

Putting a Price on Your Head

One of the hardest things about jumping into consulting work is setting your fees. To paraphrase Gerald Weinberg in *The Secrets of Consulting*, "How do you put a price on your head?"

This month, "Four by Four" asked four consultants about their rate structures. They told us about the factors that go into setting their prices, how often they revise their rates, and what their clients get for the money.

All four of the interviewees advised some soul-searching to figure out how much you need to live on and how much you'd like to be making. They recommended that you find out what other people are getting; internal consultants who buy services may be good sources of information.

To allow the four consultants to speak candidly about their rates, we're keeping their identities secret.

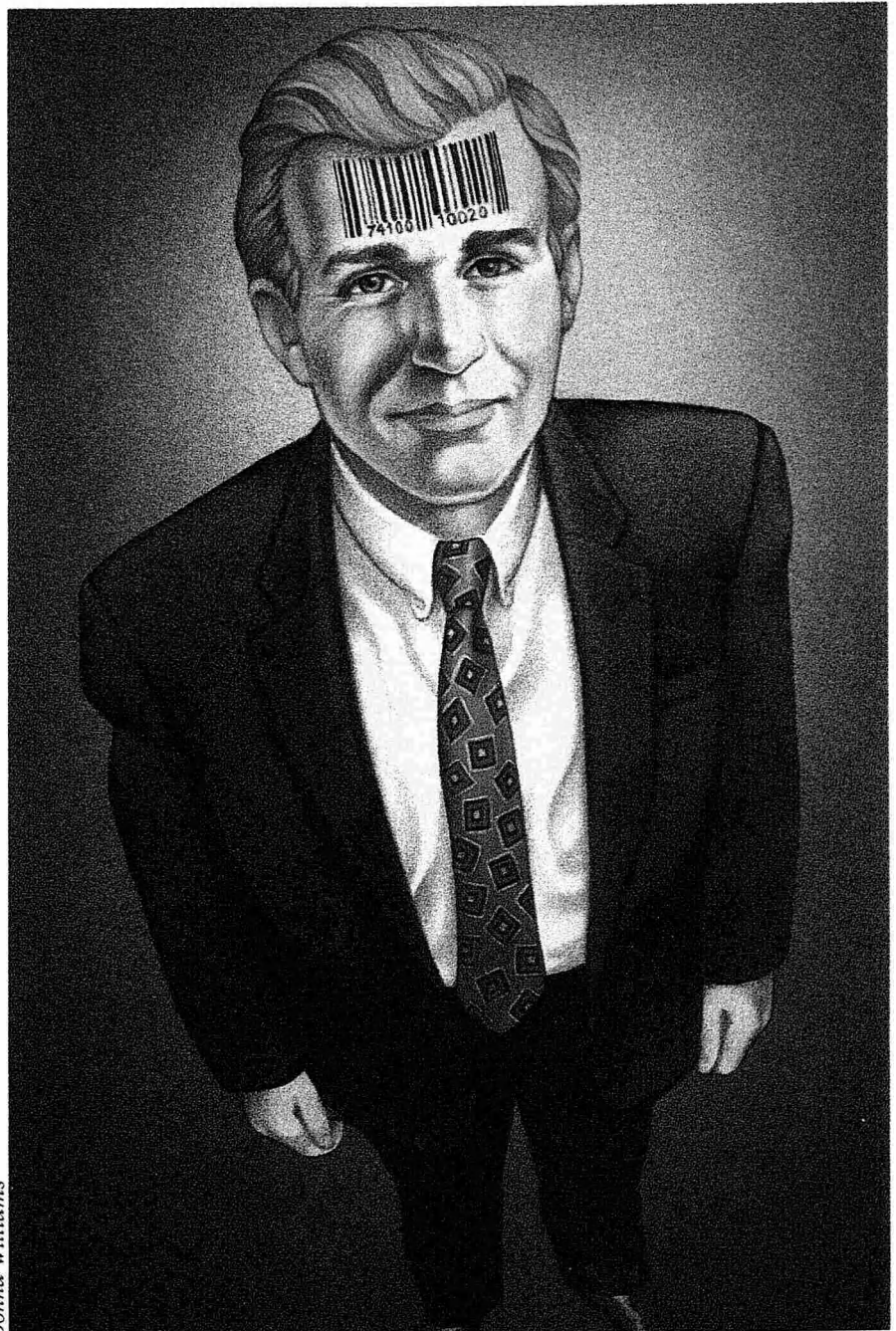
The first interview is with a management consultant based in the Northwest. He has written a book on consulting, which will be published later this year.

