
From Hot Mess to Favorite Client

WordCamp Jacksonville #WCAX



HOPE

FEAR



1. You

→ **Hope**

They're a cool person who recently came into a large inheritance

→ **Fear**

They're bat shit crazy and bankrupt.



HOPE

FEAR



2. They

→ **Hope**

You can solve their problem,
ideally for a price they can afford

→ **Fear**

That you cannot





YOU

THEY

Someone must stop the weirdness.

(Since you're the one asking for money, **that someone has to be you!**)



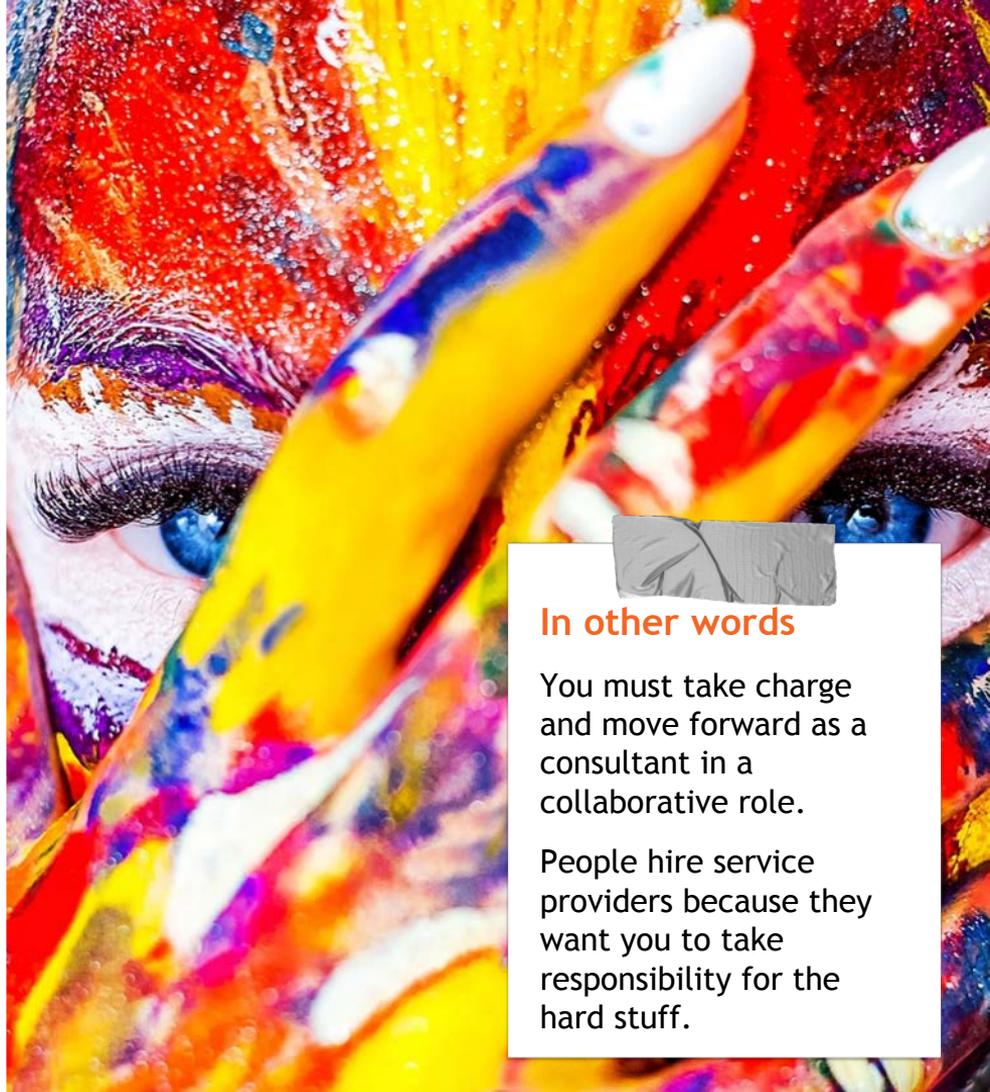
You've got to

Break the hope/fear tension, get the masks off and the walls down, cope with mixed motivation, and deal with issues of control.

And you've got a very limited time to do it.

REMEMBER:

When people tell you something's wrong or doesn't work for them, they are **almost always right**. When they tell you exactly what they think is wrong and how to fix it, they are **almost always wrong**.



In other words

You must take charge and move forward as a consultant in a collaborative role.

People hire service providers because they want you to take responsibility for the hard stuff.



Think about it

The customer makes the decisions on how to proceed.

Communication is limited.

Project is adrift with scope creep.

Pair-of-Hands Role

Many freelancers see themselves as being hired for a particular skill.

People who do not value themselves or their expertise leave money on the table, struggle with deals, and feel dejected.

