

# 10 questions

## to ask a potential business marketing consultant

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- 1. What have you done lately?**  
Ask them exactly what they've been working on in the past year. Keep it conversational. This isn't an interrogation.
- 2. Who are some of your clients?**  
Be respectful of client confidentiality, but it's perfectly acceptable to ask for testimonials or permission to speak to a few clients directly.
- 3. Are you published?**  
Ask the prospective consultant if she has had articles published. Has she been quoted in trade publications? It isn't a deal-breaker if the answer is no.
- 4. What industries do you focus on?**  
Typically, a marketing consultant will have deeper experience in certain industries than others. If they don't have expertise in your particular industry, it's not a deal-breaker. Look instead for competencies that indicate adaptability and diversity of experience.
- 5. What did you do before this?**  
You're looking for diversity in their business experience; previous roles should include responsibility for high-value projects, developing strategy and managing teams. These experiences bring order and expediency to your project.
- 6. Who are your competitors?**  
The answer to this question often tells you how the consultant views herself. Be leery of anyone who bad-mouths a competitor.
- 7. Why hire you over the competition?**  
This may sound like a rude question, but the prospective consultant should have a clear and definable point of differentiation.
- 8. What do you think of our company's efforts thus far in your field of expertise?**  
If the consultant gives you a frank assessment and pulls no punches, you may have a good fit. If they haven't any idea what you do, walk away NOW!
- 9. What do you see as the endgame of your involvement?**  
What will you (the client) have of value when the project ends? A new brand identity, website or social media presence are some of the deliverables you should expect. Documented strategies, plans, guidelines for ongoing activities are all valuable as well. Consider if there may be value in contracting ongoing services and ask them about it.
- 10. What is the most valuable thing you do to market yourself?**  
As a marketing consultant, they should have a good handle on their own marketing efforts.