Appendix

Another Checklist You Can Use

NOW THAT YOU HAVE FINISHED reading this book, you should have a good grasp of consulting concepts and skills. You have also seen how specific skills and techniques must be brought to bear in a methodical, sequential fashion during the preliminary events to heighten the probability of successful implementation. And you have seen that knowing what to do (the product of the discovery phase) is quite a different matter from finding the right way to do it (in the implementation phase).

So why another checklist? To help make this book easily accessible and useful to you as a *continuing* reference on how to do consulting. Suppose you have an appointment to see a prospective client and want to quickly refresh your understanding of what to do in contracting. Turn to the section on contracting here, and use it as an outline of what to cover in your meeting, what to pay attention to.

This appendix is divided into seven parts—overview, contracting, data collection and discovery, feedback, implementation, resistance, and ethical practice. The checklist in each section is an outline of main points or a summary of the business of that phase and the skills required. You can simply read through the checklists to refresh your knowledge and understanding of the material in the book from time to time. Or you may use them to check off some of the points you may not be completely sure about, that you want to learn more about, or that you want to practice further. The checklists also function as a topic index, giving page numbers of text if you want to review a particular point in more detail.

To Get an Overview

	Chapters 1, 2, 3	Page
□ A consultant is a person who is trying to have some influence over a group or organization but has no direct power to make changes or implement programs.		2
□ The five phases of any consulting project are:		
1. Entry and contracting		6
2. Discovery and dialogue		6
3. Feedback and the decision to act		7
4. Engagement and implementation		7
5. Extension, recycle, or termination		7
□ The primary goals for the consultant are:		
1. To establish a collaborative relationship		19
2. To solve problems so they stay solved		19
3. To ensure attention is given to both the technical/business problem and the relationships		20
□ The primary roles consultants find themselves in are:		
• Expert		22
• Pair-of-hands		24
• Collaborative		25
□ Developing client commitment is a secondary goal of each consulting act.		20
□ Each step leading to the implementation of a solution can be seen as an opportunity to engage the client, reduce resistance, and increase the probabilities of success. Each step is an opportunity for collaboration.		
Step 1. Defining the initial problem		29
Step 2. Deciding to proceed with the project		30
Step 3. Selecting dimensions to be studied		30
Step 4. Deciding who will be involved in the project		31
Step 5. Selecting the method		31
Step 6. Data collection		32
Step 7. Funneling the data		33
Step 8. Data summary		33
Step 9. Data analysis		33
Step 10. Feedback of results		34
Step 11. Making recommendations		34
Step 12. Decision on actions		35
□ There are two requirements for flawless consulting:		
1. Being authentic		37

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2. Completing the requirements of each phase		41
□ Flawless consulting allows you to:		8
• Have your expertise better utilized		
• Have your recommendations more frequently implemented		
• Have more of a partnership relationship with clients		
• Avoid no-win consulting situations		
• Develop internal commitment in your clients		
• Receive support from clients		
• Increase the leverage you have on clients		
• Establish more trusting relationships with clients		
□ The business of the contracting phase is:		
1. Negotiating wants		41
2. Coping with mixed motivation		41
3. Surfacing concerns about exposure and loss of control		41
4. Triangular and rectangular contracting		42

Before You Negotiate Your Next Contract, Remember …

	Chapters 4, 5, 6	Page
□ The specific skills involved in contracting are to be able to:		58
1. Ask direct questions about who the client is and who the less visible parties to the contract are		58
2. Elicit the client's expectations of you		58
3. State clearly and simply what you want from the client		58
4. Say no, or postpone a project that in your judgment has less than a 50/50 chance of success		50
5. Probe directly for the client's underlying concerns about exposure and vulnerability		50
6. Discuss directly with the client why the contracting meeting is not going well when it isn't		58
□ A contract is an explicit agreement of what the consultant and client expect from each other and how they are going to work together.		55
□ There are two key concepts in contracting:		55
• Mutual consent: Both sides enter the agreement freely and by their own choosing		55
• Valid consideration: Each party to the contract receives something of value		56
□ Most of your contracts should contain these elements:		59
1. The boundaries of your analysis		60
2. Objectives of the project		60
3. The kind of information you seek		62
4. Your role in the project		63
5. The product you will deliver		63
6. What support and involvement you need from the client		65
7. Time schedule		65
8. Confidentiality acknowledgement		65
9. Provision for feedback to you later		66
□ Telephone questions before the first meeting:		69
• What do you want to discuss?		70
• Who is the client for this project?		70
• Who else will be at the meeting?		70
• How much time will we have?		70
• Do you know that you want to begin some project, or are we going to discuss whether to do anything at all?		70
□ To plan a contracting meeting, use Checklist #3.		98
□ The steps in navigating the contracting meeting:		71
Step 1. Personal acknowledgement		71

