

## Want To Get Promoted? Then Think Of Yourself As An 'Internal Consultant'

By Lisa Quast, Forbes | March 2, 2015



If you've been trying to climb the career ladder or want to get promoted, here's a technique that can really help: Think of yourself as an 'internal consultant.'

Consultants are hired to assess a current situation and then create action plans for improvement. They are paid for their expertise and their calm, professional demeanor, especially in times of difficulty. By thinking of yourself as an 'internal consultant' you can use this same frame of reference to demonstrate how you add value to your department, to your company and even to your boss. Here's how:

**Remain calm.** Consultants must remain composed throughout a consulting engagement or they probably won't be hired again in the future. You can apply the same technique as an employee. Take a look at how you normally respond when you're under pressure or angry. If you tend to lash out at others or get defensive, work on changing your behavior.

**Analyze all angles of a situation before responding.** Consultants are paid to carefully analyze situations from every angle and determine all the potential options before presenting their recommended solution. Following this same process as an employee helps ensure you uncover the root causes of problems, not just symptoms. It will also make sure your ideas are rational and well thought out.

**Don't be afraid to consult other experts.** Consultants know they aren't an expert on every topic, and they aren't afraid to seek out the opinions of others. Let this guide your behavior as an 'internal consultant' and don't be afraid to seek out other employees for their feedback on important projects or assignments.

**Understand your manager's goals.** Consultants must always work with their client to define their client's specific needs. You can also follow this process by finding out what keeps your boss up at night. In other words, find out your manager's key objectives and priorities. Then, think about ways you can help him or her achieve these department goals.

**Agree on communication.** At the beginning of every engagement, consultants agree with their client on the method and timing for communication. You can achieve this by finding out how your manager prefers to interact with you. Do they want weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly updates? Do they prefer written reports with lots of details or brief summaries with only highlights? Do they prefer to meet in person or receive email updates? Adapt your communication style to best fit your manager's as you track your projects and provide progress updates.

**Do outstanding work.** As a consultant, doing so-so work won't get you additional business engagements. This is similar to employees who do so-so work; it won't get them promoted. To stand out and get promoted, you need to do outstanding work that will get you seen by management. Look for ways you can go above and beyond the daily requirements to demonstrate how you add value to the organization.

Companies are constantly looking for employees who can add positive value, so start wearing your 'internal consulting' hat while at work – and gain attention that just might get you the promotion you've wanted.

~ Lisa Quast, author of the book, [Secrets of a Hiring Manager Turned Career Coach: A Foolproof Guide to Getting the Job You Want, Every Time](#). Join me on Twitter @careerwomaninc

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