I'm not sure this needs to be anonymous. In fact, I'd prefer if it weren't; I feel funny about it being anonymous. It looks as if I don't want to say this publicly, and that's not true. But I guess it would look even stranger if one interview was on the record and the others weren't.

I've been a consultant for 13 or 14 years, and I've always charged a daily rate. I try to be consistent with what I charge. I don't want to get into the problem of the clients comparing what I'm charging them and finding out that it's different.

Changing fees with old clients is one of the most difficult things. So I try to let old clients know a long time ahead when I'm going to raise the fees. I don't know how often I've raised them, but I suppose they get raised every couple of years.

How do I set my daily rate in the first place? Arbitrarily. I look around at what it seems that other people are being paid. To find out, I just



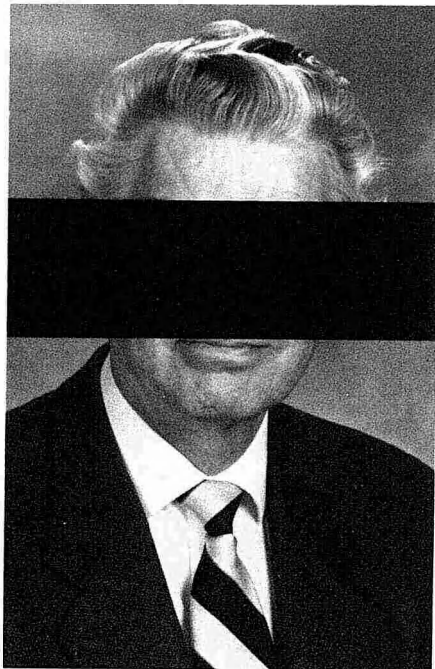
Donna Williams

ask them. And I ask clients.

When working with clients whom I don't have to travel overnight to, I charge \$1,500 a day for consulting work. With clients for whom I have to travel overnight, I charge \$2,000 a day. . . plus expenses, of course. I don't charge for travel time. Some people do.

For training, I generally charge 50 percent more: \$2,250 and \$3,000 a

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nothing, then I'm being paid nothing. If they're volunteering their time, I volunteer mine. Of course, I'm careful about giving myself away. I don't give myself to corporations. That would be unfair to the clients who pay for me.

Another thing to keep in mind is I turn away two to four times as much work as I accept. I work 80 days a year. So I want to pick clients that are growthful to me, and with whom my work can be growthful to them—where it's a contribution to them. Eighty days a year is about a third of what a lot of my friends work. Some of them are working 200 days a year and turning away 600. I'm working 80 days a year and turning away 200.

I find out early, when people call and are interested in me doing something for them, whether we're in the same ballpark as far as my expectations and their resources—time and money, for example. If we aren't, then I hook them up with somebody who is. So I refer a lot of work to other people. I don't take any percentage of that, though some people do take referral fees, and I think it's legitimate.

The recommendations

1 Figure out what you need. I've thought about this a lot, especially when I was starting out. There are really two levels of need:

- One is kind of a barely-get-by level. How much money do you need a year? A month? That level is one at which you could not sustain yourself over years; you wouldn't be interested in living at that level forever. But you could get by for a short while.

- The other level of need is a reasonable-comfort level. It may be less—even much less—than you'd like to have, but it's a level at which you could live indefinitely.

So figure out those things before you start worrying about what you're going to charge. Most people don't stop to think about how much they really need.

2 Figure out how much you want. Look at that in relation to those two levels of

need. You can't decide it on a very rational basis.

What you need—that you can figure out pretty rationally. There is some leeway in it, but if you don't have this much a month, you aren't going to be able to meet the mortgage and eat and all that.

