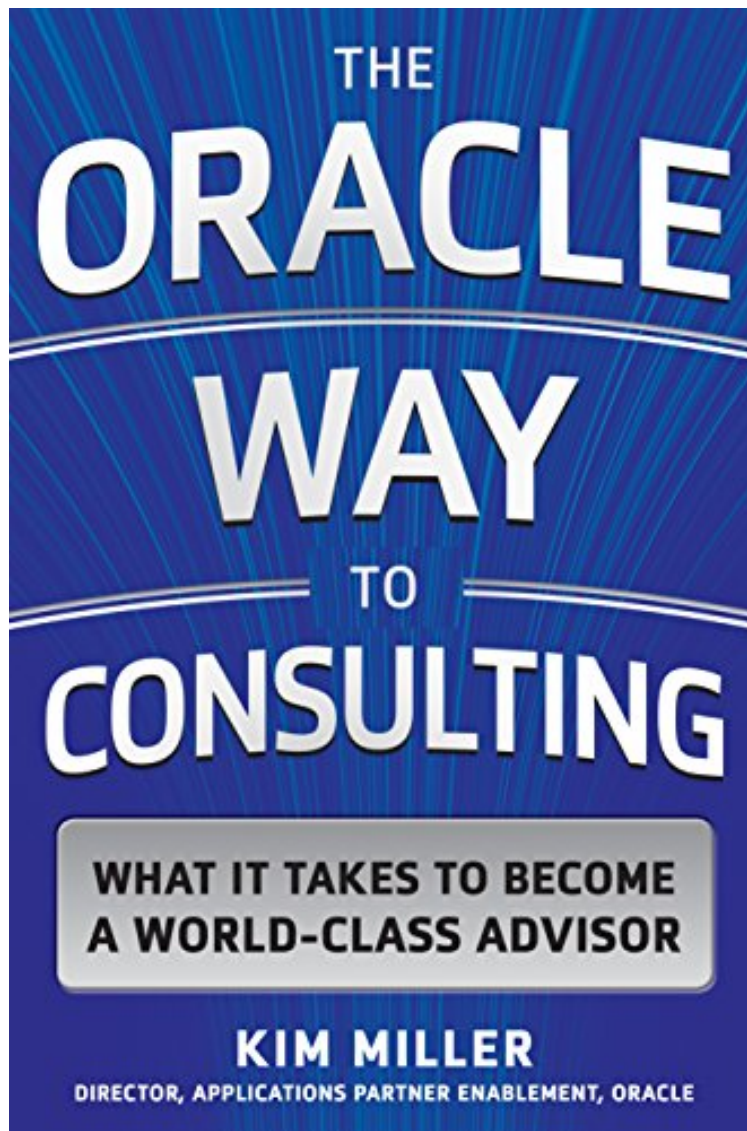


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Kim Miller

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Kim Miller : The Oracle Way to Consulting: What it Takes to Become a World-Class Advisor (Business Books) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Oracle Way to Consulting: What it Takes to Become a World-Class Advisor (Business Books):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The book to be the best Oracle ConsultantBy Angel SandovalNice book to know what it takes to be the best consultant.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. VitalBy

