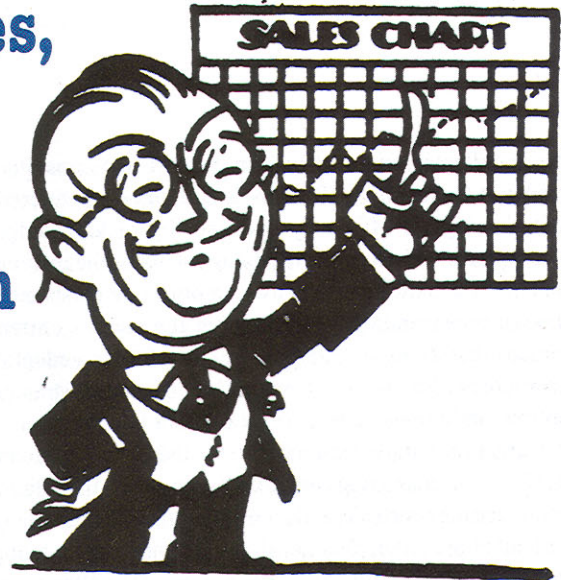


Insular client executives, monopolized business schools, cookie-cutter solutions — it's enough to make any trusted adviser get steamed.

We invited consulting professional Al Berrios to blow off a little.



It is regrettable

that when you hear the title “management consultant,” your eyes glaze over and you have a mental spasm at the inevitably high price tag associated with the title. And for what? To tell you nothing more than what you already know. Yes, there are many great obstacles for management and strategy consultants, especially those not associated with the large, global firms. Those firms don’t need to justify their fees, because their clients are almost always former consultants themselves for the firms they engage; in the meantime, all other strategy firms are left to explain their worth to jaded entrepreneurs. And rightly so, since the majority of strategy consultants mimic the big boys in method and knowledge.

Strategy is then left to the large firms to define and their clients to understand. Nonconsulting clients are left clueless,

and the consultants seeking to do business with them end up doing a shoddy job at explaining their worth to clients. Not so 75 years ago, when the deans of management consulting were rain-making among the early entrepreneurial titans of industry by proselytizing the value of letting their firms (composed mostly of young, inexperienced nonmanagers) analyze the heck out of the biggest challenges objectively and tell them how to manage their firms.

So what is strategy and how do you consult on it? For starters, you must understand that when you engage a consultant, you are actually engaging a teacher. Not surprisingly, the professional teacher’s tools and products are information. In order to properly teach, information must be collected before the teaching, but as part of an engagement. Once the infor-