

# **PRIMER to CONSULTING**

*“Your network and reputation are critical...  
these are more valuable than the work that you have done.”*

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**Student Centered • Career Focused • Market Driven**

## **Introduction**

Spring 2008

Congratulations! You have made an important step in making decisions about your career.

Many students are interested in a career in consulting. The steps you need to take to reach that goal can be exciting and invigorating. But it will also take dedication and intentionalized focus to make your dream become a reality.

Following is a compilation of advice, tips and suggestions from Boston University alumni who have made (and continue to make) a mark in the consulting field. This packet of information is by no means complete or exhaustive; rather, you should consider it a starting point. As you begin or continue your exploration of opportunities in consulting, use this guide as a tool to catalog your findings and develop your own individualized strategy in pursuing a career in consulting.

Good Luck!

The Feld Career Center

We look forward to working with you as you advance on your career path...  
whether that takes you into consulting or elsewhere.

## **Thank You!**

We wish to thank a number of SMG alumni who took time to provide their thoughts and insights for this packet.

SMG 2006	Accenture
SMG 2005	PA Consulting
SMG 2007	Arthur D. Little
SMG 2006	BearingPoint
SMG 2004	ZweigWhite
SMG 2005	Deloitte Consulting
SMG 2006	Analysis Group
SMG 2004	Deloitte Consulting
SMG 2004	Deloitte Consulting
SMG 2004	Accenture
SMG 2007	IBM
SMG 2007	IBM
SMG 2007	IBM
SMG 2006	IBM
SMG 2005	Accenture

We appreciate your time and energy and your willingness to give back to the students at SMG. We couldn't have done it without you!

## **BREAKING INTO CONSULTING... Thoughts, Tips and Suggestions from SMG Alumni**

### **PREPARATION AND RESOURCES**

#### **Course Recommendations**

CORE is most closely aligned with a consulting career. Learning the project life cycle is essential and a skill that often differentiates BU students from students at other top tier schools. Service operations was also a useful class, as I learned how to create process flows and swim lane diagrams, both of which I use on a daily basis.

SMG 2005/Accenture, New York City

A class that has taught me how to conduct a business analysis is MG422 Strategy & Policy. In addition to understanding principles of finance, marketing, operations management, and IT, it is very important to understand what to look for when analyzing a case and continuously question how a business works and whether there are more efficient ways to continue processes.

SMG 2007/Arthur D. Little

CORE is a great way to build many of the skills that are needed in a consulting career – such as effective teamwork and innovation. Make sure you highlight this experience in your interviews!

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting

The teamwork aspect of SMG prepared me best for my current position because nearly everything in consulting is done in teams. It is also important to understand analytical situations and I found that the Accounting and Finance concentrations taught me to think methodically and logically.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

There are no real specific classes one can take to prepare themselves for a career in consulting. But if you were looking at a firm like Accenture or IBM to join I would recommend an IT course which provides a general overview of what the current systems are and how they work (the basics). I say this because these firms are in the business of implementing new IT systems and having some familiarity with that field will help you in the very beginning.

SMG 2006/Accenture

The year I took MG 422 it had a consulting team project – that was extremely helpful. Other than that, try to get in some classes into your schedule that you might be consulting in – e.g. if you are going into IT consulting take some IS classes. In general, writing skills are highly valued.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

MG – Good consultants must be able to analyze problems from many different angles. MG ties together all the lessons learned in the variety of classes and forces students to think analytically.

Depending on the type of consulting you are getting into (e.g. Strategy, Human Capital, Technology, etc) some classes and/or concentrations are going to be more relevant.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting, Irving, TX

That depends on what you want to focus on. Basic finance courses are always helpful, but you can go into consulting in so many different fields that there is no specific set of courses. I went into the banking group at IBM, so I loaded up on Finance courses. Obviously, if I were going into Information Systems or Operations Management, I would have taken courses in those fields.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Econometrics, Statistics and Economics courses are great to take.

SMG 2006/Analysis Group Inc., Boston

Two items of SMG courses prepare students for consulting - team dynamics and reuse. Every consulting position will focus heavily on teams and the dynamics you learn from your teams go a long way to getting you to be a productive team member. Secondly, reuse is a very important function of consulting. You need to effectively leverage the resources around you and adapt existing work.

SMG 2004/Accenture, Boston

Obviously it will depend on the type of consulting you want to go into (Marketing, IT, strategy). If you have a focus (like IT or finance) then those courses would be important to understand the fundamentals. But more than anything, Strategy and Policy as well as some basic HR theory courses were the most applicable. You'd be surprised how much psychology/incentive behavior goes into consulting (in my job anyway).

SMG 2004/ZweigWhite, Natick, MA

Consulting firms like well-rounded individuals and will hire students of all backgrounds - liberal arts, education, etc. As long as you are smart, motivated, and analytical, the firm will most likely consider you. You ideally should be articulate and have good social/interpersonal skills, as consulting is "client-facing" and a people's business. To speak about IBM in particular, it is a technology-based firm and lots of consultants have engineering and computer science backgrounds in addition to business/management.

SMG 2006/IBM

The strategy courses senior year were very helpful.... Anything involving a lot of case studies is similar to what you end up doing in consulting – taking an often complex problem, breaking it down into manageable pieces, and solving it, and then implementing your solution.

SMG 2005/PA Consulting, Boston

Customer Services Marketing with Professor Clarke - You work on a project where a real client has hired BU to assess a problem it is having and provide recommendations.

SMG 2005/Deloitte Consulting, Boston

I am in IT management system consulting with Financial Services client focus. