Consultants

are our ethics for real or just skin deep?...

Steve hearsum

PEOPLE + SYSTEMS + CHANGE
Why this conversation now?...
Your ethics...

What is your most important ethical or moral principle that guides your work?...

answers IN CHAT...
agenda

- Framing ‘ethics’ in context of today
- What organisations *think* they are buying: experts & expertise...
- ...and what influences that?
- Shadow Side: peeling the onion of ‘expertise’ and the client/consultant relationship
- Implications for practice: inquiry in groups
ethics

/ˈɛθɪks/

noun

1. moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity. "medical ethics also enter into the question"

2. the branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles. "neither metaphysics nor ethics is the home of religion"

Definitions from Oxford Languages
What organisations think they are buying

- Experts
- Expertise
- Bespoke solutions

What clients are looking for,
Oxford Review Briefing 2020
Top 3 factors that have the most influence on clients’ buying/engagement behaviour

- Consultants expertise, specifically the “perception of the consultant’s expertise”.
- Common vision.
- Intensity of collaboration.

- Most important?...
FINDING AN EXPERT...
SHADOWS & defences... FOUR issues...
1. What is an expert?...

**Definition:**
- **noun:**
  - a person who is very knowledgeable about or skilled in a particular area.
  - "an expert in healthcare"

**Adjective:**
- having or involving a great deal of knowledge or skill in a particular area.
  - "the had received expert academic advice"
NOVICES & EXPERTS: WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?

“...experts see the words, pieces, or notes within a context of accumulated experience, knowledge, and wisdom.

This allows the expert to see deeper, faster, further, and better than the novice. Ultimately, experts see differently.”

Skovholt, Hanson, Jennings & Grier (2016) A Brief History of Expertise
Definition of 'expertise'

expertise

The ability, acquired by practice and experience, to perform qualitatively well in a particular task domain.

Frensch, R. A., & Sternberg, R. J. (1989). Expertise and intelligent thinking: When is it worse to know better?

Definitions from Oxford Languages
The Characteristics experts share

1. Mainly excel in their own domain
2. Perceive large meaningful pattern in their domain
3. Are faster than novices at performing the skills of their domain
4. Have superior memory
5. See and represent a problem in their domain at a deeper (more principled) level than movies
6. Spend a great deal of time analyzing a problem qualitatively.
7. Have strong self-monitoring skills

Risk: The Science and Politics of Fear

Dan Gardner
2. Are we as ‘adult’ as we like to believe?

- **CLIENT**
  - P
  - A
  - C

- **CONSULTANT**
  - P
  - A
  - C

- **Expert**
- **Pair of hands**
- **Collaborative/‘Dirty’**

*Alastair Wylie 2021*
3. Four primary conflicts/tensions consultants are faced with

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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Implementing recognised industry best practice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Vs</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Vs</strong></td>
<td><strong>2. Meeting expectations and instructions</strong></td>
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<td><strong>3. Engaging in and dealing with the politics in the organisation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Vs</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Vs</strong></td>
<td><strong>4. Reusing industry standard change methods</strong></td>
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4. ‘competency’ and ‘ethics’

“When you join a member IMC, you are also joining a global community of trusted, ethical, and committed colleagues. When you become a “Certified Management Consultant”... you have shown that you have the knowledge, competence, commitment and peer acceptance, that you are a true professional.

The CMC designation is a statement that you are both committed to and capable of delivering a higher level of management consulting!”

https://www.cmc-global.org/content/global-management-consulting-c
...’HIGHER LEVEL’?...

- BDO Consulting
- Cooney Carey
- Deloitte
- Fujitsu
- Pinnacle Project Partners
- Genesis Marketing and Communications
- Grant Thornton
- Hay Group (Ireland)
- International Development Ireland (IDI)
- Mazars
- PricewaterhouseCoopers
- Prospectus Strategy Consultants

Grant Thornton fined £2.3m for Patisserie Valerie scandal

PwC fined £6.5m over ‘lack of competence’ in audit

Deloitte stung with record fine for Autonomy audit
Big & small: same and/or different?

1. McKinsey & Company
2. BCG
3. Bain & Company
4. Deloitte
5. Oliver Wyman
6. Booz | Allen | Hamilton
7. EY Parthenon
8. PwC
9. ATKearney
10. GE Healthcare
11. Accenture
12. Putnam Associates
13. ClearView Healthcare Partners
14. KPMG
15. The Bridgespan Group
16. Strategy&
17. Analysis Group
18. LEK
19. The Keyston Group
20. ghSMART
21. Insight Sourcing Group
22. Gartner
23. Roland Berger
24. Cornerstone Research

McKinsey tops Vault's 2020 'Consulting 50' ranking – Consulting.us
At McKinsey, Widespread Furor Over Work With Planet’s Biggest Polluters

A letter signed by more than 1,100 employees has called for change at the consulting firm, which has advised at least 43 of the 100 most environmentally damaging companies.

“The climate crisis is the defining issue of our generation... Our positive impact in other realms will mean nothing if we do not act as our clients alter the earth irrevocably.”

NYT 27/10/2021
Breakouts 1

- What patterns are you seeing?...
- What questions are coming up?...
- What has been reconfirmed or challenged in your mind?...
Breakouts 2

- What the implications, if any, for your practice?...