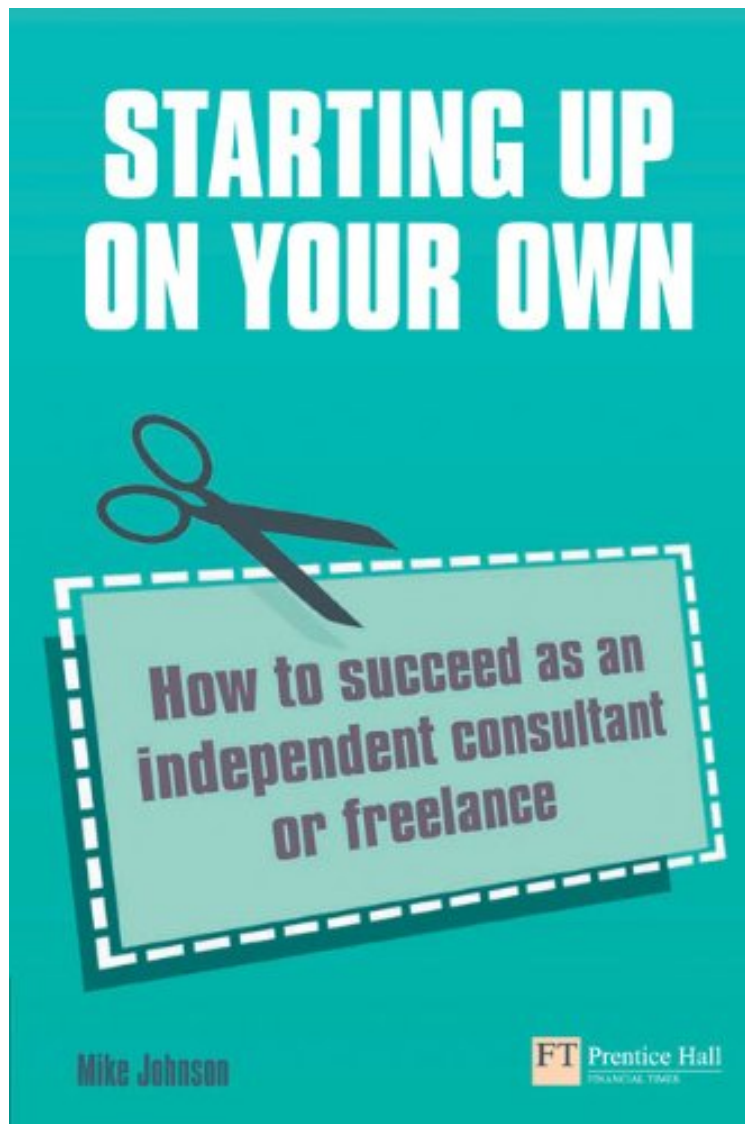


[PDF] Starting up on your own: How to succeed as an independent consultant or freelance (Financial Times Series)

## Starting up on your own: How to succeed as an independent consultant or freelance (Financial Times Series)

*Mike Johnson*

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**Mike Johnson : Starting up on your own: How to succeed as an independent consultant or freelance (Financial Times Series)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Starting up on your own: How to succeed as an independent consultant or freelance (Financial Times Series):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. and the chapters were broken down in an easily digestible mannerBy SlinkyThis book was straight to the point, and the chapters were broken down in an easily digestible manner. I wish

