

WORK, *YOUR* WAY

REINVENT YOURSELF,
CREATE THE LIFE YOU WANT
AND THRIVE AS A CONSULTANT

LISA HUFFORD

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

*To Jack and Ian, who continue to be my
greatest inspiration, teachers, and purpose*

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THREE

BUILD YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

Reflection Questions

- What are your authentic words?
- What is your personal brand statement?
- What are your professional success stories?

FOUR

DEFINE THE WORK THAT FITS YOUR LIFE

Reflection Questions

Let's build your dream project.

- Do the work you love ...
 - What is your personal brand?
 - What are your strengths and passion?
- However you love to do it ...
 - Do you want to work part-time or full-time?
 - Remote or on-site?
 - Alone or through an intermediary?
 - As an employee or a subcontractor?
- For whom you like ...
 - What are the values of your ideal client?
 - What companies do you admire and want to support?

FIVE

MASTER THE ART OF THE RATE

Reflection Questions

- What is your ideal pay range?
- What is the market value (bill rate) for your skills/expertise?
- What intangibles are just as important to you as money?

SIX

LAND YOUR CONTRACT

Reflection Questions

- Is your LinkedIn profile current? Do your picture, headline, work experience, and testimonials clearly showcase your personal brand?
- Are you actively cultivating your prospective client A and B lists?
- Do you have an attitude of gratitude? Are you looking for ways to add value and help others as you plant seeds?

SEVEN

SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

Reflection Questions

- Are the project deliverables clear to you? To the client?
- Have you set effective expectations with the client?
- Do you have a clear idea of how to deliver success for this contract?

EIGHT

DELIVER EXCELLENCE

Reflection Questions

- How are you adding value to your client every day?
- Are you checking in weekly and proactively sharing your status?
- Can you articulate your results and how you have made the team better?

NINE

REFLECT AND REFRESH

Reflection Questions

- What accomplishment are you most proud of?
- What activity most refreshes you?
- What do you want to do next?

APPENDIX 1

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

VISIT WWW.LISAHUFFORD.COM for templates and worksheets that accompany this book.

Over the years I have received these common questions that you likely have, too. I hope this FAQ format helps you easily get the answers you need.

Q. My partner thinks consulting is too risky and wants me to take a full-time job. But I want the flexibility of doing contract work. How do I convince him/her?

A. Get curious with your partner. Ask questions about their concerns with you working on contracts. Once uncovered, you can address those concerns with a plan. For example, I've heard from many professionals over the years share that their spouse is concerned about potential inconsistent income. If that is the issue, then factor that into your overall pay rate. Also, plan to keep a minimum amount of money in a separate account as your rainy-day fund with at least six months of expenses. This is a good financial wellness practice for everyone and especially if you are a consultant. While many consultants tend to establish a consistent stream of work and income, there are

no guarantees. However, there are also no guarantees in full-time employment either. While traditional employees do earn a consistent income, companies can eliminate their roles at any time, with or without severance.

Q. My client is pressuring me to become an employee and I want to remain a consultant. How can I continue to serve my client but respectfully tell them that I want to remain a consultant and don't want to be an employee?

A. This one can be tricky. Some clients assume that every consultant is doing contract work with the hope of becoming a full-time employee for that organization. While that may be the case for some, most of the consultants I work with don't want to go back to being a full-time employee. First, thank your client for considering you. Share how flattered you are that they would want you to take that role. Then share why you choose to be a consultant and how much you value supporting them in your current capacity. Emphasize the benefits to the client of having you work for them externally. As a consultant you are freed up to focus on the work, be productive, and get the work done that they want.

Q. How much time should I expect to be without work in between projects?

A. The short answer is that it depends. One of the most important things to get used to being a consultant is that it can be unpredictable when projects will come your way. You can increase your odds by constantly planting seeds. Sometimes you get to choose the work because you have a lot of options at once and other times you must

actively search for projects. Remember, you get to decide when you want to take a break between projects, too. If you want consistent work, it's important to continuously implement the activities outlined in Chapter 6. If you are actively looking for work, consider offering your skills to a nonprofit for free or reduced fee. It's the right thing to do, it will expand your network, and it's a great way to show that you are working in your area of expertise.

Q. What if I can't find a contract?

A. See Chapter 6 for actionable guidance on how to land a contract. Stay focused on your daily activities, maintain a positive mindset, and plant those seeds!

Q. What if I end up on a project with a client where I know I will not be successful? What is the best way to gracefully walk away or manage through it so that I don't negatively impact my reputation?

A. Projects can start one way and then morph into something completely different. It's stressful to both the client and consultant and can lead to unrealistic expectations and a negative brand perception. It is your responsibility to manage communication with your client and regularly set clear expectations to avoid a difficult scenario. Ask the client the two critical questions often: "What do you value that I am doing?" and "What more can I do?" These are nonthreatening questions that can open positive dialogue with your client to steer you back on the path of success. Conversely, you may determine that the work is no longer in alignment with your brand and recommend winding down the project and professionally transition or end it.

Q. How do I manage not feeling part of the team I'm working with?

A. You're not alone. Many consultants feel that they are on the outside and not a member of the team. I invite you to reframe this mindset. Remember why you chose consulting in the first place. Maybe it was because you wanted a flexible schedule and didn't want to manage all the bureaucratic activities involved with being an employee. Perhaps you have other interests, kids, or appreciate time for other activities. Focus on the benefits of your situation, rather than the downsides. And if you really want to be a part of a team again, then maybe it's time to consider transitioning to full-time employment. Revisit the pros and cons of consulting in Chapter 2 to help you determine the right situation for yourself at any given time in your career.

Q. I am so tired of hearing that budgets are tight. How do I get clients to see my value?

A. Budgets are a reality of any consultant's life, and it's on you to prove your value every day to justify your rate. Refer to the Rock Star Rules in Chapter 8, Deliver Excellence, for tips on how to showcase your value every day.

Q. How do I convince a client that while my résumé and background may indicate that I am overqualified for the project, THIS is the work I really want to do, right now, as a consultant?

A. Life is a marathon, not a sprint. Sometimes you just want to do work that's easy for you. This often happens to professionals who

have been executives or senior leaders. That's okay. This is your opportunity to redefine your personal brand and explain why you want to do work that may be easy for you. Share your why with the client, even if it's for work and life flexibility, and stress that though the work may be second nature for you, you will make them look great!

Q. How competitive is the consulting job market? What is the best way for me to stand out from the crowd?

A. That is one of the main reasons I wrote this book! To help you stand out. Consulting is a crowded field, so clearly defining and sharing your personal brand is critical to your success. You must stand out in the sea of many and showcase your uniqueness. See Chapter 3 for how to build and develop your personal brand. Refer to these questions often. Stay true to your strengths and passions.

APPENDIX 2

RECOMMENDED READING

Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead* (New York: Gotham Books, 2012).

Bill Burnett and Dave Evans, *Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life* (New York: Knopf, 2016).

Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends & Influence People* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1936).

Stephen R. Covey, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Free Press, 1989).

Paul Estes, *Gig Mindset: Reclaim Your Time, Reinvent Your Career, and Ride the Next Wave of Disruption* (Austin, Texas: Lioncrest Publishing, 2020).

Lisa Hufford, *Navigating the Talent Shift: How to Build On-Demand Teams that Drive Innovation, Control Costs, and Get Results* (New York: Springer Publishing, 2016).

Greg McKeown, *Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less* (New York: Currency, 2014).

Daniel H. Pink, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2009).