	Chapters 4, 5, 6	Page
8. You can't ask for something the other person doesn't have.		68
9. You can't promise something you don't have to deliver.		69
10. You can't contract with someone who's not in the room, such as client's bosses and subordinates. You have to meet with them to know you have an agreement with them.		68
11. Write down contracts when you can. Most are broken out of neglect, not intent.		68
12. Social contracts are always renegotiable. If someone wants to renegotiate a contract in midstream, be grateful that they are telling you and not just doing it without a word.		68
13. Contracts require specific time deadlines or duration.		68
14. Good contracts require good faith and often accidental good fortune.		68

Before You Go into the Data Collection and Discovery Phase of Your Next Project, Remember …

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	10, 11, 12	
□ The business of the data collection/discovery phase is:		189
1. Doing layers of analysis		
2. Understanding the political climate		
3. Resurfacing resistance to sharing information		
4. Seeing the interview as an intervention		
□ The specific skills involved in discovery are to be able to:		187
1. Distinguish between the presenting problem and the underlying problem		
2. Elicit and describe both the technical/business problem and how the problem is being managed		
3. Ask questions about the client's own personal role in causing or maintaining the presenting or target problem		
4. Ask questions about what others in the organization are doing to cause or maintain the presenting or target problem		
5. Plan the data collection jointly with the client		
6. Involve the client in interpreting the data collected		
7. Recognize the similarity between how the client manages *you* and how they manage their own organization		
8. Condense the data into a limited number of issues		
9. Use language that is understandable to people outside your area of expertise		
□ The purpose of discovery is to get action, not do research.		175, 176
□ Your goal is to develop a clear and simple picture of what is causing and maintaining the client's problem, including a description of the technical/business problem the client has asked for help on and a description of how that problem is being managed.		179
□ Concentrate on four things beyond the technical considerations:		177
1. Keep simplifying, narrowing, reducing your inquiry so it focuses more and more on the next steps the client can take.		177
2. Use everyday language.		177
3. Give a great deal of attention to your relationship with the client. Include the client at every opportunity in deciding how to proceed. Deal with resistance as it arises.		178
4. Treat data on how the client organization is functioning as valid and relevant information. Also assess how the problem you are exploring is being managed.		178
□ The steps in data collection and discovery are:		189
1. Identifying the presenting problem		190

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2. Making the decision to proceed		190
3. Selecting the dimensions of inquiry		190
4. Deciding who will be involved		190
5. Selecting the data collection method		190
6. Collecting data		192
7. Funneling the data		192
8. Summarizing data		192
9. Analyzing data		192
□ The presenting problem is never the real problem.		179
□ Ask these questions to yield information for your levels of analysis:		198
1. What is the technical or business problem you are experiencing?		198
2. What are other individuals or groups in the organization doing to either cause or maintain this problem at its current level of severity?		198
3. What is your role in the problem? What is there in your approach or way of managing the situation that might be contributing to the problem or getting in the way of its resolution?		198
□ How the problem is being managed is key.		194
□ Understanding how the problem is being managed requires looking at such dimensions as:		194
1. Clarity of objectives		194
2. Subgroup competition and cooperation		194
3. Support		194
4. Evaluation of performance		194
5. Sex roles		194
6. Status differences		195
7. Authority and power		195
8. Decision-making effectiveness		195
9. Norms for individual behavior		195
10. Management information		195
11. Leadership style		195
12. Conflict		195
13. Domination		195
14. Attitudes about this project and your involvement		195
□ To plan a data collection meeting, use Checklist #5.		203
□ To review what happened in a data collection meeting, use Checklist #6.		206

	Chapters 10, 11, 12	Page
□ An alternative to third-party data collection, analysis, and feedback is whole-system discovery, where the entire client system is directly involved in redefining the problem, naming a desired future, outlining alternative actions, and deciding how to proceed.		207
□ To make whole-system discovery work, there must be:		213
1. Complete transparency		213
2. Management joining the process as full participants		213
3. A full cross section of the whole system		213
4. A willingness to ignore status, power, titles, and functions		213
5. A readiness to speak up		213
6. An understanding that choosing not to participate surrenders right to complain or be heard		214
7. A focus on the future and what the group wants to create together		214
8. A way to agree on next steps and who is going to work on them		214
9. A willingness for the consultant to give up the expert role		214
□ The skills involved in whole-system discovery are to be able to:		215
1. Design learning experiences for others		215
2. Convene and bring people together		215
3. Help people question their current reality and envision their future		215
4. Confront people with their freedom and responsibility through interactive activities		215

