

POSITIVE ●
MOMENTUM

no nonsense business expertise

A glass sphere sits on a dark, textured rock. The scene is dramatically lit with a strong red glow, creating a vibrant, energetic atmosphere. Water splashes around the sphere, with droplets frozen in mid-air, adding a sense of motion and freshness. The background is dark and slightly blurred, focusing attention on the sphere and the water.

Start Consulting Today!

**Why Another Full-Time Corporate
Role Might Not Be For You**

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Why Another Full-Time Corporate Role Might Not Be For You: Start Consulting Today!

Everyone knows what it's like to want another job.

There doesn't even have to be anything wrong with your current position. Change is simply the lifeblood of progress.

In fact, 'they' say that you should change jobs every two years. In this case, 'they' happen to be recruiters, so don't listen to them! Senior roles take longer to master. But, the sentiment holds truth – if you stay in one role for too long, you will cease to grow.

When seeking change, a lot of people start by looking internally – aiming for a promotion in their own company. Unless actively unhappy, even the most ambitious people often wait until they hit a ceiling before looking to depart altogether.

But, if you are at a decision point in your career, considering a promotion, move or even a career change, maybe you should consider a bigger shakeup than just another corporate job.

Maybe... just maybe, it is time to think about becoming a consultant.

Don't freak-out! – consulting is more accessible than you think

Starting a consulting business might sound scary. Working for yourself means abandoning your monthly pay cheque, corporate title and support staff. You probably don't know where to start, assume that your network is too small or your skills are not in real demand.

Your concerns are unfounded. Breaking into consulting is simpler and less risky than you think. It delivers benefits you have not considered and is a growth market – now is the time, and this is your guide to getting started.

Before steering you towards resources that will let you really put down the foundations of a career change into consulting, I am here to get you past the first obstacle – realising that becoming a consultant is the right move.

Let's get started!



A Personal Brand is More Valuable Than Any Corporate Job Title

People can cling to corporate roles simply out of a desire to maintain prestige within a peer group of the wider business community. Working for a prestigious firm does bring with it a level of 'panache' – there is no denying that. But, that glory is not truly yours – you are simply borrowing it. You might get a boost of confidence by being able to associate yourself with success, with power, with influence. It opens doors and it delivers opportunities, but would it not be better if that reputation was truly yours.

The truth is that everyone knows this. Deep down, your corporate job title does not impress in the same way that personal accomplishment can. There is a reason that the public consciousness saves its real admiration for founders of businesses, not the CEOs that come in later. Think of Bill Gates vs Satya Nadella or Steve Jobs

Vs Tim Cook. Sure, Nadella and Cook are known names in business – they run two of the largest companies in the world. They are not, however, household names.

Gates and Jobs represent corporate brands, but those brands also represent them. The reason everyone knows who they are is that because they built something, they are something.

No independent consultant is likely to gain that level of public notoriety. But when it comes to the world of consulting and your network of clients, having that reputation for excellence attached directly to you is far more powerful than simply trying to claim a sliver of a reputation that isn't truly yours.



Self-Employment Delivers Far Greater Job Security Than You Think

Being self-employed has a reputation for instability. The truth is that most of the risk of building your own business is bottlenecked at the start. Particularly when it comes to a client based operation, once you get established, you will have more job security than you could ever dream of as a traditional employee.

The reason that working for yourself and being your own boss delivers such job security is two-fold, and the first is related to that very fact – being your own boss.

1. Your current job is less secure than you think

If you have a boss, you can get fired. Your current monthly pay cheque is not a guarantee. In fact, your continued livelihood is probably contingent on you remaining in the good graces of just one person. Sure, employment protections exist, but if they want you out, they will get you out.

Moreover, the direction and solvency of the company that you work for is not under your control. Strategic decisions that could see your whole department downsized are out of your reach. For all you know, the company could go under next quarter.

