

A Geocacher's Guide to Consulting

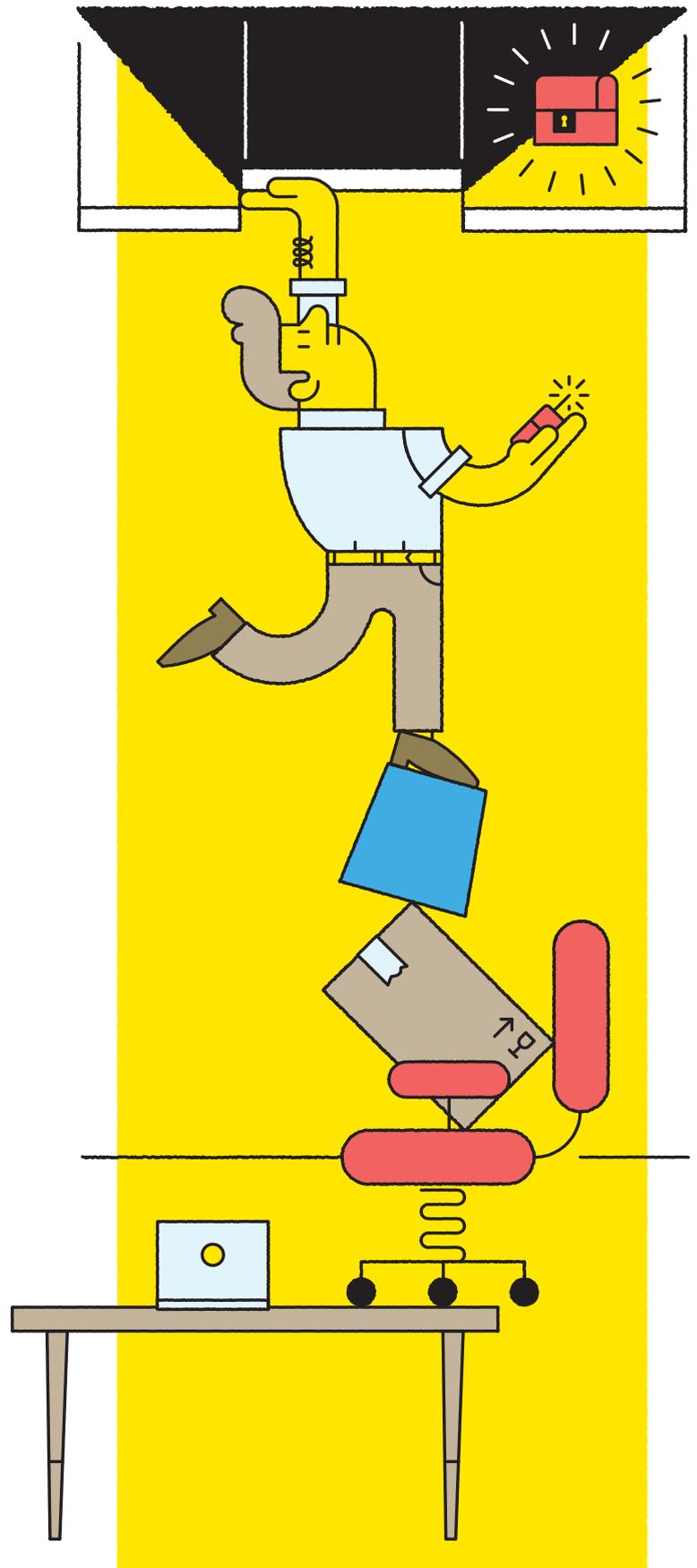
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A successful consulting engagement is like a geocaching treasure hunt. By identifying goals, determining approach with the big picture in mind, tracking progress while mitigating issues, and problem solving elegantly, we can zero in on the reward.

Geocaching is a location-based treasure-hunting experience. Two million containers, called caches, are hidden worldwide. You may even be close to one as you read this.

Hobby enthusiasts, known as cachers, follow coordinates and clues to find caches. The hardest, and most rewarding, caches to find are either hidden in plain sight in familiar places, take cachers to new places, or involve traversing difficult terrain. Experience leads to developing frameworks and methodologies. However, every cache has its own nuances; each cache is different. Consultants—does this sound familiar?

Let's fire up the geocaching mobile app and go on a hunt to teach you how to think like a cacher.





IDENTIFY THE GOAL

Determine target: Are there undiscovered caches in nearby familiar places? You may have walked past a spot every day, never knowing there was something hidden. Are you prepared to look in a new location for a cache? Exploring is invigorating but can be challenging. Consider enlisting a teammate to provide a new perspective.

Leverage SMEs: Do you have the skills to tackle the cache alone, or could you team up with a fellow cacher? Consider using hints or recommendations from cachers who have done it before.

 CONSIDER ENLISTING A TEAMMATE TO PROVIDE A NEW PERSPECTIVE.



DETERMINE THE APPROACH

Make a Plan: After picking a cache you are ready to kick off. Don't rush into "doing" without planning first. Take time to read existing documentation in the app. Identify the gap between your coordinates and the cache on the map. Understand scope and plan accordingly.

Zoom Out: Don't assume. Before executing a solution or admitting defeat, collect and synthesize all available data. Retrace existing documentation in the geocaching app. Replay where you've already looked to consider what you may have missed. Zoom out within the map to plan for potential obstacles, considering additional dynamics that might be in play—a tough terrain, extra audiences, or unpaved roads ahead.



 BROADEN YOUR PERSPECTIVE TO LEVERAGE YOUR EXPERIENCE.



TRACK PROGRESS VS. PLAN

Perform Status Checkpoints: Once you've made a plan, you'll know where to be and when to get there. As you progress on your hike-in, consistently check your compass to ensure you remain aligned on the planned trajectory. Are you on track? Have you become distracted by a new cache nearby? Stick to solving the problem you set out for and complete your mission.

Risk and Issue Mitigation &

Escalation: Perhaps a trailhead wasn't clearly marked, and you've veered off course. Maybe the terrain is steeper

 KEEP CHECKING YOUR COMPASS AS YOU PROGRESS.



or rockier than expected. When you (because you will) encounter problems, consider how to mitigate them. If you can, find a solution and continue to progress. If progressing is not possible today, note the circumstance in the app, and later get help to resume another day.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Art vs. Science: There are established scales of difficulty, size, and cache types. As you gain experience, it becomes easier to realize where and how a cache may be hidden based on your knowledge of typical containers or common hiding methods. Applying this knowledge helps you make quick finds. However, if you are not successful, broaden your perspective to leverage your experience more loosely to tackle nuances specific to each cache.

Keep It Simple, Stupid: Solve elegantly. Hiding a cache involves stealth to keep from alerting non-cachers to your activities. Non-cachers may compromise or remove your hide without realizing what it is. So, think like the person who hid the cache; if it were you, how would you have approached the hiding area? What is the most logical hiding spot?

PROJECT CLOSEOUT

Provide Value: After finding the geocache (and celebrating the win), put the cache back where you found it. If you realized a cache was damaged or removed, log it in the application. Follow the campsite rule and always leave the site better than you found it.



NEXT STEPS

Continual Learning: Synthesize what you've learned and apply it moving forward. Now you're ready to move on to the next one! ■

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