DarrenIngram_dot_com Oracle Corporation, the mighty computer technology company, is everywhere and whilst it is not as ubiquitous or well known as Microsoft or Apple to the average person, there is a very good chance that their life is touched upon quite often by Oracle's products. Becoming an Oracle customer is an investment. You do not just go to the computer store and pick up a ready-made system and neither do you ring a local computer dealer and they install something for you within a day or two. So good planning, product knowledge and industry awareness is key; an Oracle consultant becomes a vital cog in the machine, linking customer to supplier, finding the right solution to let the customer's business thrive and move forward. So armed with this book you may better understand your Oracle consultant, or any consultant for that matter; or if you are a consultant or thinking of being one you may be a much better one thanks to the author's advice whereby she lifts the veil on a proven method of teaching consultants that is central to Oracle's international business dealings. Oracle wants to be in a business relationship for the long-term. A trusted client relationship is key and whilst there are commercial pressures for both Oracle and its clients and sometimes disagreements, identifying and hopefully resolving any differences of opinion can be key for that successful, long-term relationship. The author should know her onions: she created the course Oracle Consulting Services requires each of its consultants to undertake. There is no such thing as a bare pass in Oracle's world and the company appears to put in the resources and support to aid its consultants who, in turn, aid its clients and prospective clients. High standards are not just expected or desired: they are demanded, it is non-negotiable. There is no shortage of 'be a better consultant'-type books on the market, but this one really found a little niche and hammered its way into this reviewer's consciousness. If the author is such an accomplished trainer, should one be surprised at the end results? Whilst taken in isolation it is hardly revolutionary, as a package of measures its simple delivery, unambiguous messaging and considered opinion does make it stand out. Investing in quality, demanding high-level responses and behaviour, plus setting the bar very high has its benefits. Even as a grumpy old industry veteran who has been there and possibly nearly seen it all, this book didn't disappoint. Is this reviewer too old to become an Oracle consultant: the book was not full of PR-speak extolling the company as 'The Place To Work' complete with capital letters, yet it did draw you in as a hard and hectic place to be, where professionalism and quality execution is valued, and where you would go the extra mile and then some, because in the longer-term it is the right thing to do. It is all very attractive and enticing! Of course, it helps when Oracle does it all under one roof. It can genuinely be a one-stop-shop rather than one cog in many with all the problems that it can bring in the guise of choice and flexibility. As the book notes: 'The software development effort at Oracle is a coordinated effort. The software, hardware, database, and middleware teams work together to assure that all of Oracle's products work seamlessly. Oracle's consultants have access to the individuals who wrote the software as well as a host of exceptionally experienced consultants. Oracle consultants frequently have the opportunity to contribute feedback on product performance and recommend enhancements, and so they are deeply invested in the overall success of the software. Oracle offers all its employees access to training in software and industry and soft skills. Any training that is available to customers or partners is generally available to Oracle's consultants without charge. Employees benefit from access to training materials before their general availability to the competition. The last and perhaps most important investment that Oracle makes in its employees is in the area of soft skills. Soft skills are talents that are needed to communicate effectively, excel in productivity, and be the type of person from whom others want to learn. Oracle's human resources team provides a library of soft skills training for all roles and levels of employees.' So many companies claim to invest in people - their people; they even get nice little logos and certificates to stick on their marketing materials. The cynical amongst us know the value of these certifications. The proof of the proverbial pudding can be in the eating. Even if your company is much smaller and your marketplace is quite fragmented, you can still potentially benefit from the Oracle Way in your way. The author does not varnish things, diplomatically noting: 'When people hear the word consultant, a number of images come to mind, and not all of them are positive. Defining what a consultant is and is not is important for both you and your clients. Setting the correct expectations early and often is crucial to a productive relationship. Perhaps one of the most difficult skills to learn is soft skills. The ability to gain the trust of others is part of your personality or it isn't. There are a lucky few who are naturals at this; other people are drawn to them, and so they easily assume the role of trusted advisor. For others, gaining this trust can be a stumbling block. To be an effective consultant, it is imperative that you be able to gain the trust of your client immediately and, equally important, retain that trust. Understanding the skills necessary to become a world-class consultant is the first step toward developing these skills. Being able to determine the areas where you have an opportunity to grow and learning how to cultivate these skills are important steps in the right direction.' Clearly, anyone can be a consultant and expert; even this reviewer has been known to don the consultant hat, yet there are many things he would equally not consult on, even if the end customer might not suspect a thing. Short-termism is an unattractive trait. One should aim for the long-term and a true partnership. Becoming an Oracle-class consultant? Who knows if that is always truly achievable... So in short, an excellent, powerful, considerate book that could stand you in good stead for a long time to come. Even if you think you know everything, a check of this book to be certain wouldn't hurt, would it? 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good for certain types of consultants By justsomeguyinla Having been an manager at a large

corporation where dealing with consultants was the norm, this book was an interesting read to get the consultants' point of views. Being interested in becoming a consultant myself, I thought the discussions of the soft skills necessary to be a consultant and the examples of dealing with difficult situations during the engagement were particularly useful. That said, the point of view for this book is a consultant working through a firm selling both the software and the implementation services to go along with it. In the book, the selling of the consulting services has already been handled and the engagement is being managed by a project manager so the skills necessary for both are glossed over. And when the author describes particularly thorny client/consultant situations, the message repeated throughout the book is talk to your manager. Good advice if you are working for a consulting firm, but not so useful for the independent consultant. In fact, the author doesn't paint a particularly nice picture of the independent consultant, although she tries to be balanced in saying NOT ALL independent consultants intend to steal intellectual property and cling uselessly to engagements for billable hours. As a former client of consulting services from firms that sold us software, I'll be balanced and say NOT ALL of those types of consultants are interested in enforcing opaque product licensing agreements and up-selling. Good read for the point of view presented. But if you are looking for books to help you start out as an independent consultant or start your own consulting firm, keep looking.

Become a master consultant using the training program created and used by Oracle The Oracle Consulting Way provides the essential tools and people skills a consultant must have to build trusted client relationships that lead to long-term business. The book defines what a consultant is and explains how to communicate the correct expectations early and often. Readers learn how to handle difficult clients, navigate challenging office politics, leadership techniques, leverage pseudo authority, and manage their own career path.

About the Author Kim Miller is Director, Applications Partner Enablement at Oracle, where she is responsible for innovating a program to ensure that all of Oracle's North American consultants possess the skills required to maintain the level of service demanded by clients; 97% became certified on Oracle products, a feat unmatched in the company's history.