Consulting Careers

What is Consulting?

• Consultants give expert advice to people working in a professional or technical field
• They examine organizations, identify areas for improvement, and develop actions to create change
• Consulting jobs exist in every industry

What does a consultant actually do?

• On the job, consultants:
  o Are exposed to a wide variety of experiences and are taught how to apply lessons learned in other situations to the ones at hand
  o Provide an outside, objective view to an organization
  o Pinpoint business problems and trouble spots
  o Help implement strategies to make organizations more efficient and productive, and less wasteful

Consultants (usually…)

• Have a passion for ideas, client service, and people
• Are persuasive and convincing
• Have effective communication skills
• Can solve complex problems
• Are self-starters and flexible
• Have industry experience or expertise in a specific consulting area
• Like to travel

Types of Consultants

• Generalists: Work for a firm which provides a wide variety of advice designed to make enterprises run more efficiently
• Specialists: Apply specialized process and functional knowledge to real organizations with real problems
• Independent Contractors: Contracts to perform services for others without having the legal status of an employee
• Consulting Employees: Work for consulting companies and provide services to other organizations
• Sample Job Titles (Entry Level): Analyst, Business Analyst, Business Technology Analyst, Consultant, Consulting Analyst
• Other Sample Job Titles: Senior Analyst, Engagement Manager, Principal, Partner, Director, Officer, Senior Partner, Senior Director
Sample Internship Opportunities
• Internship opportunities in the field of consulting are very limited. Most consulting firms hire candidates with past internship experience and a record of success in a particular academic field of study or industry. In addition to consulting internships, students are encouraged to pursue opportunities within their functional area of business.

Consulting Focused Student Organizations

Buckeye Undergraduate Consulting Club (BUCC)
BUCC takes in high-achieving freshmen and sophomores to develop their critical thinking, presentation and networking skills. BUCC students then work on projects with real companies on a variety of topics to further enhance their skillset. BUCC also enables underclassmen to form a strong peer cohort early on in their collegiate careers.

Students Consulting for Non-Profit Organizations (SCNO)
SCNO is a national organization with a chapter at The Ohio State University. SCNO offers strategic consulting for local non-profit clients free of charge. Student associates add value to non-profit clients by translating the knowledge they have gained in the classroom and through their own employment experience to real world problems that non-profit companies face every day. SCNO is unique in that it benefits its non-profit clients while simultaneously developing its student associates.

Consulting Focused Academic Programs

Fisher Emerging Consultants (FEC)
FEC is a selective class for undergraduate business students interested in working in the field of consulting. Students selected for FEC work with Career Management staff to develop a consulting focused job search strategy plan, receive personalized coaching, and engage with guest speakers from consulting firms. Students interested in FEC should contact Sarah Steenrod at Steenrod.5@osu.edu

Consulting Industry Immersion Program
In the world of consulting, strong skills in analytical and strategic thinking aren’t just important — they’re required. By engaging with executives in the field and academic experts, students learn what it takes to specialize in this fast paced, highly relevant profession. In the Consulting Industry Cluster C-suite executives and Fisher College of Business experts take high-achieving undergraduate students deep inside the industry for a full academic year. The result is a depth of material and live business experiences typically found at the graduate level.
**Case Competitions**
Students interested in consulting are highly encouraged to participate in case competitions. These experiences offer students the opportunity to work as a team to solve a business problem, present their recommendations to a panel of judges, and participate in a Q&A session. Companies and consulting firms often use case competitions as a way to identify potential talent for their organizations by managing the student application process, providing the case, and having company representatives serve as judges.

**What are employers looking for?**
Due to the nature of the work in consulting and the high caliber of employees working in this field, employers are extremely selective in their recruiting process. They are seeking the highest performing, most intelligent students with a strong record of leadership and experience – essentially, the best of the best. Students must start planning for their consulting career early in their academic career to ensure that they have significant experiences to include on their resume and to draw from in the interview.

**Academic Achievement**
Consulting firms have strict GPA requirements, with minimums ranging between 3.0-3.5. Although these minimums exist, many firms expect much higher GPAs. Students pursuing consulting careers are encouraged to keep their GPA as high as possible.

