

The

FUTURE OF CONSULTING



How to Turn Today's Opportunities
Into Tomorrow's Business Advantage

Future of Consulting: How to Turn Today's Opportunities Into Tomorrow's Business Advantage

By Michael Zipursky

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It was early 2020. Everything was going according to plan for Jim Huffman and GrowthHit, his marketing consulting agency.

He had finally “replaced himself” and built a team to handle operations.

He was about to make a few more key hires. The firm was well on pace to hit 7-figures.

And then, COVID-19 hit.

Jim received an email from a client:

“We’re going to need to pause our account.”

At first, he thought it was no big deal. He still had plenty of clients on retainer.

Shortly after, he received 6 more emails of the same type.

Within 2 days, half a million dollars in business evaporated.

And things only got *worse* for Jim.

He tested positive for COVID-19 while traveling for work.

Then his wife and their two young daughters got it too.

His health, the health of his family, and his business were on a downward spiral.

Desperate to come up with a solution, Jim ran the numbers on what it would take for his business to survive.

“At first, it’s denial. It’s like, “That’s only a couple.” You’re then helpless. I thought, “This is going to be everybody.” I was able to default to a game of math and numbers. By this point, we’ve lost half of our business. How are we looking on burn rate? How are we looking at monthly revenue?” I was trying to figure out the numbers of how we were doing from a sustainability standpoint with our business.”

At the end of this report, you'll learn how Jim turned his year around — and how he saved his consulting business.

I begin with this story because it contains many lessons about how COVID-19 has changed the consulting industry *forever*. Or, as some would say, accelerated the inevitable.

COVID-19 and the pandemic created tremendous uncertainty for consultants.

Many of our consulting clients were in similar spots to Jim.

In Q2 of 2020, we published a book called *ACT NOW: How Successful Consultants Thrive During Chaos and Uncertainty* to help consultants take action and prevent the pandemic from sinking their business.

Now, with *The Future of Consulting*, we're switching gears.

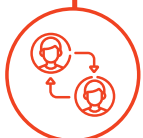
Your consulting business has survived the pandemic.

It's time for you to prepare for what comes next.

Here are the questions we pondered — and asked leading consultants around the world (whose answers are featured in this book):



What changes have you made to your business since COVID started?



How have your interactions with clients changed over the last 12 months?



Are there any specific tools or technology that you believe will have a big impact on how business is conducted in the future?



When you think about the future of marketing, business development, branding, and sales what big shifts or changes do you feel will occur (or are already happening)?



If you had to put your futurist hat on and project what the business of advice, consulting, and coaching will look like in 5 and 10 years from today...what do you predict will be different?



When you think about that future, what changes do you think you'll make to your business model, team, services, or the structure of how you work?



When you think about the future of consulting is there anything you believe consultants should know about or at least consider?

By the end of this report, you'll have a clear picture of what the future of consulting will bring — and have specific actions you can take to benefit now and prepare for the future.

Run your consulting business like you did pre-pandemic, and it will almost certainly face a bumpy ride at best — and at worst, be doomed to failure.

But if you “ride the wave” and embrace these changes, you can earn more revenue, do better work, and enjoy a level of freedom greater than you've ever had before.

The Online Acceleration

Today, when you're going to speak with a client, what do you use?

You use Zoom.

When you're looking for a service provider, how do you begin your search?

With Google.

If you're delivering a consulting service for your client, how do you do it most often (and are likely to in the future)?

Remotely.

COVID-19 has made one thing clear: we are in the midst of a *sweeping* digital transformation. No industry is safe.

According to [a 2020 McKinsey¹ article written by Arnau Bages-Amat, Liz Harrison, Dennis Spillecke, and Jennifer Stanley, digital is the future of B2B services.](#) Over three-quarters of buyers and sellers say they now prefer digital self-serve and remote human engagement over face-to-face interactions.

And this sentiment has only intensified after lockdowns.

But are B2B buyers willing to buy five or six-figure consulting services online?

Yes, but keep in mind this doesn't mean without a conversation with a human.

70% of B2B decision-makers say they are open to making remote purchases of \$50,000. And 27% would spend more than \$500,000.

Before COVID-19, Dorie Clark, author and executive education professor at Duke, was earning a solid 6-figures from keynote speaking.

Now, much of her consulting business has migrated online. She's doing more webinars than ever before.

The same goes for Sydney-based author and consultant Oscar Trimboli:

1 [These eight charts show how COVID-19 has changed B2B sales forever: https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/these-eight-charts-show-how-covid-19-has-changed-b2b-sales-forever#](https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/these-eight-charts-show-how-covid-19-has-changed-b2b-sales-forever#)

"My face-to-face workshops have adapted. Some have been canceled completely, some rescheduled, and some reimaged as an online experience."

Digital or not, clients are still seeking — and willing to invest in — experts who can help solve their problems and achieve results.

But how does one prove they are an expert in a digital world?

The rise of online learning provides us with many clues.

The Rise of Online Learning

In February of 2020, Nadya Zhexembayeva, author, educator, and consulting business owner, launched her first online course.

She had invested a lot of time, effort, and money into the program.

And it flopped. Hard.

Very few people bought it, and she lost a lot of money.

Nadya was devastated.

The course teaches how to reinvent your company during difficult periods. People did not need it at the time.

In March of 2020, everything changed.

People's businesses were now struggling to survive. They were losing their livelihoods.

Thus, COVID-19 caused the demand for her course to skyrocket.

They couldn't hire Nadya to come and help them in-person, so they invested in her course.

By the end of 2020, Nadya's consulting business grew by 500%. She credits this growth to her course.

“There will be constant evolution and constant disruption, so we need to learn how to live in it,” Nadya says.

Offering online learning is one of the many ways consultants are evolving their business.

Have you ever learned how to do something by watching a YouTube video?

Or, have you recently learned a new skill by investing in an online course?

Due to COVID-19, the online course industry is booming.

According to a [Thinkific](#)² article by Jenny Scribani, the pandemic resulted in a 221% surge in new course creation.

In a 2019 article, [Global Market Insights](#)³ reported that the eLearning market will surpass \$300 billion by 2025.

And according to [Supplygem](#)⁴, 93% of companies say they plan to adopt online learning.

For Dorie Clark, online courses have become a major driver of revenue for her consulting business.

The same goes for Oscar Trimboli, who recently launched an online course that generated sales from corporate buyers. As an added benefit, Oscar’s course has helped create recurring revenue.

Steven Morris, branding and culture consultant, has also begun creating his course:

2 The Impact Of COVID-19 On The Online Course Industry: <https://www.thinkific.com/blog/online-course-industry-trends-covid-19/>

3 E-Learning Market to surpass \$300bn by 2025: <https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2019/03/06/1748554/0/en/E-Learning-Market-to-surpass-300bn-by-2025-Global-Market-Insights-Inc.html>

4 50+ eLearning & Digital Education Statistics (2021): <https://supplygem.com/elearning-digital-education-statistics/>

"I'd like to shift into the ability to deliver one-to-many, in addition to my high-touch, high-ticket consulting work. This means systems thinking in courses and digital marketing — completely different than thought leadership-driven marketing."

Our online learning program for consultants, Momentum, has been a significant addition to our business.

For consultants, there is a massive opportunity to take advantage of the booming online learning market.

Who better to teach courses than experts in their field?

Building a course allows you to demonstrate your expertise, provide value to your clients — *and* generate revenue for your consulting business.

Software like Teachable, Thinkific, Udemy, and many more, have made it easy for consultants to build and sell digital courses.

Online learning allows your clients to learn from you around the world — another change that one must adapt to.

Remote Work Is Now The Norm

The pandemic caused governments around the world to implement lockdowns, which forced many companies to allow their employees to work from home.

In May of 2020, Shopify announced that it was now a digital-by-default company, meaning most employees would work remotely permanently.

"Office centricity is over," claimed Tobi Lütke, CEO of Shopify.

Companies like Facebook and Twitter followed suit: allowing their employees to work from home forever if they choose.

Many technology companies had been allowing and encouraging remote work for years.

But for other industries, there was immense uncertainty about remote work.

