

meta

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Editorial

Our paradox

In every crisis there is always a time of great discontinuity preceding an evolutionary change. Change for the better, yet sometimes someone gets hurt.

When thinking about this we often focus our attention on what's happening in the area of client organisations: looking for reading keys, analyses and methodologies to get out of it, focusing on increasingly immaterial elements to be competitive in terms of the so-called knowledge economy. Most attention is drawn on competencies: how to individuate and gain them.

Within such framework, the consultancy sector is experiencing some deep rethinking: the awareness of leading the offer of a strategic productive factor through methodology and competency happens to clash at times with the client system hidden mistrust in the very product value. This can cause priority adjustments, investment reduction, market contractions. Here is the paradox: while it's true that market availability of competency is a key success factor, competency offer is currently going through crisis.

We then need to look inside ourselves to try and understand a bit more: is this always true? What kind of perception does the world have of consultancy? Is it seen as an answer to competency demand and, if so, to the demand of which competencies? Is it considered as the solution to problems concerning organisation

models, fees, turnover, etc.? It's time to look at this paradox more closely and without any illusions.

Whether individually working or united in middle- or large-sized structures, consultants are going through this transition acting upon several areas at the same time: reorganising businesses and networks, investing in new competencies and new training paths. Fee policies and results involvement, together with new forms of communication if compared to the past, are the first challenging answers. In more sensitive situations single professionals are even facing this time of transition making decisions resulting in more radical life choices.

Aware of the existence of completely different frames of organisation models and markets, we chose to investigate this topic through a round-table discussion among a few consultants representing four different offer systems: a large international consultancy firm (Kpmg), a large Italian consultancy firm (Coreconsulting), a consultancy workshop in Bologna (Osa Consulting) and an individual professional (Fabio Magnani) from Montecatini Terme.

No God, no recipe, but...

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