

CONSULTING TIP OF THE MONTH

The Value of Listening

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When discussing a project with a potential client there is a tendency to want to tell the client what your relevant capabilities are instead of learning their needs. When you have so much to say to impress them, why should you spend time listening? Because you have to know what to talk about, and the potential client wants to talk about that before hearing your capabilities. Yes, really! Invite the person to tell you the problems they have.

As a consultant you are a problem solver. How can you solve the problem if you don't know what it is? How can you know what it is if you don't listen to what your client tells you? The client talks; you listen. Try not to interrupt the client. You can talk your way out of a project as readily as you can listen your way into a project. And listening to your own voice counts as talking, not listening

It is significant to remember that when you listen to what others have to say you are doing something valuable for them that greater than 90% of the persons they interact with today are not doing. That puts you ahead of your competitors!

James J. Farley is with ['Cardinal Consulting and Training'](#). You can learn more about 'listening' in the authors' book on ['The Executive MBA for Engineers and Scientists'](#).