2. Becoming a consultant means diversifying your employers

Effectively, every single client becomes a boss. You remain accountable to those individuals, and your continued employment by them is tied to the continued success of that business. But, if you lose any single client, it is not the end of the world. You would have to lose them all to lose your business. Even then, if you have a strong professional reputation, and your clients were lost to no fault of your own, you would likely find more.

Once you become established as an independent consultant who can get things done, you will have more job opportunities than you know what to do with, and the continued success of that operation will hinge on you and you alone.

That is a position of job security. That is a position of strength – a position of strength that no one in traditional employment, no matter how senior, can come close to claiming.

You might be afraid of losing job security when becoming an independent consultant but it is only by becoming an independent consultant that real job security is actually something that you can obtain.



Your Income Will Increase as an Independent Consultant

Trying to figure out how much consultants make is a little like tracking down the length of a piece of string. Unfortunately, that is exactly how consultants like it. By keeping their prices secret, they can create bespoke pricing models that match exactly what each client can pay, allowing them to maximise their profits and access a diverse range of clients – all without causing hard feelings.

Exactly how much you will make depends on exactly what you can do. We will delve into some of those specifics. But, what can be easily stated is that it might well be more than you make now. Just think about it!

Delivering value where it is needed the most

Right now, you do your job for a business every day of the week. You are there when your expertise is desperately needed and when it's not. Sure, you add long-term strategic value, understanding the ins and outs of a company. But, you aren't there because something very specific needs to be done that only you can do, right now!

As a consultant, you hop from one fire to another – delivering value to businesses when and where you are needed most. This elevates your value, puts you in a position to negotiate for the highest possible price and places your fee outside of the ongoing and regular budget of the business. You are a specialist, you are a problem solver and you are there because you have something special to add.

You will likely learn new skills as an independent consultant, growing and adding to your portfolio of value. But, even if you simply took the skill set you have today and began to apply it to situations where it was specifically in demand, you understand that your earnings would increase.

As a baseline, take your current salary and triple it. Right there is a good indicator of your earning potential as an independent consultant. It might be even more!

What is the market average?

A quick google search of consulting salaries might reveal figures of around £50k or £75k per year. Discard these numbers immediately. They reference average consulting salaries of analysts working for consulting firms. As an independent consultant, this is not you – you have an earning potential far in excess of these figures.

Independent consultants don't hand over most of their salary to management. Instead, they get paid directly by the client. They also often have a wider skill base than a 'big firm' analyst, being able to advise on multiple sides of a project that might require input from 3 or 4 corporate consultants.

Independent consultants most often charge based on a day rate. In the UK, that will commonly range between £3,000 and £5,000. That means an annual income figure of £300k is within your reach when working on fee generating assignments for 60-100 days per year. Your skills, negotiating prowess and desire to work are the only things limiting your income.



You Will Grab Control of Your Work-Life Balance

Being an independent consultant means being self-employed, being your own boss and running your own business. That means no one tells you what to do other than you.

Once you take a job, you will have responsibilities to your client. But you decide what jobs you take, when to take them and the scope of work to which you agree. That means, in a way no corporate employee can achieve, you will have true control over your work-life balance.

Over 70% of independent consultants state that fitting work around family commitments or other work-life balance goals was a reason that they struck out on their own.

When you pick your own projects, you get to pick when you work. At the very least, you get to pick when you take on a new project. 91% of independent consultants were happier or as happy with their current work-life balance than before. This number wavered only slightly depending on the industry. 100% of those who left financial service firms are at least as happy after making the move.

Freedom and Diversity Delivers Higher Levels of Job Satisfaction

Almost every survey of independent consultants indicates that they are far happier with their field of employment. For example, a 2017 survey found that only 11% of Dutch independent consultants would ever consider returning to fixed employment outside of consulting.

There are a lot of reasons this might be the case. The control over work-life balance that we have already discussed is probably a large contributing factor. But, so are two other relatively unique characteristics of consulting: diversity of projects and ownership over those projects.

