

# 'Plausible Deniability' and the Consultant

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## **Abstract**

The process of selling consultancy services to large and small clients alike is becoming more and more difficult. The problem may be seen to be particularly acute when the services on offer have a significant intangible component. The presentation discusses strategies devised in response to the difficulties of selling a little known problem-solving method (TRIZ), in the notoriously difficult area of creativity and innovation, with the hope that some of those strategies will have parallel relevance in the selling of other services.

Key to the successes now being realised in selling the TRIZ capability are tools to assist in the mapping of perceptions, systematic win-win strategies and, of particular focus during the presentation, the phenomenon of 'plausible deniability'. Plausible deniability is the reason that clients are looking for (either implicitly or explicitly) to justify their decision to *not* give you the contract. The presentation will describe systematic strategies aimed at, first, identifying, and then eliminating such reasons.

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Darrell is an engineer by background; having spent 15 years working at Rolls-Royce in various long-term R&D related positions, and ultimately becoming responsible for the company's long-term future engine strategy. He left the company in 1996 to help set up a high technology company before entering a programme of systematic innovation and creativity research at the University of Bath. He first started using the Soviet-originated problem solving method, TRIZ, in 1992, and by the time he left Rolls-Royce had generated over a dozen patents and patent applications. In 1998 he started teaching systematic innovation and creativity methods to both technical and business audiences. To date he has given workshops to over 2000 delegates across a broad spectrum of industries and disciplines. Through his small consultancy company, he continues to actively use, teach and research systematic innovation techniques with blue-chip companies around the world. He is the author of the best selling 'Hands-On Systematic Innovation' book series, and, with over 100 papers, patents and patent applications to his name, is now one of the most widely published systematic innovation specialists in the world. He is founding President of the European TRIZ Association.

## **'Plausible Deniability' and the Consultant**

Plausible deniability is the reason that clients are looking for (either implicitly or explicitly) to justify their decision *not* to offer contracts to external consultants. This session will examine novel and successfully validated strategies for overcoming the plausible deniability problem in the field of creativity and innovation consultancy.