



CAREER MINUTE



## Why Not Choose a Career in Consulting?

[By Nihit Aurora]

If you are a professional, chances are you may have given some thought to becoming a consultant at some point in your career. The business of consulting involves giving various types of advice to organizations and firms on different subjects.

Today, consultants provide advice on a seemingly infinite spectrum of issues in a multitude of disciplines, including management, manufacturing, engineering, e-commerce, finance, corporate communications, business strategy, corporate security, and a host of others. Rather than concentrating on just one industry sector, consultants often cover several.

To become a consultant, you will require a lot of expertise and experience in your chosen specialty. There are two chief modes of operating as a consultant. Management firms offer one route; their consultants work on client-based projects on a salaried basis. Other consultants prefer to work independently, providing consulting services to select client bases. Businesses require practical solutions to their problems, so it is necessary that consultants have sensible approaches to problem solving and essential business-related skills.

Major consulting firms have strong marketing departments, so in-house consultants do not get exposed to the practical details of promoting their

services to their target markets. However, independent consultants need to market their services and find their own clients.

It cannot be said that in-house consultants have more prestige than independent consultants do. The choice between employing an in-house consultant or an independent consultant depends on the client. In-house consultants work for salaries based on their previous qualifications and experience, whereas independent professionals set income targets for themselves.

This means that independent consultants need to specialize in marketing their services along with networking with prospective businesses and clients. Before venturing out into the market to provide consulting services, it is advisable to choose your niche market and study the requirements thoroughly.

Typically, both salaried and independent consultants pick up consulting projects for which they bill clients, usually on a per-hour basis. Depending on the firm's business and the client's specific needs, consultants

conduct appropriate research and collect data.

A consultant will perform an elemental analysis of the data he or she has collected and prepare a report detailing recommendations. This report identifies problem areas, the measures needed to make the necessary changes, and the steps to putting these recommendations into effect.

If you desire consulting work but are intimidated by the big firms, there is nothing to worry about. If you know you have core knowledge of a specific area, you should be able to get in touch with firms that need your services.

At this point, you may be worrying about whether you can earn your bread and butter if you decide to become a consultant. Preliminary research reveals that independent consultants command median annual salaries of more than \$100,000. In other words, independent consultants can earn more than \$70 per hour. In comparison, salaried consultants draw an average hourly wage of approximately \$40.



## CAREER MINUTE

Although consulting can be an exciting career field, it also has its drawbacks, such as client dissatisfaction and impractical deadlines. However, if you take the right approach, possess the appropriate qualifications and thorough knowledge of your business area, and use the right negotiating skills, consulting can prove to be

a worthwhile experience for those seeking a rewarding career option.

### On The Net

Self-Employed Consultants Lead Pay Scale  
[consulting.about.com/b/a/000007.htm](http://consulting.about.com/b/a/000007.htm)

Consulting  
[www.wetfeet.com/Content/Careers/Consulting.aspx](http://www.wetfeet.com/Content/Careers/Consulting.aspx)

EmploymentCrossing is the largest collection of active jobs in the world.

We continuously monitor the hiring needs of more than 250,000 employers, including virtually every corporation and organization in the United States. We do not charge employers to post their jobs and we aggressively contact and investigate thousands of employers each day to learn of new positions. No one works harder than EmploymentCrossing.

Let EmploymentCrossing go to work for you.