Consulting
First steps to get into the business

Have you ever thought about becoming a consultant? If so, maybe you have already wondered what is actually required to be successful in this industry. The following information will give you valuable insight into what it takes to pursue a career in consulting.

To begin, let me describe the responsibilities of consultants and their duties. The functions of a consultant are diverse. “What Are Consulting Jobs” 2011 In general, we can define consulting as a service “to help companies and organizations pinpoint business problems and trouble spots; help plot an organization’s next move; or generally transform the organization’s work practices to make them more efficient, productive, and less wasteful.”

These duties can be performed by one or more qualified consultants. The main goal here is to analyze issues and create solutions to the problems that companies face. In addition, they analyze these solutions within the organization, and ultimately implement them for the client.

Since there are many different areas in which you can become a consultant, there is a variety of majors possible to graduate with. They are needed in almost every field and required on a worldwide basis. Business people are preferably assigned for the classic field of consulting such as strategy, controlling or finance. However, Industrial Psychology graduates are preferred in the fields of human resource, staff development or personnel consulting. A medical practitioner, for example, can either work for hospitals or in the health care section.

That being said, the first step to take is to get an overview of a consultant’s field of duty. The best way to get this insight is by taking internships with consulting companies while being in college. This can benefit you in many ways. Internships will give you the experience you need to decide the direction of your career and provide you first hand experience working alongside professional individuals. It will expose you to the competencies needed to be a valuable consultant. It is important to find an internship within a company where you have demanding tasks, and are not just a runaround. If you prove yourself during an internship at a company, it may lead to a job within that same organization down the line.

The second step is deciding where to study. Nowadays, many options are available to you. You can either apply to a university in the US, or expand your horizons by studying abroad, such as a European University of Applied Sciences. The course of studies at a university offers a broad choice on a scientific basis. The opportunity to make the Ph.D. at a university is also beneficial.

Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) are primarily designed with a focus on teaching professional skills. The course of study is more related to practice, since most professors have previously worked in the industry. A University of Applied Science does not award doctoral degrees by itself, but in cooperation with other universities. A lot of UASs in Europe offer international courses of studies. Studying internationally is very beneficial because it can help expose you to a wide range of ideas, people and experiences that could make you grow as a person. It also comes to an advantage when applying for prospective jobs.
To get into consulting, it is crucial to detain a Bachelors Degree, along with professional experience. A company will be more likely to hire you if you have further experience and knowledge. Several consultancies have programs for Bachelor Graduates, for those who are interested in pursuing a Masters Program, which gives a minimum of two years of experience.

You might ask yourself how important is your grade for your future career? Your grade certificate should stand out, demonstrating which subjects were practiced with the highest priority. High grades in preferred subjects can settle lower grades from other classes. At this point, you are able to see the purposely concentration of your studies on your grade certificate.

Another way to earn experience is to work as a student adviser at your university, provided that your school offers it. Consultancy duties are rated positively if they fit in your field of study. This will allow you to determine if consulting is the right decision for your career.

Are soft skills important? Well, of course! Consulting firms and their clients attach particular importance to communication, especially with those with a high personality. Therefore, soft skills have an important role, next to the technical and methodical skills in the job interview.

“ConsultingFact.com”, Some important soft skills are:
- Charismatic and Social
- Positive Attitude
- Oral and Written Communication Skills
- Ability to Listen
- Leadership
- Teamwork / Team Building
- Conflict Resolution
- Time Management
- Work under Pressure
- Adaptability

Job interviews in consulting firms demand a few capabilities for the applicants. They are typically held by more than one interviewer. When answering a question, it is best to address your answers to everyone in the room. In order to leave a good impression, make sure you arrive on time, wear proper business attire, and communicate articulacy to all questions asked.

Another important factor is language. Being fluent in English is a requirement in most consultancies. Every additional language raises the worth of the adviser in the applicant’s pool.

In which way do the PhD degree and MBA degree (Master of Business Administration) matter? Both demonstrate that the applicant took a critical look on the prior chosen topics. Once again, the grades here are a critical matter.

“Management Consulted RSS”, 2010 Based on the average salaries gathered from some of the top consultant companies of 2013, the base salary one should expect may vary based on experience and level of degree. With an undergraduate degree, one can expect between $50-65K base salary, along with potential signing and year-end bonuses. In 2013 the average salary was between $70-75K during the first year following graduation. Whereas MBA graduates start with a base salary between $110-140K plus signing and year-end bonuses. The average here is between $160-200K in the first year of payment.

A career in consulting can be very rewarding, but will require a lot of hard work. As this industry continues to grow, companies will be searching for educated, talented and passionate individuals to join their team. Whether you are a student, graduate or someone simply interested in this field of study, this information is designed to help you take the next step in order to achieve your goals.

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