

Years ago, I heard a cynical definition of business/management consultants that has always stuck with me:

A business/management consultant is someone who, if you ask them what time it is, will charge you £1000 and then take your arm and read your wristwatch.

According to various reports, organisations spend billions annually on business/management consultants, yet the number of businesses in trouble never seems to decrease.

In my opinion, one important cause for the above is that many organisations haven't thought logically for themselves about their situation, what they are trying to accomplish and why. This leads them to do one of the following:

*Current situation → Semi-plausible idea → Action*

An organisation adopts the first semi-plausible idea that comes along. They may get lucky but most of the time the chosen course of action won't be suitable for their situation and aims because it isn't based upon logical thinking. A sign of this is when the idea doesn't make sense to the staff or customers.

*Current situation → Hire consultant → Action*

The organisation chooses a consultant that is unsuitable for their situation. Because consultants often specialise in one or two techniques, they tend to analyse every business situation as if that technique is the answer. The risk is that the organisation could be considering a solution that isn't relevant.

*Current situation → Endless committee meetings → No action at all*

In this case, no action is ever taken and the organisation crashes and burns in a very conscientious and meticulously documented and discussed fashion!

This book is for organisations (and individuals) who want to improve their chances of choosing an appropriate course of action. It presents a systematic and visual approach to assessing the situation, determining what needs to be changed (if anything) and why, developing creative options, planning implementation, gaining support and executing the work. This material is based upon my workshops and I have done my best to make it practical.

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