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# Becoming An Independent Security Consultant: A Practical Guide To Starting And Running A Successful Security Consulting Practice

BECOMING AN  
INDEPENDENT  
SECURITY CONSULTANT



A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO STARTING  
AND RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL  
SECURITY CONSULTING PRACTICE

MICHAEL SILVA



## Synopsis

The demand for security consulting services is at an all-time high. Organizations of all types face unprecedented challenges in dealing with workplace violence, internal and external theft, robbery and crimes of all varieties. These organizations need help in dealing with these challenges, and are reaching out to independent security consultants to assist them. Operating an independent security consulting practice can be a profitable and rewarding business for those with the right skills. Many people retiring from law enforcement, military, or security careers would like to enter the security consulting profession, but don't know how. These people have extensive skills in security and loss prevention, but don't know how to translate these skills into a successful security consulting practice. While they have some idea about the type of services that they would like to provide, they have no idea of how to go about selling these services, what to charge for them, or how to run a profitable security consulting business. It is for these people that this book was written. Within this book, Michael A. Silva, an independent security consultant with over thirty years of experience, provides practical "how-to" advice on how to start and run a successful security consulting practice. Pulling no punches, Michael tells what it takes to be a successful security consultant, and explains why so many new security consultants fail within the first eighteen months. Chapters in this book include:

- Chapter 1 - What is an Independent Security Consultant?
- Chapter 2 - A Week in the Life of a Security Consultant
- Chapter 3 - The Skills needed to be Successful
- Chapter 4 - Planning Your Consulting Practice
- Chapter 5 - Determining What and How to Charge
- Chapter 6 - Selling Security Consulting Services
- Chapter 7 - Proposal Writing for the Security Consultant
- Chapter 8 - Selling to Government Agencies
- Chapter 9 - Selling to Architects and Engineers
- Chapter 10 - Security Consulting Services That Sell
- Chapter 11 - Creating a Business Plan
- Chapter 12 - Taking the Plunge
- Chapter 13 - Taking Your Practice to the Next Level
- Chapter 14 - Continuing Education
- Chapter 15 - Avoiding Pitfalls and Common Mistakes

This book is crammed with practical tips based on the actual day-to-day experiences of a working security consultant. Within this book, Michael tells you what works "and more importantly, what doesn't work. This book is specifically written for the person starting a one-person security consulting practice, and answers questions such as:- What types of skills do I need to be successful?- What types of licenses and certifications do I need?- What should I name my business?- Do I need a website?- What types of insurance do I need?- Should I rent an office, or work out of my home?- How much should I charge?- How do I sell my services and get consulting jobs?- How do I write a proposal?- What consulting services should I offer?- How much money do I need to get started?- What steps should I take before I quit my present job?- Can I start my consulting practice part-time while I'm still

working?- How do I grow my practice and take it to the next level?- What are some common mistakes made by new consultants and how can I avoid them?

About The Author Michael A. Silva is an independent security consultant that has over forty years of security industry experience. Michael founded Silva Consultants, his independent security consulting and design firm, in 1985. In late 2001, Michael suspended the operations of Silva Consultants to accept a position with Kroll, the world's largest security and risk consulting company. From 2001 to 2006, he managed Kroll's security consulting and engineering practice in Seattle, and was responsible for projects throughout Washington, Oregon, California, and Nevada. In 2007, Michael resigned his position with Kroll and resumed the operations of Silva Consultants.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Backed with over 25 years of security consulting experience, Michael Silva guides you through each step of setting up and maintaining a successful security consulting business. The focus of this book is the business and marketing side of an independent security consulting business. This he does in

a thorough concise manner, sharing his experiences, his thoughts and the realities along the way. Chapter two: A Week in the Life of a Security Consultant was an unexpected but, a welcome glimpse into his world as an independent security consultant. I particularly appreciated the examples provided to get you started in marketing yourself, the importance of influencers, how to leverage yourself with partnerships and dealing with the isolation and emotions of working independently. This book includes a lot of wisdom culled from years of practice; a worthwhile investment!

This book is well thought out, clearly written and easy to read. I'm in the process of starting up a physical consulting firm and this book has helped me tremendously. The author through his many years of consulting practice has laid out a blueprint to become an independent security consultant. In the book the author says if you have any questions to consult him. I had a question about light meters and the author responded very quickly to my inquiry. That's pretty rare in a competitive environment and I appreciate everything the author has done for me. This is a great book for any inspiring security consultant.  
by William B Wright SSMP,CPO

I don't typically write reviews, but I felt this book deserved it. If you are a consultant or are thinking about starting a consulting business, this is a great first book to read. It is written in a very clear and casual manner. The book lays out a dose of realism on what to expect and some of the common pitfalls that consultants will experience. I know this particular book deals with physical security, but as a cyber security consultant I found it very helpful.

Thoroughly enjoyed this book and has given me new found confidence in establishing my own consulting business. Michael does a great job of giving practical advice on how to be successful in this business. He lays out the realities of succeeding in this business, the mistakes beginner consultants make and even a week in the life of a consultant. Michael goes through and describes start up costs, and gives practical advice in what has worked for him over the last 30 years to allow him to become one of the most successful independent security consultants in the country. Highly recommend this book for aspiring consultants.  
Kevin Cliff-Director of Global Corporate Security

The title says it all! Written in a conversational tone and based on his 30 years as a security consultant, I highly recommend this book to those who are about to enter the security consulting field. In each chapter, he lays out very effective strategies and provides individual steps to get the business up and running as well as including how the strategy worked for him. You can read the

book like a checklist and implement each step as you go through the book. What a time saver when starting a security consulting practice!

This was well thought out and clearly written book! I have never worked as a security consultant although I have a lot of similar experience with governments always producing a steady paycheck. After reading this book, I have the utmost confidence starting my own firm using this as a guide. Many formal education and real life experience has prepared me for the work, but this book takes you behind scenes to run a profitable business and has left no stone unturned. Thank you!

The book provides a lot of detail on a little-known area of the security field. The book is well-organized and can also serve as a reference. The one-week narrative is insightful, and the planning section contains a lot of useful information.

A solid basic text for the newer consultant.

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