So how do I figure out what I want? I ask myself, "Do I want \$50 a day for this work? No, that doesn't feel right. Do I want \$900 a day? No, I want more than that." I search for satisfaction within myself, until I find a point at which I can say, "I want this; this will meet my needs. If I got this amount working with clients, I would be comfortable. I would not be revisiting my fee all the time, saying 'I'm not getting enough.' or 'I'm getting too much.'"

It makes no more sense than buying a car. You may think you want a Mercedes, but you know a Yugo is more practical for you. But you want more than that. All right, what about an Audi? Naah. What about a Taurus? Could you be comfortable driving that Taurus day after day? Would that feel good to you? Would that satisfy your needs? Would you quit aspiring toward other cars? Yes? So maybe you'd get the Taurus.

It's not a rational thing. It's a want. It's a gut-felt, heartfelt kind of thing.

3 Find out what you can get. Talk to other consultants. Talk to friends of yours who are clients—maybe not clients of yours, but who hire people like you—and find out what people are charging out there. And see how what you can get fits with what you want and what you need—those two levels of need.

4 Forget about what you're worth. What you're worth doesn't have anything to do with it. What determines whether you're going to survive and thrive as a consultant is what you can get. People too often focus on what they're worth, but they don't know what they're worth. That's ridiculous.

Look at what rock stars are paid. Look at what nurses are paid. Look at what consultants are paid. Look

day. But I'm hardly doing any training at all, so that's not the rate that I am billing at most often.

I'm very generous with my time with clients. I don't say, "OK, that's eight hours. That's a day. Give me \$2,000." No, if I'm there and it's part of the work, that's a day to me, even if it's 14 or 16 hours.

I've actually had two clients raise my fees because I was too low.

I don't make a practice of giving some groups a break in the price. If this is what I cost, this is what I cost for everybody. And if I raise it, then I raise it for everybody. I may not always raise it at exactly the same moment, but that's what I try to do.

I think it's important not to negotiate your fee. I think it's unfair to other clients. Instead of negotiating on fees, negotiate on the work to be done. If the client's got financial limitations, find out what the limitations are and tell the client what you can do within those constraints. But stick to your regular fee structure.

I either charge my regular rates or I charge nothing. And I give away, oh, probably an average of 20 days a year. I give myself away to community organizations, to politicians, and to civic groups. Generally, if the people coming to the meeting are being paid very little or

at what teachers are paid. It doesn't make any sense. It doesn't have anything to do with what people are worth. It has to do with the market place. That's the way things are.

So let go of those stupid notions about, "Am I worth this? Am I worth that?" You're worth a great deal. You're a wonderful human being and you've got a lot of talents and abilities; you may or may not be compensated for those in the marketplace. It doesn't have anything to do with your personal worth.

If you get a lot of money, it doesn't mean that you're worth a lot. If you get a little money, it doesn't mean that you're worth little. That's a distraction that just leads you into feeling bad about yourself, especially when you're new. I know; I've done it. It's not a constructive path to go down.

The second interview is with a California-based consultant who specializes in outplacement and career-transition work. She is self-employed, but is under contract with a large consulting firm.

Money is a tough topic, and it's something people have to address upfront. I work mainly on contract for one company, and it has set fees. One of the main advantages is that it's a steady income.

When I do consulting other than that long-term contract, I price it based on whether the project is short- or long-term. If it's five days or less, it's a higher price than if it's for a longer term. With the company I work with most of the time, if I'm not working on a long project with a long-term contract, we go back to a per diem contract, which is at a higher rate. And that's \$300 a day, plus expenses.

We negotiate it differently for longer projects. For example, last summer I was off-site for four months, out of town. I was on a 6-month contract and the firm paid 100 percent of my expenses, no questions asked. It covered everything: furniture rental, phone bills, and housing—and it was an extra large house, because I took my dog along. Almost everything was

direct-billed, except my grocery bills.

Working for one company is long-term insanity; we change the contract from month to month. It depends on where we are in a project or what's going on. Right now, we've just signed a 2-month contract with an increase, because I bitched and moaned. We'll probably sign a 6-month contract after that, because this project is going to run for a year to a year-and-a-half. I'm the manager of the project, so I need to stay.

