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## **Global Consulting Group Views Future of Consulting**

The Society for Advancement of Consulting® (SAC®) asked its global membership to describe the future of consulting, especially in light of the financial turmoil, political conflicts, and technological advances that are proliferating.

Pat Lynch, President of Business Alignment Strategies, Inc. ([www.BusinessAlignmentStrategies.com](http://www.BusinessAlignmentStrategies.com)), believes that the best times for consultants (and their clients) are upon us. The economic downturn has upended existing business models, and policy changes in Washington, D.C. are about to revolutionize workplaces across the country. Organizations are trying to figure out how to operate effectively now that “business as usual” doesn’t work any more. Managers and business owners who realize that “doing more with less” has become a fantasy in the aftermath of severe cutbacks, layoffs, and furloughs need help figuring out how to do LESS with less.

Here are four changes she sees in the consulting profession:

1. Process consultants will thrive while content consultants will be sitting by the phone.
2. Consultants who emphasize results will do well while those who continue to rely on selling their methodology will suffer.
3. Organizations will rely more heavily on consultants now than they have in the past simply because they cannot get the required external perspectives and expertise from internal sources.
4. The playing field will be leveled between solo practitioners and big consulting companies—i.e., clients will hire consultants based on their ability to provide measurable value rather than their headcount.

Gayle Lantz, President of WorkMatters, Inc., ([www.workmatters.com](http://www.workmatters.com)) a leadership consulting firm, and author of the book, *Take the Bull by the Horns*, believes the future of consulting will be even more relationship driven. Clients will seek consultants who really listen to their needs, who demonstrate an understanding of their issues and who work collaboratively on solutions.

Consultants also must be prepared to address the increasing complexity of issues affecting organizations going through major change. Already businesses that are rethinking their future are looking for consulting support to challenge their thinking and generate new ideas for moving forward differently.

Dr. Maynard Brusman is a consulting psychologist and executive coach. He is the president of Working Resources, a talent management and leadership coaching firm in San Francisco, California [www.workingresources.com](http://www.workingresources.com). Maynard specializes in

selection and assessment, succession planning, executive coaching and emotional intelligence-based leadership development.

"Economic conditions have created hardship for a number of consultants over the past year. Our clients have challenged us to serve them better with innovative approaches to attracting and retaining talent and filling their leadership pipeline.

"Regardless of what challenges they face, the job of a consulting psychologist is to use skills and experience to help clients solve business problems and create economic sustainability regardless of prevailing economic conditions. Economic disruptions in the age of turbulence accelerate changes that would have eventually come. They also create disruptive conditions to create new and exciting opportunities and challenges that no one expected.

"While some aspects of consulting in the future might look the same, there are likely to be some distinct changes. Engagement sizes appear to be decreasing. Clients will be more selective about choosing for individual talent than firm name recognition. More consultants will be using participative compensation or value pricing. Consulting will focus more on innovation, transformation and reinvention instead of restoration.

"The old way of doing things isn't working anymore. Traditional advertising like newspapers, radio and TV are having a smaller impact every day. Leading edge consultants will be using social media marketing to engage their clients and communities. Consultants will leverage Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Second Life and YouTube to help themselves and clients increase revenue and brand awareness."

Alan Weiss, PhD, the CEO of SAC, notes, "These are three of our outstanding members who have summed up the feedback we're receiving globally. The law and accounting practices of paying someone \$250 an hour and billing them out at \$450 an hour have never served clients well, and will vanish in the near future as clients demand value, not merely time

SAC is an international association of consulting professionals who subscribe to an industry code of ethics and have provided evidence of significant consulting results among their clients. For more information, please go to <http://www.consultingsociety.com>, write to [info@summitconsulting.com](mailto:info@summitconsulting.com), or call 800/825-6153 (401/886-4097).

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