

Tips and Techniques from Zipline

5 Tips for the Initial Training Consultation

When speaking with a consultant about a new project, consider these helpful tips:

1

Listen to the questions. Do the consultant's questions demonstrate a deep knowledge of your company, industry, and/or market? Do they seek substantive answers that increase the consultant's understanding of the issues surrounding the project? Probing questions usually result in the best information about your project.

2

Evaluate the listening. Does the consultant listen actively by providing feedback in order to fully grasp the issues? Do the follow-up questions demonstrate that the consultant understands what you have said? Active listening ensures comprehension and removes misunderstandings that could adversely affect the project later on.

3

Count the options. Does the meeting provide more than just a couple of options, especially if you're not initially certain how to complete the project? Does the consultant brainstorm ideas with you and discuss the pros and cons of each? Often, the best way to tackle a project results from discovery and "out-of-the-box" thinking.

4

Forge a partnership. Does the consultant view you as a partner who will work closely with you throughout the project? In the initial consultation, do you discuss the roles of each partner? The collaborative approach paves the way for a smoother running project and sets ground rules for addressing setbacks and challenges.

5

Identify ongoing progress. Do you address how ongoing progress on the project will be reported to your staff, whether via e-mail, phone call, or virtual or face-to-face meeting? Are benchmarks established for communicating progress? Outlining these steps provides confidence that your project will be in good hands from start to finish.