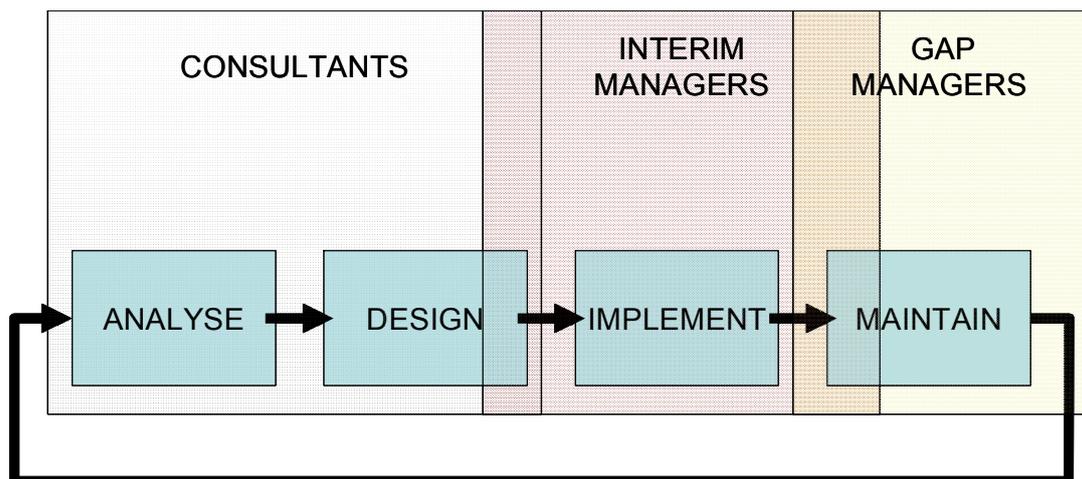


CONSULTANT OR INTERIM?

There is often a lot of confusion about the meaning of the word Interim Manager. It is still relatively unknown compared to consultant and probably consultant has become the generic word for people who help organisations improve performance. However, for many, the word consultant carries a lot of baggage. “They borrow your watch and tell you the time”, “They’re long on theory but short on practice”, “They work with you to build solutions, but don’t hang around to see if they work” are just a few of the less than complementary descriptions I have heard. Whilst it’s not usually particularly valuable to talk semantics, I have found the following model to be extremely valuable in positioning interim management with potential clients.



Any performance improvement initiative usually has four phases:

Analysis – Firstly we need to work out what the real problem is and what the root causes of that problem are

Design – An understanding of the problem will lead us to look for potential solutions and then select the most appropriate

Implementation – We now need to implement the solution, gaining the commitment of those involved and making all the necessary changes

Maintenance – Finally we need to embed this as the ‘new way’ of working whilst still looking for ways of continuously improving performance.

The real discussion I believe you need to have with the client is where they are in the above process and what input/advice/guidance they need to make it work/speed things up. You can then decide if you are the right person to get involved based on your own knowledge, skills, experience and preferences. Research I conducted at the beginning of the year confirmed there are interim managers/consultants who may only work in one of the boxes (e.g. there are some interim managers who only work in the maintenance phase and take on ‘gap’ assignments, where for example, they may be filling a role whilst the incumbent is on maternity/paternity leave), others may work in all four phases. It’s down to individual **CHOICE**.