

The Scientist as Consultant

BUILDING NEW CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

by Carl J. Sinderman &
Thomas K. Sawyer

Plenum Publishing, U.S. \$29.95, 340 pp
ISBN 0-306-45637-0, 1997

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The Scientist as Consultant is a lively guide through the trials and tribulations of entering, maintaining and succeeding in this career, from an "insider's" point of view.

The book provides information on, and evaluation of, different aspects of becoming a consultant, from entry into the field to various exit strategies. However, it falls short of being a comprehensive review on the subject due to the absence of information on a few key areas such as tax ramifications, and also because of the general lack of references for further reading or pointers for obtaining more information on specific topics.

The authors break the scientific consulting career path into three areas: the types of individuals considering the move from scientist to consultant, potential areas of consulting work, and operational considerations. In addressing the individuals, they comment on the advantages and disadvantages of consulting for several groups including the research scientist, university faculty and retirees. Special considerations for each group are discussed with an underlying focus on maintaining competence in a specialty through networking, participating in and editing journals and attending current technology symposia. They emphasize the fact that since financial gain is the primary motivator, hobbyists should be discouraged from getting involved.

When considering employment areas, the authors include discussions of legal (expert witness), international, and corporate types of consulting activities. The descriptions are accurate and effectively deal with positive and negative qualities of each area.

Sections regarding basic operations of consulting focus heavily on the subject of ethics. An interesting description (with graphics) of the forced fusion of scien-

tific, business and consulting ethics to achieve success and respect set the tone for all operational activities' mentioned. Other areas include marketing and selling scientific expertise, managing a consultancy, and completing assignments.

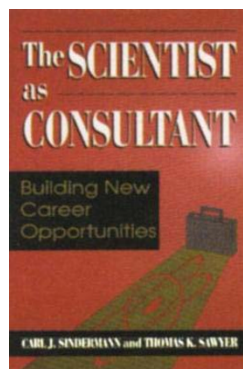
"Exceptional work must be done—all ways—as competence, vigorously applied, is what all prospective clients are searching for." To me, this quote sums up the type of direct and sometimes blunt style Sinderman and Sawyer use to unravel the complexities of scientific consulting. Their perspective, depth and insight into the field is a reflection of their professional experiences. Their wisdom and wit bely a self-confessed "scientific elitism" which, although it may hit home with their target audience, may not sit well with the general populous. To the authors' credit, the rather opinionated prose allows them to effectively relay the downside through topics like, "Clients from Hell", and "Dirty Tricks by Competitors". This style of writing is particularly effective in Chapter one, which discusses the "who, why, and when" of scientists becoming consultants and in Chapter three, "distinguishing characteristics of successful scientific consultants."

Direct and reasonable suggestions for overcoming pitfalls and for working through critical areas like "marketing and

selling scientific expertise" are provided in a useful format. The authors use information gathered through questionnaires and interviews to punctuate key points that are forced home using examples or anecdotes.

Although the text is deliberately aimed at a narrow audience, the underlying principles for success as a consultant have far reaching implications for the scientific community as a whole. Chapter three describes distinguishing characteristics of successful scientific consultants. From my personal experience I have realized that these characteristics also contribute to the success of scientific "teams" within the pharmaceutical

industry. Each member of the team is expected to bring his or her skills to bear on a problem, creating a "consulting" environment where the rest of the team becomes the customer. The key topics of technical proficiency, interpersonal skills, networking, negotiating, self marketing, presentation skills and time management are effectively addressed for consulting but are just as relevant for scientists competing in a variety of technological areas. Therefore, I would recommend this text to any scientist who would like to improve their performance and derive satisfaction from a team environment.



Nitric oxide in health and disease

by Jill Lincoln, Charles H.V. Hoyle &
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Cambridge University Press, U.K. \$39.95 pp 363
ISBN 0-521-55977-4, 1997

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Nitric Oxide in Health and Disease is one of a new series of books aimed at providing an essential introduction to both the theory and experimental approaches undertaken in some of the most exciting and rapidly advancing areas of research in biomedical sciences.

That nitric oxide should be included in this series is a tribute to this intriguing molecule—the smallest and indeed the first gas known to act as a biological messenger in mammalian systems. Despite its simplicity in structure, nitric oxide is functionally a complex intracellular messenger playing a profound role both in health and disease. The diverse nature of its actions has further intensified the interest in this field of research and has led to nitric oxide being ushered into the pantheon of messenger molecules with a fanfare of publications which to date stand at over 15,000.

Although *Nitric Oxide in Health and Disease* adds to a growing list of publications on nitric oxide, it is exceptional, standing out by successfully covering all aspects of the biology of nitric oxide in a single volume. It reviews the innumerable effects of nitric oxide as a chemical