But something could go astray. The client company that is retaining the consulting firm could decide that it has run out of funds. Then I would probably revert to a per diem contract. We write the per diem contracts for a year, but they are always superceded by the month-to-months, because the month-to-months are at a lower rate.

They do that all the time. As soon as you start to make more per month on the per diem than you do on month-to-month, they cut you back. A lot of people won't put up with it. The advantage to it is that I have worked solidly for two years, so I have no long-term complaints about it.

I've come to like working on contract for one company, long term, though I have problems with it sometimes. It gives me less anxiety and less to worry about—it provides some stability.

The recommendations

1 Take a look at what you need, minimally, to live on per year. In my case, that was \$60,000 (which, by the way, I don't make). I thought that to live comfortably and to do the things I want, I would need \$60,000 a year.

Then I asked myself, "How many days a year do I really want to work, ideally?" I want to work 120 days or fewer. That works out to \$500 a day. So if I had my druthers, that's what I'd be charging, and I'd be working 10 days a month.

The thing that validated that calculation for me was that one of the first consulting contracts I looked at was just exactly that fee,



plus expenses. And it was for 10 days a month. So that said to me that such an arrangement would meet my needs.

Of course, 120 days is just my ideal. That's just how often I would choose to work if I had a lot of individual clients rather than this long-term contract. As it is, I don't work 10 days a month; I work all year. If somebody came along tomorrow and said, "I have a one-day job for you that'll pay \$60,000," I would not be looking for work until next year.

The actual fee I would charge a client wouldn't necessarily be \$500 a day. It would depend on the length of the assignment. For a long assignment, or if it looked as if there would be a lot of repeat work, my minimum would be \$300 a day. I do try not to gouge my clients. The maximum that I charge would depend on how much I could get. But I usually run it between \$300 and \$1,000. I could probably get more, but my conscience would bother me.

So ask yourself what it is that you need, minimally, to make. From that, you can figure out the bottom fee that you can charge, depending on how much work you've got booked out. How much cushion have you got in there? How much do you want, ideally?

2 Consider your other expenses. Look at the kind of overhead you want to have. Your fees will have to pay for that, too. I know one consultant who has somebody who lives in her home and is essentially a partner in her business. They run her business out of there. All I have in my house is an answering machine, because I don't work out of my home. I use the sites of the company to which I'm under contract.

Being on your own is not like working for a corporation. So many HRD professionals have been internal for a long time; they get disgusted with corporate life and they want to get out. But they think some things are going to be the same. They're used to doing things and people responding instantly; it's not like that when you're on your own.

There is no duplicating department to send your stuff to. There is no wordprocessing department. And there's no messenger to messenger it over. You're doing everything. Everything. If you have a pride issue about lugging boxes and running a duplicating machine, you're in deep trouble if you're going to go out on your own. With a lot of clients, the more you are willing to do yourself, the happier they are to have you.

Another issue is all the benefits that you don't have when you are a single-shingle. Say you've come out of a big corporation, because of a layoff or a merger. You've got a benefits package for, say, 18 months, but then that goes away. What do you do? And health insurance is a bugaboo.

There is an association that can help people in our position who are self-employed. It's the National Association of the Self-Employed, and its main purpose is to provide health insurance for its members that's on a par with what the major corporations offer. Other membership services include making travel arrangements. It's based in Fort Worth, Texas.

We're very spoiled when we come out of corporate life. We're used to things like health-care benefits. If you have not priced a

health-care plan anywhere in the United States on your own, you don't know what it is like out there. If you're single, or if you don't have a working spouse whose plan covers you, paying for health insurance is a killer.

There is also the issue of how you are going to take care of maintaining your payments to the tax collector. Most people who are in business for themselves aren't having deductions taken out, and a lot of consultants forget to set aside money to make their quarterly estimated payments. They have mega-tax problems.

I have a workers' compensation policy through the state of California because I needed it for the site I'm at now. It's required, because the program I'm working on is partially funded by the federal government. In this case, I didn't have to pay for it myself. I sent a bill for it to the company I'm working with, and the company paid for it. If the client wants something special, the client pays. Otherwise, as a single-shingle I wouldn't have bothered with it. If I had two or three people working for me full-time, I'd have to.

