



## The 4 Key Factors to Consider When Selecting a Consultant

*Selecting the wrong consultant for your environmental service needs could end up costing you a lot of money. It is important to keep 4 key factors in mind when you are in the process of choosing a consultant. This report identifies these key factors and addresses the questions you should ask before selecting a consultant. Knowing what to look for in a consultant will save your company time and money by getting results that work! Here are the key factors to consider:*

### 1. Technical Expertise

*Has your consultant ever done this before?*

Nothing better qualifies a technical professional than past proven experience successfully accomplishing specific tasks. Knowledge of technical and regulatory requirements and limitations along with proven experience working with regulators and clients to resolve problems is a key reason to hire a qualified consultant.

*How did their solution benefit the client?*

There is always more than one possible solution to an issue. However, some solutions may offer better short term feasibility than long term sustainability. There are cost-effective solutions and there are elaborate, expensive solutions. Success can be counted in many ways by clients. A good consultant keeps the benefit of the client a key priority.

*Was their approach sound and accepted?*

In many cases, compliance solutions can and should be straightforward as their implementation is well understood. Where innovation is needed, success can be achieved when your consultant has the confidence and experience to sway opinions that a unique approach will be acceptable to facility management and regulators. This is often accomplished by clear communication and negotiation up front.

### 2. Fair Pricing

*How did the invoice compare with the proposal?*

An experienced consultant knows their business well and should ask the right questions up front to understand the issues to be resolved and have agreement on the approach. You should be able to ask about a draft proposal that clearly states scope of service and schedule. A final, agreeable proposal gets authorized quickly, and provides all parties with a roadmap for successful solution implementation.

*Were there many change orders along the way?*

An experienced consultant asks questions up front and plans contingencies into the scope to avoid surprises or at least make change orders more succinct so that purchasing agents can modify purchase orders readily with minimal additional communication and/or delay.

*Did low price result in low quality work?*

It's always a buyer beware world out there. Low price often indicates that a bidder doesn't understand the scope well or will under provide in the end.



### 3. Responsive and Accessible

*Did your consultant respond within a business day?*

A successful consultant is very busy, but always has time to make good faith efforts to keep communications going. Often, it's in their best interests to hear what you have to say before going too far with an effort only to realize you tried to reach out with a necessary change in scope or schedule. It's just good business to respond diligently to customer needs.

*Did they offer and guarantee a schedule?*

While there may be many unforeseen circumstances in managing many efforts for many clients, a successful consultant is a strong project manager who can stay on top of resource needs, and prioritize client deadlines to make sure very important tasks are done in a timely manner and that other tasks have some flexibility. A confident consultant will ask you if a schedule change to accommodate other clients is acceptable to you where your deadlines may be flexible.

*How long did it take to start working for you?*

A seller-doer consultant can manage efforts and give you a strong start date for work. If you don't hear from your consultant within 5 business days of notice to proceed, you're not important to them. Again, a confident consultant will ask you when a good start date is and honor

### 4. Successful Negotiation

*Does your consultant have good working relations with regulators?*

Why do you see a lot of consultants at trade shows and conferences? They want to stay up on the latest developments in regulatory programs, see examples of well executed programs and projects, and maintain cordial and face-to-face relationships with regulators. These are the people you want working for you.

*Do they participate in outreach efforts earning respect and credibility with regulators?*

There is no better way to anonymously know if you're consultant is respected and understands their field than when you can witness them participating in outreach, whether presenting papers, writing books, or simply going the extra step out of respect for their peers. Confident and successful consultants don't see this as a burden, rather it's a service to their work community that people request and honor.

*Do they negotiate in your interest?*

Time and time again, we see badly written permits that strangle your flexibility to operate facilities. Regulations serve as the middle of the road, universally applicable standards. However, on a case-by-case basis, your consultant should be confident to ask for exceptions when they can present credible evidence that strict application of the rules is either technically infeasible or creates an unfair economic burden on your part.

**Avogadro Environmental** offers comprehensive consulting services to address difficult and often complex compliance management issues. We have extensive experience with operational and technical aspects of your industrial processes and pollution control equipment. We have proven leadership in regulatory compliance management and agency negotiation to address your occupational safety and environmental needs. Professional service is the cornerstone of our business. Our efforts are led under direction of a Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH) and a Professional Engineer (PE). At Avogadro, we deliver technical expertise, fair pricing, responsiveness, accessibility, and successful negotiation with regulators.