

# Hiring Consultants

## The Salo Guide

- Our team's capacity is maxed out and there's still so much to do
- We need an outside perspective
- Our HR VP is going on parental leave
- My company doesn't have the expertise to get this project done
- Our CFO unexpectedly resigned
- We're a startup and we need to get smart about HR
- We're unsure if we should hire a full-time employee right now



**Sound like you? It's time to find an expert consultant.**

### **If you're reading this guide, chances are you could use some expert help.**

Well, luckily, Salo has been matching senior finance, accounting, and HR consultants with organizations for more than 20 years. We work with organizations nationwide to find the right consultant(s) for their needs. We're ready to help you get the information you need to confidently partner with an expert consultant.

### **What's in this guide**

Whether you need help immediately or you're planning ahead, read this guide to help you find the right consultant(s) for your organization.

#### **Part 1: How consultants benefit your business**

- Get to know today's professional consultants
- 10 great reasons to hire a consultant
- Common myths about consultants

#### **Part 2: How to choose and onboard consultants**

- Choose the right consultant(s) for your situation
- Foster successful consulting engagements
- See our hiring and onboarding checklist

Different people have different priorities, so pick the section that intrigues (or worries) you the most and start there!



# Get to know today's professional consultants

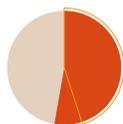


For some of today's most senior and specialized professionals, consulting is a flexible and lucrative career choice. They're former c-level execs, VPs, and subject matter experts. With their sought-after skills, these in-demand consultants are ready to jump into crisis situations, take on tough challenges, or lead a team. Today's consultants have been in your shoes. In fact, they might be your former colleagues.

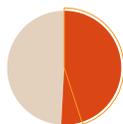
For senior practitioners, consulting is a great way to use their skills and make a difference—while being their own boss. Most are corporate veterans who want variety, better work-life balance, and the ability to choose their projects. They get the career they want, with the ability to work whenever, wherever, and how much they want. Additionally, many consultants say their pay exceeds their compensation at previous permanent roles.

## Check out these stats about freelancing and consulting in the U.S.<sup>1,2</sup>:

### Highly skilled professionals are gravitating to freelancing



53% of freelancers provide skilled services such as business consulting, IT, and marketing (*up from 45% in 2019*).



51% of workers with postgraduate degrees are freelancers (*up 6% since 2020*).

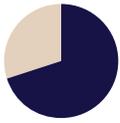
## Salo consultants have the best of both worlds

When consultants work with Salo, they get all of the advantages of freelancers as well as perks they'd expect from full-time jobs. For example, Salo consultants get benefits such as health and dental insurance, paid time off, community-building opportunities, and more.

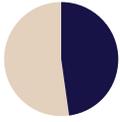


## Get to know today's professional consultants

### It's a career choice ...



70% of independent contractors said they are working as contractors by choice.

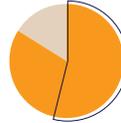


48% already see it as both a full-time and long-term career opportunity.

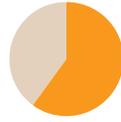


59% of freelancers believe they are making more money freelancing than they would in a traditional role.

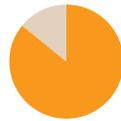
### And a lifestyle choice



84% of freelancers are living their preferred lifestyle, as opposed to 54% of traditional employees.



60% say that there is no amount of money that would convince them to take a traditional job.



86% of freelancers think that the best days for freelancers are yet to come.



## WHY HIRE A FINANCE CONSULTANT?

### A fresh start for a department in transition

When a CFO resigned, an organization realized their accounting records were in disarray. Salo provided an expert consultant with experience as a CFO and expertise in helping companies during a transition. The consultant spent time with each area of the finance team—talking through what needed to change and what work needed to be done. Then, the consultant empowered the employees to do the bulk of the work, reviewing their progress as tasks were completed. As a result of the consultant's help, the client now has a solid team and financial practices in place.