Would employees be productive working from home?

Would they enjoy it?

How will it affect the company?

After a year, the data is in: remote work and working from home is here to stay. And people are thrilled about it.

According to an article by Buffer & AngelList⁵, 98% of respondents reported wanting to be full-time remote employees post-pandemic.

With fewer interruptions, more focused time, and a quieter work environment, working from home has improved employee performance.

As soon as the pandemic hit, business coach and consultant Jonathan Stark shredded all of his optional business expenses — including his office.

However, Jonathan discovered that he prefers working from home. He says he “would never go back to working from an office.” Everything he does in his business is remote or online.

In a survey with Mental Health America⁶, researchers found that flexible work leads to better mental health: *“employees without access to flexible work are nearly two times more likely to have poor or very poor mental health.”*

What does this mean for you, the consultant?

First, forget about the notion that you can only provide value to your clients in-person.

Your clients want results, whether that comes from you being in the room with them or on the other side of the world.

Second, do not discount your fees for your remote consulting services just because they are done remotely.

5 The 2020 State of Remote Work: <https://lp.buffer.com/state-of-remote-work-2020>

6 FlexJobs, Mental Health America Survey: Those With Flexible Work Report Better Mental Health: <https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/flexjobs-mha-survey-flexible-work-improves-mental-health/>

If you are like most, you're more productive working remotely and that increase in productivity leads to creating greater value for your clients. Thus, discounting your fees because you're working remotely is contradictory.

Third, as David Jenyns, author of Systemology and serial business owner says, you can expect a new wave of consultants.

As people begin working from home, they're much more inclined to explore freelance/independent consulting.

For you, that means an increasing amount of competition.

In this report, we'll teach you how to stand out in this crowded digital marketplace. But first, you must adapt to the fact that top talent is now available worldwide.

Unlocking Top Talent

The internet began to dissolve borders way before the pandemic.

In 2021, this trend of globalization has accelerated.

With employees working from home, companies are now sourcing talent from around the world.

If you're a fully-remote, decentralized company, it does not matter where your employees live. In fact, the more dispersed your employees, the better it is for your business.

Take Automattic, for example: a company with over 1000 employees in 79 different countries, speaking 100 different languages.

If you want to hire an expert, you're no longer limited by your personal network or geographical proximity.

Whether it's freelancers, teachers, mentors, coaches, advisors, or consultants, the internet has made it easy to work with anyone you'd like.

However, keep in mind that there are no barriers to entry in independent consulting. Anybody can claim they are an expert. Some might even look the part (despite having no results to show for it).

But if you are a legitimate expert who can achieve results for your clients, demonstrate said results to potential clients, and establish a powerful personal brand, you'll reap the rewards of this global marketplace.

Here's what Dorie Clark has to say about the global marketplace — and what it means for consultants:

"I think that a trend that has been accelerating, but which will continue to accelerate, is actually about a hollowing out of the middle, and an increase in both the high-end and low-end.

And what I mean by that is in-person engagements from people with very strong brands are going to become more valuable in the post-COVID world.

People have been cooped up for a year, they've been reading, they've been watching videos, they've been consuming information, and there's a real hunger to connect in person.

I think there's an increased recognition that number 1, the bar has to be higher for people to be willing to get on the plane or come together. It's not a standard thing anymore. It's a special thing.

Number 2, it means more for people to connect with people that are already familiar to them; celebrities in their field. It becomes more and more important for people to develop a strong personal brand."

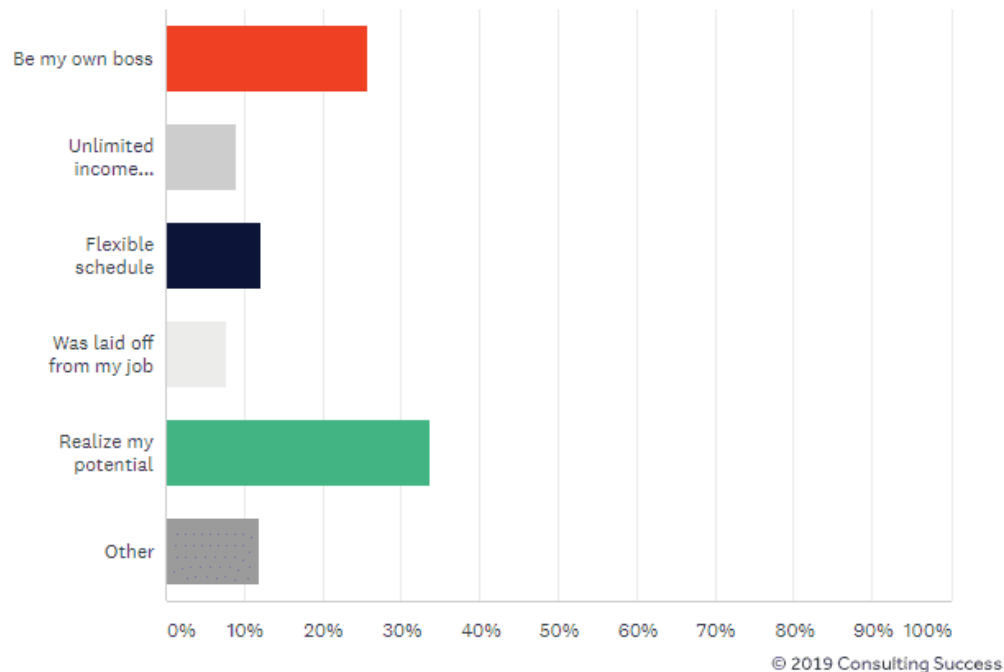
Armed with legitimate expertise and a compelling personal brand, your consulting business will thrive *especially* in a crowded digital marketplace.

And a thriving, location-independent consulting business means you'll be able to live a lifestyle with much more freedom and flexibility.

For the adventurous, it's the "digital nomad" lifestyle.

Digital Nomad Lifestyle

Here are the top reasons why people become consultants according to our most recent [Marketing for Consultants Study](#)⁷:



“Be my own Boss” and “flexible schedule” are among the top reasons why people become consultants.

As a consultant, you *are* your own boss. You create a flexible schedule that works best for you.

For a growing number of independent workers, “flexibility” is not just about how you use time. It means the ability to work from anywhere in the world.

A “digital nomad” is a remote worker who travels and works from different locations. Given remote work’s acceleration, the number of digital nomads is growing fast.

7 Marketing for Consultants Study (2019): <https://www.consultingsuccess.com/marketing-for-consultants-study>

According to [MBO Partner's 2020 State of Independence Research study](#)⁸, 10.9 million American workers describe themselves as digital nomads. That's a 49% increase from last year.

In 2020, the number of traditional workers working as digital nomads exploded by 96%.

Here's a breakdown of the fields that digital nomads work in according to the study:



Other fields were represented fairly equally.

Consultants, coaches, and researchers are among the top 3 fields that digital nomads are working in.

What does this tell you about the nature of consulting?

You can run a consulting business using the internet and various digital tools.

As a digital nomad, you can enjoy traveling while you work.

That's the beauty of the consulting business. And although it might be difficult to travel for some during Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions,

⁸ COVID-19 and the Rise of the Digital Nomad: <https://www.mbopartners.com/state-of-independence/2020-digital-nomads-report/>

the rise of remote work will inevitably lead to more digital nomads taking advantage of the fact that they can work anywhere in the world.

What kind of lifestyle do you want?

How can you use your business to create that lifestyle?

Those are two fundamental questions to ask yourself about your consulting business.

You are no longer limited by geography because you can create the same level of value (if not more) for your clients remotely.

Remote Consulting: Greater Results For Your Clients

In 2020, I spoke with many consultants who lowered their consulting fees.

They lowered their fees because they were consulting remotely instead of consulting on-site.

I told them to stop lowering their fees.

Clients aren't paying for your physical presence. They are paying you for the results and outcomes you create for them.

Before the pandemic, Dorie Clark did half-day strategy sessions with her clients in-person.

Once travel became restricted, she offered these sessions virtually, which created unexpected improvements.

"I wasn't sure how it would be at first when I started, but one advantage is that you can easily record the session so the client can refer to it afterward.

