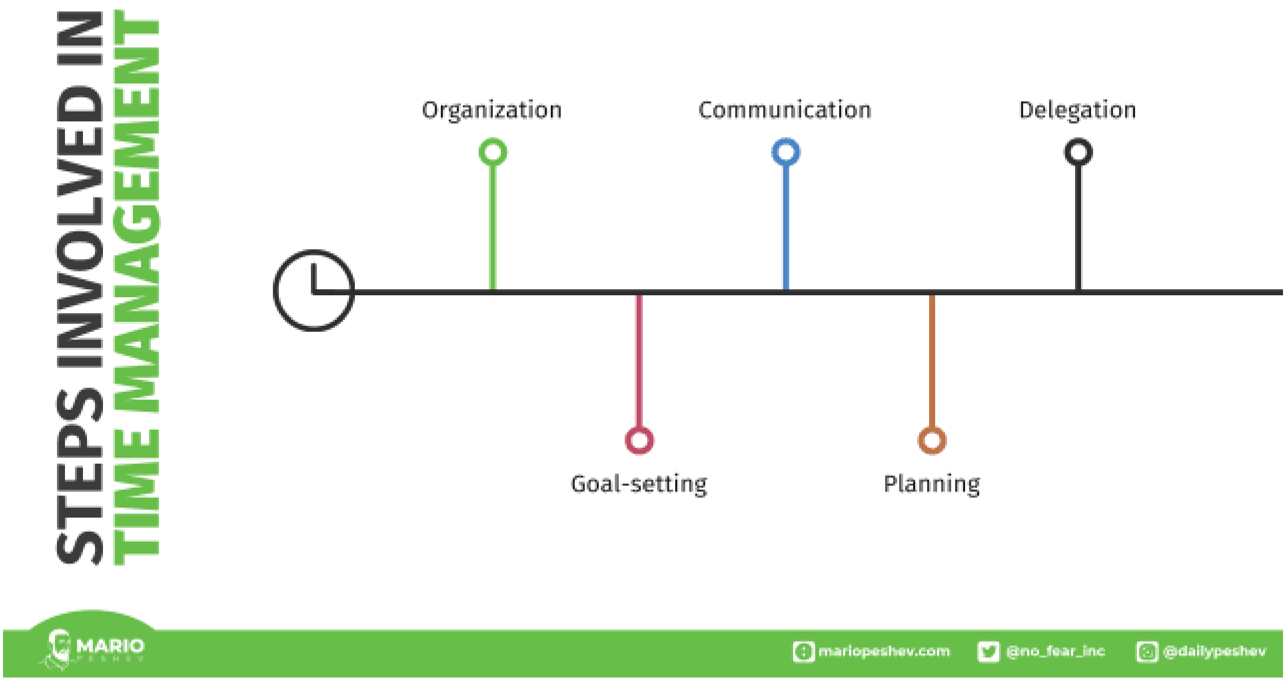
Technical skills or technical leadership refer to the manager's ability to use machines and software, production tools, and other equipment but also the skills necessary to help the other aspects of managing a business.

Managers who can see the bigger picture and design solutions accordingly have what we call as conceptual skills.

Last but not least, interpersonal skills are very important in relating with and motivating your employees. This particular type of management skills maximizes the value of a company's human resource when honed properly.

Interpersonal skills are what enable managers to relate with their employees effectively. If managers have a healthy relationship with their employees, then the employees become highly motivated to work.

3.9 TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS



Your time management skills will help you select among several time management strategies and productivity frameworks that you can use to manage your time effectively.

These time management strategies normally include the following steps:

- Organization
- Goal-setting
- Communication
- Planning
- Delegation

Developing your time management skills may take time for some but great managers often grow within a business promotion after promotion. This will set you even further apart from the other business owners or managers because you will become more productive, achieve goals faster, and do your job more efficiently.

3.10 PUBLIC RELATIONS SKILLS

Several business consultants work as the company PR with the following tasks:

- Written Communication
- Organizing Events
- Media Relations
- Developing Promotional Strategies

All of the tasks mentioned require that a consultant has excellent written and oral communication skills, among others.

Marketing teams and PR teams often overlap without proper directives. The primary tasks of the Public Relations experts include communicating news and stories to the different media channels and ultimately create a buzz about your new products or services.

Most of the time, PR strategies include events hosting like product launching or merger announcements. No matter the size of a company, it can leverage media mileage, especially in the long run.

Public relations skills are skills that you can acquire with proper research and immersion.

As a top executive or manager of a company, big or small, you could be the face of your organization. Every time your customers, the media, and the other company stakeholders look at you, they see what you represent.

Bonus: 16 Must-Have Soft Skills

Apart from the 10 business advisor skills that you can leverage, these 16 must-have soft skills can be extremely useful as well not only in advancing your career and professional development but also in running a business. As a business owner, you may be dealing not only with technical problems but also with other business challenges sprouting every now and then.
Running or managing a business also has a lot to do with working on activities such as risk management, sales, marketing, negotiations, project management, legal, and accounting, among many others.

With several activities and a heavy workload (most of the time), you have to be able to plan, delegate, and communicate with your clients and partners, while juggling multiple tasks at the same time. Being skilful in so many aspects can help you handle these tasks efficiently and deliver high-quality work without burning out.

However, it doesn’t mean that you should be on your own. You can always employ the consulting services of a reliable business advisor or consultant who can help provide insights and assistance especially in areas where you need extra focus. After all, it is wise to make sure that you still have time for research and development that can help innovate and scale your business and constantly explore opportunities and ideas.

4. QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

One key skill for Business Advisors is communication, as they frequently have meetings and conversations with their clients. Asking business advising questions is a great way to show prospective clients your expertise and understand what challenges they're facing. If you work as a Business Advisor, knowing how to ask great business advising questions can help you improve your relationships with clients and communicate with them more effectively.

4.1 WHAT IS BUSINESS ADVISING QUESTIONS?

Business Advising questions are questions you can ask prospective clients during a consulting interview. Asking the right business advising questions can help you learn more about the client and determine how you can serve them. Business advising questions cover topics like the client's customers, challenges and goals to help you understand their situation and propose a course of action.

4.2 WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BUSINESS ADVISING QUESTIONS?

Asking business advising questions can benefit both you and your clients in many ways, including:

- **Showing the client your expertise**

One benefit of asking business advising questions is that it can show your prospective client your business advising expertise. Asking good questions can help show your client that you're knowledgeable and qualified to work with them.

- **Learning what you need to know about your client**

Asking business advising questions can also help you learn what you need to know about your client to be a great business advisor. You can ask questions about your client's challenges, goals, customers and other topics to help you get the information you need to develop a strategy.

- **Strengthening your relationship with your client**

Another benefit of asking business advising questions is that it can help you strengthen your relationship with a prospective client. You can ask questions to get to know your client better and move your relationship forward.

4.3 15 BUSINESS ADVISING QUESTIONS TO ASK A CLIENT

Here are 15 Business Advising questions to consider asking your clients:

4.3.1 What is your top goal for this year?

Asking about the client's priority for the near future can help you learn more about the client and begin thinking about how you can help them accomplish their goals. You can also use the client's top goal to help keep them on track throughout the project.

4.3.2 What makes your business different from your competitors?

You can ask your client what makes them different from their competitors to help you understand your client's value proposition and competitive advantage. You can use this information as you develop their unique strategy.

4.3.3 Who is involved with the decision-making and execution of this project?

Asking who the essential contacts are for the project can help you ensure that you know who to reach as you work with the client. Knowing exactly who to contact can help you save time and increase productivity.

4.3.4 What is the primary reason you're looking for a consultant?

You can also ask your client to explain their main reason for hiring a business advisor. Asking this question can help you pinpoint exactly what the client wants to get out of your relationship. This can help you set goals and expectations for your work with the client.

4.3.5 What are the most pressing challenges you're facing with this project?

Asking your client about their challenges can give you insight into problems you can help solve through consulting. It can also give you an idea of what specific problems you should prioritize for your client to see results.

4.3.6 What options have you already tried?

It's also important to ask clients what options they've already tried. This way, you know which new solutions you can introduce or how you can improve upon the solutions they've already considered.

4.3.7 Can you tell me about the profile of your target customer?

You can also ask your client to explain their target customer, including their demographics and any problems they're facing. This information is important to help you develop a strategy that works for your client and make customer-centric decisions.

4.3.8 How prepared is your organization to make a change?

Another question you can ask your client is how prepared they are to make a change. This question is important to gauge how willing your client is to implement your solutions and get results.

4.3.9 How does this project relate to your organization overall?

Asking how the project relates to the organization can help you understand where this specific project fits into the client's overall goals and plans.

4.3.10 If you could change one thing about this project, what would you change?

It can also be a good idea to ask clients what they would change about the project if they could. This can give your ideas of what specific solutions you can implement for the client to see results.

4.3.11 What outcomes do you expect from this project?

It's also essential to ask clients what outcomes they expect from a project, as achieving these outcomes is important to client satisfaction. Try to understand your client's outcomes in specific terms, including any key numbers or deadlines you should know.

4.3.12 Is there anything else that I should know?

This general question can help you gather any additional information about the client. This question is important to ask because it can help you catch any information that you didn't learn by asking your other questions.

4.3.13 Would a [proposed solution] help you reach your goal?

This question gives the opportunity for you to propose a potential solution or course of action to your client. Your proposal may be creating a plan, developing a new process or taking another course of action. This question can encourage the client to buy into your consulting, strengthening your relationship.

4.3.14 Do you have any questions for me?

You can also give the client the opportunity to ask you any questions they have. This is essential to make sure your client gets everything out of the conversation that they expected. It can also make them more likely to feel comfortable choosing you as a consultant.

4.3.15 When should we schedule a meeting to discuss our plan?

It's also important to end your conversation with a call to action to keep moving your relationship forward. This question asserts that you want to continue working with the client and asks the client to choose a meeting time that works best for them.

4.4 TIPS FOR SPEAKING WITH CLIENTS

Here are some tips that you can use to improve the way you speak with clients:

4.4.1 Do your research and be prepared

One essential tip for speaking with a client is to do your research and be prepared for your conversation. You can research your client's website, social media and news coverage to learn as much information as you can ahead of your conversation. You should have a general understanding of:

- The name and role of the person you're speaking to
- The client's product or service
- The client's customers
- The client's main competitors
- The client's recent major events

4.4.2 Use active listening skills

You can also improve your communications with clients by using active listening skills. Active listening skills can help you show clients that you value what they're saying. Active listening includes making eye contact, paying attention to your body language and giving feedback.