# 10 Great reasons to hire a consultant



Working with an experienced consultant can have long-term benefits for your organization. With a relatively small investment, you can see significant results—such as expedited timelines, streamlined processes, more confident teams, or innovative solutions to your business challenges.

## Hiring a consultant is a good idea when you need:

- 1 Speed:** When you need to get something done fast, you need experienced, knowledgeable people. With seasoned consultants, you don't have to spend weeks handholding, training, or onboarding. They hit the ground running and add value immediately.
- 2 Expertise:** If your existing team is missing critical skills, a consultant with subject matter expertise can be the perfect fit. Whether you need a one-time expert opinion or you need to build an entirely new skillset within your organization, a subject matter expert can cultivate the know-how you need.
- 3 Affordability:** Although you may pay more per hour for a consultant, your overall costs will probably be less. You don't have to withhold taxes, pay unemployment, provide healthcare benefits, or fund training/development. You only pay for the work you need done.
- 4 Interim leadership:** When a leader leaves, takes a leave of absence, or changes positions—the whole team is impacted. It's important to have an experienced leader who's ready to manage, mentor, and evolve the team.

### ACTIVITY

#### SHOULD YOU HIRE A CONSULTANT OR FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE?

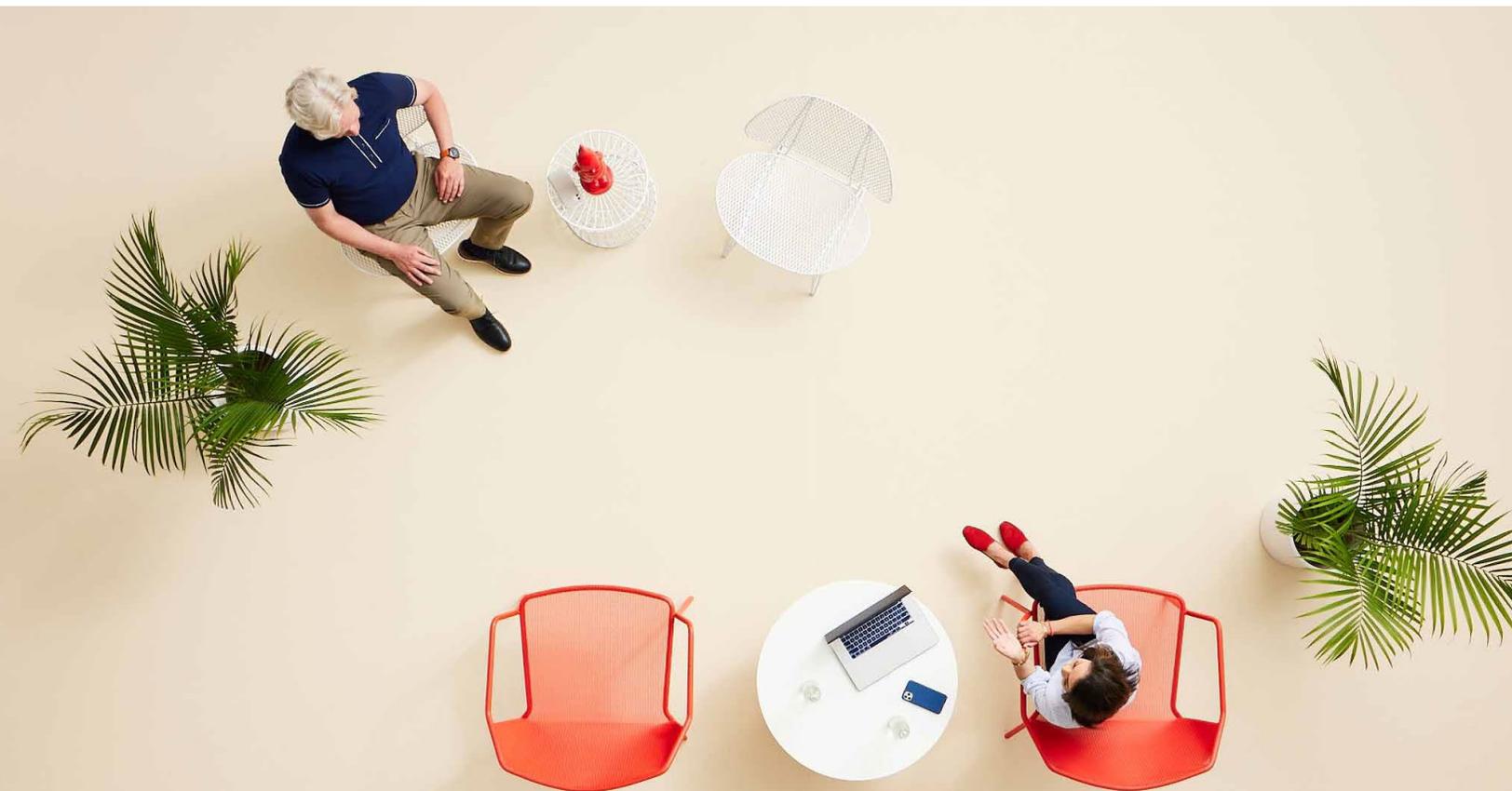
Create a hashmark on each line. If your answers skew toward the left, hiring a consultant might be for you..