3 Ask other people how they set their fees. Most people I've spoken with—at least within the ASTD network—have been very, very good about talking about their fee structures, particularly when we're not competitors. I didn't know what else to do, so I just asked.

Also, as an internal consultant I was buying services. When you work internally, you learn what things cost. You get to know that there is a range, and that you can charge more on this coast, for example, than you can in, say, the Southwest. It also depends on your years of experience and your background and what industry you've come out of, and how technical you are. If you're technical, you should make more.

4 Plan ahead. The problem with being a single-shingle with a long-term contract is that you have nothing when the

contract ends. Companies are fickle. I've been with this one firm for a long time, but it could just as easily have me or not have me.

I don't think that will be the case with this company I'm working for, since it markets my specialty.

The smart thing to do would be not to lock yourself in—100 percent of your days—to one client. Leave yourself some marketing days, and also have at least one or two other clients. And book your days ahead. There is some sense of security in knowing, "I've got 60 days booked solid."

The third interview is with the president and sole employee of a new East Coast firm that does training and management consulting worldwide.

I've been in management consulting for more than 10 years, mostly working with large firms. The normal way that fees are set in large firms is a simple determination of salary converted to payment per hour. A standard multiple is designed to cover overhead and to allow for non-chargeable time. Studies show that the multiple that's used varies between 3.5 and 5.2 on that hourly rate.

When I went out on my own, I converted to a daily rate, because I found that most people do not understand the number of hours that a trainer really has to work for one day of training. So I estimated the time I actually spend, used the basic rate multiple, and came up with a daily rate.

My rate is \$1,200 to \$1,500 per training day. I charge \$1,500 if there's going to be extensive development work, because I don't charge for the development work, just for the training days.

The only time I would discount my rate is for volume. I will make a deal if somebody is guaranteeing a sizeable number of training days in the course of a year, because I have efficiencies out of that. I have less preparation time if I'm going to do the same class 10 times a year for one client. If a single client is going to buy, say, 30 days of training from me in the course of a year, I might

discount it to \$1,000 a day.

As for offering discounts to small companies—the difference between Mel's Diner and IBM—no, I would not.

My fees do not include expenses. The client pays my travel expenses. If unusual purchased materials are involved, such as a videotape that we will either rent or buy, the client pays for it.

I don't anticipate raising my rates more often than once a year. Probably not more often than every couple of years, unless I get too busy. That's not something I'm worried about at the moment.

Of course, apocryphal stories in the management consulting profession indicate that raising your rates often increases your chargeable time. I know several people for whom that's been true. They raise their rates, and so there is more demand. I know of a consultant who does negotiation sessions and charges \$4,500 for a five-hour workday. He is apparently as busy as he wants to be.

I've never spent just eight hours a day when conducting a class. A typical class may be from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 or 5:30 p.m., but I design my day so that I'm there at least an hour and a half early, and maybe two hours after the class.

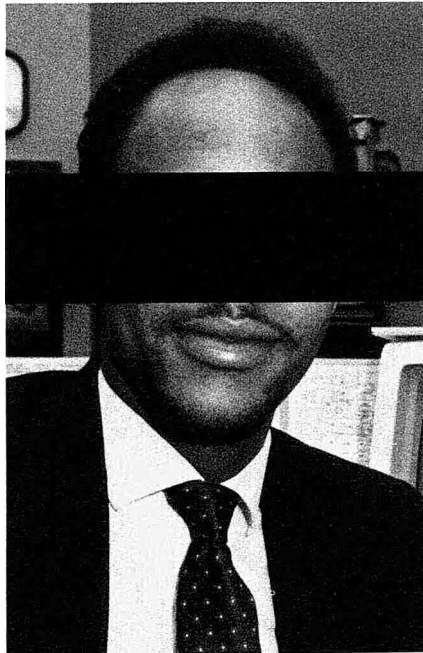
I'm training between eight and twelve days a month. The rest of my time is mostly spent on marketing. Of course, I don't get paid for that.

The recommendations

1 Attend a basic course in consulting. That will get into some of the issues of client relationships and other aspects that go beyond technical expertise. It will help you think in terms of client management and the issues involved in trying to influence a culture from outside it.

