

Appendix C

SUCCESS STORY: SELLING CONSULTING PRODUCTS



Taken from an interview by your author with one of the best “start from scratch”, independent management consultants in the business.

Author, JDS: **“Bob, how did you get started?”**

Bob: “After 43 years as an independent consultant, or as I like to say, ‘gainfully unemployed’, people are always asking me, how did you get started? My wife and I started part time when I was a school Principal. We began marketing a management course for a university through the State Education Association. The course became so popular that in 3 years we were generating more income part time than my full-time job. That’s when we decided to pursue the independent route”.

JDS: **“What was your biggest concern when you changed careers?”**

Bob: “I was concerned that marketing one course might not be enough to carry us forward. The income stream needed more balance. That’s when we adopted the concept of a three-legged stool. It’s a secure piece of furniture if the legs are the same length. Our stool only had one leg, Training, Marketing, and Conducting one course. We decided to create the other two legs, Consulting and Product.”

JDS: **“What steps did you take next, Bob?”**

Bob: “A colleague and I started to create training programs that could be offered as in-service educational programs with materials. Those programs began to be utilized and our product leg was growing. At the same time, I was introduced to an educational tool that had promise and began marketing it to my contacts.”

“Since we had some expertise in marketing to the educational community, we accepted consulting engagements for colleges and school systems. The stool was becoming more stable. The training leg was still the longest but the other two were growing. After four years in business, we sold the training programs to a larger organization and for the next 15 years received royalties quarterly.”

“We were very successful promoting the educational tool and the publisher approached me to train other independent consultants to use the product. For eight years I conducted 10 to 12 training programs a year in the Northeast US as well as Canada. About the same time a colleague had secured a contract with an international consulting firm and needed help delivering the content. This began the international phase of the business conducting programs in United Kingdom, Europe, and Asia”.

JDS: “Sounds like you and your wife were branching out into new business arenas”

Bob: “At this point the training leg was strong, so we decided to work on building the consulting. We began to work with some local firms in a consulting capacity. A small office coffee and beverage supply company wanted some help expanding. We helped them develop and implement a plan to increase their market share”.

“Then a small fulfillment company needed help with a succession plan as the owner was retiring. Shortly after that a large manufacturer was interested in a detailed needs analysis. We were using some products with a small number of their workers when an individual from their training department wanted to be certified to use the product with a larger population”.

JDS: “And then?”

Bob: “That need precipitated the development of a Train-the-Trainer Program. We would train and certify corporate trainers and they would purchase and deliver the product. We invited trainers from all industries to attend and over the next few years because of an increased number of corporate trainers, our product leg began to grow. To continue that

growth, we created a trainer support system to give them all the support so that it was easy for them to utilize our product”.

JDS: **“Where do things stand today?”**

Bob: “Today, 43 years later, 90% of our sales are product and 10% Train-the-Trainer. Our training is conducted in-person or virtually depending on the client’s needs”.

JDS: **“Thanks Bob for showing the readers of this book that an independent, successful managing consulting career is very possible”.**