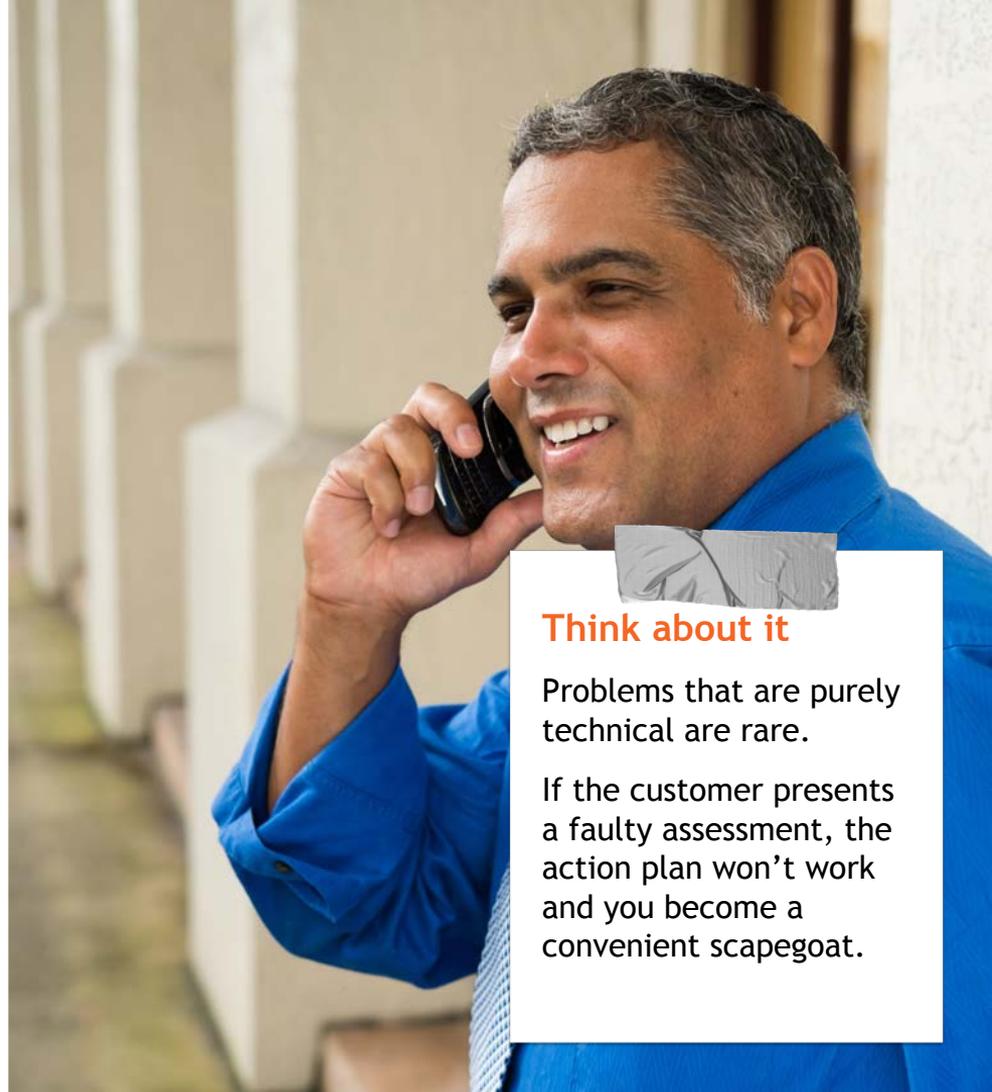
Expert Role

"You're the expert; find out what's wrong and fix it. Keep me posted."

Technical control rests with the consultant.

Collaboration is not required.

Two-way communication is limited.



Think about it

Problems that are purely technical are rare.

If the customer presents a faulty assessment, the action plan won't work and you become a convenient scapegoat.



Think about it

Consultants don't solve problems for the customer.

Working collaboratively takes time and may impact workflow as well as cash flow.

Collaborative Role

Problem solving is a joint undertaking

Equal attention to technical issues and human interactions

Customer shares responsibility for success or failure

Goal: Solve problems so they stay solved

A close-up photograph of the side of a yellow taxi. The car is bright yellow with a black door handle and a black side mirror. The text 'NYC TAXI' is printed in black on the door. The 'T' is enclosed in a black circle. The car is parked on a city street, and another yellow taxi is partially visible in the background.

