

ASP, The Art and Science of Practice: How I Started an OR/MS Consulting Practice with a Laptop, a Phone, and a PhD

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Rather than become a professor after finishing my PhD in operations research, I became a small-business owner. Armed with a few books on sales and proposal writing, and with no industry contacts, I built my consulting business from the ground up through cold-calling, networking, paying referral fees, and teaching. To transform contacts into new business, I fill and manage a pipeline, ask for and follow sales advice only from successful salespeople, and never write a proposal until I have both a budget and a deadline. As a sole proprietor, my time is my money, and I have learned to manage it carefully, especially because much of my time is not billable—including the hours I spend drumming up business. I have learned that creating a successful consulting firm takes money, tenacity, experience selling your time and talent, and a strong desire to work for yourself. My business proves that it is possible.

Key words: professional: comments on, OR/MS implementation.