4.4.3 Build a relationship

Another tip for speaking with clients is to make an effort to build a relationship with each client. You can connect with the person you're speaking to by opening your conversation with a warm greeting and speaking in a friendly manner. This can help you keep fostering a relationship with your client.

4.4.4 Take notes on your conversation

Taking notes on your conversation is another key tip for speaking with clients. Taking notes can help you record important information from your conversation to use in developing your strategy. It can also show the client that you're listening closely to what they're saying and paying attention to their needs.

4.5 QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK IN ORDER TO KNOW IF THE BUSINESS ADVISOR IS THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOU AND YOUR COMPANY

The following is a list of questions you need to ask in order to know if the consultant is the right fit for you and your company.

4.5.1 How Many Years of Experience Do You Have?

Most people would say that it's not about quantity, but quality. However, this isn't always the case particularly if you want to ensure you hire the right consultant among several options.

The length of someone's experience will tell you more than just the number of years, but also the following:

- The consultant's firm resolve to stay in this specific field for a long time
- Proficiency with the technical know-how and dynamics of consulting
- Exposure to several networking activities with people from all walks of life
- How lucrative the job is for the consultant to continually want to be in this business

Most importantly, how long one has been in the industry implies that a consultant has learned several lessons and has been refined over the years.

4.5.2 Do You Have Client Testimonials?

Business people offering services are only as good as their client's feedback.

It is great to get "good" feedback from clients where they thank you for helping them out. It would be nice to know they're willing to make themselves known as one of your clients. However, it is way better to hear them say how you specifically helped them.

Asking for any client testimonials to back up what your business advisor claims is a really good way to know whether you have found a reliable consultant fit for the job. The more specific they are in their testimonials, the better for you as a prospective client.

The information you can get from these testimonials might just be the deal-maker in case you'd still have doubts.

Your best bet is finding a skilled consultant with a successful track record of working with similar businesses to yours.

4.5.3 What Kind of Assessment Do You Plan on Conducting?

An evidence-based evaluation of the current standing of your business will only be possible with a thorough assessment. Never rely on your points of view alone because they could be biased or judgments lack a tangible basis.

Among the different types of assessment, a consultant must conduct are:

- needs assessment
- organizational assessment
- operational assessment
- individual assessment

Knowing ahead of time what kind of assessments a consultant is planning or capable of doing can help you prepare ahead. There are assessments that can be too intrusive for you so you can discuss that with your consultant. There are also assessments that need across-the-board participation so you can disseminate information to your departments about what to expect once you onboard your consultant.

4.5.4 Are You Easily Available Even During Weekends?

Ideally, you would want to work with a consultant who can respond to your emergency phone calls or emails during weekends. Who wouldn't?

However, the key to a healthy and mutually beneficial relationship between the consultant and you are a clear understanding of and respect for one's availability.

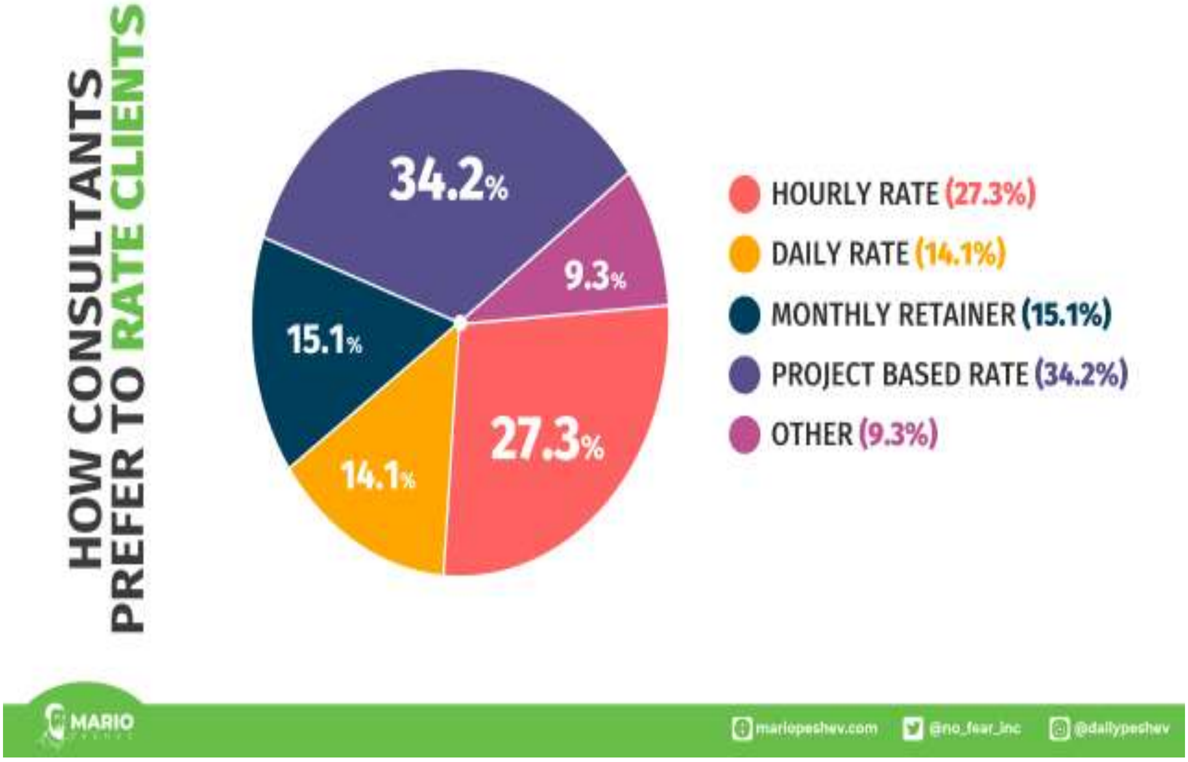
It is best to ask this question upfront especially if the nature of your business is around the clock. The tricky part though is that you also have to set fair expectations with regard to the availability of your prospective consultant and how much time he would be willing to spare.

After all, how a consultant values time is also a reflection of what kind of a business person he is.

4.5.5 How Much Is Your Consulting Fee?

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, consultants make an average of $150,000 per year (or $62.93 per hour).

Below are the fee methods and the percentages of consultants who favor these methods (Source: Consulting Success).



As a client, you want to know if your consultants are overpricing or not by comparing the asking fee with the others in the market. This will also help you plan your budget early on. Knowing how much to pay and when to pay during the interview process is an important part of setting proper expectations.

Generally, consultants charge based on any of the following pricing structure:

- Hourly rate
- Daily rate
- Monthly retainer
- Project-based rate

The rate also depends on whether the consultant would be working with you office-based or not. Others would go for hiring an office-based consultant.

This option provides maximum efficiency in terms of time and money since you can easily assign your consultant other tasks or ask for insights in a snap thereby letting you have more time on other important areas of your business.

4.5.6 Which field is your expertise?

Everyone has a field of expertise. The earth is massive, full of opportunities. You can find fulfilment; you can find problems to solve and you can make the money you want in your life.

Your field of expertise has buried treasure in it, but you only will find it when you are hard at work. That treasure can sustain you, your loved ones and then some, but you have to identify it first, then become a maestro in that field.

Examples of Field Expertise

- **Architecture and engineering**

People in the architecture and planning fields are responsible for designing new structures or creating aesthetically pleasing, practical and structurally sound environments. Many positions require an undergraduate or graduate degree.

- ❖ Architect
- ❖ Civil engineer
- ❖ Landscape architect
- ❖ Sustainable designer
- ❖ Biomedical engineer

- **Arts, culture and entertainment**

This career field is dedicated to enriching people's lives through culture and the sharing of arts and self-expression. There are formal educational programs for these fields, but these careers also include self-taught people who have natural talent.

- ❖ Music producer
- ❖ Art curator
- ❖ Animator/video game designer
- ❖ Filmmaker
  - ❖ Graphic designer
  - ❖ Fashion designer
  - ❖ Photographer

- **Business, management and administration**

The business, management and administration career fields are best for business-minded individuals with a penchant for communication. They work to execute various processes necessary for the functioning of businesses. It usually involves working in an office environment.

- ❖ Human resources
- ❖ Marketing
- ❖ Accountants
- ❖ Real estate agent
- ❖ Business Development

- **Communications**

The communications career field is about mastering the art of delivering a targeted message to diverse groups of people.

- Copywriter
- Public relations specialist
- Meeting/event planner
- Social media & Brand

- **Installation, repair and maintenance**

The installation, repair and maintenance career field is dedicated to helping customers operate specialized machinery. Workers in this field have a vast knowledge of their trade. They help to install, maintain, troubleshoot and repair a variety of different objects in the modern world.

- Auto mechanic
- Landscaper and groundskeeper
- Bicycle repairer
- Wind turbine technician
- Plumber

- **Farming, fishing and forestry**

The farming, fishing and forestry career fields are ideal for people who enjoy the outdoors. Providing food for people, this career field is an essential part of society. These professions work directly with ecosystems and manage them in various ways. People get the opportunity to be close to wildlife and nature. It includes the growing and harvesting of plants and animals for human consumption.

- Agricultural worker
- Animal breeder
- Nursery worker
- Forest and conservation worker
- Fisher

4.5.7 Are You a Member of Any Professional Association?

If you hire a consultant who currently works under a consulting firm, they are most probably affiliated with an association of their own.

Affiliations matter because they serve as the references for the consultant's character which is necessary for background checks.

Among others, the following are the advantages you can get when a consultant belongs to a reputable association:

- You can get access to the tools and resources your consultant exclusively has through the organization
- The consultant undergoes continually grows under the guidance of his senior consultants
- There are networking opportunities that will help link your business with others

❖ Consulting Success has curated a list of consulting and business associations you might want to check out:

4.5.8 What Has Been Your Biggest Success as a Consultant?

Success stories never fail to inspire.