NYC TAXI

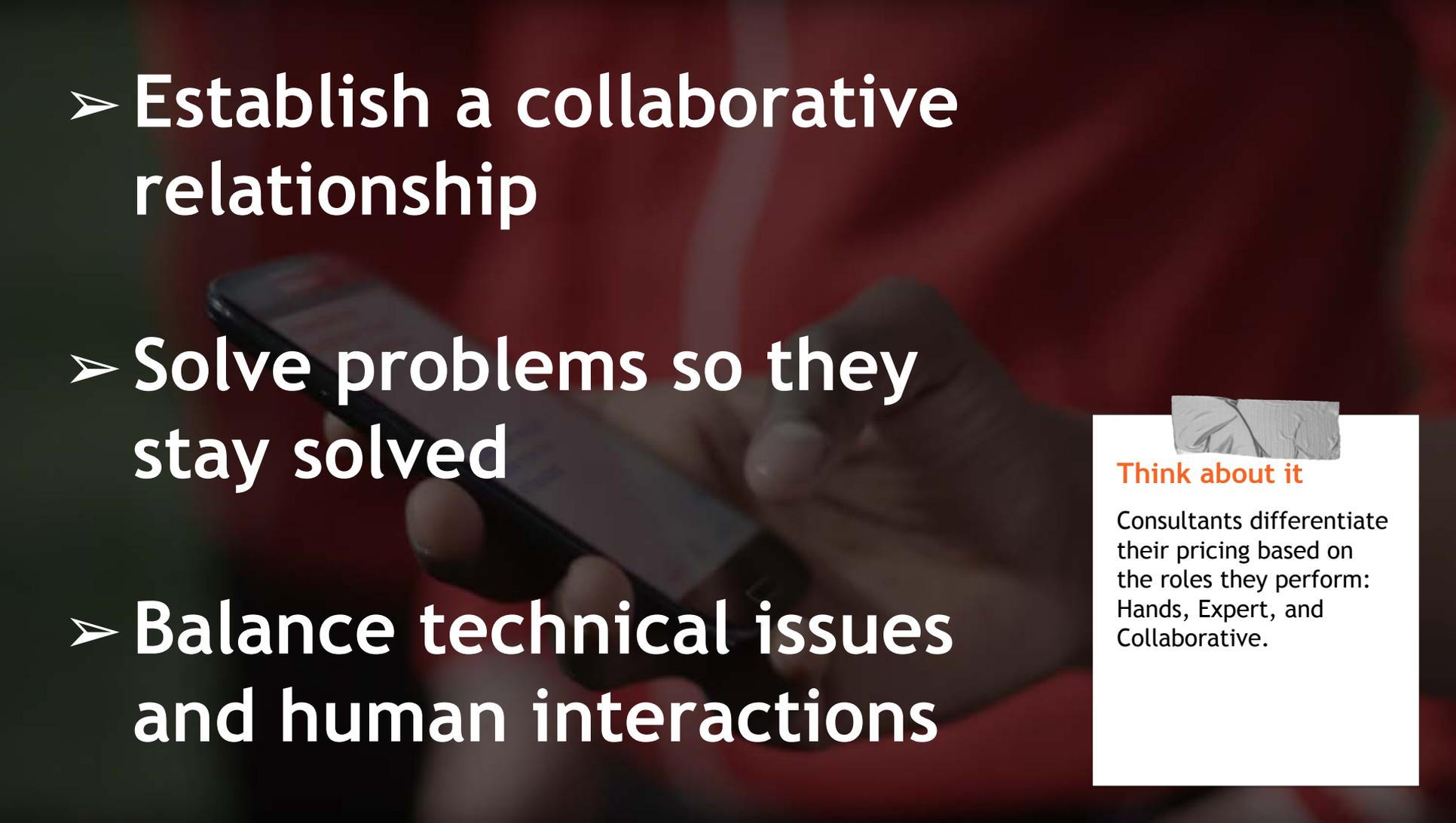
Consulting Roles

Pair-of-Hands
Expert
Collaborative

Robot

Technician

Agent

- 
- Establish a collaborative relationship
 - Solve problems so they stay solved
 - Balance technical issues and human interactions



Think about it

Consultants differentiate their pricing based on the roles they perform: Hands, Expert, and Collaborative.

Hourly billing. Is it unethical?

Most customers do not like you billing by the hour. They prefer a fixed price.

It puts the consultant and the customer in an adversarial role.



A photograph of a roller coaster track silhouetted against a bright orange sunset sky. The sun is visible as a glowing orb behind the track's structure. The foreground shows dark silhouettes of trees and bushes.

Clients who respect
you do not make
unreasonable
requests.

Resources

Process Consulting: Building the Helping Relationship (Ed Schein, 1998)

Flawless Consulting: A Guide to Getting Your Expertise Used (Peter Block,)

The Soul of Enterprise (Ron Baker, Ed Kless)



Kathy Drewien

My company rescues abandoned, ugly, broken, outdated, and non-productive sites.

I help savvy, confident, and thoughtful creative professionals evolve, grow, and create life-changing results.

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