Try to determine realistic expectations, based on the information learned in such a class, and from talking to others whom you'd meet in the class.

2 Identify what's reasonable. You have to define a general target and look at



what it's going to take to get to it. You don't want to cut your personal salary too far, or it would be kind of silly to go out on your own in the first place. But it's also unreasonable to expect to make a lot of money as a consultant in the first couple of years.

Decide how much you expect to earn, what kind of profits you expect to make, and what kind of overhead you think is reasonable for your business to support. Include the costs of operating your office, of buying and maintaining equipment, and of developing materials, if you're putting together standard courses.

Determine how much time you'll be able to sell. If you expect to be busy selling training four days a week, all year around, you're probably too idealistic. I'm not sure it would be physically possible to do that. You wouldn't have time for marketing and coordination.

Use that information as a basic determination and build something from it. For example, let's say that it works out to \$830 a day. You may decide that \$830 is a reasonable daily rate, or that you were over-optimistic on one factor, and a rounder number—a better number—would be \$900. Maybe you were too conservative and \$750 has a nice ring to it; that may work.

It's a philosophical thing, this playing around with the numbers. And it's virtually impossible to do. There is considerably more art than science to it.

An important thing in consulting is identifying the difference between price and cost. If you're going to be in business for a long time, your price has to be higher than your cost. Other than that, it does not, in fact, have to be related to it in any way, shape, or form.

3 Determine what clients usually pay for your types of services. Decide whether what you're selling should be worth more or less to them than what they traditionally pay. Would you be willing to work for that rate? There are a lot of judgment issues.

If somebody was buying a course from me, I'd want to find out what the company has been doing in the way of training. Maybe the normal way has been to send people to a three-day class that costs \$500 a head. Am I a substitute for that training? Say the company has been paying \$50,000 to get its people trained. Would the client consider paying me \$50,000 for a class presented in-house? The answer is usually no; most companies that bring courses in-house do it at least partly to save money. But I can use the information to identify a reasonable charge.

I suppose I undercharge frequently, but I never knowingly undercharge. I don't think it does any good. It's like that old line about the used-car lot: "We lose \$100 on every deal, but we make it up in volume."

Once you establish a rate for someone, it's very, very difficult to change it. Say you go in saying, "I'll do the first class for these clients at half my normal rate, so that they'll realize how good I am." Thereafter, they're going to expect that the quality they got on that first job is worth half your normal rate.

4 Read a book called *The Secrets of Consulting: a Guide To Giving and Getting Advice Successfully*, by Gerald M. Weinberg (Dorset House Publishing, 1985). Chapter 12, "Putting a Price

on Your Head," is a philosophical discussion of price and is probably the best thing I've ever seen written on the topic.

The Secrets of Consulting is a whole series of little laws. Let me run down a few from Chapter 12:

■ "The more they pay you, the more they love you." Its corollary is, "The less they pay you, the less they respect you."

■ "If you need the money, don't take the job." Weinberg says that if you need money badly, you may set your price too high, trying to get solvent on one job. Or you may set your price too low, trying to sell your work on the basis of price alone. Neither is a healthy thing to do.

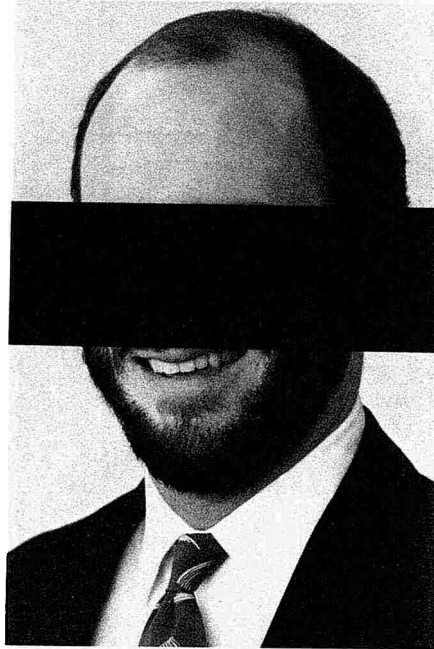
■ "If they don't like your work, don't take their money." I'm in the business of being a needs-satisfier. If I am unable to present something that is useful to the clients, I'm not going to bill them for my work.

