Chapter 13: Working with Clients

The McKinsey Way — Ethan M. Rasiel • Executive Strategy Breakdown

THE MCKINSEY WAY

1 Partnering with Client Teams Rather Than Acting as Auditing Invaders

- ✓ Consultants who enter an organization with an arrogant 'know-it-all' attitude provoke instant institutional immune responses and passive-aggressive resistance.
- ✓ Position the engagement as a collaborative partnership: integrate client personnel into workstreams, solicit their practical wisdom, and share intellectual ownership.
- ✓ When client counterparts feel credited with developing the solution, they become passionate internal champions who defend the strategy long after consultants depart.

2 Constructively Managing Liability Team Members

- ✓ Client teams occasionally assign low-performing or politically disruptive individuals—'liabilities'—to consulting pods to remove them from everyday operations.
- ✓ Avoid public confrontation or overt complaints to client leadership, which damages political rapport and makes the consulting team look fragile.
- ✓ Constructively neutralize liability members by assigning them self-contained, discrete research tasks that leverage their specific historical knowledge without bottlenecking critical path workflows.

3 Driving Rigorous Implementation and Securing Multi-Tier Buy-In

- ✓ A brilliant strategy that fails to alter frontline employee behavior produces zero economic return; implementation requires securing buy-in across all organizational layers.
- ✓ Boardroom approval is insufficient; mid-level managers and frontline supervisors must understand how new processes benefit their daily workload and performance reviews.
- ✓ Establish concrete implementation milestones, transparent accountability metrics, and pilot programs to prove viability before rolling out system-wide transformation.