Self-Employment in Public Health

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Self-Employment Opportunities

- Grant-Writing
- Program Planning
- Health Education/Health Literacy
- Program Evaluation
- Data Analysis and Reporting
- Strategic Planning
- Marketing/Communications
- Media Relations
- Event Planning
- General Consulting (all of the above)
- Contract Work
- Others???
Potential Clients

- Government Agencies
- Nonprofit Organizations
- State and Local Health Departments
- Hospitals
- Colleges and Universities
- Private Companies
- Professional Associations
- Insurance Companies
Advantages of Self-Employment

- Flexibility in work schedule
- Ability to select work location
- Ability to select projects
- Ability to choose colleagues
- Relatively limitless earning potential
Disadvantages of Self-Employment

- Must find work
- No Work = No Pay
- Possible unpredictable/unstable workload
- Responsible for work-related expenses
- Increased administrative responsibility—the “buck” stops with you
- Limited or no workplace camaraderie
Why Agencies Hire Consultants…

- Seeking expertise in specific area
- Need to satisfy short-term staffing need
- To help meet deadlines
- Oftentimes cheaper than full-time employees
Consultant’s Profile

- Risk-taker
- Outgoing
- Disciplined
- Self-Motivated
- Personable
- Good Communicator (verbal and written)
- Organized
- Creative
## Cost of Self-Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Office Supplies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated phone number</td>
<td>Equipment Repairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>Meeting registrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printer</td>
<td>Professional publications (ie. journals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copier</td>
<td>Professional association memberships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fax/fax subscription</td>
<td>Mileage and travel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scanner</td>
<td>Professional email address and/or website</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postage scale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postage meter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credit card capabilities</td>
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</tbody>
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MAJOR Expenses

- Office Space - $600 to $1,200 per month
- Health Insurance – Up to $1,000 per month
- Disability Insurance – up to $500 per month
- Professional Liability Insurance – appx. $400 annually
Other MAJOR Expenses

- Life Insurance - $30 to $100 per month...up to $1,200 annually
- Retirement - up to $13,000 per year
- Self-Employment Tax – Approximately 15% of income
Preparing for Self-Employment

- Develop a plan and do your homework
- Find a mentor
- Research consulting opportunities
- Find a niche
- Take advantage of trainings offered or covered by your employer
- Become an expert in one or more areas
- Build relationships in your field
Preparing for SE (cont.)

- Join professional associations
- Spread the word
- Save 6+ months of living expenses or pay bills in advance
- Be creative with your departure
- Maintain good relationships with former employers
- Start “on the side”
What’s Hot in Public Health?

- Health Disparities
- Obesity
- Health Reform
- Access to/Utilization of Care
- Patient-Centered Medical Care
- Public Health Emergency Preparedness (eg. Pandemic influenza)
- Information Technology
- Health Literacy
Getting Started

- Research, research, research
- Find a good accountant
- Get impressive letterhead and business cards
- Decide on business name and structure – incorporate or not?
- Register with appropriate departments and programs (e.g. small business, minority business associations)
- Consider industry standard and business expenses when determining fees
Setting Your Rate

- Check going rates, considering experience and education
- "Tate Formula"
  - Start with ideal (yet reasonable) annual salary
  - Divide by 2080 to get hourly rate
  - Add 30 to 40% for fringe
  - Add 15 to 40% additional for consultant expenses
Desired annual salary: $100K

$100K / 2080 = $48.07 per hour

Fringe: $48 * 0.3 = $14.40

Consultant Expenses
48 * 0.3 = $14.40

Consultant’s Hourly Rate:
$48.07 + $14.40 + $14.40 = $76.87

Hourly Rate: $77

* Note that 2080 hours a year may not be guaranteed.
Ongoing Considerations

- Staffing and Business Growth
- MFN Clause
- Insurance Coverage
- Retirement Planning
- Taxes
- Vacation and Leave Time
Tips for Success

- Commit to Excellence
- Push for long-term contracts
- Secure retainers, when possible
- Stay in close communication with clients
- Be flexible
- Follow through
- Define and Maintain Balance
- Give back to clients and community
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