Occasionally I will be taken advantage of by someone who is looking for a one-time class and figures, "If I complain about it, I can get the fee cut." In previous positions, I dealt with a few clients who worked that way. Fortunately I didn't have to make the decision of whether to bill them. It gets to be an ugly relationship.

■ "Set the price so you won't regret it either way." That is perhaps the most important principle of pricing that Weinberg states.

For example, suppose you've put together a course and billed the clients \$4,000 for it. You were bored while doing the training, didn't enjoy the course, and didn't like working with the clients. They come back and ask you to do the course again. This time, you should set the price at something like \$6,000. If they do hire you, you can put up with being bored; you can tell yourself, "Gee, I'm making a lot of money off of this." But if they turn you down because of the \$6,000, you can say, "That's fine. I didn't really want to do it anyway."

The fourth interview is with the president of a small southeastern firm that specializes in consulting, human resource development,



organization development, and training.

I do two different types of rate setting: one for organization development work and the other for training programs.

Training programs vary. We have some that are as low as \$950 a day for instruction, and at least one that's \$1,900 a day. It depends on the content and on the investment that we have to make upfront for course materials, transparencies, films, and videos.

Our lowest-priced courses are on subjects that you would expect to find in off-the-shelf programs: time management, meeting management, and telephone skills. Our highest-priced course is on autonomous work teams. So the training varies, but most of our coursework runs in the neighborhood of \$1,250 a day for instruction.

We provide train-the-trainer options and we charge additional for materials for those courses, instead of rolling that expense into the cost of the training. That's because it costs more to duplicate materials for those courses than for others.

The organization development work is for flat fees. We started our business in October 1988. Our OD consulting services were \$750 a day then; six months later we raised them to \$950; this January we

started charging \$1,250 a day. We think that's competitive. The mean around here is probably \$1,000 to \$1,500.

That may seem like a fairly significant charge, but the client gets much more than one day of work from our firm. For each day of development work, we spend at least 50 percent more time preparing for that day and following up.

I travel a lot on jobs; for example, I've done work in Maine, California, and Colorado. The same rates hold all over. Of course, expenses are in addition to that. We charge for actual expenses, not on a per diem basis.

We don't charge for travel time, just for the expense: airline tickets, lodging, meals, and rental cars. Some people do charge for travel time. But I didn't like that when I was an internal person buying their time, so from a personal perspective, I thought that would defeat what I was trying to do.

I try to give clients advance notice when we change our rates. I deal with them on a project basis. When an old client comes back to us for a new project, I tell the client that our rates have changed, and this is what the price will be. To clients with whom we do not currently have projects, I send letters saying something like this: "I appreciate your business during the past year. Please be notified that effective January 1, 1990, our rates will be. . ."

The letters have even generated a couple of new programs. The rate didn't seem to matter. Just the fact that we sent the letter reminded them of our services. I wasn't expecting that on a price increase.

Sometimes I'll get a call from a company that's been a good customer, but that I haven't dealt with since a recent rate change. The clients want a new project and they've already put it in their budget without checking with me first, at the same rate as last time. In such a case, to keep from losing business with a good customer, I would probably tell the client, "Sure, we'll be glad to do it. But keep in mind that from now on, these are the rates."

The recommendations

1 **Decide what kind of consulting business** you're going to be.

When you're just starting out, of course you want your pricing structure to be attractive to people. But there's also a perception issue to keep in mind. You want potential clients to perceive your firm as a professional, top-of-the-line organization.

If you set your fees too low the perception is that you're probably a high-school or college teacher trying to make some money on the side. That happens a lot in this business. Such consultants don't have offices; they work out of their homes. They can afford to set very low fees, say \$200 to \$250 a day.

Look at the kind of expenses and facilities you are going to have in your business, versus the kind of fees you think you should charge. You have to charge enough to cover your expenses.

You can be a consultant and charge \$250 a day and work out of your bedroom. You can use your home phone and go to Pip or Kinko for your copying and faxing services. And you really can run on just a bare minimum of fees. But in the long run that's not the way to stay in business.

