

## Adrian Ashton

Insight | Development | Encouragement

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# Adrian Ashton

*Adrian Ashton a highly regarded provider of advice, consultancy, training and research to various types of businesses, and was named as one of the UK's Top 10 Business Advisers by Enterprise Nation. We spoke to him to find out more about his approach, and get his insight into why consultancy is so crucial for businesses.*

When dealing with clients, I always try and structure my support openly and with clear routes through which clients can raise any concerns they may have about my support. Personally, I'd rather refer them to a colleague or other agency if it becomes apparent that I'm not best placed to meet their specific needs, rather than try and 'soldier on', as this does no one any favours in the long run.

Furthermore, I also try and use stories to illustrate concepts and ideas to help clients better relate to them, and simple analytical frameworks to facilitate what may otherwise be sensitive and difficult discussions.

In order to achieve the best results possible, I always seek to take a responsive and dynamic approach to working with clients around their needs and cultures. In some instances, this helps them identify and secure appropriate finance, whereas in others it's about supporting them while they introduce new products and services. Sometimes it can simply be about helping people gain the confidence and assurance in their own decision making abilities.

Through all of these (and other) interventions, consultancy helps clients to gain additional perspectives and a 'critical friend' to help them make better informed decisions about their future.

Across the corporate landscape, consultancy can often be under-valued. Moreover, cuts in funding to help businesses access it mean that there is an increasing risk that parts of the wider economy could begin to 'stall' from not having the stimulation and catalysing effect on their growth and further creation of different types of wealth. From my perspective, there is generally poor education about what it takes to be a successful entrepreneur and grow a successful enterprise.

As well as developing new models of support through which I can offer support to clients (#beermentoring has always proved popular with many!), I'm also the only freelance consultant globally to openly publish an annual 'social impact' on myself. This demonstrates the extent to which my business practices have supported the local economy, how I've mitigated my environmental impact, as well as other responsibility and sustainability measures.

