



Introduction – Annaliza Apostol

CATHERINE DOLL (founder & CEO of The Gilson Group, LLC)

Catherine is an experienced financial professional with over twenty five years in public accounting and private industry. Catherine began her career in public accounting and has built an outstanding knowledge of finance and accounting, systems implementation and management and corporate governance, just to name a few areas of expertise. She is currently leading The Gilson Group in providing business accounting and informational technology consulting services providing high level, seasoned consulting to companies with special expertise in technology and life science businesses. Catherine has acted as Senior Project leader for several Sarbanes Oxley compliance projects.

Catherine has had several fascinating assignments including one for the Federated States of Micronesia, (FSM) where she was responsible for overseeing the financial complexities of transferring the FSM from a United States Territory to a sovereign nation. She started her career with Deloitte in Orange County and was one of the very first Associates at Resources Global Professionals, providing outsourced consulting services. Catherine received her B.A. in Economics with an emphasis in Accounting from the University of California Santa Barbara and is a Certified Public Accountant.

Catherine is a member of American Institute of CPAs, California Society of CPAs, WBENC (Women's Business Enterprise National Council) and is a VISTAGE Technical Advisor.

Catherine Doll
The Gilson Group, LLC.
Cal CPA 7/29 Meeting Outline

Unemployment in southern California reached 11.2% in May. The good news is that in these times companies need to outsource, which is great news for consultants.

Polling questions:

- 1 Raise your hand if you are currently a consultant?**
- 2 Raise your hand if you are interested breaking into consulting?**

Once again the questions are -

- 1 What is the best way to break into Consulting?**
- 2 When is it appropriate and how often do you check in with a recruiter?**
- 3 The key to success in both these questions is Networking**

What is the best way to break into Consulting?

I will break this question into 5 different pieces

- **Definition of becoming a consultant.**
 - **Why become a consultant?**
 - **Risks of becoming a consultant.**
 - **Who becomes a consultant?**
 - **How to become a Consultant**
- **Definition of becoming a consultant?**
 - 1. When you become a consultant, you're saying you offer skills, knowledge and expertise that businesses or other people can use. A consultant gives advice, solve problems, make recommendations, or provide specialized work such as:**
 - **Accounting Expertise**
 - **Project based consulting**
 - **Sarbanes-Oxley tools and training**
 - **Financial and SEC reporting services**

- **Information technology management**
- **IFRS implementation**

Someone who decides to become a consultant is usually paid by the hour, day or project, on commission, or based on performance. They are independent contractors and not employees of the hiring organization.

- **Why become a consultant?**

- Low cost of entry (business cards, website, computer, telephone)
- Choice of clients
- You set your rates
- Take vacations when you want
- Variety and challenge – this isn't for everybody

Risks of becoming a consultant?

- More than one boss
- No regular pay
- No administrative help, benefits and health care
- No tech support
- Work alone without the moral, creative and administrative support of co-workers

Story - Either marketing or working CPA's are not known for their sales skills! If you are working you are not marketing if you are marketing and not working. Unless of course you work during the day and market breakfast, lunch and dinner and that doesn't last long. I tried it!

- **Who becomes a consultant?**

- New grads – rare as there you have little experience intern for a CPA firm
- Career changers – experienced but want to try something new and independent
- Seasoned experts – retired with significant expertise these people often become a consultant because their old company and colleagues beg them for help.
- Life changers – new family, desire to work from home, retirees
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- **How to become a consultant?**

- Network – warm referrals are best. It is key to success in consulting
 - A list of networking organizations can be found on the website www.TheGilsonGroup.com
 - CPA firms
 - Investment banking firms

- Bankers
 - Consulting firms
 - Neighbors
 - Kids sports team parents
 - Church
- Become an expert

- **Accounting Expertise**
- **Project based consulting**
- **Sarbanes-Oxley tools and training**
- **Financial and SEC reporting services**
- **Information technology management**
- **IFRS implementation**

Practicalities of becoming a consultant

- Set up business - at minimum-
 - Licenses and insurance – check with your tax advisors and attorney on what’s best for you
 - Business cards
 - Brochure
 - Incorporate – check with your advisors
 - Website/personalized email addresses
 - Maintain certifications
 - Continue education
 - Register on Craigslist, Guru.com

Most importantly, it’s easier to maintain a current client than get new clients

There is a reason that a boomerang is the logo of the company. We always come back.

I pulled this from an excerpt from *How the Mighty Fall* by Jim Collins

- Recognize the client’s core values and fit with those values
- Be “self-motivated” and self-disciplined, compulsively driven to do the best you can do because it’s part of your DNA
- Recognize that the assignment is not a “job” it’s a responsibility
- Fulfill your commitments
- Be passionate about the client and the work
- Shine the light on others who contributed to the success.

When is it appropriate and how often do you check in with a recruiter?

Again, it's all about networking -

When you have identified recruiters with whom you would like to build a long-term relationship, it's important to follow a few best practices to get the most out of the experience.

- 1) **Respect the recruiter.** Do not send your resume to the same company that your recruiter is contacting on your behalf. It sounds obvious, but some candidates call or email the company, thinking it shows enthusiasm. But many companies will view this as unprofessional or impatient.
- 2) **Set expectations upfront.** Every recruiter is different, so you need to spell out how the process is going to work. How often should you check in with them? Do you call or email? Will the recruiter contact you if you get invited to an interview? And always let the recruiter know your other contract or job possibilities, especially if you are considering an offer.
- 3) **Limit the number of recruiters you work with to one or two.** Otherwise it could actually hinder your job search. You could wind up with too many copies of your resume floating around at the same potential employer. Or worse, if you are still in a position, word could leak out to your current employer that you are job hunting. By limiting the number to one or two recruiters, it enables you to be more discreet with your job search.
- 4) **Understand their limitations.** Recruiters have to present candidates that fit the pre-determined criteria they receive from their clients. If your background doesn't quite fit, don't waste your time and theirs trying to convince them. Just wait for the next opportunity.
- 5) **Always return a call or email from a recruiter.** You may not be interested in a new job right now, but they'll remember a courteous, professional reply and keep you in mind. Try to help recruiters by referring someone you know, too. The gesture will build good will for the future. Talk to them for five minutes; find out what they specialize in, what regions, and who their top clients are. Ask for their contact information via email and ask them to keep you in mind for future opportunities.
- 6) **Don't wait for a recruiter to call you.** Do your research, find the best recruiters, and develop a relationship with them before you need them. That way you'll be in their database and ready to begin a job hunt immediately, should your circumstances change.
- **Finally, keep in touch with your recruiters as time goes on.** Let them know how you're progressing in your current job, even if you have no plans to change. The relationships you establish and cultivate with top recruiters can play a significant role in your landing your next consulting job.

Conclusion

Once again, the key to success in both these questions is networking

I have seen countless examples of employees that are comfortable with their jobs drop their connections and network. If circumstances change they have to start from scratch in building a network. This could add months to either a consulting assignment or a job!

You can find a short list of networking organizations and a copy of this presentation on our website www.TheGilsonGroup.com. **If you supply me with a business card I will send you the link to the website.**