

Contracting and Consulting for Policies & Procedures Engagements

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As the number of persons employed by some U.S. organizations declined since the late 1980s, so have employment opportunities for Policies & Procedures (P&P) practitioners. During this period, the number of contractors and consultants has increased to meet the needs of newly changed organizations. A useful way for P&P practitioners to learn how they can provide contracting and consulting services is to understand three roles in leveraging such services: an extra pair of hands, expert, and collaborator.

Decline in employment

Since the late 1980s, many U.S. corporations reduced employment in various professions for numerous reasons. For example, in a study on employment of policies and procedures (P&P) practitioners in the Los Angeles region, there was an estimated 18% decrease in employment between 1985 and 1990 (1) (2). A decrease continued through at least 1995 and is attributed largely to the decline and restructuring of the aerospace and defense industries in the region.

Increase in contracting and consulting

While there was a sizable amount of restructuring and displacement of employees, much of this change re-invented the need for talents in supportive areas like human resources, training, and policies and procedures. For example, companies seeking quality management efforts as ISO 9000 have created work for P&P practitioners and trainers. Some of this work has fallen in the laps of self-employed individuals and companies specializing in training and communication. If these trends continue, P&P practitioners seeking contracting and consulting engagements will need to better understand and define the roles they serve with clients.

Roles in contracting and consulting

A useful way to understand and apply contracting and consulting services is according to the way one may leverage his/her role in a client engagement (3) (4). Three roles for leveraging services are an extra pair of hands, expert, and collaborator. Each role differs in positioning, marketing, and fee setting.

In an extra pair of hands role, the P&P practitioner functions more like contract labor being led or managed by others to help solve a client's problem. He markets his services passively through others, offers a low risk in his value of services, and is compensated by the hour.

In the expert role, the P&P practitioner contracts to perform a project whereby she manages or leads her self or team to solve a client's problem. She markets her

services proactively through networking and professional reputation, offers a moderate risk in service value, and seeks compensation hourly or for a fixed fee.

In the collaborator role, the P&P practitioner advises the client in determining how the client solves its own problem. He markets his services actively yet indirectly through volunteer services to his profession and reputation in his specialty. He offers a high level of risk that has a bearing strategically on an organization, and he seeks compensation by the hour or on a fixed fee, retainer, or contingency basis.

Some benefits

When the P&P practitioner knows the three roles for leveraging services, she can better help clients understand these roles when defining the expectations in a working relationship. Also, the P&P practitioner has more flexibility in leveraging a variety of roles for different types of projects, services, and fees.

References

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