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## **Article reproduced from the INVESCO Internal magazine**

### **Consulting skills workshop**

"Earlier this month I attended, together with Anna Schofield, a 3-day intensive Consulting Skills Workshop. Management courses bring out the best and worst in people. In my case, I began with a disgustingly negative attitude. Indeed, at a pre-workshop orientation coffee with the main instructor, John Williams, I shocked him by saying I 'deeply resented' having to waste my time on the course.

'I'm back office,' I said, 'I don't need consulting skills. And I've done this sort of stuff before. Why me?' I even lobbied Mark Armour (CEO) to wriggle out of the whole damned thing. Couldn't he see how precious my office time is? Luckily Mark is a wiser person than I and insisted I attend.

Well, I was completely wrong. From the outset it was apparent that the Workshop was well structured, very practical, and most useful in all kinds of corporate situations, not just in pitching products to the market. I'm normally easily bored but I found the long working days whizzed by. John Williams utilises lots of role playing, and unlike many such exercises, these sessions were apt and productive.

The Workshop covers the role of the professional consultant, communication and facilitation skills, understanding client needs, handling difficult situations, how to plan presentations, and how effective teams work. As can be seen, though these skills are paramount for selling, they apply equally to getting stuff done internally.

On the opening day, I wrote down three objectives: gain a good conceptual framework on how to do consulting; participate in INVESCO's development of a common skills base; and be stimulated to change my life (that last objective raised a few laughs, I can tell you). I'm pleased to report all three objectives (even the last one, though what happened is a secret) were met.

If asked to go, my advice is: don't be a grump like me, throw yourself into it. You'll be glad you did."

*Andres Kabel  
Manager Operations  
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