If you're going to be a full-line consulting business—if you're going to build a business within your community—you're going to face requests. You're going to face requests from the community and from professional organizations. You have to establish a base and be part of the community, and certain responsibilities come along with that.

We belong to the local chamber of commerce, make contributions to various civic groups, and sponsor an elementary school. Such activities give your firm the kind of longevity that you can't get when you work out of a shoebox in your bedroom.

We chose to open an office. We chose to have a conference room. That's a good contact point for clients, but it also adds to the expense of having a business. All that makes potential clients take you

more seriously. They're more likely to see you as another businessperson like themselves.

2 **Balance your fees with your expenses.** Just starting out, you may not have any idea what kind of overhead to plan for. You have to do the best job that you can—early on—in anticipating the expenses that you will incur. Then ask yourself what you need to charge per day and how many days you need to sell during the year to cover those expenses and your salary. Our target last year was 100 days.

I asked myself, "How much do I need to live on?" and decided that I wanted to take home a salary of \$50,000. I also chose to have a full-time office manager, someone who would be here at all times instead of an answering machine or an answering service. That adds to your image, but it also adds to what you're going to be paying out-of-pocket.

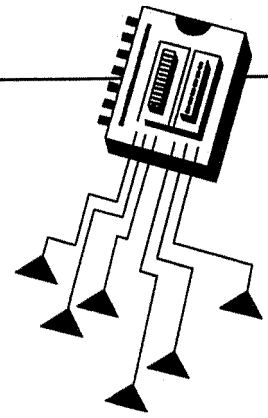
I thought about the expenses that I incur at home, such as utility costs, phone costs, and rent. Then I added to that the obvious additional costs that would be associated with a business: bigger long distance bills, publishing, advertising, and so forth.

You almost have to have copy services and fax services. Our first rate increase was partly because we wanted the ability to do duplication and faxes in our own office, and had to pay leases on the equipment. And if I had one headache in starting this business it was trying to decide what type of long-distance service to use.

Find out what other people are charging for similar consulting services. In my case, I knew what I had been paying as an internal buyer.

Check with your competitors. Check with local professional organizations. Call a couple of internal human resource people whom you know and ask what they typically pay. Tell them you're starting a business and don't have any idea of what to charge. Most of them will spill the beans for you.

3 **Find a good accountant** to handle your financial affairs. One of the biggest problems we've had is finding appropriate



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people to take care of all of the tax-work that goes along with this kind of business. I believe you could have a full-time person dealing with taxes.

Until I got into this business, I never understood the burden that state, local, and federal taxes place on businesses trying to get off the ground. It's unbelievable—not necessarily the amount of money, but the amount of forms. We get probably two to three forms every week. If you try to handle all that yourself, you're not going to have time to do consulting work. Of course, your fees have to reflect such expenses as hiring an accountant.

4 Carve out time to market yourself. You can get a long series of consulting contracts and work yourself to death on those contracts, but when you get to the end of those contracts, there's nothing left. There's nothing there.

Force yourself not to take

consulting days—to turn down some jobs—so you can go on the road and introduce your company to potential customers. You have to be willing to do that.

Right now you may be contracted through the end of July, but if you work only on those contracts through then, you'll get to the end of July and ask, "Now what am I going to do?" You'd have no business, unless you happen to get some repeat business. And you'll get some of that, but you won't always get it.

At times you have to say, "I can't do it then. I'll be glad to do it some other time for you," in order to go on a marketing trip instead.

You can't depend on a lot of advertising to get business. People receive a lot of junk mail every day; I'm not sure they read much of it. Talking in person to potential clients is much more effective.

It helps to be a contributing member of your local ASTD organization, NSPI, or the American

Society for Quality and Participation. Be active in those types of organizations so that you get to know people: not only your competitors but also your potential clients. I make it a rule never to approach anybody to do any marketing at a meeting. I don't think that's appropriate. But being active in those chapters certainly does give you a lot of excellent contacts.

"Four by Four" is compiled and edited by Catherine M. Petrini. If you have ideas for future topics or would like to be interviewed, write to Four by Four, Training & Development Journal, 1630 Duke Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313.

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