

## PROFESSIONAL INSIGHT

STEP

3

UNDERSTAND  
REASONS FOR  
SUCCESS

Management consultants are all about driving growth but taking none of the credit, according to Paul Winter, President of the Management Consultancies Association

## Boosting public bodies

**If management consultants have to get used to watching someone else receive the plaudits for transformation in the private sector, then public sector work only deepens the requirement not to expect positive headlines and awards.**

## Unsung heroes driving growth

**B**ehind most successful business announcements and turnarounds there is nearly always solid advice from management consultants who are often long-gone by the time the CEO gets a standing ovation at the AGM.

That is certainly the experience of Paul Winter, President of the Management Consultancies Association who believes that is exactly how it should be.

"Management consultants have a long, proven history of being a reliable source for growth," he says.

"So whenever you see a company or organisation has come on in leaps and bounds you can almost always be certain there was engagement with management consultants involved. The fact they never get the plaudits or are never featured in the headlines about the turnaround is fine, it's what the role is all about.

"We're in the background and the pats on the back should always go to the people who show strong leadership through getting a good and well-advised management team around them. A management consultant will get the job done and make sure they're replaced so someone else can carry on the programme when they're gone."

**Crossover specialists**

One of the major challenges a management consultant has to get over,

other than accepting a client's board will always take the credit, is how the role actually goes against what most people are brought up to believe.

Management consultants are hired by boards who want to drive growth and turn around a business yet most business people, like everyone else, expect people to be experts in just one area.

"We're a nation of specialists, we all grow up and then do a job that we largely stick to, becoming an expert in that area," reflects Winter.

"The thing is, becoming an expert can be limiting because people assume that's all you can do. Management consultants are the opposite. They're people who are very good at what they do but they don't specialise in doing one thing in one industry. It's all about taking what you learn and observe in one industry to another because things are generally highly repeatable. More often than not the hugely successful business turnaround stories come simply from taking something that works well in one industry and introducing it into another."

**Decisive and early**

Hence, most of what a management consultant will bring to a company is observing how things are done, looking at good behaviour and replacing the negative behaviour with something that has worked elsewhere. Inventing a new service or product is almost unheard of, Winter assures, but helping them to

realise that is what they need and then assisting in its development and execution is a common task.

**'Management consultants have a long, proven history of being a reliable source for growth'**



**Paul Winter**  
President,  
Management Consultancies Association

This stimulus for growth and innovation can only come about when a management consultant has made an assessment of the board and unit leaders they are working with.

"To help a company grow, you've got to be very canny at understanding people and making accurate judgements about them," Winter reveals.

"You have to figure out where people's strengths and weaknesses are, but crucially you have to establish who you can trust. You need to figure out who is really backing the process and who you can trust to carry it through and keep on driving it once you're gone."

The benefit for client companies is that once they have overcome the understandable concern of allowing in consultants to show them how to do things better, they are likely to have a more successful company and they are more likely to use management consultants again.

The key, Winter maintains, is to act early and be reassured when making the decision that others in a similar position have done so in the past and will do so again. The biggest risk is acting late and allowing rivals to steal a march on your business and its customer base while you pontificate on whether something needs to be done.

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