

# MANAGEMENT CONSULTING NEWS

*all things consulting . . .*

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We received lots of feedback on Tim Berry's article, [Business Planning, Consultants, and Cobblers' Children](#).

One reader, Tony Wanless, wrote:

Tim Berry's article highlights a problem that I often see in my day-to-day dealings with consultants and other knowledge-based businesses. It is my experience that, when it comes to their own businesses, most consultants are poor planners and worse marketers.

Both issues are important because they point to a common syndrome: Many consultants are not very good business managers. Instead, they are often "doers"—an elevated form of tradesmen. They are purveyors of specialized knowledge or skill, but they rarely organize their businesses optimally to sell that knowledge or skill.

Perhaps the reason most consultants don't have business plans is, as Mr. Berry says, they don't really need them. What they do require are adapted strategic plans, or business management plans.

I don't view this as a matter of semantics. A business plan is, for the most part, a marketing document used by most businesses for a specific purpose: to persuade financiers to pony up operating cash. An adapted strategic plan, or management plan, is an internal guide to operation of the business.

All businesses should have these, of course, but they are more important for knowledge businesses because these enterprises rely more on intellectual capital (organizational, management and marketing skills) than financial capital.

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