Another is that it becomes far easier and more accessible to people around the world.

Last week, I just did one with someone from Hong Kong. And of course, it would have been pretty burdensome for her to come to New York City. So being able to do it this way really opened up an opportunity to serve new people."

For Oscar Trimboli, the pandemic has opened up a world of remote work opportunities for his business:

"COVID-19 has expanded my geographic reach. Clients who I quoted travel for other continents have been very open to online delivery. This has resulted in projects in Canada, United States, United Kingdom which I never would have been able to access pre-COVID-19."

In this chapter, I'll challenge the idea that in-person consulting, by default, is more valuable than remote consulting

If you can deliver the same results and outcomes without being onsite, then do not reduce your fees.

The Challenges of In-Person Work

The first challenge of in-person work is travel.

Business travel and consulting go hand-in-hand. Before the pandemic, traveling to visit your clients on-site was a common way to deliver your consulting services.

According to [an article in Harvard Business Review](#)⁹ by Andrew Rundle, there is a strong correlation between the frequency of business travel and poor health.

“Compared to those who spent one to six nights a month away from home for business travel, those who spent 14 or more nights away from home per month had significantly higher body mass index scores and were significantly more likely to report the following:”

- *Poor self-rated health*
- *Clinical symptoms of anxiety*
- *Depression and alcohol dependence*
- *No physical activity or exercise*
- *Smoking*
- *Trouble sleeping*

The odds of being obese were 92% higher for those who traveled 21 or more nights per month compared to those who traveled only one to six nights per month, and this ultra-traveling group also had higher diastolic blood pressure and lower high-density lipoprotein (the good cholesterol).”

⁹ Just How Bad Is Business Travel for Your Health? Here's the Data: <https://hbr.org/2018/05/just-how-bad-is-business-travel-for-your-health-heres-the-data>

When you can't travel to see your clients, there's a good chance your health will improve as a result.

The second challenge of in-person work is logistics: getting people together.

Think about the amount of coordination required to host an in-person meeting with your clients.

At least one party has to travel. Both of you have to adjust your (busy) schedules. Add more people, and the complexity increases.

This makes it an inefficient way to deliver your consulting service.

Jonathan Stark shares his experience trying out an in-person workshop with his clients — and why he wouldn't go back to it:

"In 2018, I started an in-person workshop to experiment what it would be like to have a group of people in-person, around a table, working on a particular outcome over the course of two days.

It was fun and experimental. I liked it. But for a variety of reasons I wouldn't go back to it even when we can. It doesn't scale well at all and it's extremely inefficient.

The third challenge of in-person work is helping clients with implementation.

After you do an in-person workshop with your client, excitement is high.

But the next day, the excitement drops. You've left. Now, it's on the client and their team to implement.

The day after that, other priorities come up. The excitement declines further.

Weeks later, the client does not fully implement what you taught or trained them to do.

If you deliver an in-person workshop or training and then step away and expect the client to handle implementation themselves, you're asking too much of them. Other priorities will come up and take their attention away.

Successful training and implementation is about supporting your client on an on-going basis.

In the digital economy, where everyone is easily-connected, remote, and mobile, it's easier to support your clients with implementation as an advisor.

It's easy for you to set up a quick Zoom call, send a few emails, or provide some follow-up video training. Many of your clients will appreciate it.

By providing on-going support after you've given a workshop or training, you can help your clients get the results they want. And you create the opportunity to earn recurring revenue through a monthly retainer to support implementation.

In-person work will come back. But remote work, for many consultants, is a better solution.

The Value of Remote Consulting

One could argue that remote consulting is MORE valuable than in-person work — for both you and your clients:



Your clients don't need to pay you to travel, reducing their expenses



Busy executives can schedule a video call with you without shifting their and their team's schedule around to meet you in person



You can communicate asynchronously, saving everybody time and helping you focus on the work



Your overall health and wellness are improved because you're spending less time traveling

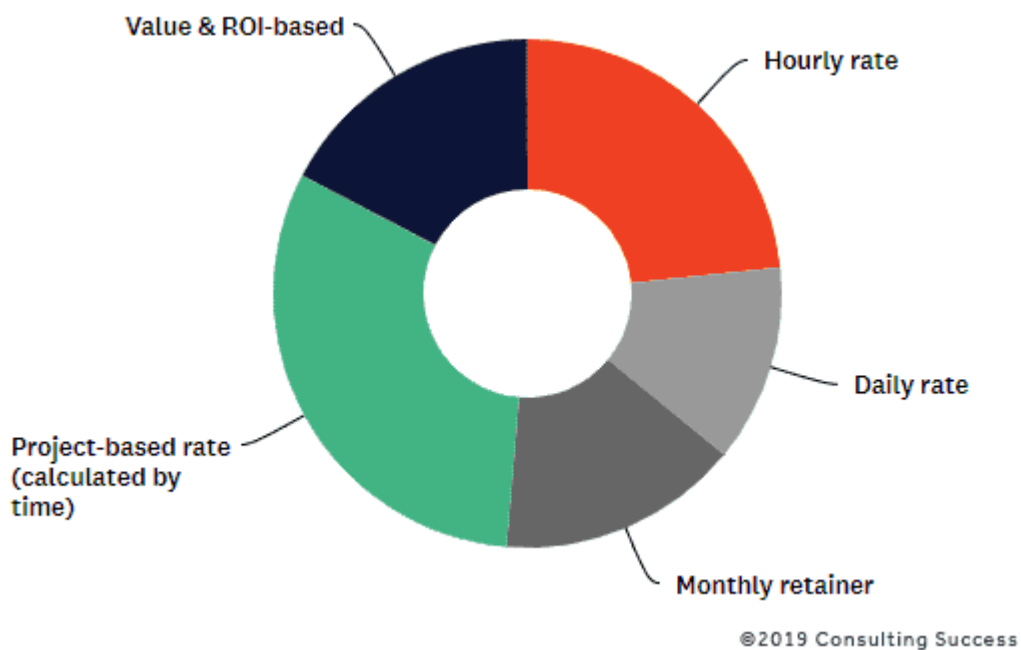
With remote consulting on the rise, it's more important than ever for consultants to learn how to charge appropriately for the value they bring.

Given current travel restrictions, it's more difficult to charge for your physical presence.

But why would you charge for your physical presence in the first place?

It's like charging for your time or by the project — charging based on inputs instead of results.

According to our [2019 Consulting Fees Study](#)¹⁰, over 50% of consultants use either an hourly rate or a project-based rate.



These methods aren't inherently bad. However, they follow faulty logic.

Your client doesn't benefit from your time or your deliverables. Nor do they usually benefit from your physical presence.

¹⁰ [Consulting Fees Guide: How Much To Charge For Consulting \(3 Formulas & Examples\)](https://www.consultingsuccess.com/consulting-fees): <https://www.consultingsuccess.com/consulting-fees>

They benefit from the results and outcomes you can create for them.

Again, if you can create the same amount of value for your clients remotely, then you should not discount the fee on your remote consulting services.

This is why authority-building and personal branding have become more important. Clients must believe you can deliver results remotely. If you're "just another consultant," you'll have a tough time commanding higher fees for remote consulting services.

How Consultants Are Delivering More Value Remotely

Many have found that remote consulting is superior to in-person consulting for on-going support and delivering a lasting transformation.

It's easier to keep up with clients around the world using Zoom, email, and other digital tools compared to traveling back and forth to a client for implementation.

Now, it's feasible to empower and enable your clients to implement with a mixture of "done with you" and "do it yourself."

Oscar Trimboli shares how remote consulting has affected his service delivery and what his clients expect:

"Clients appreciate the value of pre & post-event tools such as assessment and embedding methodologies."

"People are expecting experiences rather than events. Connected experiences - before, during, and after they work with you live. Clients are looking for people who can help sustain and accelerate change and its impact."

Oscar has also been using digital tools to increase the value he can create for his clients:

“Based on feedback from our audience of newsletter subscribers, book readers, and podcast listeners they requested regular webinars and live Q&As and we implemented monthly community online workshops to be helpful which increased their engagement.”

