



THE ROLE(S) OF THE CONSULTANT IN TEAM SCIENCE

**Dr. Joseph A. Kotarba, Institute for Translational Sciences,
University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston; Department of
Sociology, Texas State University, San Marcos, U.S.A**

**Dr. E. Bernadette McKinney, Institute for Translational Sciences,
University of Texas Medical Branch, U.S.A.**

**Dr. Emma Tumilty, Institute for Translational Sciences, University
of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, U.S.A.**



- The role of the consultant in team science has grown in importance and complexity, and is worthy of serious analysis.

BACKGROUND – TEAM SCIENCE



- The consultant's role in the literature
- Largely seen in terms of the linear relationship between the...

consultant \leftrightarrow client

BACKGROUND – TEAM SCIENCE



- **Our research question:**
- **What is the role(s) of the consultant in team science when the client is...**
 - **Multiple entities in the organization**
 - **Multi-level in the research project**
 - **In need of increasingly complex skills**

BACKGROUND – TEAM SCIENCE



- **Sources of material for analysis:**
 - **The authors' personal experiences at UTMB-Galveston**
 - **Discussions with other consultants, administrators, and scientists on this topic**

METHODS



- **Analysis:**
 - **Multi-perspectival**
 - **Interpretive**
 - **Based on the principles of Grounded Theory (Kotarba and Wooten, 2017)**
- **→ LOGIC OF DISCOVERY**

METHODS



Source: Dilbert.com

BACKGROUND -

CONSULTANTS



- **A professional who:**
 - **Provides expert knowledge and skills**
 - **Addresses specific issues**
 - **Works on a contract basis, but is not exactly a contractor**
 - **Identifies with the entity on a part-time basis**

WHO IS A CONSULTANT?



- **Arthur Turner. (1982). “Consulting is More than Giving Advice.” Harvard Business Review (September). → INVOLVEMENT**
- **Carter McNanara. (2012). “Why Should Practitioners Know Their Paradigms.” Consulting and Organizational Development.” January 20). → STANDPOINT**

WHO IS A CONSULTANT?



- **Works with:**
 - **Researchers**
 - **Staff, and sometimes**
 - **Administration**

THE CONSULTANT IN TEAM SCIENCE



- **Meets situational skill needs in:**
 - **Ethics**
 - **Law**
 - **Organizational Development**
 - **Methodology**
 - **Evaluation**
 - **Education**

THE CONSULTANT IN TEAM SCIENCE



- **(At Least) Three Consultant Roles in Translational Team Science**

THE CONSULTANT IN TEAM SCIENCE



- **The Assigned Consultant:**
 - Serves as a regular member of the team.
 - Shares the goals of the team.

ASSIGNED CONSULTANT



- **The Assigned Consultant:**
 - **Adopts the language of the team over time.**
 - **Contributes as an equal team member.**

ASSIGNED CONSULTANT



- **Example: An attorney/medical humanist who encourages clear communication and questions unspoken assumptions.**
- **Inside consultants are in demand for a variety of grant- or project-related skills.**

ASSIGNED CONSULTANT



- **The Situational Consultant:**
- **is called in to assist the team with a specific question or problem.**
- **They are internal to the organization, but is not solely attached to a particular research team.**

SITUATIONAL CONSULTANT



- **Example: An ethicist who may be invited to participate in an immediate, discrete team issue, such as a human subject informed consent or the appropriate level of compensation for a research participant.**

SITUATIONAL CONSULTANT



- The Outside Consultant:
 - Metaphorical, an *infusion* to teams.
 - His or her charge comes from the broader organization to accomplish the organization's goals. → CTSA

OUTSIDE CONSULTANT



- **Example: One skilled in research methods who conducts evaluation studies.**

The outside consultant's work is a direct application of their discipline-related skills.

OUTSIDE CONSULTANT



- There is clearly a movement towards a *fluid* model of the consultant's role.

ADVANCES TO TEAM SCIENCE



- Put differently, more analytical attention should be focused on the actual process/work/needs of consulting to complement theorizing the role of the *consultant*, which has been a major theme in the organizational literature on the topic.

ADVANCES TO TEAM SCIENCE



- **Reasons why...**
 - **Advent of multiple teams under the rubric of the grant or project**
 - **Advent of SIGS and Team (“K”) Services**
 - **Super specialized science**

ADVANCES TO TEAM SCIENCE



- **Propose generalized principles of team consultation**
- **Assemble “stories” about the everyday work life of the team consultant**

FUTURE DIRECTIONS



- **Enhance your value to the organization**
 - **Publish**
 - **Share languages and paradigms (Integration)**

FUTURE DIRECTIONS



THANK YOU! QUESTIONS?

- This work is supported by the Institute for Translational Sciences at the University of Texas Medical Branch and funded in part by a Clinical and Translational Science Award (UL1TR001439) from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, National Institutes of Health.

Contact Details:

Dr. J.A. Kotarba

joseph.Kotarba@txstate.edu

Dr. E.B. McKinney

emmckinn@utmb.edu

Dr. E. Tumilty

emtumilt@utmb.edu



REFERENCES

- **Arthur Turner. 1982. “Consulting is More than Giving Advice.” Harvard Business Review (September).**
- **Carter McNamara. 2012. “Why Should Practitioners Know Their Paradigms.” Consulting and Organizational Development.” January 20).**
- **Cathy Charmaz. 2014. Constructing Grounded Theory. 2nd Ed. Sage.**



REFERENCES

- **Joseph A. Kotarba, et al. . 2014. “Collaborating with the Community: The Extraterritorial Translational Research Team.” Journal of Translational Medicine & Epidemiology (2,2) 1038.**
- **Joseph A. Kotarba and Kevin Wooten. 2017. “The Innovation Scorecard for Continuous Improvement as Applied to Translational Sciences.” Journal of Clinical and Translational Science. (<https://doi.org/10.1017/cts.2017.297>).**