



HR DELIVERY

Making Sure HR Delivers

HR DELIVERY WORKSHOP SERIES

Organisational Consulting

Organisational Consulting: From Request to Useful Advice

Practise a disciplined response to internal consulting requests. Learn to clarify the problem, contract the work, test evidence and present useful options while building ownership with the people responsible for change.



01 DAY

Introductory taster

IN-HOUSE

Your people. Your context.

PRACTICAL

Explore, discuss and apply

A PRACTICAL STARTING POINT

Understand the topic. Try it in practice.

Internal advisers often receive a preferred solution before the underlying problem has been explored. A request for a workshop, restructure or policy may hide several different causes. Useful organisational consulting combines careful inquiry, a clear agreement about the work and advice that clients can understand, challenge and own.

This workshop introduces a practical consulting conversation from initial request to agreed next step. Participants rehearse contracting, interviewing and feedback, examine incomplete case evidence and compare responses so their advice addresses the client's decision and the wider work system.

WHO IS IT FOR?

HR business partners, internal consultants, organisational development practitioners and functional specialists who advise managers on people, organisation or service improvement questions within their professional remit.

BY THE END OF THE DAY, PARTICIPANTS CAN:

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| <p>01 Clarify the request</p> <p>Turn an initial request for a solution into a provisional problem statement and an explicit client decision.</p> | <p>02 Contract the assignment</p> <p>Draft a simple agreement covering scope, roles, access, confidentiality boundaries, outputs and how changes will be agreed.</p> |
| <p>03 Ask useful questions</p> <p>Use open, specific and testing questions to explore work examples while distinguishing inquiry from prematurely recommending a solution.</p> | <p>04 Interpret mixed evidence</p> <p>Separate observations, interpretations and missing information in a case, considering alternative explanations before proposing a course of action.</p> |
| <p>05 Present credible options</p> <p>Compare possible responses against client needs, feasibility and consequences, explaining the evidence and uncertainty behind a provisional recommendation.</p> | <p>06 Build client ownership</p> <p>Agree a practical next step with an accountable client, including the participation, support and review needed for implementation.</p> |

A useful first application

An introductory practice day for internal advisory work. It develops consulting conversations and draft records, without completing a diagnostic engagement, authorising specialist advice or guaranteeing acceptance of recommendations.

THE FRAMEWORK / WORKSHOP FOCUS

Consulting Inquiry: workshop working model

The six stages structure an initial consulting assignment: clarify, contract, inquire, interpret, advise and transfer ownership. This workshop learning aid keeps the client's decision, evidence and responsibilities visible throughout the conversation.

A PRACTICAL LEARNING AID FOR THIS TASTER

01 Clarify

What decision does the client need help to make now?

02 Contract

What scope, access, responsibilities and boundaries can both parties agree?

03 Inquire

What work examples and perspectives could explain the presenting problem?

04 Interpret

Which explanations fit the evidence, and what remains uncertain today?

05 Advise

Which feasible options best address the problem and its consequences?

06 Transfer ownership

Who will act on the advice and review its usefulness?

The working model is an introductory guide, rather than a proprietary diagnostic or accreditation. The depth of inquiry and specialist involvement must reflect the assignment's sensitivity, consequences and professional requirements.



LEARN BY DOING

Explore. Challenge. Make the ideas useful.

Short explanations lead into lively exercises, paired discussion and small-group challenges. Participants test ideas, share experience and build a draft together. The tone is engaging and enjoyable, with time to reflect and connect learning to real work.

01 The solution-first client

One participant requests an urgent team workshop while another acts as adviser. Observers track questions that clarify the problem and moments when assumptions enter the conversation.

02 Contracting under pressure

Groups negotiate a brief with a sponsor who wants speed and unrestricted interview notes. They define useful outputs, confidentiality boundaries and unresolved conditions before accepting the assignment.

03 The conflicting evidence room

Teams compare interview extracts, a process map and operational data. They build competing explanations, identify evidence gaps and select one further inquiry with high decision value.

04 Feedback without a verdict

Participants present an uncomfortable finding using evidence and uncertainty. The client challenges it, and the adviser practises listening, revising the interpretation and agreeing a shared next step.

DIAGNOSE BEFORE YOU ACT

Evidence > shared feedback > agreed priorities

Use selected diagnostic prompts to distinguish known facts from assumptions. Discuss the findings and agree their meaning before proposing a solution. Feedback is part of diagnosis, not an afterthought.

ONE CASE, DEVELOPED THROUGH THE DAY

A division asks HR to run a motivation workshop because service deadlines are slipping. Managers cite weak ownership, while employees describe repeated approval changes and competing priorities. The sponsor expects recommendations within a fortnight and wants to know which employees have criticised the current process.