Since most communication now happens online, David Jenyns has made improvements to his service delivery:

- He's brought on an assistant to help with customer support.
- He's using Intercom so that his team can easily chat with clients who need on-demand support.
- He's built an onboarding system to integrate his clients into his software, methodologies, and community.

All of this has added tremendous value to his business and makes his client's lives easier.

Consultant Steven Morris has been using integrations on Zoom to increase the value of his services to clients, using applications like [Ottr.ai](#) to capture transcripts for meetings, integrations for whiteboards, breakout rooms, and more.

There are many tools available to help you create more value for your clients. And as I'll talk about next, these tools create a tremendous advantage for you and your consulting business: *leverage*.

Creating Leverage To Scale Your Business

There are many digital tools you can use to create tremendous value for your clients...but what can they do for your consulting business?

How can they change and improve your business model — leading to greater profitability, more efficiency, and remove you as the bottleneck?

I asked Jeff Gothelf, author, speaker, and digital transformation consultant based in Barcelona about consultants who are “breaking the mold”...

Here’s what he said:

“In the UX field, there’s a guy named Joe Natoli. Joe has become well-known. But up until a few years ago, not many people had heard of him. Joe is the best-selling UX course designer on Udemy, by far. Tens of thousands — if not hundreds of thousands of students — have gone through his courses. And they’re great. And Joe has built an entire business on top of Udemy primarily training people on UX.

“What’s interesting too is that Joe’s public persona is now growing and becoming bigger. But it wasn’t always that way. The way that he did it was he took a popular topic in an underserved community — Udemy did not have a lot of great UX content. And he made a great UX consulting course on Udemy. And he’s built a great consulting business on top of that — plus the passive recurring revenue that comes from having an online course.”

This example demonstrates how you can combine your expertise with digital tools to create infinite leverage and truly scale your consulting business in a way that you simply could not do 10 or 20 years ago.

In this chapter, I’ll discuss how you can apply these principles and create leverage to scale your consulting business.

Increasing Your Profitability

One of our clients in Germany, Martin, provides management and strategy consulting services for his clients.

Before the pandemic, his engagements required traveling to visit his clients on-site.

For 2-4 hours per day, Martin was in his car, traveling to and from his client's offices.

Once the lockdowns started, he was no longer able to drive to his client's offices. He was forced to work from home.

Because he no longer had to spend so much time driving, he was able to get much more done every day.

He's now fully-booked with consulting work. Most of it he's able to do at his home office.

Not only has he cut down on his time driving, but he also has...

- Been able to take on additional projects
- Gained energy by not having to commute
- Created more time to spend on profit-driving activities like marketing and sales

If you're offering remote consulting services, you no longer have to spend time traveling. This leads to an instant increase in profitability because...

- You aren't spending time traveling
- You aren't spending money traveling
- You can do more revenue-generating work

...making each of your projects more profitable.

By taking on projects with a better profit margin, you're able to grow your consulting business profitably faster and easier than before.

Here's another example from our own business.

We run online consulting workshops for our clients. Previously, we would have rented a conference room at a hotel and invited people to attend.

Now, we host these workshops online.

Today, whenever we run a workshop, we no longer have the expense of travel, booking a conference room, and all of the other costs that go into hosting an in-person workshop.

Before the pandemic, many B2B buyers just weren't ready to invest in remote consulting services delivered through videoconferencing.

According to [a recent report by McKinsey](#)¹¹, eCommerce and videoconferencing now account for 43% of all B2B revenue. That is more than any other channel.

Make no mistake: working in-person with your clients is incredibly valuable. But it does not create leverage or help you scale. Working remotely has opened up a new realm of possibilities for consultants who want to scale.

Remote consulting not only creates more value for your clients — but also increases your profitability. Add productization into the mix, and it only makes remote consulting even *more* valuable.

Record & Reuse: Productize Your Offers

Before the pandemic, Jeff Gothelf's typical consulting projects were training programs for organizations.

As a B2B consultant, he was doing high-cost, high-touch sales to sell these projects.

Although these types of projects can be profitable, they are challenging to “re-use” once they are done. Due to their level of customization, they are difficult to sell, require a lot of your time, and aren't scalable.

When he was no longer able to deliver these projects in person, Jeff decided to run an experiment.

11 These eight charts show how COVID-19 has changed B2B sales forever: <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/these-eight-charts-show-how-covid-19-has-changed-b2b-sales-forever#>

"One of the main things that I do is high-cost, high-touch B2B sales. I'm running an experiment right now where I'm selling a 90-minute, \$90 masterclass publicly on objectives and key results. I made it clear and said "This is an experiment — and if I don't get 100 people to buy tickets to this class, I'm not holding the event. So if you want this event to happen, buy a ticket and tell a friend. I've sold 122 tickets."

"I was scared, so I gave myself seven weeks to promote it. We had 100 sales in 10 days. It could be lead-gen for bigger consulting work. But if at the end of the day I'm making 10-grand for 90 minutes of my time and I can repurpose that class and do it once a month, that's great. And the next step is then can I make this a self-serve thing where I don't even need to be there."

"All of this is reducing the amount of time that I'm working, maintaining at least a similar level of income — so that I can free up time to do things I really want to do. "

So, what exactly has Jeff done to make this shift?



He's packaged what he knows into a workshop, teaching general principles that his audience can take and "DIY" in their business



He's creating intellectual property that he can use to generate leads by teaching what he knows



He's creating leverage by shifting from serving one-to-one to one-to-many



And despite being in new territory, he's willing to experiment and try something new.

Now, he's created a new offer where he'll generate 5-figures for 90 minutes of his time — and open up future opportunities for higher-fee consulting business. Eventually, he can even turn these workshops into a self-serve course.

If you let them, constraints, like the ones caused by the pandemic, force you to experiment. And sometimes, these experiments win.

Before you fight these constraints, ask yourself: “How can I use this constraint to my advantage? What could I create that fits within these constraints?”

Providing one-to-one, done-for-you consulting services is only one way to create value for your clients.

In the future of consulting, you'll find many consultants using other ways to “productize themselves” and create leverage in their business: serving more people, generating more revenue, and removing themselves as the bottleneck.

Your Global Audience

As a consultant, you're no longer limited by your location. Many consultants, like the ones featured in this book, are serving clients around the world.

But how does one get these clients in the first place?

If you aren't meeting these clients at conferences or networking events, where are you finding them?

In 2021, the better question is this: how are they finding you?

If you're serving a global market, you can now build a global *audience* as well.

One of the most important benefits of sharing your expertise, developing intellectual property, and becoming a thought leader is that you'll build a worldwide following of people who know you, like you, and trust you.

Having published content for consultants for over a decade, we have readers from every continent. Our Clarity Coaching Program community has members from dozens of countries. The diversity of thinking, expertise, and experiences enriches everyone involved in the community.

The power of reaching a global audience and building your own community is something Jonathan Stark thinks is vital for your success as a consultant in the future:

"I think you'll see more communities. And I don't just mean in 2020 — I think people are increasingly working remotely, they are starving for connection, they're overwhelmed with information, they don't know what tactics to do or not do, and they're disconnected from people.

It functions like marketing, but I think creating communities will be the marketing of the future. Communities create word-of-mouth on steroids. I think creating specific communities of practice, where people can connect and support each other, if you're leading something like that it's going to do your marketing for you.

Taking a leadership role and connecting the people who are following you with each other — that's the move.

"The ones that do and execute against that strategy — they have an extremely high percentage of success. Others resist it because it is risky. And it is risky. You could pick the wrong thing. You could not be ready. You might not have the skills. You might not have the expertise.

It can be a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy if you aren't ready to stick your head above the crowd, stand above the herd, and perhaps attract some sticks and stones coming your way — if some sticks and stones are going to bother you, then it's going to be a hard path. But if you can deal with some sticks and stones, it has a really high success rate."

Whether it's through a Facebook group, a private forum, or a Slack chat there are many tools you can use to become a leader of your own tribe.

Jono Bacon, consultant and author of *People Powered: How Communities Can Supercharge Your Business, Brand, and Teams* can vouch for the impact this strategy can have.

