



CAREER MINUTE



Is Consulting the Right Career For You?

[By Roshan Tolani]

Consulting is an exciting and challenging career. In this age of growing complexities in business, there is great demand for consultants. Before plunging into the field of consulting, however, explore the field and consider how you might fit into the profession.

Career Options in Consulting

Consulting professions can be in general or specialized areas. Though a good consulting professional can be a great help to a large number of businesses, firms generally prefer specialists. Market realities have given rise to divisions among sectors such as strategy consulting, management consulting, and IT consulting.

Role of a Consultant

In earlier days, consultants played the roles of advisors to large business organizations in trouble. But the horizons of consultancy have widened in the last two decades. Though advice and guidance remain the mainstay of consultancy, many consultants help firms with implementation aspects as well. Re-launchings, reorganizations, improvements, and continual support are not necessarily outside the domain of a consultant's job today.

Is a Consulting Job Suitable for You?

Often we come across an abundance of media reports and anecdotes detailing great career opportunities and successes in the field of consulting. According to market reports, the consulting industry

currently offers jobs to over 300,000 people and generates annual revenues around \$30 billion. Although it may sound naive to ignore the growth prospects that consulting careers offer, it may be more prudent to analyze one's own aptitude, skills, values, and interests before considering consulting as a career.

Useful Skills for Consulting Jobs

Some skills have universal value. Interviewers always screen candidates to find ones with integrity, sincerity, and initiative, but the field of consulting has specific requirements. Broadly speaking, candidates possessing the following skills will always find favor with employers:

- Innovative ideas-in business, old ideas will have no buyers.
- Problem solving skills-firms will pay you only if they are unable to solve their own issues.
- Logical reasoning-the ability to tie up loose ends and learn from mistakes is crucial in the consulting profession.
- Presentation skills-great ideas lose

their significance in absence of good presentation.

- Statistical skills-when nothing guides, data reveals. The ability to see reality and trends from numbers and figures can boost your career.
- Ability to cultivate relationships and create networks-business is all about people.
- Ability to synthesize - the inability to relate to diverse issues can derail a consultant's career.
- Communication skills-the ability to listen to clients and talk meaningfully to them is the soul of any business activity.
- Computer skills-besides saving time and energy, they also help with accuracy.
- Business acumen-to be of any help to businesspeople requires tact and shrewdness.
- Team spirit-the union of minds can generate ideas in abundance and avoid mistakes.



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- Original perspective -as every problem is different, each needs a unique solution.
- Industry knowledge-without knowledge of the field, you'll be groping in the dark.

In short, your contribution to the field of consulting can be remarkable if you are original, logical, and passionate about diagnosing and solving problems.

On The Net

Thinking About a Consulting Career?
www.careers-in-business.com/consulting/mcyou.htm

Careers in Consulting
jobsearch.about.com/cs/businessjobs/a/consulting.htm

Careers in consulting - an introduction
www.topmba.com/mba_careers/mba_careers_news/article/careers_in_consulting_an_introduction

Consulting
fisher.osu.edu/fin/opler/consult.htm

Consulting: Skills and Talents Required
www.careers-in-business.com/consulting/mcskill.htm

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