Asking a consultant about his most successful ventures and experiences will inspire you towards your own success. Not only that, but you will also learn the consultant's:

- list of accomplishments
- strategies and specialties
- values

Why values? The consultant could talk about a particular professional feat he has recently achieved, a company problem he has solved, or a management conflict he has resolved. Depending on the consultant's answer, you would know which matters to him the most.

- Is it his own professional achievement or a contribution to a company?
- Has it been a long time since he did something significant?
- Does he have the motivation to solve problems?

You can be more specific by expounding the question in terms of:

- nature of the task
- goals set
- actions taken

4.5.9 What Has Been Your Biggest Failure?

In the same way that you would like to know what a consultant's biggest success is, you would also like to know what he considers his biggest failure – you get to know more about the consultant's strengths and even weaknesses.

You should be interested to know how the consultant was able to turn things around.

This is a tricky question because you could either see if a consultant is resilient enough to bounce back right away or if he is able to assess every situation with enough objectivity to always have a takeaway.

The question is often followed by "how did you deal with it?".

The answers to these questions will help provide hindsight's into what challenges took place and if you ever face the same business challenges, you could tell if a consultant has learned the lessons necessary for you to avoid or solve a problem.

4.5.10 Do You Use a Formal Program to Help Your Clients or Do You Come up With It as You Go Along?

This question is just another way to ask the following questions:

- ❖ Are you prepared as a consultant to train?
- ❖ Do you have the necessary tools and resources?
- ❖ Can you outline your own training programs?
- ❖ Have you thought about equipping us with the possible challenges that will come our way?

The answers to this question often come in a form of a business proposal or portfolio where a client outlines what he can do for you. However, you would still want to ask this question vis a vis any document the consultant presents.

4.5.11 Are You a Specialist in Your Area?

There are several types of business advisors or consultants. While there are certain specializations that overlap like how management consultants can overlap with operations advisors or even strategy advisors, not all specializations match with what you could be looking for in a consultant.

A consultant could profile in several specialties but this question clarifies how confident a consultant is in his area and whether he could back it up.

For instance, you could be looking for an IT consultant. During an interview with someone applying for this role, you would like to know if the IT consultant can handle strategy, procurement, or even management other than being an expert at structuring IT systems.

This question will also help you distinguish instantly during an interview which candidate can bring more to the table among the others, thus narrowing your list.

Once you search for “business advisor”, “management consultant” or a relevant term, you can gather a couple of dozen professionals offering one-off or ongoing services. But how to vet them?

1. Name 5 typical questions that clients need to ask in order to know if the business Advisor is legitimate? (5)

BUSINESS ADVISING - QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **How Many Years of Experience Do You Have?**

2. **Do You Have Client Testimonials?**

3. **What Kind of Assessment Do You Plan on Conducting?**

4. **Are You Easily Available Even During Weekends?**

5. **How Much Is Your Consulting Fee?**

6. **Which field is your expertise?**

7. **Are You a Member of Any Professional Association?**

8. **What Has Been Your Biggest Success as a Consultant?**

9. What Has Been Your Biggest Failure?

10. Do You Use a Formal Program to Help Your Clients or Do You Come up With It as You Go Along?

11. Are You a Specialist in Your Area?

4.6 HOW TO MASTER THE ART OF GIVING AND RECEIVING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

The ability to give and receive feedback is an important skill which, when delivered effectively, can bring about positive change. Yet giving and receiving feedback is often one of the things we fear the most in the workplace. So, is there a way to make sure feedback conversations are constructive and positive, rather than something to be avoided?

According to Kon Krios, Head of Learning and Organisational Development at SEEK, if you can master the art of giving feedback, you are creating a valuable opportunity to help others reach their full potential.

Kon recommends using a tool developed by global provider of professional development training the Centre for Creative Leadership called the Situation — Behaviour — Impact (SBI) model.

“The SBI method provides a clear, simple structure for delivering feedback that helps keep your message focused and constructive and increases the likelihood it will be received in a positive way,” he says.

So how does it work?

- **Situation**

The first step when you’re giving feedback is to clearly outline the situation you’re referring to. This puts the feedback into context and gives the recipient a specific reference.

For example:

“During the meeting last week with our client Peter…”

“During the meeting yesterday when John spoke to you in an aggressive way…”

- **Behaviour**

The next step is to describe the specific behaviours that you want to address. It is very important to only address behaviours that you have observed directly, rather than making assumptions or being subjective about those behaviours. Make sure you focus on the behaviours, not the person – this will help to ensure that the recipient does not feel under personal attack.

For example:

“During the meeting last week with our client Peter, I noticed you spoke over him three times, and when he attempted to speak, you appeared dismissive.”

“During the meeting yesterday when John spoke to you in a way that I experienced as aggressive, I noticed your tone stayed calm and you were able to clearly address the two issues that he was concerned about.”

Impact

The last step is to describe how the other person’s action has affected the business, you or others. Make sure the feedback being given is enabling, so the person on the receiving end can take action on the feedback being given.

For example:

“During the meeting last week with Peter, I noticed you spoke over him three times, and when he attempted to speak, you appeared dismissive. I think this had a negative impact on our relationship with the client who appeared to leave the meeting feeling unheard. I felt disappointed and saw it as a missed opportunity.”

During the meeting yesterday when John spoke to you in a way that I experienced as aggressive, I noticed your tone stayed calm and you were able to clearly address the two issues that he was concerned about. I was thrilled about the way you handled this difficult situation and it has helped us foster trust in the relationship.”

Here are some useful tips for feedback conversations:

When providing feedback:

- Feedback should be timely so the person receiving the feedback is able to recall the situation easily.

- Pick the right moment. Try to choose a time when both parties are in an open frame of mind.
- Prepare well. When giving feedback, make sure you manage your thoughts and emotions, particularly when it could be challenging for the person to hear it.
- Aim to use specific information in your description of the behaviour you are giving feedback on. This helps to ensure that your comments are objective.
- Don't just follow a script. While the SBI tool is a great way to structure the feedback, it is important to stay in tune and listen to the other person's perspective.
- Make sure you also comment on what the person did well.

When receiving feedback:

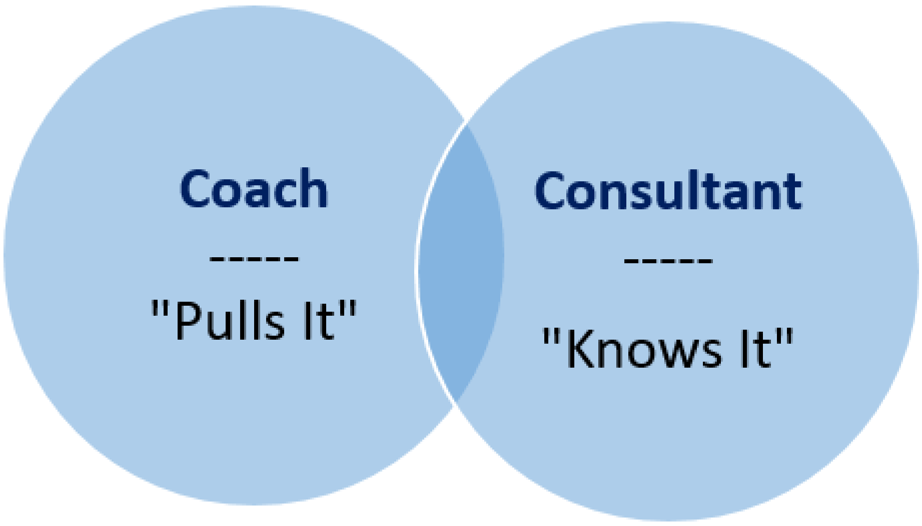
- It's important to listen and put yourself in a curious and open mindset.
- View feedback as an opportunity to grow and learn.
- If you don't agree with the feedback being given, it is also okay to share your perspective on the situation.
- If you're unsure how to interpret the feedback you're being provided, ask the person to clarify using the SBI model.

5. MECHANISMS FOR RECOGNISING AND MAINTAINING ELECTIVE OR SPECIALIST COMPETENCE

5.1 THE COACH-CONSULTANT CONCEPT

A **small business consultant** works with clients on strategy, planning and problem solving, and helps clients develop business skills and knowledge. These topics range from designing a business model or marketing plan, to determining which marketing techniques to use and how to use them. They often help clients learn how to plan and implement projects. A small business consultant gives advice, teaches skills, and brainstorms with the client to produce practical results and enhance strategic thinking.

A **small business coach** helps clients to create success by focusing on personal development: time management, self-sabotaging behavior (like procrastination and distraction), finding clarity, decision making, and getting into action. When you put on your coaching hat, you don't give advice. Instead, you help the client find the answers from within themselves. You need *both* consulting skills *and* coaching skills in order to be effective and provide real value. If you have been working with micro business owners and solo entrepreneurs you can rarely find one that doesn't need both coaching and consulting.



Its true clients almost never approach the business consultant and ask for straight coaching. They ask for consulting. They ask for practical advice and brainstorming. But in the search to find solutions and to map out a strategy, a small business owner will stumble unless they do both the personal development work *and* the business development work that leads to success.

5.2 CHECKLIST FOR BECOMING A SMALL BUSINESS CONSULTANT

Here is a list of things to consider when you are starting or growing your small business consulting practice:

- **Start with your own skill-building.** You cannot be an effective consultant if you don't bring value to the small business owner. Be relentless in your ongoing skill building. You become more in-demand and can charge higher fees based on your wider breadth of knowledge and expertise.
- **Check your experience level.** It's rare that a small business owner will entrust their business to a small business consultant who has never owned a business before, or to a consultant who doesn't have a high level of expertise in a specific topic area. An expert is defined as having 10,000 hours of experience with the topic they claim as their expertise. If you use a traditional 40-hour workweek as your ruler, that means you need at least 5 years' full-time experience with your small business topic in order to call yourself an expert.
- **Determine your Big Why.** Before you get down to the nitty-gritty of designing your business and getting clients, figure out ***why*** you want to be a small business consultant and help this specific target audience. What is your motivation? Knowing this will keep you going when you hit the inevitable speed bumps along the way to building your business and serving your clients.

- **Determine what "success" looks like for you personally.** Keep your eye on the target. The definition of success differs from person to person. Take some time to visualize all the ways that a successful consulting practice will manifest in your personal and professional life.