**ACT/SAT Scores**
Some consulting firms encourage students to include their standardized test scores on their resumes. Some students choose to include the overall and quantitative scores, while others may include only the quantitative score.

**Consulting Resume**
A consulting resume must clearly and concisely gain a prospective consulting firms’ interest by showcasing the skills they are looking for, such as leadership, quantitative, problem solving, and teamwork, to name a few. While students pursuing consulting opportunities can follow the guidelines in the Office of Career Management’s Resume Guide, it is the resume content that sets the most competitive candidates apart.

**Involvement & Leadership**
Consulting firms place a heavy emphasis on leadership experience. One way that students can gain leadership experience is by taking on a leadership role within a student organization. Students are encouraged to get involved as a member of a student organization early on in their academic career so they can begin gaining leadership experience.

**Work and Internship Experience**
Students are encouraged to pursue consulting internships, but it is important to note that they are very limited in number. Students can gain very valuable work experience that is highly valued by consulting firms by completing internships in their field of study.
Professional Development
Students are advised to take advantage of the many professional development opportunities available to them at Ohio State and through professional associations. Students should identify areas in which they need improvement and plan accordingly. Here are some examples:

• Writing skills – consider a professional writing minor
• Public speaking – take an additional communication class or explore student organizations, such as Just a Minute (JAM) or the local Toastmaster’s group
• Technical skills – explore Excel training programs or classes with additional content in these areas
• Networking – attend a conference for a professional association in your field. They often have discounted student rates and very few students in attendance, so you have a chance to stand out.

Networking
Successful consultants must be skilled at developing and fostering relationships and there is a strong emphasis placed on trust. Taking advantage of networking opportunities is a good starting point for a student to determine if they want a career focused on building relationships with clients. Firms want to get to know candidates and want candidates to learn about their services and culture to ensure a good fit. Due to this, many firms offer events on campus, such as information sessions, coffee chats, and case interview workshops to connect with students. It is important for students to take advantage of these opportunities.

Connecting with employees at a firm of interest for informational interviews is also highly recommended. OSU alumni can be a great starting point and can be identified through LinkedIn by searching “The Ohio State University” and then going to “See alumni.” View the Office of Career Management guide to Networking and Informational Interviews for additional tips.

Consulting Interviews

Case Interviews
Consulting firms have raised the ante for those who want to work in their industry by utilizing case studies as part of the interview process, and several other companies are using case interviews for a variety of positions. By presenting an actual business problem and expecting a well-formulated and concise response to possible solutions, recruiters are testing candidates’ abilities to listen, analyze and solve problems on their feet. There are many web sites and books devoted to preparing for case interviews. One book that students find very helpful is Case in Point by Marc Cosentino. To learn more about case interviewing, see the handout: An Introduction to Case Interviews and schedule an appointment with a career consultant.
Tell Me About Yourself and Why Consulting?
Students should also be prepared to answer the questions, “Tell me about yourself” and “Why consulting?” Management Consulted offers great tips and advice on how to best approach these questions.

Behavioral Interviews
While much emphasis is placed on the case interview, as students pursue consulting opportunities, preparation for other areas of the interview are equally as important. Consulting firms are known for pushing students to include as many details as possible in their behavioral answers and Students should prepare using the Office of Career Management Interview Guide and complete their QUIC Interview by the end of their sophomore year.

Additional Consulting Resources

Modern Guild
ModernGuild partners with leading companies to curate intensive online Accelerators designed to equip all graduates with the core competencies and the self-confidence they need to land their dream jobs (consulting or finance).

Management Consulted
Management Consulted is the leading resource on all things consulting, with a focus on resumes, interviews, case interviews, and finding management consulting jobs! They have written many consulting articles on topics ranging from travel to salaries, from resume mistakes to summer internships, from exit opportunities to case interview preparation. Be sure to check out the “Free Info” section of the website, which even includes a free case of the month.

Consulting Firm Websites
The following sites include valuable case interview tips, advice and practice cases as well as information on company culture and what to expect on interview day.
Deloitte
Bain & Company
McKinsey & Company
BCG