**Micro Consulting Q & A**

Following are common questions about the Micro Consulting program:

**Q.** **What kind of assistance can I expect?**
**A.** Following are just a few of the items we can help with (some may or may not take longer than the retainer time–but it’s your time, you tell us what you want to do with it):

* Help create a department plan of action. A high-level sequential overview plan that becomes the framework to accomplish your goals.
* Assist with creating a sales and marketing budget.
* Advice on channel options, such as which channel will sell your product.
* Someone to execute a turnkey reseller channel from scratch (or refine an existing one).
* Do a competitive channel analysis.
* Create a complete closed-loop lead to a closed sale tracking system.
* Write or assist with the department marketing plan.
* Review the best promotional approach (PR, advertising, SEO, direct response, events, etc.) and help implement it.
* A department capability analysis and recommendation (reviewing job descriptions and activities, helping the department and company get organized properly–the first step to creating a market-driven organization).
* Review the product definition process and help fix any holes or re-boot to get it right
* Cross-train the marketing department (or select employees) on strategy and all 4 P’s of the marketing mix.
* Help with a business plan and recommend methods to get financing.
* Temporarily run the department, or part of the team while you are seeking a replacement.
* Create a return on investment matrix and PowerPoint showing the expected return on projected promotions.
* Figure out how to initiate a company branding campaign.
* Do the qualifying search for a field rep force.
* Help prepare for a major event like a trade show, analyst meeting
* Put together a crisis management plan
* Create a sales training program
* Help design a direct response ad campaign or put together a national roadshow
* Train and level-set the entire marketing department, the product management team, or the new channel manager (have conducted multi-day on-site training sessions from coast-to-coast and worldwide (as far as Korea)

The list goes on. Having managed all aspects of a small and large marketing department, we can always do an assessment and provide recommendations for ongoing projects. Any of the single services below (packaging review and ad campaign analysis) can also be completed and covered within any Micro Consulting engagement.

**Q.** **How many of these packages are you offering?**
**A.** We typically only pick up about 4-6 *new* accounts within any one month (we work with 8 to 16 companies at once when they were on the smaller retainer amounts). To ensure accessibility, we can always book select times or select days where we 100% available to counsel or do project work just for your team. We’ll always try to make sure we are available to help at a time that works for you.

I have worked with some companies to complete the projects within one month (campaign analysis, competitive review, setting up their promotional campaigns), while others have maintained the Micro Consulting services for over a year–with a final project to help hire the right replacements. Availability varies. Companies pay for time–not for completed project work (since we only responsible for portions of the work personally)–unless the agreement is specifically for a completed project (i.e. delivering a completed comp plan, a MAPI plan, etc.),

Please [call or e-mail](http://chanimal.com/websites/staging/about-us-2/contact-info/) to find out if we currently have the bandwidth to help with your specific needs.

**Q**. **What companies have you worked with?**
**A.** Over the years we have worked with multi-billion dollar companies and a LOT of mid to small companies (including numerous start-ups–well-funded or single person self-funded). Recognizable names include:

GE, Motorola, Dell, HP, Disk Doctors, xTree, PC Tools, Compaq, Microsoft, Adobe, Autodesk, Corel, Innasys, WordPerfect, Ashton Tate, Disney, Harcourt, Goldmine, NEC, Indigo Rose, Mitsubishi, IBM, Epson, Iomega, Toshiba, AOL, IQReseller, MicroDivision, Aptora, Seamless, ProExecute, Babylon, Extreme Ease, My Business Manager, PTC, DataSoft, Novel, Zerox, Buffalo, Generic Cadd, Alpha Software, MoreGroup, Zebra Imaging, Spectral, Celedon, Ascentive, Boeing, Delta Point, Ingram Micro, Aldus, ScratchOut, Carry-A-Tune, DCA, Lotus, Netscape, Creative Labs, Dynamsoft, Intel, Red Storm Entertainment, Comodo, Ej4, Focus Partners, Interspire, and more. See [the client](http://chanimal.com/websites/staging/consulting/clients/) list.

**Q.** **What if I don’t use all the hours under the monthly retainer–do they carry over?**
**A.** No. If I had a vendor’s time carry over, we could end up with a month with too much work for the number of available hours (we work up to 200 hours per month. That’s why we set this up as a retainer basis. We’ve had retained accounts only use my help incidentally–but the impact was critical.

Others use every second of their time and then request more. We’ve had some companies miss their appointments and don’t use all their time–please do not miss your allocated times (time is reserved and there may not be enough other time available to make it up). We will contact you regularly by phone or e-mail to try *and* ensure you are getting complete value each month. This approach is not perfect since we are not available all the time like a full-time employee, but the value for the money is *exceptional* (see testimonials). On average we work more hours than are paid for–no cost, we just want to help.

**Q. How much time commitment should I expect?**
**A.** You will need to commit to at least *two to three* 1-hour meetings each week for the 10-hour program and at least *three to five* 1-hour meetings for the 25-hour plan–plus time on your own for any of your personal deliverables. We have the channel knowledge, processes, templates, and samples, but do not always have the domain expertise for your product category–but combined we can cover it all. In the meetings we will either complete the deliverables together (a working meeting, like when we have to review every page and policy of the portal together (so I can explain everything and get your live edits), or we review deliverables (such as the competitive matrix, the price list, etc.) or we project manage and get an update on our status (and then peel away to work on the items separately). The biggest snag we *ever* run into is if the company cannot keep their meetings–it slows the progress to a crawl.