Before You Go into the Feedback Phase of Your Next Project, Remember …

	Chapters 13, 14	Page
□ The business of the feedback phase is:		228
1. Funneling data		228
2. Presenting personal and organizational data		228
3. Managing the feedback meeting		228
4. Focusing on the here and now of the meeting		228
5. Don't take it personally		228
□ The specific skills involved in feedback are to be able to:		245
1. Confront the client with all relevant data collected, even if it wasn't part of your original assignment		245
2. Give descriptive rather than evaluative feedback		245
3. Feed data back to the client about personal behavior in handling the target problem		245
4. Understand that client criticism and resistance are not directed at you personally		245
5. Be present at the meeting where the action steps are determined		245
6. Structure and control the feedback meeting to elicit client reaction and choice of next steps		245
□ A clear picture may be enough: If you present a clear and simple picture of why the problem exists, the client will have as many ideas for recommendations as you do.		217
□ In condensing the data, select items that:		218
1. The client has control over changing		
2. Are clearly important to the organization		
3. Are the object of some commitment somewhere in the client organization to work on		
□ The guidelines for giving feedback effectively: Behave assertively, not aggressively or nonassertively		221
□ Use language that is:		223
• Descriptive		
• Focused		
• Specific		
• Brief		
• Simple		
□ Avoid language that is:		223
• Judgmental		
• Global		
• Stereotyped		
• Lengthy		

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• Complicated		
□ To structure the presentation, there are only three general categories of data:		229
1. Analysis of the technical/business problem		
2. Analysis of how the problem is being managed		
3. Recommendations		
□ The agenda for the feedback meeting should follow these steps:		230
Step 1. Restate the original contract		230
Step 2. State the structure of the meeting		230, 232
Step 3. Present findings		232, 233
Step 4. Present recommendations		232, 233
Step 5. Ask for client reactions		234, 235
Step 6. Halfway through the meeting, ask the client, "Are you getting what you want?"		235, 236
Step 7. Decision to proceed		236, 237
Step 8. Test for concerns of control and commitment		238
Step 9. Ask yourself if you got what you wanted		238
Step 10. Give support		239
□ To plan a feedback meeting, use Checklist #7.		241
□ To review what happened in a feedback meeting, use Checklist #8.		244

When You Encounter Resistance, Remember …

	Chapters 8, 9	Page
◻ Resistance is inherent in the consulting process.		139
◻ To deal with resistance, you should be able to:		139
1. Identify when resistance is taking place		140
2. View resistance as a natural process and a sign that you are on target		140
3. Support the client in expressing the resistance directly		140
4. Not take the expression of the resistance personally or as an attack on you or your competence		140
◻ Some common forms of resistance are:		140
1. Give me more detail		141
2. Flood you with detail		141
3. Time		141
4. Impracticality		142
5. I'm not surprised		142
6. Attack		143
7. Confusion		143
8. Silence		143
9. Intellectualizing		144
10. Moralizing		144
11. Compliance		145
12. Methodology		146
13. Flight into health		146
14. Pressing for solutions		148
◻ There are two underlying concerns that cause most resistance: control and vulnerability		151
◻ There are three steps for handling resistance:		163
Step 1. Identify what form the resistance is taking		163
Step 2. Name the resistance, in a neutral, nonpunishing way		165
Step 3. Be quiet, let the client respond		168
◻ Don't take it personally		168
◻ Give two good faith responses to every question. The third time a question is asked, interpret it as a form of resistance.		169

Before You Go into the Implementation Phase of Your Next Project, Remember …

	Chapters 15, 16, 17	Page
□ There are two aspects of implementation: (1) the technical work, using your particular expertise, and (2) the question of building support for the business or technical change you are planning.		249
□ There is a difference between seeing implementation as a matter of installation or as a matter of engagement. Installation sees change as an engineering process and addresses the tangibles, such as technical changes, work processes, and structure. Engagement acknowledges that any change also requires a shift in many intangibles, such as relationships, faith, commitment.		248
□ Many of the ways consultants try to change institutions actually create defenses against change. Our mistake in implementation is to over-invest in, or even misuse, such legitimate mechan-isms as		250
1. Vision and leadership		
2. Standards		
3. Rewards		
4. Training		
5. Measurement		
□ Remember the secondary goal of consulting: to teach clients how to solve the problem themselves next time. If you take over and become a surrogate manager, you are no longer consulting. Don't sacrifice learning objectives in favor of short-term results.		260
□ A core strategy for building emotional commitment to implementation is to design new ways for people to engage each other. Successful engagement takes place when we have:		265
1. Balance between presentation and participation		266
2. Full disclosure and the public expression of doubt		268
3. Real choice on the table		270
4. New conversations		272, 274
5. A physical structure that supports community and common purpose		275
□ A presentation-based meeting, even if it allows questions, says that only the top has something important to say and that the employee's job is to listen. Implementation based on engagement and participation means that the important conversations are the ones that take place between employees.		267

