

February 7, 1962

Dear Charles--

A couple of comments I have been hearing about Q/S lead me to reiterate some points of philosophy about the enterprise.

1. We are not consultants at a functional level.
2. Most of us are already deeply involved in space work through university and government consultative responsibilities. We should be extremely cautious about leaving ourselves open to criticism on conflict-of-interest, which would be most acute if we actively consult on R&D work of an established company for defense contracts as a principal activity. In fact I am inclined to think that we should actively avoid space research because of these conflicts, unless we run into some particularly imaginative idea that could only be adequately be developed through our leverage on an industrial enterprise. But this should then be on the basis of a full-blown joint-venture, not the purchase of our casual consultative (and influential????) talents. I am afraid the jackals will be after us from both sides if we don't look out here.
3. Let us not piddle with small potatoes, unless.... as above!

I went back to the brochure, to pick it apart, and it is mainly impeccable. But the footnote to the cover is confusing: what is meant by, and who cares about "full participation by scientists". You surely don't mean to stress participation in a financial sense to our clients! That should be scratched without delay: it will do us far more harm than the cost of replacing it. I would suggest some wording:

Quadri-Science, Incorporated

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

The application of the highest scientific talent to the fundamental advances of American industry.

I realize that there is a lot of carryover here from previous thinking that was SBIC-oriented. But I hope to have persuaded you of a more ambitious approach, and I hope it is not too late to have this reflected in this publicity. We should add a mode 5 on page 4: 5. Furnishing industrial organizations with unique talents ~~opportunities~~ to review and recast their operations to meet the demands and ~~opportunities~~ opportunities of modern science and technology.

For my own part I would be quite disinterested in consulting of the usual kind that might be implied by mode 2.

These remarks are partly provoked by a conversation I had with Gil Levin of Resources Research. Frankly I am not deeply impressed by the technical competence he represents, but I would not object to a reasonable investment of just cash. His tone suggested to me that he is looking for some influence too, however, and I would be very touchy about having any responsibilities to him, as I am already too close to some of his proposals for planetary life-detection in other connections. But altogether this is just piddling, and I don't think we should be wasting much time with them. The big fish are much more to the point -- and I am not convinced that a lot of advance publicity is a positive benefit to help land them!

Joshua Lederberg