Start ASAP	It can wait
Temporary need	Lasting need
Objective opinion	Institutional knowledge
Existing expertise	Train-as-you-go



## 10 Great reasons to hire a consultant

- 5 Role definition:** No use hiring a permanent employee for a role that's in flux. A consultant can help you define the role you need and create a job description to help you find the right permanent resource.
- 6 Extra capacity:** Big projects or big challenges can overwhelm your team. If you need some extra hands on deck, professional consultants can help your team shoulder the load.
- 7 Problem-solving prowess:** Got a tough problem to solve? Bring in someone who has "been there, done that." An experienced consultant has likely worked in a variety of organizations, industries, and project teams. They will help you clearly identify the problem and come up with creative solutions to solve it.
- 8 Change/transition help:** Times of change are critical for businesses. When you're in a transition, a knowledgeable consultant can help you steady the ship. Consultants can provide confidence with insights, ideas, and processes that have worked in similar situations.
- 9 Objective analysis and decisions:** As outsiders, experienced consultants can often identify opportunities and eliminate blind spots in your organization. They look at your business in new ways and without bias.
- 10 Growth and innovation:** Creating a new subsidiary? Establishing a new team? Want to launch a new product? When a business starts something new, there's a lot of work to do. Consultants can help you get your initiative set up and started. Then, they'll prepare for a seamless transition to the permanent team and set them up for future success.



# Common myths about consultants



Leery about hiring a consultant? No worries. We're here to bust the most common myths about consultants and consulting engagements. Let's dig in.

**MYTH: Consultants are expensive**

Not always. Effective, rewarding consulting engagements can be tailored to almost any budget.

**MYTH: It takes too much time to onboard a consultant**

It's the opposite. Experienced consultants are pros at hitting the ground running—they often add value on day one.

**MYTH: Consultants only work on prestigious projects**

Nope. Consultants can fill day-to-day roles, allowing your employees to work on special projects and meaty initiatives.

**MYTH: Consultants aren't as dedicated as employees**

False! Consultants want to make a difference (and their careers depend on referrals)—so, they go the extra mile.

**MYTH: If you need a consultant, your team is doing something wrong**

No way. Even the most successful teams hire consultants when they need temporary extra capacity, specialized skills, or a new perspective.

**MYTH: Consultants take their knowledge with them when they leave**

Not at all. Good consultants leave client teams with the knowledge they need for future success.

**MYTH: Consultants only work for big companies**

Incorrect. Consultants help organizations from startups and family businesses to Fortune 100 companies.

**MYTH: Consultants want to take employees' jobs.**

Not likely. Most consultants choose a consulting career for the flexibility and variety permanent roles don't offer.

