

Success Secrets for Interim Executives and Independent Consultants

No longer does an executive need to work for the same company year after year. Nor does a CEO need to spend months looking for the perfect executive candidate. There is a dramatic shift from needing to own an executive's expertise for a number of years to simply leasing expertise on an as-needed basis. *How I Fired My Boss and Made More Money* provides an insider view of how top-level executives are enjoying long and accomplished careers as interim executives and independent consultants.

"The gig economy is most often thought about as Uber drivers, Grubhub delivery people, Task Rabbit helpers, and so on. However, the increase in non-permanent work arrangements also now extends to C-level executives, who may not be accustomed to the freelance life. McAlister's and Wasley's book breaks new ground by helping senior managers understand the relevant context and providing the how-tos for setting up a business and succeeding as an independent executive."

Andrew Karpie, research director for Spend Matters Network

"The world is moving, make no mistake about it, in the direction of modularized everything—including employment. The employer of the future hires in more and more variable ways; and the employee of the future has many bosses. At the heart of this is the concept of the interim executive and independent consultant. If that sounds like you, then McAlister and Wasley have written the guidebook to your future. This is How You Do It in the employment world of the future."

Charles H. Green, CEO Trusted Advisor Associates, co-author *The Trusted Advisor*

"In your hands you hold a blueprint for your future. The next ten years is the decade for independents to shine and succeed. Kristen and Pamela share what you need to know and what you need to do in order to position yourself for more prospects and clients. The bonus revealed is how you can have more flexibility and freedom to create the life you want."

Mark LeBlanc, author of *Never Be the Same* and *Growing Your Business!*



Kristen McAlister joined Pamela Wasley to purchase the executive talent firm Cerius and serves as president. She is a national speaker and is published on topics ranging from operations and productivity to talent management and the contingent workforce.



Pamela Wasley is one of the founders and CEO of Cerius. She has served on several private boards, and is a frequent national speaker and is published on topics of mergers and acquisitions, the workforce of the future, and global contingent workforces.

\$20

How I Fired My Boss & Made More Money

Kristen McAlister & Pamela Wasley



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**INSIDER
SECRETS**

from Successful
Interim Executives and
Independent Consultants

Kristen McAlister & Pamela Wasley

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CHAPTER 5

Create a Relationship, Not a Client

Sell What You Can Do, Not Yourself

People are always more comfortable selling something or someone besides themselves. It's human nature. Many people just aren't comfortable selling period. We'll go into detail in this chapter, covering the range of sales situations, including getting past the initial hurdles of selling yourself, building a partnership with clients, managing client expectations, challenges, and rates.

Let's start with a common myth—you do need to be able to sell yourself to clients and referral partners.

Think of your background and the impact you have on companies as your product, not you. When thinking through it, take you out of the equation and use your company name, such as JKL Solutions, rather than your own name (for example, Jeanne K. Long). If you are challenged with this, make it a little less personal initially: think of yourself as talking about a friend or a company. Focus on the relatable experience, activities, actions, and results of JKL Solutions rather than those of Jeanne K. Long.

Don't Sell; Tell a Story Instead

Using a story about a similar company you have worked with, start telling a prospect what was happening in that company at the time, how you were a part of it, the great team you had, and the results you achieved at the end of that engagement. Make sure you describe the formula that made the team so great, because when you go into a new client, sometimes you aren't able to duplicate the same results because it will be a different team, different decision-makers, and different culture. Mentioning the team you worked with can also keep you from sounding as if it was just you who fixed the issues at that company. Ego and taking credit for everything rarely goes over well when selling yourself and your services.

Building a Partnership

For some executives, the sales process is seamless and comes naturally. For many, however, it is neither seamless nor natural. It is a painful process that seems like it never goes anywhere or drags on forever. If you are in that group, we've put together some guidelines for you to pick and choose from as you formulate your own process and style when working with clients, from due diligence to introduction to engagement.

For starters, stop thinking of it as a sales process and more of building a partnership. When we surveyed CEOs and asked, "when faced with a challenge or opportunity, what stops you from hiring a management consultant or interim

executive,” the top response was, “Trust—Believing they can do what they say they can do.” When building a partnership, you need to establish credibility and reliability in order to create trust.

Your First Meeting Is Not an Interview—Listen to Your Client

Practice reading people. Really listen; ask the questions that are important to the client and work to understand the pains they are having. If you don’t, they will likely end up talking about something that is not really the issue. Listen carefully and key in on what they are meaning to say, not just what they are actually saying. When answering their questions, again listen, and answer them directly. Stay on point as much as you can. Make sure that if you tell a story, it is relevant. Tell a story about a client or past situation that is similar to this client’s situation and focus on how you resolved it together with the team. This will be really helpful to them. We have seen executives who struggle to connect with clients or bridge the gap between their experience and what clients need have greater success using this technique.

Do Your Due Diligence

As much as you want business, not all leads are created equal, and neither are all companies. Each company and situation are unique. As much as the company will be doing due diligence on you, you should be doing the same. Not every opportunity is right for you, and not every company is a good client. Think of conversations with the potential client