- **Write a business plan.** Go through all the same steps you would go through with a client, and work on your *own* business model design. Things to consider: what legal format you'll use, what are your mission and vision statements, what are your offerings, your pricing and profit models. Include the resources you will need to succeed, like money, time, skills/knowledge, equipment, and people resources. Set goals and milestones for the next 1 year, 3 years and 5 years.
- **Write a marketing plan.** There are many small business consultants out there. How will you be remarkable and stand out from the crowd? How will you connect with your audience and build rapport and trust? Will you use traditional marketing techniques only, or combine traditional and internet marketing? Which of the 100+ available techniques will bring the best results? How much will you invest in marketing (in both time and money)? What are the goals of your marketing?

- **Learn coaching skills.** You will be working with human beings who have their own set of strengths and weaknesses. Learn deep listening skills and how to ask meaningful questions to get clarity and provide focus. Learn how to hold clients accountable for implementing their action plans, and how to deal with difficult client situations.
- **Choose a focus or niche.** Determine if your specialty requires you to have a license or certification (financial and tax advisors, legal advisors, insurance advisors). Will you focus on a small topic area, like email marketing strategies, or will you be an expert who can help clients with a wide range of challenges and projects? Will you work with a particular size business based on number of employees or revenue? Will you work only with local clients, or will your consulting business be national/international?

- **Decide if you are going to advise them, or do the work for them.** Some consultants are more like mentors and advisors, who work with the small business owner to do planning and strategy work. Other small business consultants provide a specific service as a sub-contractor, to augment the client's staff.
- **Learn the problems that most small business owners have** and formulate a strategy to define and solve those problems. Outline the top problems that clients commonly need help with. Use readily available strategies, tools and assessments to help solve these problems, or create strategies of your own. Consider putting together your own consultant's toolkit.
- **Deeply understand the seven areas of a business model** to help your clients in the areas that are causing the most damage or have the best return on investment if they make a change.
- **Systemize your own business** so that you have maximum efficiency. Use templates, automation and sales scripts. Take time early in the setup of your business to create these systems to free up your time and attention for more important tasks.
- **Get help with the administrative and marketing work.** Outsource the tasks that you do not want to do, that you are not an expert in, or that take away from your revenue-generating time.
- **Get your ego out of the way.** While your work can and should be meaningful to you, you are not a consultant to pump up your own ego. You are a consultant to serve your clients. You are going to advise them, help them to determine the pros and cons of each course of action, and then allow them to make their own decisions. You cannot stop them from making unwise decisions or from not following through on an implementation plan. Equally, if your client has a big win, it may be partly due to your advice, but much of the praise needs to go to your client for making it happen. Decide in advance what a "successful client engagement" means to you.
- **Be honest about your own areas of personal development.** No one is perfect. Sometimes we procrastinate. Sometimes we get distracted. Sometimes we let anger or fear get the better of us. Sometimes we don't

communicate as well as we could. Discover your weaknesses and either learn how to overcome them, or hire staff to help deflect them.

- **Choose marketing techniques that bring qualified leads to the sales conversation.** Track your marketing relentlessly. If your marketing isn't bringing the desired results, revamp it. Do not choose marketing techniques because they are a hot trend if they don't bring in leads or help build your brand recognition.
- **Learn problem solving, decision making, project management, and time management skills.** These four skills will provide the backbone of the assistance you will offer clients and help you run your own business successfully.
- **Learn from the masters.** Why reinvent the wheel? You can discover savvy shortcuts by paying attention to the leading consultants in your industry. In any small business consulting niche there are always several people who have risen to the top of their profession. Study their offerings, their marketing methods, the way they run their businesses, and the way they work with clients. Determine if those methods would serve you and your clients, too.

5.3 THE BUSINESS ADVISOR COMPETENCIES

The following is a summarized list of the 31 competencies listed by "cluster" (similar competencies related to a common skill set). Each competency includes a definition and the observable behaviors that may indicate the existence of a competency in a person.

- **Establishing Focus**: The ability to develop and communicate goals in support of the business' mission.
- **Providing Motivational Support**: The ability to enhance others' commitment to their work.
- **Fostering Teamwork**: As a team member, the ability and desire to work cooperatively with others on a team; as a team leader, the ability to demonstrate interest, skill, and success in getting groups to learn to work together.

- **Empowering Others:** The ability to convey confidence in employees' ability to be successful, especially at challenging new tasks; delegating significant responsibility and authority; allowing employees freedom to decide how they will accomplish their goals and resolve issues.
- **Managing Change:** The ability to demonstrate support for innovation and for organizational changes needed to improve the organization's effectiveness; initiating, sponsoring, and implementing organizational change; helping others to successfully manage organizational change.
- **Developing Others**: The ability to delegate responsibility and to work with others and coach them to develop their capabilities.
- **Managing Performance:** The ability to take responsibility for one's own or one's employees' performance, by setting clear goals and expectations, tracking progress against the goals, ensuring feedback, and addressing performance problems and issues promptly.

5.3.1 Communication and Influencing Cluster

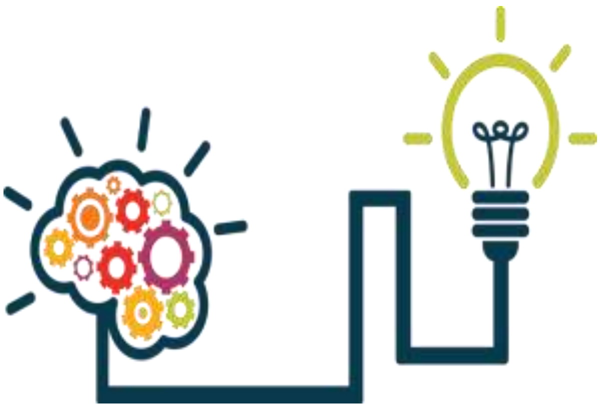
- **Attention to Communication**: The ability to ensure that information is passed on to others who should be kept informed.
- **Oral Communication:** The ability to express oneself clearly in conversations and interactions with others.
- **Written Communication**: The ability to express oneself clearly in business writing.

- **Persuasive Communication**: The ability to plan and deliver oral and written communications that make an impact and persuade their intended audiences.
- **Interpersonal Awareness:** The ability to notice, interpret, and anticipate others' concerns and feelings, and to communicate this awareness empathetically to others.
- **Influencing Others**: The ability to gain others' support for ideas, proposals, projects, and solutions.
- **Building Collaborative Relationships**: The ability to develop, maintain, and strengthen partnerships with others inside or outside the organization who can provide information, assistance, and support.
- **Customer Orientation**: The ability to demonstrate concern for satisfying one's external and/or internal customers.

5.4 COMPETENCIES DEALING WITH BUSINESS

5.4.1 The Preventing and Solving Problems Cluster

- **Diagnostic Information Gathering**: The ability to identify the information needed to clarify a situation, seek that information from appropriate sources, and use skillful questioning to draw out the information, when others are reluctant to disclose it
- **Analytical Thinking:** The ability to tackle a problem by using a logical, systematic, sequential approach.



- **Forward Thinking:** The ability to anticipate the implications and consequences of situations and take appropriate action to be prepared for possible contingencies.
- **Conceptual Thinking**: The ability to find effective solutions by taking a holistic, abstract, or theoretical perspective.

- **Strategic Thinking:** The ability to analyze the organization's competitive position by considering market and industry trends, existing and potential customers (internal and external), and strengths and weaknesses as compared to competitors.
- **Technical Expertise**: The ability to demonstrate depth of knowledge and skill in a technical area. Effectively applies technical knowledge to solve a range of problems.

5.4.2 The Achieving Results Cluster

- **Initiative**: Identifying what needs to be done and doing it before being asked or before the situation requires it. Does more than what is normally required in a situation.
- **Entrepreneurial Orientation**: The ability to look for and seize profitable business opportunities; willingness to take calculated risks to achieve business goals.

- **Fostering Innovation**: The ability to develop, sponsor, or support the introduction of new and improved method, products, procedures, or technologies
- **Results Orientation**: The ability to focus on the desired result of one's own or one's unit's work, setting challenging goals, focusing effort on the goals, and meeting or exceeding them.
- **Thoroughness:** Ensuring that one's own and others' work and information are complete and accurate; carefully preparing for meetings and presentations; following up with others to ensure that agreements and commitments have been fulfilled.

- **Decisiveness:** The ability to make difficult decisions in a timely manner. Takes charge of a group when it is necessary to facilitate change, overcome an impasse, face issues, or ensure that decisions are made.

5.5 SELF-MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES

- **Self Confidence**: Faith in one's own ideas and capability to be successful; willingness to take an independent position in the face of opposition.
- **Stress Management:** The ability to keep functioning effectively when under pressure and maintain self-control in the face of hostility or provocation.
- **Personal Credibility**: Demonstrated concern that one be perceived as responsible, reliable, and trustworthy. Takes responsibility for own mistakes; does not blame others
- **Flexibility**: Openness to different and new ways of doing things; willingness to modify one's preferred way of doing things.

6. UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO CHANGE

To develop a successful strategy for change, you need to understand the types of barriers faced in the SMME environment. Using this knowledge, you can consider which barriers and levers may operate in your organization and which may be relevant to a particular problem. Following careful consideration, it is possible to develop a tailored approach to overcome the barriers, encourage changes in behavior and ultimately implement guidance.

6.1 AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE

Awareness and knowledge of what needs to change and why, are vital first steps in enabling change to occur. Evidence shows that SMMEs are often unaware of, and lack familiarity with, the latest evidence-based guidance. In addition, they may be aware that new guidance has been issued but don't know how their current way of working needs to change to ensure they provide the best care for customers in line with the guidance. Some SMMEs may feel that guidance undermines their autonomy or is not applicable to their population, and so don't consistently refer to it.

6.2 MOTIVATION

Motivation is a fundamental part of nearly everything we do. External factors can drive motivation and change behavior, for example, the provision of incentives or penalties imposed as part of regulatory checks. But internal factors, such as individuals' self-motivation, drive and desire to improve are very important too. Intentions and goals can impact on how much people want to change. Their priorities and commitments may also interfere with their ability to change.