Fundamentally, this is a matter of personality. Some people like routine. But, if doing the same thing every day gets you down, consulting delivers you a new way to work. Every client means a new environment, new people and a new challenge.

As a consultant, you will also own the orchestration and outcome of your projects. You are being brought in because of deficiencies within a company. That means you need to lead. As a consultant, it is your job to identify problems, devise solutions and create outcomes. For people who love independent consulting, this ownership is a driving factor in bringing them satisfaction in their job.

For many, control, change and the freedom to choose when to work and what projects to take delivers an invigorating work environment that people are happy to greet on Monday morning. The truth is that consulting is not for everyone. But, for people who fit the bill, it provides access to a career that delivers real job satisfaction.



A Primer on How to Get Started

So, if you feel convinced that consulting is the right move, you are probably wondering how to get started. The key to starting an independent consulting business is planning. Although you will end up in a position of job

security, there is risk at the beginning. You should start laying the groundwork before you leave your current job, have a plan, develop a schedule and be prepared. Then look to seek out tailored advice.

We have written more on this, including resources you should investigate. But, here is a quick primer on what to do:

Step 1: Start networking today!

You are probably restricted from taking on paid work before you leave your current job, but there is no reason that you shouldn't start networking. Figure out who you already know and who you need to know, categorise your contacts and get out there and start talking to people.

Don't put pressure on these early meetings. Simply use them as an opportunity to learn more about your own skills, learn who you know that has a lot of connections and who might actually hire you directly.

Next, dust off your LinkedIn profile and start getting social on social media. Almost half a billion professionals are on LinkedIn, so you want to make sure that everyone in your extended network is connected to you. Make time every day to go through your feed, find posts where you can leave relevant comments and make insightful posts yourself. This will help you remain front of mind with the widest possible audience. Look to turn online relationships into face-to-face chats and follow up all real-world interactions with online communication.

When networking online and in real life, you need to make sure that you add value. Do not engage in sales pitches and always do your homework on the people you are meeting. To learn more, check out our guide to networking as a consultant.

Step 2: Always look to learn new skills

The more skills you have, the more valuable you will be to clients. Critical to this is learning skills that are complementary to each other. For example, if you know how to build IT systems, learning how to train people to use those same systems will allow you to complete more aspects of a single job. This will allow you to charge more and land more jobs.

Learn from the people around you and keep learning as you progress down the path of consulting – it's worth looking into structured training programmes. This, however, brings the issues of deciding which training is worth investing in and which is complete nonsense – bringing us to our last point.



Step 3: Look into consulting partnerships and franchise organisations

There are a whole host of organisations out there designed to help established professionals transfer into independent consulting. The naming conventions are inconsistent. However, the groups can be split between two broad categories – organisations that deliver clients to consultation and those that help consultants build their own client relationships through offering training and administrative support.

The former can be helpful to new consultants without strong network connections. But, they are not a path to cultivating client relationships that you own – a prerequisite to being a truly self-employed independent consultant and capturing most of the benefits discussed in this article. These organisations are most commonly called consulting associate programmes.

Consulting franchises and partnerships will help provide client opportunities and networking support. But, the focus is on mentorship and specific skills training. They also supply administrative support that will allow you to focus on networking, delivering to clients and growing your own skill base. To learn more about this, check out our guide to consulting success.

No matter what, getting started as an independent consultant begins with deciding to take the leap. Consulting is a growth sector, expanding faster than the baseline

UK economy for the last five years. Independent consulting, while still a niche sector within the broader industry, is growing even faster. There are opportunities out there for those who want them. If you want to increase your income, take control over your work-life balance and find job satisfaction in a challenging but rewarding environment – independent consulting could be for you. Stop looking for another full-time corporate job and start consulting today.

Are you interested in taking
your next steps into being an
independent consultant?

Speak to Us

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Thank you.