	Chapters 15, 16, 17	Page
□ Part of our task as consultants is to create assemblies in which there is an opportunity for all voices and points of view to be heard, reality in the words of the audience is as important as the reality spoken from the podium, and those at the podium tell the truth about failure and uncertainty.		268
□ There are opportunities for real choice at many levels of the organization in shaping vision, standards, training, measures, and accountability. The consultant's task is to support maximum reasonable power at lower levels for the sake of genuine change.		270
□ Most of our conversations about change are simply recycled statements of positions we have taken before. Old conversations are a refuge, a way to avoid freedom and our choice to invest. Ways for the consultant to help stimulate new conversations are to:		274
1. Discuss the personal impact the change has on me/us		274
2. Discourage discussion of anyone not in the room		274
3. Be careful about discussing history		275
4. Postpone discussion of action plans as long as possible		275
5. Discuss what part we have played in creating the situation we are now in		275
□ The places in which we meet carry a message about our intentions that is as clear as any verbal presentation. The power of place is not about having the right design for a room but about knowing that whatever the space or structure you are given to work in, you always have a choice about how to arrange it to suit the particular purpose.		275
□ Practical ways to engage people to confront the emotional work the implementation phase requires are to:		282
1. Open with transparent purpose and level the playing field		282
2. Renegotiate expectations about participation		283
3. Rearrange the room		286
4. Create a platform for doubt		289
5. Ask, what do we want to create together?		291
6. Help create a new conversation		293
7. Support the choice for peer commitment and accountability		295
8. Encourage positive feedback		300

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□ Implementation is more complex than contracting or discovery, for it is more particular to each situation. There is no universal, clear-cut path to follow. Even so, the most successful implementation efforts invariably build relationships, encourage local choice and more distributed governance, and promote common purpose. The consultant is in a unique position to introduce this mind-set to the client.		303
□ To prepare for implementation, use Checklist #9.		302
□ To review the implementation process, use Checklist #10.		304

To Create an Ethical Practice, Remember …

	Chapters 18, 19	Page
◻ All consulting has its shadow side—attitudes and practices that engender doubt and cynicism. Possible ways to confront and accept the shadow are:		307
1. Say no as often as you say yes		324
2. Stay true to your worth		324
3. Grow on your own terms		325
4. Operate as if everyone counts		325
5. Leave it all behind		326
6. Forgive		326
◻ Consulting cannot be done well without genuine caring for the client. Ways to express our care in the critical elements of the learning and change process are to:		327
1. Choose learning over teaching		328
2. See learning as a social adventure		330
3. Know the struggle is the solution		330
4. See the question as more important than the answer		331
5. Mine moments of tension for insight		335
6. Focus on strengths rather than deficiencies		337
7. Take responsibility for one another's learning		338
8. Let each moment be an example of the destination		339
9. Include ourselves as learners		341
10. Be authentic, in the way we manage ourselves and in our connection to our clients		341

Author Biography

About the Author

SINCE THE PUBLICATION of the first edition of *Flawless Consulting,* Peter Block has written two additional books: *The Empowered Manager: Positive Political Skills at Work* (1987) and *Stewardship: Choosing Service over Self-Interest* (1993).

Peter received a B.S. degree in business administration from the University of Kansas and a master's degree in industrial administration from Yale University. He is the creator of the Staff Consulting Skills Workshops, which teach consulting skills to people in the staff role in areas such as engineering, systems analysis, finance, and personnel. The workshops are offered by Designed Learning and have been conducted in public seminars and internally for hundreds of organizations in the United States and around the world. Designed Learning can be reached at (908) 889-0300 or www.Designedlearning.com .

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He has received several national awards for outstanding contribution in the field of training and development, including the American Society for Training and Development Award for Distinguished Contributions, the Association for Quality and Participation President's Award, and *Training* magazine's HRD Hall of Fame.

Designed Learning, founded by Peter Block is ***The Center for Consulting Competence.*** We support Training, HR, Information Systems, Quality, Engineering and other staff groups in their efforts to transform themselves into consulting organizations. Our workshops transfer powerful consulting concepts, skills and expertise to staff professionals. Our expertise is in successfully navigating the day-to-day problems facing staff groups transitioning to and operating as consulting units. With us, they develop the expertise that builds the capacity of their clients for marketplace success.

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