6.3 ACCEPTANCE AND BELIEFS

An individual's personal beliefs and attitudes impact significantly on the way they behave. Perceptions of the benefits of any proposed change versus the costs, both practical and financial, can be important. Perceptions of the views of others may also have an impact. Some SMMEs may find it difficult to accept new guidance if it is in conflict with other guidance issued by professional bodies or the opinion of an influential colleague. Other SMMEs may not believe that recommendations reflect the evidence or that they will achieve better customer satisfaction. A person's belief in their own ability to adopt a new behavior also has an impact on whether a change is implemented.

6.4 SKILLS

To make change happen, individuals need to know not only about what needs to change, but also how best to competently carry out the change. Your business Consultants, SMMEs owners/managers may need training to ensure they have the skills to deliver best practice. They may need the time to learn new skills and practice them.

Support from peers or mentoring might be needed. Individual abilities, interpersonal skills and coping strategies will also affect how easy or difficult it will be for individuals to learn new skills.

6.5 PRACTICALITIES

Practical barriers can involve a lack of resources or trained artisans, or difficulties in establishing service delivery. New equipment might be needed in order to enable new guidance to be followed. In some cases, the configuration of services or the infrastructure of the organization may need to be altered to allow for change to happen. Another practical difficulty is maintaining change in the long term. If key members of the SMME leave or priorities shift it may be difficult to maintain any changes that have been introduced.

6.6 BARRIERS BEYOND OUR CONTROL – THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The financial and political environment can impact on both the Consultant and the SMME's desire, motivation and ability to make changes. At an organizational level, financial systems may not facilitate payments for new interventions and resources may be constrained. Incentive mechanisms and regulatory processes may not be aligned with what's needed to implement the changes.

Evidence shows that regulation and national target setting bring about improvements in the quality of SMMEs. Mandatory reporting has been shown to bring about improvements in customer care. There is also evidence to show that continued professional development is linked to improved quality of care and better sales outcomes.

6.7 IDENTIFY THE BARRIERS TO CHANGE

Equipped with an understanding of the types of barriers faced by both the Consultant and the SMMEs, you now need to identify the barriers that your organization faces. This will involve looking at the specific barriers for different individuals in your organization in relation to a particular piece of evidence-based guidance.

When implementing any new policy or guidance, it is essential to identify the gap between recommended practice and current practice (baseline assessment). Ideally, this assessment will also help to identify the potential and actual barriers to change, allowing you to pinpoint the practical actions needed to implement the change along with the groups of entrepreneurs who are key in bridging this gap.

Evidence shows that there are a number of methods that can be used to identify where change is needed and potential barriers to that change. Your choice of method will be guided by local circumstances, including the numbers of parastatals involved and the time and resources available. In some situations, more than one approach may be needed.

6.8 TALK TO KEY INDIVIDUALS

Key individuals have specific understanding of a given situation and have the knowledge, skills and authority to enable them to think around a topic and explore new ideas. You may want to consider talking to a group of key individuals through one of their regular meetings

Talking to a key individual or a group of key individuals is an informal way of gaining insight into a particular problem or situation. This method has a number of advantages, for example:

- it enables ideas to be explored in an iterative fashion
- detailed information can be obtained
- it is quick and inexpensive.

There may be some disadvantages, for example:

- it relies heavily on the key individual(s)
- the responses may be subject to bias

- it may be difficult to find the right person (or people) to talk to
- additional corroboration may be needed.

Talking to a key individual may be used, for example, when you are considering introducing a new financial system to the SMME. By discussing the potential barriers that might arise as a result of introducing the new system with key individuals that will be affected, you can get specific details of the problems you are likely to face.

Remember, there is no one method to overcome all the different barriers; different approaches will be effective for different people and different situations. These methods can be used on their own or together; combining methods may have a bigger impact on change.

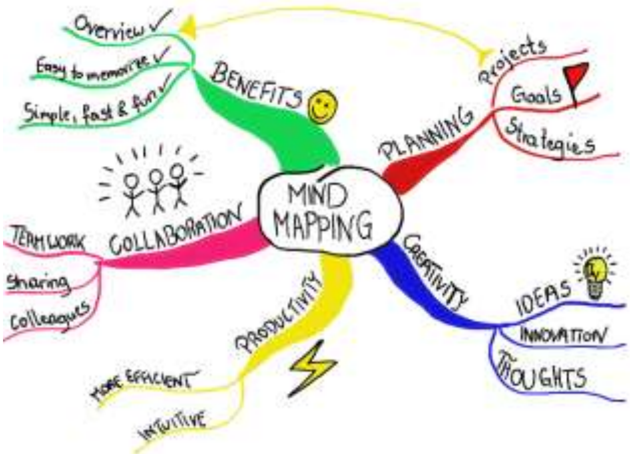
7. MAPPING BARRIERS TO METHODS

If we now take all of the information gathered about what needs to change, who is affected and the likely barriers, and combine it with our understanding of what works to make change happen in different situations, we can map the barriers to specific methods.

- Run local educational workshops to highlight changes in practice. Encourage attendance from across the locality and encourage professionals to explore short- and long-term solutions to training needs.
- Promote work-based methods of learning such as learning from and with peers and mentoring by senior colleagues.

A winning knowledge management program increases staff productivity, product and service quality, and deliverable consistency by capitalizing on intellectual and knowledge-based assets.

Many organizations leap into a knowledge management solution (e.g. document management, data mining, blogging, and community forums) without first considering the purpose or objectives they wish to fulfill or how the organization will adopt and follow best practices for managing its knowledge assets long term.



A successful knowledge management program will consider more than just technology. An organization should also consider:

- **People**. - They represent how you increase the ability of individuals within the organization to influence others with their knowledge.
- **Processes**. - They involve how you establish best practices and governance for the efficient and accurate identification, management, and dissemination of knowledge.

- **Technology**. - It addresses how you choose, configure, and utilize tools and automation to enable knowledge management.
- **Structure**. - It directs how you transform organizational structures to facilitate and encourage cross-discipline awareness and expertise.
- **Culture**. - It embodies how you establish and cultivate a knowledge-sharing, knowledge-driven culture.

The following eight-step approach will enable you to identify these challenges so you can plan for them, thus minimizing the risks and maximizing the rewards. This approach was developed based on logical, tried-and-true activities for implementing any new organizational program. The early steps involve strategy, planning, and requirements gathering while the later steps focus on execution and continual improvement.

STEP 1: ESTABLISH KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Before selecting a tool, defining a process, and developing workflows, you should envision and articulate the end state. In order to establish the appropriate program objectives, identify and document the business problems that need resolution and the business drivers that will provide momentum and justification for the endeavor. Provide both short-term and long-term objectives that address the business problems and support the business drivers. Short-term objectives should seek to provide validation that the program is on the right path while long-term objectives will help to create and communicate the big picture.

STEP 2: PREPARE FOR CHANGE

Knowledge management is more than just an application of technology. It involves cultural changes in the way employees perceive and share knowledge they develop or possess. One common cultural hurdle to increasing the sharing of knowledge is that companies primarily reward individual performance. This practice promotes a "knowledge is power" behavior that contradicts the desired knowledge-sharing, knowledge-driven culture end state you are after.

Successfully implementing a new knowledge management program may require changes within the organization's norms and shared values; changes that some people might resist or even attempt to quash. To minimize the negative impact of such changes, it's wise to follow an established approach for managing cultural change.

STEP 3: DEFINE HIGH-LEVEL PROCESS

To facilitate the effective management of your organization's knowledge assets, you should begin by laying out a high-level knowledge management process. The process can be progressively developed with detailed procedures and work instructions throughout steps four, five, and six. However, it should be finalized and approved prior to step seven (implementation).

Organizations that overlook or loosely define the knowledge management process will not realize the full potential of their knowledge management objectives. How knowledge is identified, captured, categorized, and disseminated will be ad hoc at best. There are a number of knowledge management best practices, all of which comprise similar activities. In general, these activities include knowledge strategy, creation, identification, classification, capture, validation, transfer, maintenance, archival, measurement, and reporting.

STEP 4: DETERMINE AND PRIORITIZE TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

Depending on the program objectives established in step one and the process controls and criteria defined in step three, you can begin to determine and prioritize your knowledge management technology needs. With such a variety of knowledge management solutions, it is imperative to understand the cost and benefit of each type of technology and the primary technology providers in the marketplace. Don't be too quick to purchase a new technology without first determining if your existing technologies can meet your needs. You can also wait to make costly technology decisions after the knowledge management program is well underway if there is broad support and a need for enhanced computing and automation.

STEP 5: ASSESS CURRENT STATE

Now that you've established your program objectives to solve your business problem, prepared for change to address cultural issues, defined a high-level process to enable the effective management of your knowledge assets, and determined and prioritized your technology needs that will enhance and automate knowledge management related activities, you are in a position to assess the current state of knowledge management within your organization.

The knowledge management assessment should cover all five core knowledge management components: people, processes, technology, structure, and culture. A typical assessment should provide an overview of the assessment, the gaps between current and desired states, and the recommendations for attenuating identified gaps. The recommendations will become the foundation for the roadmap in step six.

STEP 6: BUILD A KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

With the current-state assessment in hand, it is time to build the implementation roadmap for your knowledge management program. But before going too far, you should re-confirm senior leadership's support and commitment, as well as the funding to implement and maintain the knowledge management program. Without these prerequisites, your efforts will be futile. Having solid evidence of your organization's shortcomings, via the assessment, should drive the urgency rate up. Having a strategy on how to overcome the shortcomings will be critical in gaining leadership's support and getting the funding you will need. This strategy can be presented as a roadmap of related projects, each addressing specific gaps identified by the assessment. The roadmap can span months and years and illustrate key milestones and dependencies. A good roadmap will yield some short-term wins in the first step of projects, which will bolster support for subsequent steps. As time progresses, continue to review and evolve the roadmap based upon the changing economic conditions and business drivers. You will undoubtedly gain additional insight through the lessons learned from earlier projects that can be applied to future projects as well.

STEP 7: IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing a knowledge management program and maturing the overall effectiveness of your organization will require significant personnel resources and funding. Be prepared for the long haul, but at the same time, ensure that incremental advances are made and publicized. As long as there are recognized value and benefits, especially in light of ongoing successes, there should be little resistance to continued knowledge management investments. With that said, it's time for the rubber to meet the road. You know what the objectives are. You have properly mitigated all cultural issues. You've got the processes and technologies that will enable and launch your knowledge management program. You know what the gaps are and have a roadmap to tell you how to address them. As you advance through each step of the roadmap, make sure you are realizing your short-term wins. Without them, your program may lose momentum and the support of key stakeholders.

