
business | when and how to hire a spa consultant

by Mara Shorr

WHEN IT IS TIME TO HIRE A SPA consultant, you want to know you are in the right hands. Depending on the type of consultant you are looking to hire, the reasons for seeking outside help will be drastically different.

Often, you may see issues come up that are outside of your wheelhouse. For example, do you need a custom brochure designed? Do you need a strong negotiator for a new piece of office equipment or the leasing of a new space? Do you know your expenses need tidying, but

effits, that come with a qualified full-time candidate.

What to look for when hiring an outside consultant

1. Ask for a list of their typical clients, including the industries they specialize in, along with a list of references. You need to know that your contractor understands the guidelines, rules, regulations and laws within the beauty, esthetic and cosmetic industries.

quarter hour, half hour or hour? Are you charged for a five-minute phone call, one line text and single question email?

4. Resolve how the agency/contractor/consultant will fit into the spa's existing structure. Clarify who the main point of contact will be inside your spa. Will the consultant attend your regular staff meetings, either in person or virtually, in order to stay abreast of what is going on amongst your staff, or will you connect with them one-on-one?

5. Know which services the agency/contractor/consultant will handle for the spa, and which they will not. For example, you may find that your receptionist has a knack for writing e-newsletters, but doesn't know a thing about managing databases or putting together the final graphic piece. Your manager may be able to pull your financials from your software, but does not have the time or experience to properly analyze them on his or her own. Use your team members to accomplish as much as you can in-house, as this can save you time and money down the road. There is no need to pay a consultant \$150 (or more) an hour to do something that your own team can do. ■

Request a complete list of the consultant's services. You do not want to start working with them and realize later that you are going to be billed additional hours every time another person has to be contracted.



you are just not able to do it yourself? Do you suspect that a staff member is sneaking money from the till?

For most small spas, having an accountant, HR manager, website developer, marketing department or even practice administrator on staff full-time just does not make sense financially. There is typically not enough work in those fields to justify hiring someone whose sole job relies on those tasks. Outsourcing these items to an expert who works on many accounts in your industry can save you the expenses, including salary and ben-

Make sure the consultant is not working for your competitors. You do not want your trade secrets to be given away.

2. Request a complete list of the consultant's services. You do not want to start working with them and realize later that you are going to be billed additional hours every time another person has to be contracted.

3. Always get your details in writing ahead of time. These should include how you will be billed, and how much. Do you have to sign a contract for a certain length of time? Are you charged by the

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