All of his consulting business comes through his global audience and the communities he has joined.

According to Jono, communities are one of the most important assets you can create for your business:

“Communities are changing the way people engage with brands, teams, products, and businesses. Salesforce, Fitbit, and Sephora have brought 1 million+ customers together to provide support and run events. Harley Davidson have over 1700 local chapters to share knowledge and experience. Star Citizen used Kickstarter to raise over \$150 million to build their new video game and a community of over 2 million players. PayPal, Bosch, Microsoft, and CapitalOne have all created powerful internal communities inside their organizations to foster innovation, break down silos, and go faster.”

Building your own community also helps you combat the loneliness associated with remote work and running your own business — factors which we’ll take a look at in the next chapter.

Beware The Downsides Of Remote Work (And How To Overcome Them)

Although running your own consulting business and remote work comes with many benefits, they do have their downsides.

According to a recent article by [Forbes by Chris Westfall](#)¹²:



4 out of 5 workers find it hard to “shut off” in the evenings



97% say that vacation days while working from home are important for “recharging” — another way of saying “mental health”

12 Mental Health And Remote Work: Survey Reveals 80% Of Workers Would Quit Their Jobs For This: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/chriswestfall/2020/10/08/mental-health-leadership-survey-reveals-80-of-remote-workers-would-quit-their-jobs-for-this/?sh=48d1d2903a0f>



Half of the respondents cite that their sleep patterns have been interrupted due to COVID-19, and 45% say they feel less healthy mentally while working from home

As a business owner, you don't have the luxury of an HR department or your colleague down the hall to help with your mental health. It's something you'll have to take responsibility for and take seriously. Both your mental and physical health have major implications for your performance.

In this chapter, I'll dive deeper into some of the mental health issues facing entrepreneurs, remote workers, and independent consultants. And I'll provide you with strategies to overcome them.

Mental Health & Mindset

According to [MentalHealth.gov](https://www.mentalhealth.gov)¹³, "mental health" is defined as:

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

Here are some of the common warning signs that you might be suffering from a mental health problem:

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people and usual activities
- Having low or no energy
- Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared
- Inability to perform daily tasks like taking care of your kids or getting to work or school

13 What Is Mental Health?: <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/what-is-mental-health>

Working on your mental health will help you become more productive, handle the stress of entrepreneurship, and help you realize your full potential.

So, what can you do to manage and improve your mental health?

Outside of focusing on your physical health and sense of belonging (covered in the next few sections), one of the most important things is working on your *mindset*.

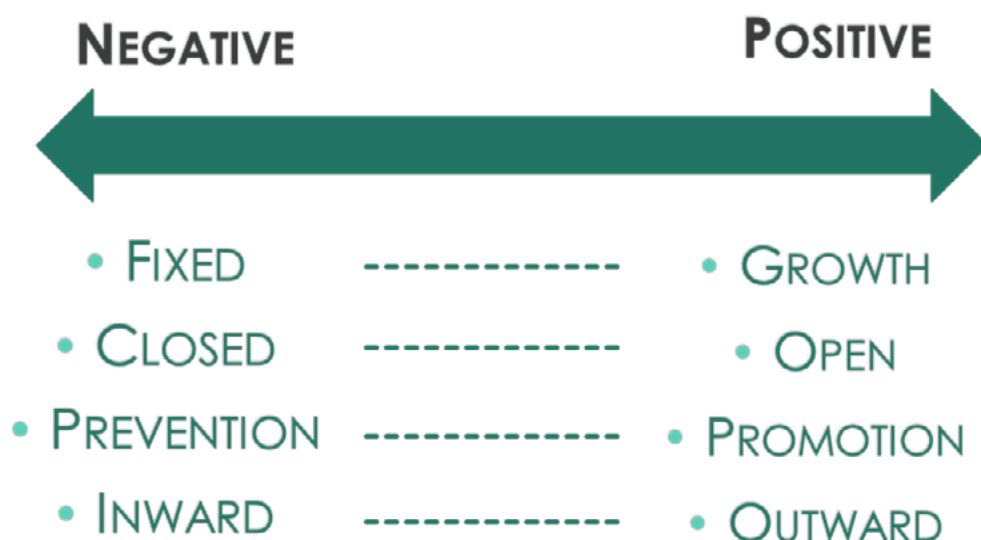
Dr. Ryan Gottfredson — leadership researcher and consultant — describes mindset as follows:

“Our mindsets are the mental lenses we use to view the world. They shape and drive our ability to think, learn, and behave in the most effective ways.

As such, they are foundational to our life success, work success, and leadership success. Thus, if we can improve our mindsets, we can improve our life, work, and leadership.”

Your self-talk — what you say to yourself — plays a major role in your mental health. The good news is that you can exercise some control over that self-talk, how you think, and the decisions you make.

If you want to improve your mindset, use Ryan’s success mindsets model:



Instead of a fixed mindset where you don't believe you can develop your abilities, talents, or intelligence, choose a growth mindset, where you believe you *can* develop your abilities, talents, and intelligence.

Instead of a closed mindset where you aren't receptive to other people's ideas, choose an open mindset where you *are* receptive to other people's ideas.

Instead of a prevention mindset where you are focused on avoiding problems, choose a promotion mindset where you focus more on winning and achieving goals.

Instead of an inward mindset where you focus more on yourself and see others as objects, choose an outward mindset where you focus more on others and see them as people.

The beauty of mindset work is that you can decide how you think. Once you are conscious of better ways to think, you can choose to think that way.

It might not be easy if you've been stuck in harmful thinking patterns for years. But, if you make the conscious effort to adopt the 4 success mindsets, your mental health will almost always improve.

The Power Of Connection

Entrepreneurship is a lonely, difficult journey.

Instead of working with co-workers at an office, you're working at home by yourself.

Although you might be more productive working by yourself, it's hard to feel the sense of community and connectedness you do at a company.

Your social life has likely taken a hit since you've become an entrepreneur as well.

Loneliness is not something that you can just ignore or push through. It's linked to...

- Depression
- Poor sleep quality

- Impaired function
- Cognitive decline
- Poor sleep quality
- Impaired immunity
- Poor cardiovascular health

Suffering from these symptoms will affect your success.

For many, the pandemic and isolation increased their feeling of loneliness. According to [a 2020 report](#) by Cigna¹⁴, 2/3 of Americans said that they are lonely.

What are the best ways to combat loneliness in an age of lockdowns, social distancing, and remote work?

Again, we stress the importance of community — finding a group (or groups) to join and belong to.

In our 2019 Health & Wellness Study For Consultants, we examined the effect that one's social life had on mental health. Here's what we found.

"Twice as many consultants who see their friends and family feel very content with their lives compared to those who rarely see their friends and family. We observed that time spent with friends and family was positively correlated with higher levels of motivation, healthier eating, and a stronger peer support group."

Although it may be difficult to see friends and family in person right now, there are effective ways to socialize and connect with people using technology.

A 2020 research report conducted by Facebook and The Governance Lab, "The Power of Virtual Communities," found that online communities play a significant role in people's lives.

¹⁴ Loneliness is at Epidemic Levels in America: <https://www.cigna.com/about-us/newsroom/studies-and-reports/combating-loneliness/>

"In the survey, about a thousand respondents in each of 15 countries were asked whether the most important group they belonged to operated primarily online or offline, or in both those spaces. In 11 out of 15 countries, the largest proportion of respondents reported their most important group as primarily online, and in three of those countries that proportion was 50% or more of respondents."

The consultants in our Clarity Coaching Program have found our community invaluable during the pandemic.

With weekly group sessions, online Mastermind events, and ongoing forum discussions, we can connect, teach, and help each other on an on-going basis. The community we've built is one of the things I'm most proud of.

Remember this: as an independent consultant working remotely by yourself, you don't have to go at it alone.

Join an online community based on your interests. No matter who you are or what you're interested in, chances are there's a community of like-minded people out there. Being a part of a community is one of the best things you can do for your mental health — and thus, your consulting business.

Back To The Basics

Sleep, exercise, and diet.

What do these 3 health & wellness-related topics have to do with the future of consulting?