**Q. How much time does it take to build a reseller program?
A.** It takes about 10-30 hours of consulting time (depending on what you have completed already) to finish the setup before we can start recruiting (which is ongoing until the company can do it on their own). To put it in perspective, this is only 1 – 3 days of actual time, which is *very* fast–but you can stretch it out in 10 or 25-hour increments (1 month or longer depending on your preferred Micro Consulting plan). It constitutes the following Phases:

Phase I – Setup. It typically takes 3-4 hours of consulting time to get the program defined, all the policies setup (NFR, MDF, Lead, Deal Registration), the agreement, and the 53-page portal site setup.

Then it takes 5 – 30 hours of consulting time to get all the content complete–depending on how much is already done. This can be the longest phase. Again, the more that is already done–the shorter the time. The record is 10 hours of consulting time from the initial meeting to the recruiting stage.

The content includes the competitive matrix (the longest item–but 3rd most-requested item by partners), the PowerPoint (with the “persuasive document” so it sells), Market Info, 25/50/100 word description, post any existing white papers, case studies, the graphics, plus write the recruiting email, determine the email system, etc.

Phase II – Recruiting. This starts with building the database, sending out three emails (3 days apart), and then the setup and orientation of new partners. We’re going for the first 10 partners to get our processes down, then we turn up the heat. This usually lasts 3-4 weeks. As the partners come on board, we also work on the final phase.

Phase III – Enablement. This includes the new partner signup, orientation meeting, then a follow-up marketing meeting to get the product on their website and have them send an email campaign announcing they carry the product. This is done simultaneous during the recruiting time period as new partners continue to join.

We usually stick with the companies long enough to get the first 10 – 50 partners and transfer what we know to the person who will head up the channel, then the rest is rinse and repeat. This last phase is usually about 30 days. After that, we can work on promotions to generate demand and leads to your new partners, but it is up to you and your budget. We then peel away but am available for questions as needed.

So, it usually takes 10-30 hours to set up, about 10 to recruit and start enablement. It averages about 40 hours to get set up, start recruiting and getting actual resellers ready to sell (again, to put that in perspective–that is about 1 week of our time helping you (which is amazingly fast, so far as actual consulting time, but your actual time depends on how long you want to stretch it out). Additional time can be used to help generate leads. How long it takes you is dependent on how much of the marketing items are already done and the number of hours per month you select. 10 hours/mo will take 4 months to complete the entire cycle (your first sale through a newly trained reseller is dependent on your sales cycle). With about 25 hours per month, it will usually take about 6 weeks before you have resellers–you chose based on your budget and resources. We often recommend you pick up an intern to help–we can help you find one (we have worked with over 150)–it makes it much faster and is very affordable.

**Q.** **What if I need more time during the month?**
**A.** Each package stipulates an hourly rate for additional project work required within a 30-day period. The higher the retainer commitment, the lower the ongoing locked rate. We can always work something out that will be both affordable and possible.

**Q.** **How accessible will you be?**
**A.** We are available via e-mail and/or cell phone from 7 am until 5:30 pm Monday through Friday (central time). On Tuesdays and Thursdays we often schedule evening calls on Skype with retained companies in Australia, China, Europe and elsewhere. If we do not have an open call arrangement, then we are available per our defined times or days. We attempt to be accessible to all your needs. We will admit that there are sometimes we are booked back-to-back, but we are usually pretty good at responding once available.

**Q**. **Are you available on-site?**
**A.** Yes, but we may have to schedule a select time or particular days where we can assist other pre-existing accounts. However, everything can usually be worked out just fine. If there is travel involved, we usually charge 1/2 the hourly rate during the time we inaccessible by phone or e-mail.

**Q**. **What are the terms of the agreement?**
**A.** The retainer is month-to-month with a one-week cancellation notice so we can notify additional vendors of availability. We are usually flexible depending on the circumstances. Our objective is to get the team on track, execute what is required to increase revenues (the bottom line), and help enable the company to wean themselves of our services with internal folks who can continue the pre-defined direction.

**Q.** **Have you had success with every company you’ve worked with?**
**A.** No. But so far we have successfully met the needs of over 95% of every company we’ve worked with–many hire us for a certain phase, execute and then hire us again later as they continue to grow. We get a LOT of referrals from previous companies, venture capitalists, rep firms, trade publications, and other industry consultants. Out of hundreds of companies we’ve helped so far with the Micro Consulting approach, we’ve had about four that we were not able to help progress. Mainly because they could not execute (repeatedly missed their deliverables (didn’t allocate anyone to take the lead internally) or *kept missing the meetings*).

For specifics. one company got a brand new CEO who decided to pull out from the channel immediately when he came on board–within a week after we started recruiting (he only had experience with direct sales and didn’t understand how it worked), another ran out of funding before he could complete his product, while another was acquired and the new company had a great channel program already and didn’t need the same kind of help. All in all, the Micro Consulting approach has worked VERY well. The approach is so novel, it was one of the top five finalists from CompTia for being such a good value and so innovative.

**Q.** **What is your billing cycle?**
**A.** We usually start billing whenever we get started, and then the automated system continues to invoice until we have been notified.

**Q. What forms of payment do you accept?**
**A.** Most of the companies pay electronically via PayPal (VISA, MasterCard, PayPal withdraw, etc.), QuickPay, check or automatic bank deposit. We prefer any type of payment that does not require that use to go to the bank. All companies that use the Micro Consulting program pay the upfront retainer. Net 30 is available, but only for the regular, non-Micro Consulting projects–usually by larger companies we’ve worked with like Microsoft, 3M, Dell or Autodesk–but the rates are much higher.