



Navigating Independence: Insights from a Healthcare Consultant

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Introduction

I'm Gabriela Alcala-Levy, a healthcare consultant with over 20 years of diverse experience, spanning international projects to founding my consulting firm.

1996: Beginnings at The World Bank

- Global initiatives improving health and education.

2003: Healthcare Transformation at Mass General Hospital (Formerly Partners Healthcare)

- Led initiatives, including PROMs implementation.
- Impactful contributions - Reduced infections and fostered transparency.

2019: Founding MAPA Healthcare Consulting

- A Minority and Woman Business Enterprise.
- Deliberate transition to value-based healthcare.
- Focus on enhancing operational efficiency.

1999: Consulting for BearingPoint (Formerly KPMG Consulting)

- Consumer testing research for CMS.
- Policy research and analysis for Medicare managed care.

2016: Ventured into the Startup Sector

- Crafting a comprehensive Referral to specialists and Medicare Risk adjustment Programs.

What is Independent Consulting (IC)?



Independent consulting can be defined as the provision of specialized services, advice, or solutions to organizations or professionals on a freelance or contractual basis.

It involves leveraging expertise to address specific challenges or contribute to projects without being permanently employed.

The scope of independent consulting is broad and may include:

- Strategic planning
- Operations management
- Process improvement
- Project implementation
- Technology implementation
- Financial planning and support.

Advantages and Challenges

ADVANTAGES

- Flexibility in Work Schedule.
- Diverse Range of Projects.
- A diverse group of people to work with.
- Autonomy and Decision-Making.
- Fewer meetings.
- A broader view of your field.
- People value an outside voice.

CHALLENGES

- Lack of Job Security.
- Constant Business Development and Client Acquisition.
- Managing Finances (including negotiating fees) and Benefits.
- Managing scope creep.
- Learning to work with many different types of clients (e.g., some may be hard to engage).
- Understanding the pros and cons of the different legal structures.

Helpful Attributes of Independent Consultants

- + Expertise in a specific niche.
- + Effective communication and interpersonal skills.
- + Adaptability to different work environments.
- + Proactive approach to problem-solving.
- + Building and maintaining client relationships.
- + Organizational skills.
- + Ability to network.
- + Tolerance to uncertainty.

Fostering Trust: Strategies for Building Strong and Lasting Client Relationships



Understanding your client's needs.



Proposing tailored solutions.



Good project management.



Delivering on-time, high-quality work.



Managing the business aspects, such as invoicing and contracts.



Staying informed about industry trends and regulations.

Lessons Learned



NETWORKING

- Use it as an opportunity to learn about others.
- Treat it as another "client".
- Don't fear rejection.
- Reach out even if you are busy.
- Don't be alone.
- Get together with other consultants for support.
- Build a network of people who can complement your skills on specific projects.
- Join consulting or network organizations (like WHCM).



CREATE A DAILY ROUTINE

- Plan your week ahead of time (e.g., Sundays or Monday mornings).
- Keep one day a week meeting free.
- Use dry periods to enhance your offerings and marketing materials.
- Get a virtual assistant.

Lessons Learned



LISTEN TO YOUR GUTS

- Learn to say no.
- Take more than you think you can handle. (Let me explain)
- Raise issues proactively.



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Stay current on your field, and constantly assess what is new and how things are changing.
- Attend seminars and conferences and read.

Tips for Success

- ✓ Building a Strong Professional Network.
- ✓ Effective Time Management.
- ✓ Setting clear expectations for deliverables, timing, and status updates.
- ✓ Embracing Challenges as Learning Opportunities.
- ✓ Presenting at conferences.
- ✓ Seeing other consultants as collaborators and not as competitors.

Great Resources

CONSULTING STAFFING FIRMS:



- Catalant Technologies
- Business Talent Group
- Navital Global
- Veritux/Umbrex

FRACTIONAL JOBS FIRMS:



- Bolster
- Continuum
- Fractionally

BOOKS TO READ:



- Trusted Advisor by David Maister and Charlie Green
- The Go-Giver by Bob Burg
- Guide to winning clients. David. A. Fields

Q&A



Conclusion

- 🌿 Consulting is about building solid relationships.
- 🌿 We have a lot to offer, more than what we think.
- 🌿 The clearer your niche, the easier it is to find clients.
- 🌿 Many resources can support your journey.
- 🌿 Reach out to those who have done it.

Contact Information



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Things to Do if you Decide to Formalize your Independent Consulting

- Write the strategy of your firm.
- Pick a name for your firm.
- Get a domain name.
- Define your legal structure.
- Get a business checking account.
- Set up an email signature.
- Set up Dropbox or some other backup solution.
- Get a high-end business laptop. Get a second business backup laptop.
- Get a place to work.
- Get a logo.
- Get business cards.
- Get a good headshot.
- Update your LinkedIn profile.
- Prepare a bio and a resume.
- Prepare a project list.
- Prepare a PowerPoint template.
- Get an NDA, or non-disclosure agreement.
- Set up an invoice template or system.

Source: Will Backman from Veritux/Umbrex

The logo for MAIPA Healthcare Consulting features the word "MAIPA" in a large, bold, dark blue sans-serif font. The letter "I" is replaced by a stylized red and white graphic element consisting of two interlocking shapes. Below "MAIPA" is the text "HEALTHCARE CONSULTING" in a smaller, dark blue, all-caps sans-serif font. The entire logo is centered on a white background, with dark blue and light blue decorative wave-like borders at the top and bottom of the page.

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