ALA Core Library Consulting Interest Group Library Consulting FAQ

Introduction
Are you thinking about working as a consultant either part-time or full-time? Here are answers to some of people's most frequently asked questions as they start exploring this career change. This one-pager will help you get started on your journey and includes links to additional educational and professional resources for you to learn more.

How do I get started in Library Consulting? Understand your unique knowledge, skills, and abilities and see how you can transfer those across organizational and institutional settings. The linked questions here are designed to help you explore your skillset; QualityMetrics, LLC, hosts the survey and the cumulative data are available to you on this link. Martha Kyrillidou, Director of QualityMetrics, LLC, will share insights from people taking this survey in the Core Library Consulting Interest Group annually every fall.

What kinds of consultants are there? The library consultants directories listed below demonstrate the variety of expertise consultants provide. Some individuals pursue consulting instead of a traditional career working in or with libraries and others as they head toward or into retirement. A consultant may work independently, collaboratively with other consultants, or as a member of a firm or organization. Their work may be full-time or part-time, billed by the contract or the hour, or even pro bono. Consultants constantly adapt their services and how they provide them to meet libraries' evolving needs.

How do I organize myself administratively? When you start your business there are legal and financial decisions you will need to make. It is important to make sure you are compliant with local, state, and federal laws, and protect your business and individual assets. Check out the guide 10 Steps to Start Your Business by the U.S. Small Business Administration for information on how to fund your business, choose a business structure, register your business, get federal and state tax IDs, identify if you need any licenses or permits, and set up a business bank account. In addition, it is recommended that you get insurance coverage to help protect you and your company if legal issues arise. Some potential clients/businesses may also require proof that your business has liability insurance.

How do I handle my consulting finances? We strongly recommend that you consider finding an accountant you can trust and using accounting software such as Quickbooks for your finances. Quickbooks allows you to invoice clients, and track payments with ease; If your business grows, Quickbooks helps you manage other parts of your business as well (payroll, taxes, etc.).

How do I find business/RFPs? Networking at conferences and serving on boards is a great way to meet potential clients. Offer pro bono work by providing training sessions at conferences and/or regional workshops. Reach out to your State Library to let them know about your services. Search for RFPs (Requests For Proposals) using the Library Consultants Directory at libraryconsultants.org.
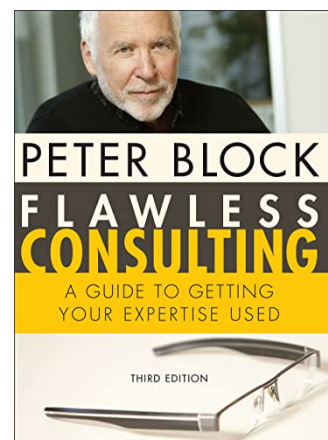
How do I handle PR/Marketing? Develop a website by hiring a website developer or create your own with a service such as [GoDaddy](#), [WordPress](#), and [Squarespace](#). Create a logo for your company. Provide regular updates to multiple social media accounts. Consider developing a blog that is part of your website. Use email marketing with a service such as [MailChimp](#), [ConstantContact](#), etc. Hire a graphic designer to create business cards and additional promotional items or use an online service such as [Canva.com](#). For printing business cards and stationery, also consider using [moo.com](#).

How do I learn more?

- [ALA Core Library Consultants Directory](#)
- [Consultants for Libraries - A Community Directory](#)
- [Library Consultants Directory](#)
- Visit the [ALA Core Library Consulting Interest Group "Library"](#) for recorded sessions, meetings, and related documents.

Flawless Consulting: A Guide to Getting Your Expertise Used by Peter Block ([Available on Amazon](#))

Library Juice Academy course: [*Is Consulting for Me? What You Need to Know About Library Consulting Work*](#). Course Description - Are you thinking about transitioning to consulting work? This four-week course introduces the basics of library consulting, including types of projects, expertise needed, and tips for starting and managing a consulting business. Additional modules focus on managing consulting projects, cultivating productive consultant-client relationships, and navigating consulting challenges.

ALA Core Library Consulting in-person workshop: [*Assembling Your Consultant Tool Kit: What You Need to Know to Become a Successful Consultant*](#). Workshop Description: This full-day ALA Core in-person pre-conference explores building a successful library consulting business. Topics include the required personal attributes, establishing the business, areas of consulting, the importance of understanding a client's motivation, dealing with project scope creep, and the methodologies typically employed in consulting work. The workshop covers contract deliverables, including incorporating client feedback and presenting results. Interactive activities are included in each part of the workshop, providing plenty of opportunities for discussion. At the end of this preconference, participants will understand the legal options for a consulting business, and the necessary insurance requirements.