## WHY HIRE AN HR CONSULTANT?

### Leading an HRIS project from RFP to implementation

A privately held consumer packaged goods company was looking for a partner to lead an HRIS project from RFP to implementation. A Salo consultant with deep HRIS experience managed all aspects of the client-side project. With the consultant's help, the new system was delivered successfully: on time, within budget, and with minimal disruption to the business. After the system was put in place, the HR and payroll teams gained a broader scope, influence, and engagement in their organization.



# Choose the right consultant(s) for your engagement



You don't need just any consultant; you need the right consultant for your engagement. (You might even need more than one.) Finding the right consulting match requires preparation.

## First: Define your business needs

Start your consultant search by creating an initial definition of the engagement. While the details may change over time, you need a starting point that includes:

- The challenge(s) and expected outcome(s)
- Skills required
- Budget and timing
- Workplace parameters (e.g., in-person, remote, hybrid)
- Duration and hours per week (e.g., a few hours a week for a month or a full-time, year-long commitment)

## Second: Questions to ask consultants before hiring

Choosing the right consultant is about asking the right questions. Ask candidates questions, such as:

- Do you have the proven ability to do the work (e.g., do you have references or past work examples)?
- Do you have the problem-solving acumen and ability to innovate?
- Do you have broad knowledge, a specific area of expertise, or both?
- Can you quickly create trusted relationships and gain people's confidence?
- Are you able to communicate complex concepts quickly?

## The Salo advantage

When you work with Salo, our business development directors (BDDs) do most of the leg work. They help you define your needs, find qualified consultants, set up interviews, and negotiate the terms of the engagement.

[Learn more about the services our BDDs provide.](#)



## Choose the right consultant(s) for your engagement



### Timing, budget, and availability

- What are your rates?
- How do you prefer to bill for your work (e.g., hourly rate, per project, fixed fees, retainer, etc.)
- What is your availability? When could you start?
- How much time can you commit to us?

### Culture fit

- Are your values aligned with our team's?
- Is your workplace/workstyle compatible with ours'?
- What could the consultant add to your team culture?
- Do you collaborate with others effectively, including listening and taking feedback?

## WHY HIRE AN ACCOUNTING CONSULTANT?

### Setting up a sustainable finance function

At a high-growth, family-owned engineering firm, the president was moonlighting as their accounting department—in addition to all of her other work. She knew she needed to set up sustainable finance/accounting processes but didn't know where to start. Salo assigned a tried-and-true, controller-level Salo expert to act as interim controller. On day one, the consultant stepped in and started taking things off the president's plate. The consultant quickly began managing day-to-day tasks, setting up long-term professional processes, and preparing the company to welcome a permanent controller.



# How to successfully work with a consultant



When consulting goes well, it's a mutually beneficial experience. Both the organization and the consultant grow, learn, and succeed. But that partnership takes effort from the consultant and the organizational representatives.

## Prepare your team in advance

Consultants are generally exceptional relationship builders. But it helps if you—the project sponsor—give any impacted teams a heads up before the consultant arrives. Why? When consultants appear without warning, it can cause stress and fear for other team members. They might worry the consultant is going to take their job or “come in and change everything.”

So, provide an overview of who the consultant is, why they're coming, and what you hope the engagement will accomplish. Talk, specifically, about how the consultant will benefit the team (e.g., reducing their workload or increasing their knowledge).

## Start off strong

At Salo, we often say our consultants can “hit the ground running.” Career consultants are pros at acclimating quickly, but they need a little help from you to get started. (Check out our “Onboarding Checklist” on the next page.)

To help your consultant start adding value on Day 1:

- Get technology set up, security clearances, and paperwork done in advance.
- Have a kick-off meeting to reiterate the scope of work and any other expectations.
- Introduce the consultant to the team and set up 1:1 meetings with key colleagues.
- Provide a list of go-to people that the consultant can contact for quick questions and clarifications.

Note: If your consultant is working remotely, ask if they are open to meeting the team in person at the beginning of the engagement to establish some relationships quickly. While an in-person visit isn't necessary, it can make the onboarding and teambuilding aspects easier.