they had a version that was more tailored to the U.S., but all of the information was still quite applicable. As my first consulting book, I'd say this serves as a good foundation book to get started with. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Read this book By Susan Unrau Stucky This is a really sensible book. So sensible, you might think you don't need to read it. But you would be wrong. If you are new to working as an "independent" or "free lance", then, take everything Johnson says to heart. And I mean every little thing. Even if your business card "half size" and is a picture of your avatar, the print has to be of high quality, and yes, card stock still matters. If you are already an independent, you would do well to treat the topics Johnson covers as a checklist. I say this because I have worked as an independent. Successfully, I might add. I do recognize many of the scenarios he recounts. For instance, I made the mistake of taking on a partner. And then I made the mistake in the reverse. Becoming a partner of someone who probably should have stayed an independent. Others, I got right. I did have signed contracts when I started out. This and many other scenarios ring true to my experience. And remember Virginia Woolf? A Room of One's Own? As Johnson argues, you do need a space to work in that is not only not encumbered by such things as your family using the spare table to wrap holiday gifts (an example provided by the author). You also need to create a space, a place, where you go to work. Even taking on the practices of the work identity if that is what it takes. The author recounts an example of a guy who walked to the bus stop each day in his suit. And then returned to settle down in his home office. If you work for a large corporation in today's world, you will find that your work environment resembles that of the independent, free lance, more and more. I now work for a very large, global company. Yes, I consulted there as an independent. Yes I "went back in" as we say in that business. And, frankly, it is very nearly the same inside. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Starting Up for Veteran or Pup By Don Bates If you needed a key to what awaits you in Mike Johnson's 12th no-nonsense book, it's summed up in the final paragraphs when he says of success as an independent consultant: "[T]he great thing is that I am not looking at a date on a calendar when I will have to retire. I can do this as long as I want." I know Mike and that's exactly how he feels. Ditto for me although my consulting is far less independent. I do it in concert with colleagues at Stevens Pincus Gould Management Consultants in New York City, along with teaching for George Washington University and other organizations on writing and media relations. I know lots of consultants in NYC and DC who are 70-80 years old and still chugging along at full steam. Mike's been an independent consultant for the past decade after having founded a corporate communications firm with offices in London and Brussels and run it for almost 20 years. He's a big Scotsman, literally, with big ideas. This book sums up pretty much all that he has learned as a consultant. His writing style is refreshingly open and he guides you with step-by-step precision. He seldom meanders and he doesn't mince words. Starting with a self-reflective checklist entitled "Have You Got What It Takes?" he provides down-to-earth advice and counsel for those who do. For him you don't become a consultant because it sounds like fun, although it can be, or because the grass looks greener in the next-door consultant's yard, which it probably is if he or she is gainfully employed. You become a consultant because you can do what has to be done - because you have the right stuff - and that for Mike starts with a simple question: "Why do you want to do it?" Boiled down to its essence, he wants you to be as clear as possible about your skills, abilities and goals, and what you must do before jumping into the fray. As he puts it, "Consultant, know thyself!" To assist you he covers everything from helping you to understand your motivations to how to handle planning, marketing, sales, promotion, billing, collections, outsourcing, budgeting, and evaluation. And every chapter ends with a summary of its "key learning points." Critically, Mike also addresses the basics of finance and law as they impact the independent consultancy business. He even provides a sample contract to use when you land the first big client. The contract covers the touch points of a strong but legally tenable relationship. Consulting is a creative enterprise, he acknowledges, but it's a business, too. If you're not a business person now, you'll have to become one, although it's not as tough as it seems at first blush. But money isn't everything. In fact, for him it's secondary. As he explains, "All the successful consultants I know enjoy their work, profit comes second." Many years ago, a Wall Street Journal writer published a study of how a cross section of people became millionaires and one of the salient characteristics was that they enjoyed their work in addition to working long hours. Money was the payoff but the personal pleasure they got from doing what they did was the source. Mike is at his best when he gives insights about the subtleties of getting and keeping clients, without which everything else is a pipe dream. If you don't have customers you don't make money. Obvious, yes, but it's amazing how many people put out shingles and then sit back, waiting for the proverbial phone to ring. They don't follow the three rules for starting a successful independent consulting practice: sell, sell, and sell. Get clients, then you can build the fancy office, take the extra vacation days, lease the expensive car, buy the gold watch, eat in the chi-chi restaurants, befriend the wealthy, and put a lot of cash away for the rainy days that will surely come, if only with age. By and large, Mike hasn't missed much. I wish I had read a book like this when I first decided to become a public relations consultant. I would have saved a lot of wasted time and effort and been a lot more profitable sooner than later. About the only place where I discern a weakness is his coverage of - or lack thereof - of social media and their uses for independent consultants. I'll guess that when he envisioned the book and wrote early drafts that social media was pretty much an afterthought for most consultants, but today these media are an essential tool for expressing expertise, gaining press coverage, and attracting clients. For most consultants, they're still largely adjuncts to traditional media, but they're fast becoming a dominant



independent senior executive coach and consultant on leadership **HOW TO WORK FOR YOURSELF AND MAKE IT WORK** Are you thinking of starting up on your own and working for yourself? Do you need to know the nuts and bolts of setting up, marketing yourself, prospecting for new business and keeping things running on a day-to-day basis? Have you already made the leap and want to get more work, new clients, higher fees? This practical, no-nonsense book pulls no punches and gives you all the guidance you need to set yourself up, plus all the know-how you need to survive, prosper and expand once you're up and running. See the book's website for up-to-the-minute financial and tax information for small businesses and the self-employed: [www.pearson-books.com/startinguponyourown](http://www.pearson-books.com/startinguponyourown)