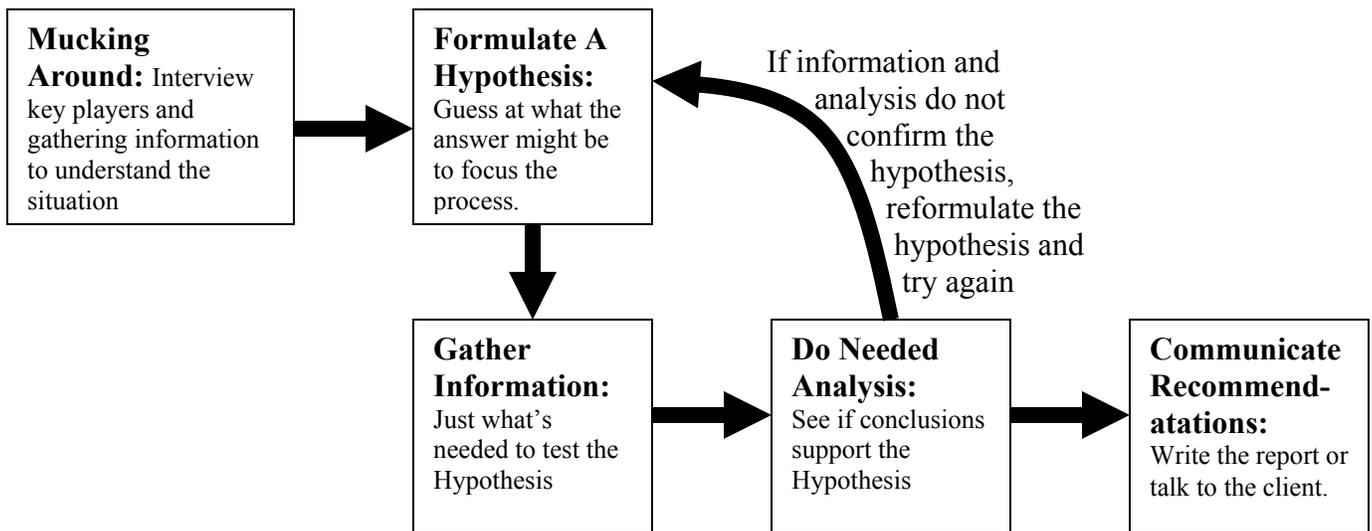


Chapter 4: Do I have The Consulting Skills I Will Need?

If you have been a consultant, then you may wish to skip this chapter. For those who are new to consulting as a profession, there are three specific skills that a consultant requires to do his or her job:

1. **Information Gathering:** Collecting information about a specific entity or situations and adding related information from personal experience or third party sources. Information can come from many places – interviews, research, available documents, the work of other consultants, etc. Most consultants find that there is too much information to deal with.
2. **Analysis:** Using appropriate analytical techniques and tools to develop conclusions and recommendations from the information gathered. There is a confusing array of techniques and tools for a consultant to choose from – ranging from just plain common sense logic to highly complex computer models. The trick here is to choose those that are appropriate. {Note: logical, properly structured writing can be a powerful analytical tool}.
3. **Communication:** Packaging the relevant information, conclusions, and recommendations in a way that will resonate with and motivate a client to take action. The package could be a formal presentation, a report, a letter, or just a private conversation – depending on the context and the need of the client.

Many times the consulting process is not a straight line from information through analysis to communication. The graphic below illustrates a typical process.



When a consultant formulates a hypothesis early in a study that proves to be right, many clients think the consultants already knew the answer before they did the assignment. In some cases this is correct, but more often it is the insightful use of experience together with the opinions of the key managers they interview up front (during the “mucking around” phase).