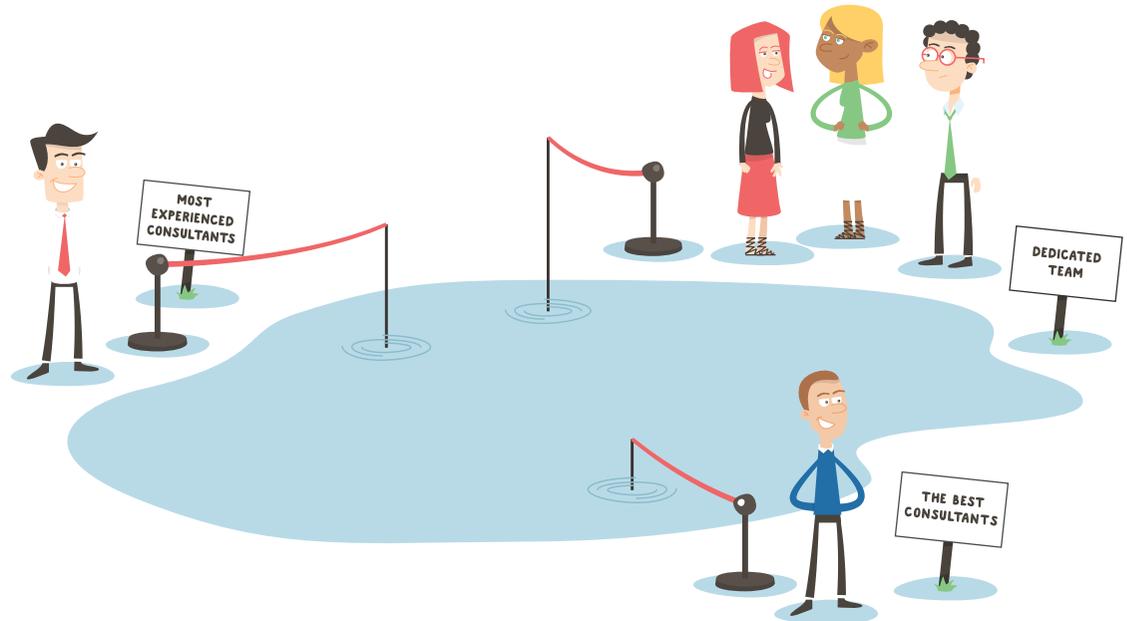


# How to Be an Effective Consumer of Epic Staffing Services

## What the “Big Guys” Don’t Want You to Know

Have you ever wondered where your Epic consulting resources come from? You probably have a salesperson assigned to your organization, perhaps you deal with two or three different salespeople from different consulting companies. You most likely call or email them when you have a need to engage a consulting resource. In a matter of hours, you receive resumes and decide which merit an interview and, finally, you decide, based on a resume that probably amounts to little more than a listing of past projects and a phone interview, which candidate seems to be the best fit to help you accomplish your goals. You don’t need to search far and wide to find consulting companies that provide healthcare IT staffing services. In fact, you may feel hounded by salespeople, some of whom represent companies with core competencies that may seem an odd fit to the world of healthcare IT—defense contractors, metals & mining, construction, and other companies attempting to fit service offerings geared toward retail and banking into healthcare. And no doubt you’re bombarded with grandiose claims of “superiority” because a company has deemed itself having the “most experienced consultants”, “the Best Consultants” “The Biggest Epic Practice”, and the “secret code” to extracting special considerations from Verona as “Epic Insiders”.

In today’s market for Epic consulting resources, the availability of Epic technical skill sets exceed demand. The healthy growth of Epic over the past decade has spawned hundreds of firms, peddling thousands of consultants’ resumes with some level of implementation experience. The market for this level of consultant has become so commoditized that distinguishing one resource from another



has become virtually impossible. Many of these companies can produce an array of resources with an impressive list of certifications. Dig a little deeper into those resumes, however, and it becomes apparent most of these resources, while certified, have limited to no experience in implementing or optimizing some of the applications in which they are certified.

The inference that consultants are “employees”, as most clients understand the term, is misleading. The vast majority of consultants are “employees” in the loosest sense of the word. More specifically, they are hourly contractors who bounce from one employer to another and one contract to another every three to six months. The reality is there is a finite number of experienced, true consultants in the Epic space and every consultancy fishes in the exact same pond for its Epic resources.

So how do you tune out the carnival barkers and focus on finding an Epic staffing partner to ensure you receive the right resource, providing reliable results at a reasonable bill rate? Read on for some tips on achieving just this!



# How to Be an Effective Consumer of Epic Staffing Services

## Tips for Working with Your Vendor

- Ask your Epic staffing partner what support structure it offers consultants.
- Have an understanding of market pay rates of the various levels of Epic consulting resources and ensure your consultants are within that range to help guard against consultants being lured away to another project for a higher pay rate.
- Does your staffing partner have its consultants leave you with a formal knowledge transfer document?
- If you are engaging a company to assist with strategy-level work, guard against a “one-size fits all”, pre-defined solution. While it’s always beneficial to take stock of lessons learned from other organizations, it’s rare that a solution for one organization can be copy-and-pasted to fit another.
- Inquire if your Epic staffing partner has its consultants complete a communication plan upon arrival at your site to detail with whom, when, and via what medium a consultant should be communicating project status, issues, risk, and the like.
- Be transparent in your expectations with your sales person. Don’t try to secure a high level project manager for an analyst rate. Many organizations find themselves in need of unbudgeted consulting help. Almost all consultancies will work with you on bill rate if you’re upfront with your budgetary constraints. Is your salesperson simply taking an order or does he/she have an understanding of Epic and HIT?
- Does your Epic staffing partner offer a Try-N-Buy option?
- If your consulting resource doesn’t work out, how quickly can your staffing partner find a replacement?



## Tips for Working with Your Consultants

- Be an active participant in writing a Statement of Work. Consultants will feel more secure in knowing what’s expected of them and you can extract maximum return on your consulting dollars.
- Do you want to hear how consultants have done things on other projects or do you prefer not to know? Maybe develop a forum to gather those ideas for future consideration, if you don’t want to hear about them now.
- Tap into the wealth of information your consultants possess. Have them conduct lunch-n-learns with your team (preferably co-host with one of your FTEs).
- You don’t need to explain every business reason to a consultant, but giving them a general idea of why a decision was made will help him/her execute on his/her deliverable.
- You manage these consultants on a day-to-day basis in most cases, don’t be afraid to actually manage. Consultants will welcome the feedback.
- Take into account a consultants cultural fit with your organization—if your organization is more Brooks Brothers than Aeropostale, let the salesperson know.
- When sifting through resumes, look for concrete contributions that consultants have made on past projects, rather than simply a listing of past clients with generic information.
- When interviewing consultants, ask Behavior-Based Interviewing questions to get a sense of how well a consultant will fit into your culture and is suited for the nature of work you expect him/her to complete.
- Consider adopting a productivity-based work agreement with your consultants, which will allow for remote work while eliminating concerns about work being completed.
- Communication, communication, communication—it’s impossible to have too much of it. Remember many of the consultants you bring in are “parachuted” into your organization and onto your project with no situational awareness of the major players on your team and in your organization. The most successful client-consultant relationships begin with an in-depth orientation of the project.

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