

R.J. Calio Consulting, LLC.

Retail Systems Consultant

How to choose the right consultant for your business

Choosing the right consultant for your business can be a good option when you need specific expertise that you don't have in-house for a specialized project. Here are some guidelines to help you make the right decision.

- 1. Be able to describe the project you have in mind and develop an estimated budget for that project before talking to potential consultant.**
- 2. Talk to be people in your industry to see if they can recommend a consultant they may have used.**
- 3. Ask the consultant their experience with projects similar in size and scope.**
- 4. Ask them if there are affiliated with or take fees from the companies they recommend.**
- 5. During you initial conversation are they trying to pitch their services before allowing you to give them a good overview of the project and your needs.**
- 6. Are they willing to visit your business to get first hand knowledge of your current systems, the culture of your organization and expectations from a new system prior to being engaged.**
- 7. Are they willing to bring you a least three potential vendors for you to evaluate**
- 8. Do they have a discovery process that will examine your current internal business processes for purchasing and receiving, inventory control, labeling and pricing product, point of sale and management reports?**
- 9. Will they make suggestion on "best practices" rather than accept you current practices and procedures?**
- 10. Are you and your organization willing to be challenged on your legacy procedures and practices?**
- 11. Do you get the sense they are over simplifying the process and glossing over the importance of getting by-in from the key users and stake holders of the current system?**

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 827
South Windsor, CT. 06074

E-Mail: rcalio@snet.net
Web : www.rcalio.com
Phone: (860) 644-7956
Fax: (860) 644-2358

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12. Will they provide a project timeline and assign tasks to specific people?

13. Will they provide timely updates on the project detailing any problems, challenges and any other issues that are relevant to the success of the project?

14. Are they willing to quote the project on a fixed cost basis and stay with the project until completion?

In the final analysis your intuition as a business person is extremely important. You have to feel comfortable with the consultant and feel confident that they understand your industry and your business and you can work with them.

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