STEP 8: MEASURE AND IMPROVE THE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

How will you know your knowledge management investments are working? You will need a way of measuring your actual effectiveness and comparing that to anticipated results. If possible, establish some baseline measurements in order to capture the before shot of the organization's performance prior to implementing the knowledge management program. Then, after implementation, trend and compare the new results to the old results to see how performance has improved. Don't be disillusioned if the delta is not as large as you would have anticipated. It will take time for the organization to become proficient with the new processes and improvements. Over time, the results should follow suit. When deciding upon the appropriate metrics to measure an organization's progress, establish a balanced scorecard that provides metrics in the areas of performance, quality, compliance, and value. The key point behind establishing a knowledge management balanced scorecard is that it provides valuable insight into what's working and what's not. You can then take the necessary actions to mitigate compliance, performance, quality, and value gaps, thus improving overall efficacy of the knowledge management program.

The Power of Knowledge Management

Implementing a complete knowledge management takes time and money, however, the results can be impressive and risks can be minimized by taking a phased approach that gives beneficial returns at each step. Organizations that have made this kind of investment in knowledge management realize tangible results quickly. They add to their top and bottom lines through faster cycle times, enhanced efficiency, better decision making and greater use of tested solutions across the enterprise.

8. SELF-DEVELOPMENT MECHANISMS

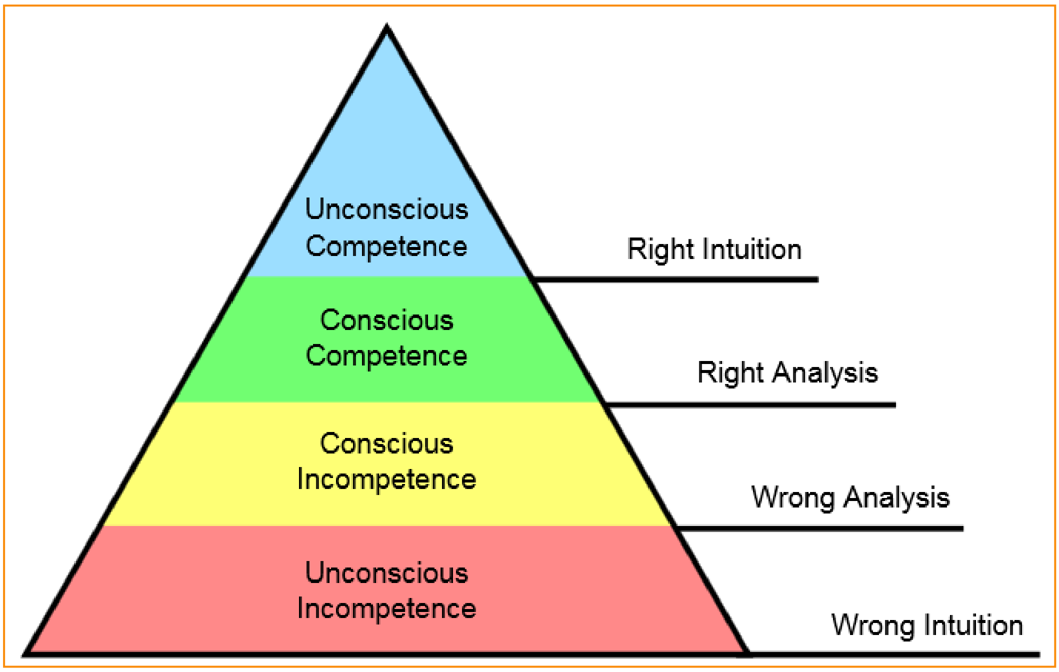
Competence is the ability of an individual to do a job properly. A competency is a set of defined behaviors that provide a structured guide enabling the identification, evaluation and development of the behaviors in individual employees. The term "competence" first appeared in an article authored by R.W. White in 1959 as a concept for performance motivation. In 1970, Craig C. Lundberg defined the concept in "Planning the Executive Development Program". The term gained traction when in 1973, David McClelland wrote a seminal paper entitled, "Testing for Competence Rather than for Intelligence". It has since been popularized by Richard Boyatzis and many others, such as T.F. Gilbert (1978) who used the concept in relationship to performance improvement. Its use varies widely, which leads to considerable misunderstanding.

Some scholars see "competence" as a combination of practical and theoretical knowledge, cognitive skills, behavior and values used to improve performance; or as the state or quality of being adequately or well qualified, having the ability to perform a specific role. For instance, management competency might include systems thinking and emotional intelligence, and skills in influence and negotiation.

Competency is also used as a more general description of the requirements of human beings in organizations and communities.

8.1 COMPETENCE HIERARCHY

Competency is sometimes thought of as being shown in action in a situation and context that might be different the next time a person has to act. In emergencies, competent people may react to a situation following behaviors they have previously found to succeed. To be competent a person would need to be able to interpret the situation in the context and to have a repertoire of possible actions to take and have trained in the possible actions in the repertoire, if this is relevant. Regardless of training, competency would grow through experience and the extent of an individual to learn and adapt. However, research has found that it is not easy to assess competencies and competence development.



8.2 PERSONAL COMPETENCIES

8.2.1 Attention to Detail

Achieves thoroughness and accuracy when accomplishing a task through concern for all the areas involved.

Behavioral Indicators

- Provides accurate, consistent numbers on all paperwork
- Provides information in a useable form and on a timely basis to others who need to act on it
- Maintains a checklist, schedule, calendar, etc. to ensure that small details are not overlooked
- Follows policies, procedure, safety and security measures in using various equipment

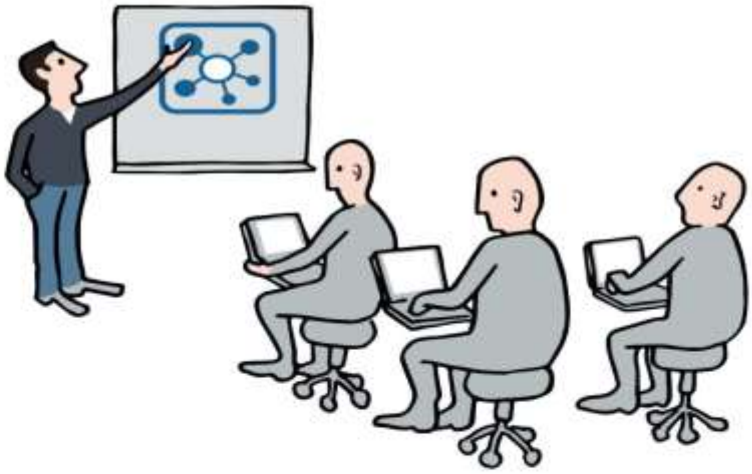
- Work requires little or no checking
- Writes down important details in messages or communications so the details are not lost or forgotten

8.2.2 Coaching

Work to improve the immediate performance of others; facilitates their skill development; and gives feedback in a manner that facilitates confidence and maintains self-esteem.

Behavioral Indicators

- Reinforces effective behaviors or results through acknowledgement, recognition and/or feedback in a timely manner.
- Clearly states actual performance compared to expected or desired performance.



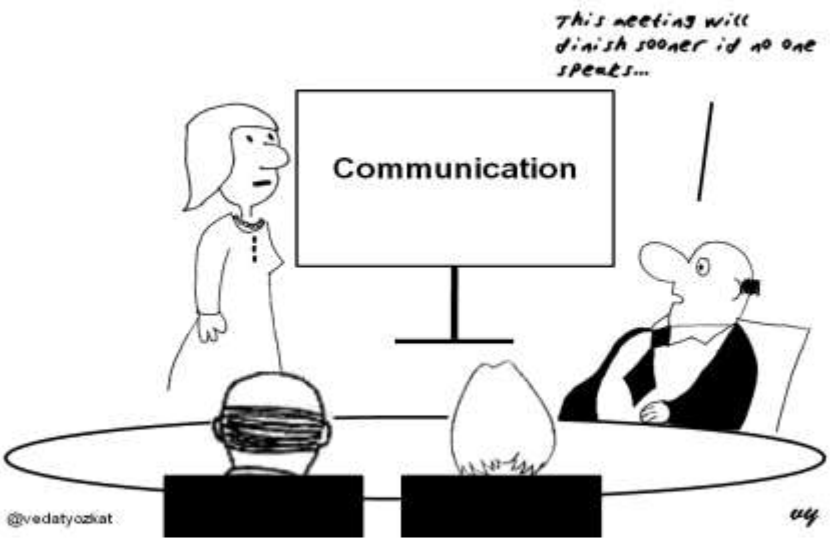
- Devotes time to providing task-related help to others.
- Asks questions that help other people recognize the need for performance improvement.
- Expresses confidence in an individual's ability to meet or exceed expectations.
- Takes time to listen to other's issues and concerns.
- Discusses problems immediately, before they are forgotten or out of control.
- Encourages others to voice their concerns and constructive criticism.

8.2.3 Communication Skills - Oral

Demonstrates the ability to convey thoughts and express ideas effectively using speech in individual or group situations; attends to and fully comprehends what others are saying.

Behavioral Indicators

- Is clear and articulate when speaking with an individual or before a group.
- Uses examples and paraphrasing in speech, as necessary, to clarify ideas and concepts.
- Uses vocabulary appropriate to the audience.
- Checks for understanding of the communication by asking open-ended questions that draw out the listener's understanding.



- Thinks through what is to be communicated and organizes thoughts and ideas effectively.
- Demonstrates effective listening by providing feedback to the speaker in such a way that it is clear that the message was understood.

8.2.4 Communication Skills – Written

Demonstrates the ability to express ideas, thought and concepts clearly in writing, using correct and appropriate grammar, organization and structure.