More than you think.

Failing to get at least 7-8 hours of sleep **impacts every part of your mental and physical health**. According to an article by Healthline¹⁵, lack of sleep will put you at risk of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, memory issues, mood swings, high blood pressure, and many more.

15 The Effects Of Sleep Deprivation On Your Body: <https://www.healthline.com/health/sleep-deprivation/effects-on-body>

Physical inactivity is **just as dangerous**. According to an article by the CDC¹⁶ on the lack of physical activity, not exercising adequately (at least 150 minutes per week) leads to increased risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, lower sleep quality, and more.

Finally, an unhealthy diet can lead to a **host of health issues and chronic diseases**. According to another article by Harvard Health Publishing¹⁷ on poor nutrition, an unhealthy diet increases your chance of obesity, stroke, type 2 diabetes, cancer, and more.

Sleep, exercise, and diet are all related. Fail to account for one, and it will affect all of the others. You cannot afford poor sleep, inadequate exercise, or an unhealthy diet if you want to perform at the top of your game.

In our 2019 Health & Wellness Study for consultants, one of our primary discoveries was this:

The better you take care of your health, the better you'll perform in your business.

For example...

- Fitness plays a large role in one's overall health. Consultants who consider themselves to be in good shape reported vastly higher levels of motivation and higher levels of contentment with their business and personal lives.
- A "very healthy" diet makes a big difference even compared to a "moderately healthy" diet. Consultants with a very healthy diet tend to be in much better shape, sleep more, feel depressed less frequently, and feel more motivated.
- Consultants who meditate every day are much more likely to feel motivated every day (35%). Compared to consultants who rarely meditate: only 13% of them feel motivated every day.
- Consultants who rarely drink are much more frequently motivated and feel more content with their business and personal lives compared to those who drink a few times a week.

16 Lack of Physical Activity: <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/factsheets/physical-activity.htm>

17 The high cost of a poor diet: <http://health.harvard.edu/heart-health/the-high-cost-of-a-poor-diet>

- 40% of consultants who take a quarterly vacation said they are “Very Content” with their lives — compared to only 11% who rarely take vacations

No new business tactic or strategy will compensate for failing to take care of your physical and mental well-being. If you’ve been neglecting this area, now is the time to start taking it seriously.

We hope that you’re excited about what the future of consulting will bring. But it’s critical to take care of the basics before anything else.

Eat right, sleep well, exercise daily, and spend time with your loved ones. The success of your business, and life, depends on it.

Benefit From The Future, Now

So, what are some specific actions you can take today to turn today's opportunities into tomorrow's business advantage?

We've summarized our interviews, research, and insights into 8 action steps to help you succeed.

1. Take Care Of Your Foundations

Before you dive into the shiny new tools and technology, ensure that you've taken care of your consulting business foundations first.

That means...

You are running a consulting business model that is suited to your lifestyle and goals

You have a clear ideal client avatar and can easily build lists of your ideal clients to reach out to

You have a clear specialization and messaging that attracts the interest of your ideal clients

You have offers that are profitable and create a 3-10X ROI for your clients

You have a marketing and sales process that can reliably generate leads and new consulting clients

Without these foundations in place, you're building a house on top of sand. New strategies and tactics won't fill the gaps if there are major holes in any of these areas.

Once you've got these areas of your business dialed in, you're ready to take advantage of the next 6 action steps.

(If you need help with these foundational areas of your consulting business, we have many resources on ConsultingSuccess.com including our Momentum Course and Clarity Coaching Program)

2. Create Thought-Leadership Content

Content continues to be one of the most effective ways to reach prospects and establish your authority.

According to [B2B PR Sense Blog](#)¹⁸, 80% of B2B decision-makers prefer to get information from an article rather than an ad. And according to [DemandMetric](#)¹⁹, companies with blogs produce an average of 67% more leads monthly than companies that don't blog.

As a consultant, your product is your expertise. Your content demonstrates your expertise. By creating and publishing content, you provide your potential clients with value and a “sample” of your expertise. If your content is helpful, then you'll increase the chance they get to know you, like you and trust you.

But how do you actually get started creating thought-leadership content?

In June of 2020 during our online client Mastermind event, Andrew Sobel, business development expert and author of *It Starts With Clients*, provided a helpful exercise for getting started writing thought-leadership content.

Bring up a blank document. Write a list of 30 of the major topics, problems, and questions currently facing your industry.

Every day, spend 30 minutes writing a 1-page article on each topic, problem, or question — adding your insight and value to the discussion.

By the end of 30 days, you'll have a 30-page document adding your insight to the most important topics in your industry.

Publish the 1-pagers as blog posts on your website. Share them on LinkedIn. Send them to clients when you reach out to them. Use them in your follow-up.

This method has been incredibly helpful to Andrew and helped him start conversations with his clients. And it will do the same for you if you commit to it.

18 Want the Best PR? Avoid These 12 Big PR Mistakes: <https://b2bprblog.marxcommunications.com/b2bpr/best-pr-avoid-big-pr-mistakes>

19 Did you know that 90% of all organizations use content in their marketing efforts?: <https://www.demandmetric.com/content/content-marketing-infographic>

Creating thought-leadership content starts with carving out 25-50 minutes a day to spend writing. Develop the habit to “share what you know” and you’ll consistently publish content that adds value to your potential client’s lives — and put you in front of them as a trusted advisor.

3. Build Your Email List

If you don’t have an email list, now is the time to start one. It’s one of Jonathan Stark’s “must-do’s” for consultants — something he recommended far before COVID.

“Email marketing has an ability many channels don’t: creating valuable, personal touches at scale,” says David Newman, author of Do It! Marketing.

According to the [DMA National Client Email Report](#)²⁰, email marketing has an average ROI of \$38 for every \$1 invested: an ROI of 3700%, making it one of the most effective marketing methods.

Unlike other marketing methods like social media marketing, content marketing, or podcasts, email marketing allows you to speak directly to the members of your audience. With email marketing, prospective clients give you permission to market directly to them in their inboxes.

Consulting is a long-term sales cycle. Clients must know you, like you, and trust you — and the need has to arise for your expertise before they hire you.

With email marketing, you can nurture, follow-up, and add value to your prospective clients at scale. You stay top of mind so when they need your expertise, they think of you first.

How do you build up your email list?

It starts with creating an effective, lead-generating consulting website. First, your consulting website must generate traffic. Second, it must convert that traffic into email opt-ins.

On your consulting website, instead of offering visitors to “sign up for your newsletter”, offer them something of value in exchange for their name and

²⁰ DMA National Client Email Report 2015: <https://www.emailmonday.com/dma-national-client-email-report-2015/>

email. That can be an eBook, white paper, email course, how-to guide, case study, or anything else you can create that adds value to your prospective client's life.

According to [Media Post](#)²¹, white paper and eBook downloads are the top producers of B2B leads — cited by 59% of marketers.

Most consulting websites don't offer a clear call-to-action. According to the "Small Business B2B Call To Action Study," up to 70% of B2B websites don't display clear calls to action on any of their main pages.

You can avoid creating a "brochure-style" website by using your consulting website to share your expertise — and thus, provide value to your potential clients.

Use a tool like Sumo or Optinmonster to embed an opt-in form on your consulting website to capture leads onto your email list.

For your email database itself, use a tool like MailChimp or ActiveCampaign. These tools enable you to build up your database and send prospects email campaigns.

Another effective way to build up your list is by using a quiz.

This is how Oscar Trimboli has used a quiz to build up his firm's email database:

"In March 2020, Listening Quiz was launched. This has been transformational for sales, marketing and engagement. It simplified all communications and call to action to "I invite you to complete the 7-minute Listening Quiz and receive a personalized 5-page action plan". This created over 1,000 opt-ins per month and unexpected corporate sales and cross-selling opportunities to other products like books, cards, online courses. It's allowed me to differentiate and charge a premium for online keynote speaking and workshops because I create a before, during, and after experience for participants that brings more than a lift in knowledge - it's bringing a sustained shift in performance."

