

BAM Management consultancy Network	
Coffee chat: 23 November 2022 08:30 – 09:30 on Zoom	
Aims	
The coffee chat this month focused on: “How can retaining professional distance and objectivity be appropriately balanced with building personal relationships and cultural understanding?”	
Emerging themes	
1	MCs become skilled at being insider-outsiders. They seamlessly transition between being an insider and developing a close working relationship with the client, and bringing objectivity and expertise as an outsider
2	Distance and outsider perspective is valuable, it is what clients want and is part of the value consultants add.
3	Senior managers may have their own agendas and may hire an MC because they share their own entrenched views.
4	Some clients want to do too much too soon. Maintaining professional distance whilst developing a strong relationship is important to be able to say no to the client. It may be necessary to walk away if the client insists on a potentially destructive path, to avoid reputational damage.
5	Senior stakeholders may have different agendas or may not have the buy-in of operational staff. MCs must leverage their outsider status to deliver fairness and balance.
6	Consultancy is not just about delivery. MCs must objectively assess capabilities and mindsets/change readiness. Perhaps even advising the client to recruit missing skills. This is even more important if the project has been set up as a joint venture with measurable benefits.
7	Whilst maintaining psychological distance and otherness is important, building an emotional connection and developing mutual trust with the client is a key factor for success.
8	There is a connection between professional distance and ethics (not to be confused with morals although the two are connected). Consulting ethics is important and may warrant further discussion in this forum.
Next steps	
1	MCN members are welcome to propose discussion topics for future MCN coffee chats