Behavioral Indicators

- Organizes written work in a manner that is clear and easy to follow
- Produces written material that is understandable, as evidenced by the reactions of the recipients
- Keeps written material concise and relevant.
- Uses proper grammar, spelling and punctuation and paragraph structure
- Writes in a manner that commands attention and achieves desired results

8.2.5 Continuous Improvement Orientation

Looks for incremental improvements in work processes and results

Behavioral Indicators

- Pays attention to processes or steps leading to the accomplishment of results, looking for ways to improve quality, efficiency and/or effectiveness
- Looks for ways to eliminate redundancy or in processes, for example repetition of steps in a
- process that provides no value-add
- Looks for ways to streamline work processes, for example eliminating steps that do not add value or rearranging the steps in a process to facilitate workflow
- Looks for ways to reduce rework; rework being anything that requires additional effort and
- attention to “fix” before the process can be successfully completed
- Looks beyond symptoms to uncover root causes of problems
- Looks for ways to reduce duplication of effort in and between departments
- Questions “the way things have always been done around here” to ensure that processes and results continue to be relevant and add value

8.2.6 Creativity

Generates novel and valuable ideas, using these ideas to development new or improved processes, methods, systems, or services or products.

Behavioral Indicators

- Tries new methods for completing required tasks, eventually finding a “better way”
- Challenges conventional practices in a constructive manner
- Devises new ways to approach existing issues to add value through efficiency, effectiveness or customer satisfaction
- Displays a high level of curiosity and translates it into new approaches to problem identification and solution
- Turns “lemons” into “lemonade”

8.2.7 Customer Service Orientation

Demonstrates concern for meeting internal and external customers’ needs in a manner that provides satisfaction for the customer within the resources that can be made available.

Behavioral Indicators

- Asks questions to identify customer’s needs or expectations or to determine customer’s awareness of the full range of available services.
- Involves stakeholders in the decision-making or problem-solving process as early as possible
- Takes a variety of actions to fully understand and meet a customer’s needs
- Monitors customer satisfaction regularly
- Responds to customers with an appropriate level of urgency
- Looks for ways to continuously improve results or outcomes to increase customer satisfaction
- Works with customers to develop realistic objectives or time frames

8.2.8 Initiative

Evaluates, selects and acts on various methods and strategies for solving problems and meeting objectives before being asked or required to do so

Behavioral Indicators

- Recognizes and acts on opportunities.
- Digs beneath the obvious to get at the facts, even when not asked to do so.
- Creates opportunities or minimizes potential problems by anticipating and preparing for these in advance.
- Anticipates needs in different situations and takes appropriate action.
- Requires minimum supervision and is self-directed within the scope of his/her accountabilities.

8.2.9 Judgment

Demonstrates the ability to make decisional authoritatively and wisely, after adequately considering various available courses of action.

Behavioral Indicators

- Weights considers alternative available actions before selecting a method for accomplishing a task or project.
- Refrains from “jumping to conclusions’ based on no or minimal fact-based or data-based information; takes time to collect facts before decision-making.
- Balances needs and desires with available resources and constraints.
- Recognizes when to escalate appropriate or specific situations to the next higher level of expertise.
- Considers the impact of an action or decision on customers and the institution.
- Listens to both sides of any story before making a commitment or taking action.

8.2.10 Leadership

Develops and uses effective strategies, change management and interpersonal skills to influence others toward the accomplishment of identified objectives

Behavioral Indicators

- Solicits input of others who are affected by plans, actions or proposed changes.
- Develops and uses subtle, positive approaches or strategies to influence others.
- Serves as a role model to others, demonstrating commitment and a vision of challenging goals and objectives.
- Is approachable and establishes rapport with employees.
- Establishes measurable and achievable results expectations.
- Holds self and others accountable for achieving established performance expectations.
- Communicates a vision to pull others through a changing environment effectively.

8.2.11 Planning/Organizing

Establishes a systematic course of action for oneself or others to ensure accomplishment of a specific objective. Determines priorities and allocates time and resources effectively.

Behavioral Indicators

- Sets priorities with an appropriate sense of what is most important
- Realistically anticipates obstacles when planning
- Tracks progress and completion of activities to accomplish stated objectives
- Manages time effectively to accomplish what needs to get done
- Works effectively under short deadlines

- Modifies planned actions when necessary to achieve desired results
- Plans with an appropriate and realistic sense of the time demand involved
- Converts or translates objectives into workable activities
- Develops systems to organize workflow to ensure quality, precision and timeliness of outputs.

8.2.12 Professional/Technical Expertise

Acquires and uses technical and professional knowledge, skills and judgment to accomplish results and serve customers effectively.

Behavioral Indicators

- Understands technical aspects of own job.
- Makes self-available to others to help solve professional and technical problems or issues.
- Keeps up-to-date on the professional and technical aspects of the job.
- Applies university policies and procedures in a correct and timely manner.
- Keeps up-to-date on resources available to serve the needs of customers.
- Keeps up-to-date on current research and technology in education and in one's own professional field.

- Recognizes trends in theory and practice of one's own professional or technical field and effectively prepares for anticipated changes.

8.2.13 Relationship Building

Established rapport with people easily, developing and maintaining a network of contacts that can provide information, help and access to others.

Behavioral Indicators

- Takes appropriate action top gain cooperation and build consensus.
- Develops and maintains positive working relationships with co-workers and customers by being timely and maintaining a pleasant, positive attitude.
- Understands how he/she is perceived by others.
- Is aware of the differences in style among people and adapts one's own style to better work with others with differing styles.
- Uses different behaviors depending on the situation at hand to achieve desired outcomes.
- Works to make a particular impression on others to help achieve a work-related objective.
- Develops and proactively uses networks, both inside and outside the college to build rapport and seek or provide help.
- Establishes a climate of trust, confidence and mutual respect.
- Takes actions to improve relationships between others.

8.2.14 Teamwork

Willingly cooperates and works collaboratively toward solutions that generally benefit all involved parties and accomplish group objectives.

Behavioral Indicators

- Asks for the input of group members and encourages the participation of all.
- Gives credit and recognition to those who have contributed.

- Demonstrates interest in helping others solve problems and accomplish work objectives.
- Follows up on inquiries and requests from peers and co-workers.
- Participates actively in accomplishing group goals, doing his or her share willingly.
- Shares information and own expertise with others to enable them to accomplish group goals.
- Works to develop consensus in pursuit of group goals.
- Acknowledges and works through conflict in a productive way; shares concerns and differing opinions in a constructive, positive way.
- Respects and is tolerant of differing opinions and those who hold them.
- Obtains cooperation of others for whom one has no direct supervisory responsibility.

8.2.15 Valuing Diversity

Creates an atmosphere of valuing and accepting others

Behavioral Indicators

- Gets insight from others about issues and opportunities before making decisions.
- Directly confronts any prejudicial or disrespectful behavior or comments.
- Helps to identify and works to change organizational policies that may be contrary to the institution's statement on diversity.
- Pursues inclusion of those with different backgrounds in day-to-day interactions within the institution/entity's community.
- Examines one's own thought and language for assumptions and stereotypical responses.

- Establishes relationships with people who are different form oneself.
- Seeks to understand the individual person rather than seeing the person as a representative of a group.
- Values the involvement of employees who have abroad base of experience and backgrounds as an asset to the Institution/Entity.
- Gives feedback openly and respectfully to others whose different behaviors and values affect their credibility and effectiveness, identifying alternatives to help people use their differences effectively and not alienate others.
- Accommodates different personal styles that are effective in accomplishing desired outcomes.
- Demonstrates support of organizational policies and practices that enhance diversity within the Institution.

8.3 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND PERSONAL COMPETENCE

Personal Competence - **self-awareness** and **self-management**
Social Competence - **social awareness** and **relationship management**

Before you can begin to plan ways to improve your EQ competencies you need to identify your current level within each competency and then decide the best way you can achieve a 'high' level in each. As with all areas of management you will need to adapt or add to the 'high level' descriptions used in this session to take into account the unique attributes of your role and organization.

Your level of personal competence is one half of how to develop your emotional intelligence (EQ). It consists of two key attributes:

8.3.1 **Self-Awareness**

This is your ability to recognize your own emotions and their effects on yourself and other people. It represents the foundation of EQ because without being aware of and understanding your own emotions it is impossible to move into the other EQ competencies like self-management and social awareness.

8.3.2 **Self-Management**

Builds on your self-awareness, using your own self-control to ensure your emotions don't control you regardless of the situation. It involves using what you know about your emotions to both manage these emotions and motivate yourself.

Self-awareness means that you understand how you feel and can accurately assess your own emotional state. To do this you need the following competencies:

- Emotional self-awareness
- Accurate self-assessment
- Self-confidence

In order for a person to become emotionally self-aware they may need to accept that they have an inbuilt reluctance to admit to certain negative feelings. This can be overcome by being aware of the behaviors that result from these negative emotions, rather than necessarily having to admit to the underlying negative emotions.

You can recognize an individual who has a high level of emotional self-awareness because they will:

- Know which emotions they are feeling and why
- Realize the links between their feelings and what they think, do, and say
- Recognize how their feelings affect their performance
- Have a guiding awareness of their values and goals
- Adopt behaviors that minimize the effects of their own emotions on a situation.

Once you are able to identify your own emotions and how they can impact situations you are able to accurately assess yourself. This enables you to understand and explore your own strengths and weaknesses, as well as being willing to explore them with others.

- **Trustworthiness** - means that you will do what you say, when you say you'll do it. People with this competence:

- Act ethically and are above reproach
- Build trust through their reliability and authenticity
- Admit their own mistakes and confront unethical actions in others
- Take tough, principled stands even if they are unpopular

- **Conscientiousness** - involves an individual being thorough, careful or vigilant and implies a desire to perform a task well. People with this competence:
  - Meet commitments and keep promises
  - Hold themselves accountable for meeting their objectives
  - Are organized and careful in their work
- **Adaptability** - the ability to change something, or oneself, to fit occurring changes. People with this competence:
  - Smoothly handle multiple demands, shifting priorities, and rapid change
  - Adapt their responses and tactics to fit fluid circumstances
  - Are flexible in how they see events
- **Achievement orientation** - requires an individual to show concern for working toward a self-imposed and defined standard of excellence. People with this competence:
  - Set themselves challenging goals
  - Measure their own performance against those goals
  - Actively seek out information to get the job done
  - Use their time efficiently
- **Initiative** - means taking the lead in problem-solving and conflict resolution as well as taking action to prevent problems from occurring in the first place. People with this competence:
  - Seek out fresh ideas from a wide variety of sources
  - Entertain original solutions to problems
  - Generate new ideas
  - Take fresh perspectives and risks in their thinking

Self-management is critical for a manager because no one wants to work for someone who is not in control of themselves and whose reactions depend on their prevailing mood.

9. PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

Small business owners have been shown to be reluctant seekers of advice and support, although accountants have been consistently identified as a key source of advice for SMMEs. The main reasons that SMMEs seek advice from accountants are for compliance and taxation reporting purposes. Both the evidence and a prior thinking suggest that this may help to form a basis for providing subsequent forms of business advice.

9.1 A FRAMEWORK FOR ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

We all have an image of our better selves-of how we are when we act ethically or are "at our best." We probably also have an image of what an ethical community, an ethical business, an ethical government, or an ethical society should be. Ethics really has to do with all these levels, acting ethically as individuals, creating ethical organizations and governments, and making our society as a whole ethical in the way it treats everyone.

9.1.1 What is Ethics?

Simply stated, ethics refers to standards of behaviour that tell us how human beings ought to act in the many situations in which they find themselves-as friends, parents, children, citizens, businesspeople, teachers, professionals, and so on.

It is helpful to identify what ethics is NOT:

- **Ethics is not the same as feelings**

  Feelings provide important information for our ethical choices. Some people have highly developed habits that make them feel bad when they do something wrong, but many people feel good even though they are doing something wrong. And often our feelings will tell us it is uncomfortable to do the right thing

- **Ethics is not religion**

  Many people are not religious, but ethics applies to everyone. Most religions do advocate high ethical standards but sometimes do not address all the types of problems we face.
- **Ethics is not following the law**

  A good system of law does incorporate many ethical standards, but law can deviate from what is ethical. Law can become ethically corrupt, as some totalitarian regimes have made it. Law can be a function of power alone and designed to serve the interests of narrow groups. Law may have a difficult time designing or enforcing standards in some important areas, and may be slow to address new problems.
- **Ethics is not following culturally accepted norms**

  Some cultures are quite ethical, but others become corrupt -or blind to certain ethical concerns (as the United States was to slavery before the Civil War). "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" is not a satisfactory ethical standard.
- **Ethics is not science**

  Social and natural science can provide important data to help us make better ethical choices. But science alone does not tell us what we ought to do. Science may provide an explanation for what humans are like, but ethics provides reasons for how humans ought to act. Just because something is scientifically or technologically possible, it may not be ethical to do.

9.1.2 Why Identifying Ethical Standards is Hard

There are two fundamental problems in identifying the ethical standards we are to follow:

1. On what do we base our ethical standards?
2. How do those standards get applied to specific situations we face with aspiring business people?

If our ethics are not based on feelings, religion, law, accepted social practice, or science, what are they based on? Many philosophers and ethicists have helped us answer this critical question. They have suggested at least five different sources of ethical standards we should use.

9.2 SOURCES OF ETHICAL STANDARDS

9.2.1 The Utilitarian Approach

Some ethicists emphasize that the ethical action is the one that provides the best or does the least harm, or, to put it another way, produces the greatest balance of good over harm. The ethical corporate action, then, is the one that produces the greatest good and does the least harm for all who are affected-customers, employees, shareholders, the community, and the environment. Ethical warfare balances the good achieved in ending terrorism with the harm done to all parties through death, injuries, and destruction. The utilitarian approach deals with consequences; it tries both to increase the good done and to reduce the harm done.

9.2.2 The Rights Approach

Other philosophers and ethicists suggest that the ethical action is the one that best protects and respects the moral rights of those affected. This approach starts from the belief that humans have a dignity based on their human nature per se or on their ability to choose freely what they do with their lives. On the basis of such dignity, they have a right to be treated as ends and not merely as means to other ends. The list of moral rights -including the rights to make one's own choices about what kind of life to lead, to be told the truth, not to be injured, to a degree of privacy, and so on-is widely debated; some now argue that non-humans have rights, too. Also, it is often said that rights imply duties-in particular, the duty to respect others' rights.

9.2.3 The Fairness or Justice Approach

Aristotle and other Greek philosophers have contributed the idea that all human beings should be treated equally. Today we use this idea to say that ethical actions treat all human beings equally-or if unequally, then fairly based on some standard that is defensible. We pay people more based on their harder work or the greater amount that they contribute to an organization, and say that is fair. But there is a debate over CEO salaries that are hundreds of times larger than the pay of others; many ask whether the huge disparity is based on a defensible standard or whether it is the result of an imbalance of power and hence is unfair.

9.2.4 The Common Good Approach

The Greek philosophers have also contributed the notion that life in community is a good in itself and our actions should contribute to that life. This approach suggests that the interlocking relationships of society are the basis of ethical reasoning and that respect and compassion for all others-especially the vulnerable-are requirements of such reasoning. This approach also calls attention to the common conditions that are important to the welfare of everyone. This may be a system of laws, effective police and fire departments, health care, a public educational system, or even public recreational areas.

9.2.5 The Virtue Approach

A very ancient approach to ethics is that ethical actions ought to be consistent with certain ideal virtues that provide for the full development of our humanity. These virtues are dispositions and habits that enable us to act according to the highest potential of our character and on behalf of values like truth and beauty. Honesty, courage, compassion, generosity, tolerance, love, fidelity, integrity, fairness, self-control, and prudence are all examples of virtues. Virtue ethics asks of any action, "What kind of person will I become if I do this?" or "Is this action consistent with my acting at my best?"

9.2.5.1 Putting the Approaches Together

- Each of the approaches helps us determine what standards of behaviour can be considered ethical. There are still problems to be solved, however.
- The first problem is that we may not agree on the content of some of these specific approaches. We may not all agree to the same set of human and civil rights.
- We may not agree on what constitutes the common good. We may not even agree on what is a good and what is a harm.

- The second problem is that the different approaches may not all answer the question "What is ethical?" in the same way. Nonetheless, each approach gives us important information with which to determine what is ethical in a particular circumstance. And much more often than not, the different approaches do lead to similar answers.

9.2.5.2 Making Decisions

Making good ethical decisions requires a trained sensitivity to ethical issues and a practiced method for exploring the ethical aspects of a decision and weighing the considerations that should impact our choice of a course of action. Having a method for ethical decision making is absolutely essential. When practiced regularly, the method becomes so familiar that we work through it automatically without consulting the specific steps. The more novel and difficult the ethical choice we face, the more we need to rely on discussion and dialogue with others about the dilemma. Only by careful exploration of the problem, aided by the insights and different perspectives of others, can we make good ethical choices in such situations.

We have found the following framework for ethical decision making a useful method for exploring ethical dilemmas and identifying ethical courses of action.

What is Ethics? (3)

Name 2 ways which are helpful to identify what ethics is not. (2)

Name 5 sources of ethical standards. (5)

9.3 A FRAMEWORK FOR ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

As business advisors, it is important to ***recognize an ethical Issue***

1. Could this decision or situation be damaging to someone or to some group? Does this decision involve a choice between a good and bad alternative, or perhaps between two "goods" or between two "bads"?
2. Is this issue about more than what is legal or what is most efficient? If so, how?

9.3.1 Get the Facts

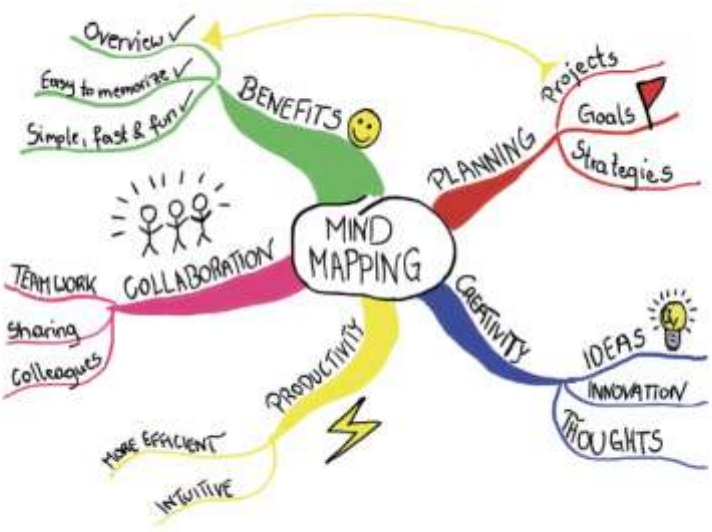
- What are the relevant facts of the case? What facts are not known? Can I learn more about the situation? Do I know enough to make a decision?

- What individuals and groups have an important stake in the outcome? Are some concerns more important? Why?
- What are the options for acting? Have all the relevant persons and groups been consulted? Have I identified creative options?

9.3.2 Evaluate Alternative Actions

Evaluate the options by asking the following questions:

- Which option will produce the best and do the least harm? (The Utilitarian Approach).
- Which option best respects the rights of all who have a stake? (The Rights Approach).
- Which option treats people equally or proportionately? (The Justice Approach).
- Which option best serves the community as a whole, not just some members? *(The Common Good Approac*h).
- Which option leads me to act as the sort of person I want to be? (The Virtue Approach).



9.3.3 Make a Decision and Test It

- Considering all these approaches, which option best addresses the situation?
- If I told someone I respect-or told a television audience-which option I have chosen, what would they say?

9.3.4 Act and Reflect on the Outcome

- How can my decision be implemented with the greatest care and attention to the concerns of all stakeholders?

- How did my decision turn out and what have I learned from this specific situation?

9.4 TIPS FOR CONSULTANT

- **What the client says is the problem is rarely the real problem -** Managers often conclude that the front-line needs training because they're not doing what organizational leaders want, so they want their consultant to develop a training course to fix this. Chances are, though, that the real problem is lack of effective communication or some other managerial skills on the part of the bosses.
- **Sometimes clients say they're ready for change when they really aren't -** Learn to recognize the warning signs; you may need to encourage them
- **Resistance is almost always rooted in emotion** - When your client disputes your findings and recommendations. It's very unlikely to be your methods or your data.
- **Thou shalt network** - If you're an internal consultant, you need to cultivate relationships with people you can depend on for information and support. Get to know your organization and the people in it. If you're external, stay in touch with your clients and with others in the training field. You want them to remember you and your great work as they move among different organizations.

What is the difference between Coaching and Consultant? (6)