21 SEO The No. 3 Effective Tool For Lead Generation: https://www.mediapost.com/publications/article/258864/seo-the-no-3-effective-tool-for-lead-generation.html?utm_source=Webbiquity.com

Your consulting website and email list have never been more important than they are now. Use them together to provide value and follow-up with your clients, and they will become the top marketing channel for your consulting business.

4. Offer Remote Consulting

As discussed earlier, remote consulting gives you an incredible opportunity to serve your clients from anywhere in the world.

Take your current services and create an “online” version of them.

Your clients are paying you to solve problems and create results for them. If you can solve those problems or create results without being there in person, you can offer remote consulting services — and charge the same amount, if not more, as you would in-person.

Here are some popular forms of remote consulting you can offer your clients:



Online workshops



Virtual presentations



Coaching calls



Asynchronous email and video support



Strategy sessions



Subscription-based coaching

It's also worth thinking about how you will differentiate your remote services from others by improving the quality of your communications.

A high-quality camera and microphone will do wonders for the quality of all of your virtual communications.

After you provide a one-time remote consulting service, think about how you can support your client through the implementation

Whether it's an off-boarding and follow-up sequence, or a recurring monthly service, the end of a project doesn't have to be the end of your time serving that client. Clients will invest in continuous support if they get continuous value.

There is an abundance of tools to help you deliver your value remotely. It's on you to get creative and figure out how you can create value for your clients without being there in-person.

Put together an offer and tell your ideal clients about it. See what resonates and what doesn't. Then, iterate and improve on your offer. That's the basic process.

If you don't create and sell an offer, you can't expect to find any buyers. Take imperfect action and *create*. That's your duty as an entrepreneurial consultant.

5. Productize Your Services

Consulting services are often thought of as "Done-With-You" or "Done-For-You" models.

With "Done-For-You" services, you do the work and deliver the project for your client.

With "Done-With-You" services, you work with the client to deliver the project.

Although these are powerful delivery models for generating results, they are difficult to scale. They require your time and attention and you can only work with a few clients at a time.

Now, because it's rarer to serve clients face to face, clients are more accustomed to "Do-It-Yourself" models and self-service programs where you provide them with the expertise and they implement it themselves.

How are consultants creating DIY programs and products to scale their expertise?

- Online courses
- Community workshops
- Masterclasses
- Group coaching
- Books

Using these mediums to create products is easier than you think. You can record and re-use everything you create, mixing and matching your content to create programs and products:

- If you're offering a one-on-one coaching session, you can record those sessions and sell them to others with their permission.
- If you're hosting a community workshop, you can record it and turn it into a course.
- If you're writing articles, you can compile those into a book.

The possibilities are endless. Digital content is infinitely reproducible — for little or no cost.

Think of it this way: many of your potential clients would like to work with you, but they don't have the budget or trust required for your higher-tier, higher-priced offers.

By creating productized, DIY offerings, you can provide your expertise to the client without having to do the work for them. You give them the choice of the more inexpensive option where they have to invest more of their time instead of more of their money.

Here's how David Jenyns thinks about this dynamic in his business:

"The 3 different product lines we've got are quite clear:

- *A self-service model*
- *A group model*
- *A higher-end, done-for-you model*

When you're having a sales discussion, you have some good options for them based on:

- *how quickly they want to move*
- *what sort of support they're after*
- *what sort of budget they've got."*

Creating productized services is a foundational part of scaling a consulting business. Until you package your expertise into a fixed-price, fixed-scope product, you'll be trading your time for money.

Take advantage of the adoption of self-service models and create an offering for your clients they can implement themselves. Of course, they won't typically be able to get the same results as if you were to guide them along the process personally. If they want your expertise and personal guidance customized for them, they can choose to invest in your higher-level and higher-fee option.

6. Start An Online Community

Starting and leading your own community of clients is an incredibly effective method for growing your consulting business.

Digital tools have made it easy to create your community:

- Facebook Groups
- Slack channels
- Forums

Now, creating a community is relatively easy...but *building* one is difficult.

Once you've created it, it's important to get people to start engaging with others in the community. Otherwise, it will fall flat and die out.

Here are some important questions to ask yourself about how you'll get people to engage in your community:

- What *incentives* will you offer them to post and discuss?
- What *rewards* will you offer them to engage with the community?
- What *opportunities* will you offer them so they want to be regular, frequent members?

We took some best practices from Jono Bacon's presentation at our 2020 online client Mastermind event on how to build a community for your consulting business and summarized them for you here:

Know your audience. Just like you should be serving a specific audience for your business, your community should do the same. This is the first step. Once you're clear on who should make up your community, all of the other steps and tips will be much more effective.

Optimize the onboarding. Onboarding is one of the most important steps for building your community. The quicker you get someone integrated, the greater chance they'll get engaged with the community. Make it super clear and easy for people to join, and give them something to do once they're in. Automated content and emails are invaluable for onboarding.

Build your email list. Jono thought that email marketing was "old-school" and put it off for years. But when he finally started doing it, it was a big help in growing his community. The bigger your email list, the more potential members of your community.

Systematize engagement. Engagement is what gets people into your community — and helps them go from casual to regular to core members. Don't leave this engagement up to chance. Systematize and automate it as much as you can so that every member is engaged at every step.

Relentlessly focus on providing value. Want to grow your community? Add more value. Want to get more regular and core members? Add more value. Value is key. The more you provide value, the bigger and better your community will be.

Keep selling out of it. Yes, it's going to be tempting to sell to all of the potential customers in your community. Keep it to a minimum. If you focus on providing value, your community will do your selling for you. Keep your selling for other channels.

Ask for their input — and use it! With your community, you want to deposit, deposit, deposit — but also, withdraw. Ask your community for some content. Curate their content and use it to create your own original content — something like “10 tips.” Content is one of the best ways to leverage your community.

By following these best practices, you will create a tremendously valuable asset for your business.

What’s the easiest way to start your community?

You can do it with a single Zoom call — a “virtual happy hour.”

Here’s how you do it:

1. Pick a date and time for the virtual happy hour.
2. Email your clients and let them know you’re inviting them to a virtual happy hour.
3. On the call, ask them about their dream community: who would be in it, the content and discussion that would go on, and what it would provide for them.
4. For the most engaged people, tell them you’re going to create a community, and that you’d like them to be key members.
5. Create your community on your platform of choice.
6. Recap the discussion you had on the happy hour within your community to get the discussion going
7. Kick the doors open to your community — and now, you won’t be starting from 0.

One of the toughest challenges of being an independent consultant is loneliness.

But once you’ve started to build your community, your loneliness will fade.

You’ll get the best of both worlds: the freedom and flexibility of running your own business, and the sense of belonging and teamwork that your community brings.

7. Analyze Your Weaknesses

Consultants who fared well during the pandemic prepared for uncertainty.

If you want to give yourself the best chance of “future-proofing” your consulting business, start by analyzing your areas of weakness and develop a plan on how to strengthen them.

Here’s an exercise to help you do that.

Take an inventory of your business to identify areas you are heavily reliant on.

What areas in your business either drive or support your growth?

Example #1: 90% of your business comes from in-person speaking engagements.

Example #2: 80% of your revenue comes from one client.

Example #3: The majority of your business and revenue comes from referrals you occasionally receive.

What would happen if you could no longer deliver in-person speaking engagements?

What would happen if your one client decided to terminate their contract?

What would happen if the referrals you relied and depended on stopped?

These scenarios happened to many consultants during the pandemic.

If you are over-reliant on a particular tactic, channel or client, you have a weakness in your business. And it should be addressed.

Once you’ve identified the areas you’re weak in, here’s what your next steps might look like...

Example #1: You shift in-person speaking engagements to an online workshop. You expand from serving a local audience to making your offers available globally. And you focus more on promotion of valuable content to expand and grow your audience of potential buyers.

Example #2: You change the structure of your services and offerings. While tempting you don't accept projects that take all of your time. Your goal goes from having just any client to always have 4 or more clients. You consider productizing your offerings, building a team and always make time to work on the business (marketing) and not just in it (delivery).

