



# Consulting Demons: Inside the Unscrupulous World of Global Corporate Consulting

By Lewis Pinault

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In this gripping and colorful account of the American dream gone astray, Lewis Pinault provides the essential guidelines on how to get ahead and an enlightening perspective on the brutal infighting that can engulf even the most civilized consulting firm. This stunning exposé of some of the most prestigious and respected names in the business leads you into a world where a client's interests are skillfully subordinated to those of the consultants, where money rules the day, and where principles and morals are unwelcome baggage.

Humorous and insightful, this no-holds-barred account takes you behind the scenes of the dehumanizing indoctrination of an academic intellectual into an exploitative -- and exploited -- "global transformation contractor." Featuring new material dealing with the e-consulting industry's boom, bust, and its future, *Consulting Demons* offers the most complete look at an industry that exacts the highest prices for the most questionable standards of success.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

With the ubiquitous term *consultant* now being bandied about as practically every second person's job description, *Consulting Demons* is a book for everyone. At once an entertaining account of one man's personal odyssey through the various levels and organizations of the corporate consulting world, an informed opinion given to fresh-faced MBAs choosing this profession as a career, and an ominous warning to clients not yet privy to its inner workings, *Consulting Demons* is a compelling read.

Earning an undergraduate degree in political science at MIT, Lewis Pinault channeled his interests in space development into areas more salable in the late 1970s, namely, ocean engineering and Japanese. Hired directly out of college by a Japanese shipbuilder, he spent the next few years living in the conglomerate's dilapidated dormitories, mastering the language and gaining valuable project management experience. Pinault's introduction to the alluring world of corporate consulting came through company contact with consultants from the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), and a year later he'd been willingly sucked into the vortex of a fast-paced, all-consuming 12-year consulting career. His ensuing adventures led him throughout Southeast Asia, in and out of BCG, the MAC Group, Gemini Consulting, Arthur D. Little (ADL), and finally Coopers & Lybrand, and through a number of less-than-professional exercises in client scamming and industrial espionage (otherwise known as benchmarking).

Having left the sanctums of global consultancies to pursue his original aspirations in science and the law, Pinault has written an exposé of considerable force. Part autobiography, part cautionary manual, the book presents a dark picture of the world of management consulting; in fact, each of its chapters ends with a "Consulting Demonology" tract, including such topics as "Client Beware: Consultants' Spycraft Charms" and "Red Spots and Other Ruses Consultants Use to Close on Large Fees." Though Pinault's tone is sometimes rather arrogant, it serves to reinforce the nature of the consulting game, one that this book portrays as risky and lucrative for the consultant but extremely costly and often not worthwhile for the client. If you're already a bona fide member of the ever-growing management consultant population, read this book and measure your worth as a successful trickster or unknowing drone. If you're thinking of becoming a consultant, read this book and think again. If you're a client about to sign a pact with the devil (or its demons), beware. -- S. Ketchum

#### From Publishers Weekly

This expose is sure to incite envy and lust for the power and influence consulting entails, while simultaneously inciting dismay at the underhanded tactics consultants apparently use as a matter of course. Pinault, an international player in a number of major consulting organizations, narrates the story of his life as a participant in a number of corporate takeovers, reengineerings and project startups. The book is heavily dependent on dialogue, which lends an air of freshness and reality to business subjects often bound in stilted, academic prose. The story begins with Pinault's background: he tells how, having hoped for a career in space technology, he detoured into the study of Japanese and began his career working for a Japanese shipbuilding firm. This was followed quickly by his immersion into the international Boston Consulting Group. With the exception of a few detailed descriptions of actual consulting projects--the manufacture of disposable diapers is one--most of this account describes Pinault's rise up the consulting ladder, his struggles with the demands and stress of the job and the machinations of various consulting firms competing intensely on several continents. Pinault's work was sometimes skullduggerish, and he gleefully relates tales of his "benchmarking"--i.e., covertly, duplicitously discovering other companies' trade secrets--and low-bidding

competitors' clients. Interspersed throughout are pithy guidelines that condense consulting into simple lessons: e.g., "Cases that begin to show obsession with large quantities of data... run a high danger of fractured expectations." This is two books in one, the narrative refreshing and illuminating, the guidelines terse and educational. At times, both serve to highlight the shady, sometimes questionable activities that seemingly permeate this professional culture. (Feb.)

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From Kirkus Reviews

An unconvincingly moralizing tale of Pinault's 12-year career in the global-consulting industry that aims, none too successfully, to be the *Liars Poker* of its ilk. Motivated by a desire to attain the good life goal that tantalized him while he spent three years working and living in relative penury in Tokyo, Pinault, who had dreamed of doing work related to outer space or the oceans, took his first consulting job in 1987 when he realized the opportunities (and pay) in these areas were too sparse. Thus he embarked on a career that toured some of the major players in consulting: the Boston Consulting Group, the MAC Group, Cap Gemini Sogeti, United Research, and Arthur D. Little and involved him in some of the industry's most interesting and questionable work. Not surprisingly, most of that work involved providing clients with solutions that were either right under their noses or the most profitable solutions for the consultants—preferably both. In addition, Pinault worked on industrial-espionage projects, including one for a Japanese diaper-tape manufacturer in which he actually managed to produce a super-secret material sample for his client. Following the consulting trend of the 1990s, Pinault also implemented "change management," a kind of EST for corporations in which industry gurus freely used fear in the name of competitiveness. Throughout it all, he maintains here, he never really wanted to be a consultant and just did it for the money (how much money, he never says). Pinault seems genuinely distressed at the methods of some of his employers, but in the end, he is unable, or unwilling, to use his experiences to discuss any morals about greed (including his own) and corporate culture. Lacking the honesty and wit of his model, Pinault comes across as all dressed up with no one to bully, confound, or deceive. -- Copyright ©2000, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

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