

## Patterns, Idioms and Language for the independent consultant

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When is a consultant a consultant and when are they a contractor?

How does a consultant get work? And how is that different to a contractor?

Should a solo consultant put their marketing efforts into social media or old-fashioned networking? Does speaking at conferences actually lead to work?

And the \$64,000 question: how much should you charge?

These questions face the independent consultant almost everyday. For those of us who work alone or in small consultancies getting the answers right to these questions can directly effect both our own bank account and the benefits our clients feel. Those of use who have worked this way for a few years can see patterns and idioms but what is more difficult to see is how our patterns and idioms apply to others.

The aim of this focus group is to start identifying a body of patterns and idioms to help those of us who are independent and those who think they would like to be independent.

### **Structure**

We will start by having the independent consultants present tell their own stories.

We will attempt to identify reoccurring themes and explore whether these themes are patterns (with reoccurring forces) or just idioms, just the way it has come to be. In the process we will try to pin down - and differentiate - some of those slippery terms, like consultant, contractor and coach.

At this point we should start to see some patterns and idioms. We will also need to identify and define language - consultant or contractor? And some national differences.

At the end of the focus group we should have the raw data for pattern writing to begin. With a little luck there should be some patterns at EuroPLoP 2016.