



OFFICE HANDBOOK

Chapter 44: Diversity

Diversity means more than just abiding by a set of severely restrictive guidelines mandated by numerous EEOC settlements. Diversity is a way of life that the Company fully embraces. In accordance with the outcome of our latest "litigation event," we have developed these guidelines.

HIRING/PROMOTION: The Company recognizes that attracting and retaining the best talent possible is a key to competing globally. To that end, managers are encouraged to make hiring and promotion decisions via a blind selection process commonly known as "eenie, meenie, minie, moe."

MENTORING: We are committed to creating a culture where all employees can contribute their unique talents. We understand that certain outstanding employees may yet need assistance "fitting in." For them, we have contracted with a well-regarded global provider whose qualified offshore mentors are available by phone or email. A nominal deductible applies to this benefit.

ENFORCEMENT: Employees need to trust that they have a place to turn in the unlikely event of actual discrimination. Colleagues who believe they are victims should refrain from contacting their own counsel; our corporate attorneys have significant experience in this area and will be pleased to put the matter to rest.

MULTICULTURALISM: Effective immediately, the CEO's Friday afternoon "keg buster" parties will feature *Apprentice*-like tasks pitting diverse teams—Asians versus Caucasians, say, or Christians versus Muslims—against each other. We hope such activities will engender new levels of mutual understanding. Failure to participate may result in harsh disciplinary action.

LEADERSHIP: The tone for tolerance is set at the top. We are therefore proud to announce that two sought-after executives, Martha Stewart and Franklin Raines, have agreed to join the board as our first "diverse" directors. They'll be at a future keg buster; please make them feel at home.
—Ryan Underwood



Consultant
Debunking Unit

Consultant Nation *By Martin Kihn*

IN THE BROADWAY musical *Avenue Q*, the love-struck Brian announces the end of a period of chronic unemployment saying, "I'm a consultant! And I don't even know what that means."

Brian's not the only one who has discovered rewards of the consulting trade. The Census Bureau identifies 109,730 people as consultants, hauling in an average \$86,910 per year. But they're only part of the picture: One study indicated there may be up to half a million Americans who call themselves "consultants" of one sort or another. So while a handful of top-tier firms such as Accenture and McKinsey & Co. employ a mere 50,000, there could be 10 times that many who think they're in the same profession.

Who are these mysterious souls—the self-proclaimed consultants? The Consultant Debunking Unit (CDU) spanned the globe, gathering examples of this industry's unsung troopers—those who perform consultative services not for the boards of the *Fortune* 500 but for, well, for others. We found:

- **Joy consultant** After leaving her job with an insurance company in 1979, Susan L. Colantuono decided to turn her perennial peppiness into a career as a counselor of good feelings. Her book *Make Room for JOY!* (Interlude Productions, 2000) includes the strangely un-consultantlike admonition to "sweep away material things."

- **Flag consultant** FlagsPlus.com is a New Jersey company offering a variety

of festive pole-top banners, including many sporting the images of cartoon characters. Those unsure of which among this potpourri of wind-flappers to select are urged to connect with the company's "flag consultant," John Ceci, whose first question is the unhelpful "What are you looking for?"

- **Compost consultant** A mixture of decaying organic matter with a doubtful odor would seem something no consultant would dive into. But North Carolina's Ron Alexander proudly proclaims his company's status as a "leader in compost market research and development." Unafraid of getting dumped on by doubters, he touts his "expertise in product development."

- **Satanic consultant** When legendary Church of Satan Magus Anton LaVey died, he passed the dark baton to Magistra Blanche Barton, who provides advice and counsel on the ways of the Horned One. Borrowing the counterintuitive approach of strategy consultants, Barton even claims she doesn't worship Satan.

- **Maypole consultant** We located the self-titled "Maypole Consultant for England"—a London-based woman named Donna Maria, whose national "Mayfayresday" tours last year set a world record with a nonstop 24-hour whirl. Asked why she does what she does, Ms. Maria spoke for many an unsung consultant, saying it's to create a world full of "color, beauty, vitality, and fun!"

Martin Kihn is author of the multinational phenomenon House of Lies: How Management Consultants Steal Your Watch and Then Tell You the Time.

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spike (n.) special talent or skill; what consultants are supposed to have