Groups prepare a consulting contract, choose proportionate evidence sources and rehearse a feedback conversation that protects agreed confidentiality while addressing the service problem and ownership of action.

THE FACILITATOR WILL

Invite different perspectives.

Make assumptions visible.

Welcome constructive debate.

Capture practical learning.



SAMPLE WORKSHOP AGENDA

A working day, with room to think.

09:00-16:30 | Six hours of facilitated learning, plus lunch and breaks. The agenda, emphasis and timings are always agreed with the client, including local scheduling needs.

09:00-09:20	Welcome and the presenting request Examine familiar advisory requests and identify the decisions, assumptions and relationships hidden behind a request for a quick solution.
09:20-10:15	Clarify and contract the work Rehearse an initial client meeting and draft scope, responsibilities, access arrangements and boundaries that make the assignment workable.
10:15-10:30	Break
10:30-11:30	Inquire into the work system Practise questions that elicit concrete examples and map whose perspective is needed to understand work, decisions and handovers.
11:30-12:30	Interpret conflicting evidence Build alternative explanations from the case material and distinguish what the evidence supports from what requires further inquiry.
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-14:30	Develop advice with choices Compare feasible responses, their consequences and resource requirements before framing a provisional recommendation that answers the client's decision.
14:30-14:45	Break
14:45-15:30	Practise the feedback meeting Deliver a challenging finding, respond to disagreement and revise the message so the evidence and remaining uncertainty stay clear.
15:30-16:10	Contract for ownership and action Peer review the proposed next step, clarifying who can act, what support is needed and how progress will be reviewed.
16:10-16:30	Plan an advisory conversation Choose a current request to reframe and prepare the questions and contracting points needed for a more useful client conversation.

Follow the client's decision from initial request through evidence, advice and ownership of the next step.

FROM THE SESSION TO YOUR DESK

Useful models. Practical working records.

The day combines reference materials with drafts developed in the exercises. Each has a clear use beyond the workshop; the work reflects the evidence and perspectives available in the room.

01 Initial inquiry prompts

A set of questions for exploring the presenting request, desired outcomes, previous attempts and decision context without prematurely accepting the client's preferred solution as the diagnosis.

Use them to clarify what advice the client actually needs.

02 Consulting contract draft

A worked agreement covering scope, roles, access, outputs, confidentiality boundaries and review points, with unresolved issues clearly marked for discussion with the client.

Use it to establish a workable internal advisory assignment.

03 Evidence and inference log

A case record separating observations, interpretations, alternative explanations and missing information so a recommendation can be traced back to what is actually known about the problem.

Use it to challenge assumptions before presenting consulting advice.

04 Options comparison page

A worksheet for comparing a small number of responses against the client's outcome, implementation conditions, employee consequences and uncertainty, including maintaining current arrangements where credible.

Use it to explain a recommendation and its material trade-offs.

05 Feedback conversation guide

A practical sequence for introducing findings, checking understanding, hearing challenge and agreeing implications, developed through an observed role play with specific feedback from peers.

Use it to discuss difficult evidence while preserving client ownership.

06 Assignment next-step record

A draft action agreement naming the client owner, immediate inquiry or pilot, necessary support and review questions that will test whether the advice proves useful.

Use it to connect a recommendation with a reviewable next action.

CONTINUE EXPLORING

Continue with the models, diagnostic manuals and development resources on the HR Delivery website. Workshop exercises provide a first application; a full organisational diagnostic or implementation assignment can be agreed separately.

[Open the framework >](#)

[Explore diagnostic resources >](#)



MAKE THE LEARNING COUNT

A better conversation. A practical next step.

Use the inquiry prompts on one current advisory request. Agree a small, explicit consulting contract, test a leading assumption with relevant evidence and bring the client a choice that includes implementation responsibilities and clear limits on certainty.

YOUR FIRST 30 DAYS

01

Days 1-7

Reframe a request

Choose an existing advisory request and ask the client what decision is needed. Confirm the desired outcome, who owns it and the assumptions currently shaping the proposed solution.

02

Days 8-21

Gather proportionate evidence

Agree access and information boundaries, then collect a small set of relevant work examples. Compare perspectives, record contradictions and test the explanation that would most change your advice.

03

Days 22-30

Discuss useful choices

Present the emerging evidence and two feasible responses. Invite correction, agree a provisional next step with its owner and review whether the consulting agreement still fits the problem.

Follow-through is participant-led. Additional facilitation, a full diagnostic or specialist support can be agreed separately.

AVAILABLE IN-HOUSE

Shaped around your organisation

The client selects a realistic internal advisory context and clarifies any information handling requirements. Participants bring a sanitised consulting request, one example of ambiguous expectations and a decision they would like to help a client make.

PLAN YOUR IN-HOUSE WORKSHOP

Talk to Dr Phillip Welsh

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Discuss your workshop



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