Basics of Business Consulting

Course Summary

Description

Consulting as a profession and a function within many organizations has transformed in recent years. Clients engage consultants for different reasons and expect outstanding results. Organizations use them for improving performance, growing their business, and making various organizational changes. This course will cover topics from the client and consultant view: required core skills, personal characteristics, the basic processes, engagement and risk management, variations in consulting companies, what to look for in using a consultant (internal or external), and ethics.

Project managers frequently perform in the role of consultant, whether they are from within the organization or from an external firm. Understanding consulting processes will help project managers perform more effectively. Performing as the external consultant can be a different role than being a consulting from an internal department. While the general overall process is the same, there is a different style – both will be covered.

Objectives
At the end of this course, students will have learned:

- A comprehensive understanding of consulting and being one
- Processes for consultants
- Techniques to perform as a consultant
- How to develop the engagement plan
- How to achieve the clients goals

Topics

- The role: of the consultant and of the client
- Vocabulary of consulting
- Uncovering the real agenda and need
- Skills for consulting
- The engagement process
- Techniques for consulting

- Values and ethics – know and follow them
- What is the real problem - the direct and the implied goals
- The role and value of communication
- Coming to closure – when is it done

Audience

This course is intended for both project team members and project managers wishing to expand their working knowledge of Earned Value Management as a project planning and control process.

Prerequisites

- Management or coordination of non-operations work
- Program manager, project manager, project lead
- Interest to understand consulting work

Duration

Two days

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Course Outline

I. Day 1
- A. Introductions: instructor and students
- B. Participation expectations
- C. Student goals for the course, using real/active projects
- D. Review of syllabus
- E. Consulting
  1. Basic process
  2. Client involvement
- F. Consultant
  1. Different roles
  2. Assumptions
  3. Goals
- G. Values and being authentic
- H. Consulting skills
- I. Consulting techniques
- J. The beginning
- K. The relationship
  1. The client
  2. Others
  3. You
- L. Review of the day
  1. What was learned
  2. How to apply tomorrow

II. Day 2
- A. Proposals and contracts
- B. What really needs to be done
  1. Defining the problem
  2. Gathering the data
- C. Communication
  1. From beginning to end
  2. Resistance
  3. Feedback
- D. The engagement
  1. The Plan
  2. The implementation
- E. Ethics
- F. Pragmatic information
  1. New client
  2. Client new to using consultants
  3. Mistakes and how to recover
- G. Review of course
  1. What was learned
  2. How to apply tomorrow
  3. How to improve consulting work