## How to successfully work with a consultant

### Work together effectively

Managing consultants is similar to managing most employees. The partnership works best when you:

- **Make your consultant part of the team.** Treat your consultant like an employee. If there's an all-employee meeting or employee happy hour, include your consultant. Especially on long engagements, consultants are invested in your success and want to build relationships with your team. The more integrated they are, the more value they can create.
- **Have regular check-ins.** Consultants can do a lot on their own, but if you really want to see "the magic happen" it helps to meet regularly with your consultants. Regular (preferably weekly) check-ins are key to the success of the engagement. They help you gauge your consultant's progress. Finally, check-ins provide a regular opportunity for the consultant to ask for help, information, or feedback.
- **Be honest and open about your organization.** Consultants are here to help your organization succeed, but they can't do that if you're not telling them the whole story. Make sure the consultant has the context they need (warts and all) to do their job.
- **Stay open-minded about what consultants tell you.** Consultants see your organization with fresh eyes. That means they have insights you might have never noticed. Use that knowledge to your advantage. For example, they might see an employee with talents you didn't know about or a process that could work better. You're paying for a consultant with expertise gained from moving from organization-to-organization—use that knowledge!

### End on a high note

Eventually, consulting engagements come to an end. Work with your consultant to create an exit strategy, where the consultant transfers their knowledge to your permanent employees. Sometimes, that's creating a training program or having a new employee shadow the consultant for a while. Other times, it's just handing over the "keys" to employees that have been working side-by-side with the consultant all along. Regardless, it's a good idea to plan a transition period where the consultant is still available if there are questions or issues. With a good transition plan in place, your team will be able to seamlessly transition into a bright future.

## WHY HIRE AN HR CONSULTANT?

### Building an HR function from scratch

One of the nation's largest drugstore chains and a leading pharmacy benefit manager created a joint venture to deliver prescriptions to consumers' homes. The new company needed to build an HR function from the ground up. They needed an interim leader with experience with benefits and compensation. Working remotely, our consultant was able to build a total benefits structure, strategy, and team.



# Hiring and onboarding checklist

Here's a quick checklist to help you navigate hiring and onboarding a consultant.

## Before interviewing candidates

- Outline the engagement or challenge
- Identify critical consulting skills/competencies
- Define the goals and objectives
- Define expected milestones, results, deadlines, and deliverables

Ensure your organization has systems in place for hiring/onboarding/paying consultants

Agree on interview questions and priorities

## Before the consultant's first day

Prepare your team for the consultant by outlining their role and responsibilities

Get paperwork and payment arrangements completed

Arrange to provide:

- Technology credentials and/or computer
- Logins/passwords
- Security badge/parking pass (if in person)
- Workspace (if in person)

Review any compliance, regulatory, or trade secret information

Compile a list of people the consultant can contact if they have questions

Set up 1:1 meetings between the consultant and key partners, colleagues, or stakeholders

## On the first day

Have a welcome meeting to:

- Provide information about your organization's big-picture goals and how the consultant's work contributes to that success
- Discuss your organizational culture
- Reiterate the expected outcomes (and any scope changes)
- Establish communication and collaboration expectations

Introduce the consultant to key team members



# Expert help is just a chat away.

Have a tough challenge? Need an extra pair of hands? Looking for interim leadership? At Salo, we've got you covered.

And the process couldn't be easier.

We have vetted, expert finance, accounting, and HR consultants ready to help your team succeed. Just contact us at [hellosalo.com/contact-us/](https://hellosalo.com/contact-us/) to discuss your needs, and we'll find the right consulting experts for your situation.

Salo is a nationwide talent firm that's focused on building a world that works better together. When we match a talent expert in finance, accounting, and HR with an organization—we propel both forward. We call these interactions “Meaningful Experiences®.” With every interaction or engagement, it's our goal to Make it Meaningful®.

[www.hellosalo.com](https://www.hellosalo.com)