Example #3: You stop relying on referrals. You spend 1 hour a day on marketing and having conversations with potential buyers. You work on strengthening your relationships, use a CRM system and ensure consistent follow up to diversify and build your pipeline.

Nobody can predict the future. By understanding where you are over-reliant or weak, you can take steps to strengthen these areas and benefit now. As well as plan and prepare for possible future challenges that may arise. Doing so will help you to future-proof your business and give you a significant advantage over others who have failed to take these steps.

8. Sleep Well, Exercise, Eat Healthily, & Improve Your Mindset

Sleeping well, exercising daily, eating well, and working on your mindset will improve your performance as a consulting business owner.

Let's start with sleeping well. Matthew Walker, the author of *Why We Sleep*, [provides 11 tips for sleeping well](#)²²:

- Start a sleep schedule
- Don't exercise 2-3 hours before bed
- Reduce (or stop) caffeine and nicotine consumption
- Don't drink alcohol
- Avoid late-night meals
- Be aware of medications that can disrupt sleep
- Create a relaxing nighttime routine
- Take a hot bath before bed

²² [Matthew Walker's 11 Tips for Improving Sleep Quality](https://www.masterclass.com/articles/matthew-walker-on-improving-sleep-quality#a-brief-introduction-to-matthew-walker): <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/matthew-walker-on-improving-sleep-quality#a-brief-introduction-to-matthew-walker>

- No devices in the bedroom
- Get 30 minutes of sun a day

“Think of the ideal bedroom as a prehistoric cave somewhere in the Great North: cool, dark, and gadget-free.”

Daily exercise is all about creating a habit — a routine that you do every day.

For example, I prefer to run. Every morning before I hit the office, I run for 30 minutes around the park and lake near my house. That gets me going and ready to win the day.

Create an exercise that works best for you. Whether that’s walking, running, yoga, strength training, CrossFit, or sports, the best exercise routine is the one you’re consistent with.

Sleeping well and exercising daily will force you to eat healthier. Here are some other tips to help you improve your diet:

- Affirm to yourself that you “eat a healthy diet” and make it a part of your identity.
- Reward yourself at the end of the week — like a nice “cheat” meal with your favorite snacks — if you eat clean for the entire week.
- Take control of your environment: don’t let unhealthy foods fill up your pantry.
- Replace unhealthy choices with healthy choices, one item at a time.

Good sleeping, exercise, and eating habits will create massive improvements in your mental health and mindset. But to take the mindset work one step further, there are many things you can do:

Start a meditation habit. Use an app like Headspace or Calm to meditate for 10 minutes every morning. According to an article by Healthline, “12 Benefits of Meditation,” meditation can reduce stress, control anxiety, lengthen attention span, improve sleep, reduce pain, and more.

Cultivate a growth mindset. Choose to believe you can improve your abilities, become open to the ideas of others, have empathy for people, and play to win instead of playing not to lose.

Surround yourself with like-minded people committed to your success. Either join a community where you can find your tribe — or start your own.

Cut negativity out of your life. You know those things that irk you every time you come across them? Whether that's the news, social media, or certain people, cutting them out of your life will provide massive improvements to your mindset.

Read great books. As a consultant, your brain is your business “muscle.” Reading is one of the best things you can do for your brain. Check out our article on the best consulting books²³ for our recommended reading list.

As powerful as the new strategies are listed in this book, *nothing* is as impactful for your business (and your life) as taking care of your physical and mental health.

23 **12 Best Consulting Books:** <https://www.consultingsuccess.com/best-consulting-books>

What Happened to Jim?

What did Jim Huffman do to save his agency?

After he got out of panic-mode, he began setting up calls with the brightest people in his circle.

He told them his numbers. He told them the situation. And he asked them what he should do next.

Jim committed to being open and transparent throughout the process so he could receive honest, helpful feedback.

He came up with two options:

The first was to go super lean — to fire everybody except a few people and ride the pandemic out.

The second was to go on the offensive — to keep everybody on the team and see how things turned out.

He decided on the second option.

Jim spent years building up a strong team. It's the last thing he wanted to let go of. He knew that his team provided excellent work for their clients. If they could make it out of this, he was confident they would come out of this stronger than ever before.

He decided to give it three months.

If he couldn't get more clients in that time, he would consider the first option and start letting people go.

But until then, he would do everything in his power to make things work.

"What's nice about running an agency or consultancy is we're not selling T-shirts where we need to find 1,000 or a million people to buy something. We wanted five clients, and five is an obtainable number.

We looked at the existing industries that we were targeting, and thought: What industries are thriving now? What industries need our help more than ever? eCommerce went from 11% of overall purchases to 30%. Online education was skyrocketing. This work from home environment is skyrocketing. We started narrowing in on the industries where we could help.

"The other thing is we wanted to create more content. We thought: how can we help our clients by being thought leaders putting out content? We started increasing our frequency of publishing content.

- COVID hasn't happened before. But there have been downturns, and there have been companies that have emerged from the downturn stronger than ever — so we started publishing content about those companies."We started publishing on mental models and frameworks that executives should be thinking through to navigate this.*
- We started increasing the webinars we were doing with partners and even hosting some on our own.*
- We increased our ad spend on Google and LinkedIn Ads.*

Once we outlined the industries that were doing well, we started building up our database of who these companies were, the people at these companies, and the type of content we wanted to get in front of them.

All of those things combined we were able to close the gap on what we lost in 60 days by doing a combination of those tactics."

By using many of the strategies and tactics mentioned in this book, Jim was able to save his agency.

Now, in March of 2021 as I'm writing this book, it looks like we're nearing the end of the pandemic.

Things will open back up. Travel will resume. In-person consulting will return.

Jeff Gothelf brings up the prediction that we'll see a tremendous period of growth once everything returns to normal:

"There's this prediction that when this thing is behind us in 2022, and we've moved forward, we're going to see another round of the Roaring Twenties. Explosive spending, explosive growth. A rebirth of a lot of industries that have been laying dormant now for a few years. There is a tremendous opportunity to help these organizations capitalize on that. There are some obvious industries — tourism, travel, hospitality, entertainment — that's going to go big."

Whether there is another Roaring Twenties or not, what's certain is that there will be another global crisis of some sort in the future.

Perhaps not of the same magnitude as the pandemic caused by COVID-19, but economic downturns are guaranteed every few decades.

Will your consulting business adapt and thrive for whatever the future brings?

I hope that this book has given you strategies, best practices, insights and ideas so you can take the steps to create greater success now and a lasting advantage for your business into the future.

As a consulting business owner, there are *always* ways to provide value for your clients no matter the circumstances.

With the right strategy, tactics, and mindsets, you too can create a consulting business that not only survives chaos — but *thrives* in it and *benefits* from it.

Footnotes

1. [These eight charts show how COVID-19 has changed B2B sales forever: https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/these-eight-charts-show-how-covid-19-has-changed-b2b-sales-forever#](https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/these-eight-charts-show-how-covid-19-has-changed-b2b-sales-forever#)
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11. These eight charts show how COVID-19 has changed B2B sales forever: <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/these-eight-charts-show-how-covid-19-has-changed-b2b-sales-forever#>

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13. **What Is Mental Health?:** <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/what-is-mental-health>
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About the Author



Michael Zipursky is the CEO of Consulting Success® where they specialize in helping entrepreneurial consultants grow profitable, scalable and strategic consulting businesses.

He has advised organizations like Financial Times, Dow Jones, RBC, and helped Panasonic launch new products into global markets, but more importantly, he's helped over 500 consultants from around the world in over 75 industries add 6 and 7 figures to their annual revenues.

Over 35,000 consultants read his weekly consulting newsletter. Michael is also the author of the Amazon Best Sellers ACT NOW: How successful consultants thrive during chaos and uncertainty, The Elite Consulting Mind and Consulting Success® the book, and now the Future of Consulting.

To learn more about Michael and his cousin and co-founder Sam Zipursky, check out the Consulting Success® story and short mini documentary here: <https://www.consultingsuccess.com/about>

You can also receive a FREE 47-Page Consulting Blueprint with a compilation of Michael's most popular articles by going to [consultingsuccess.com/blueprint](https://www.consultingsuccess.com/blueprint)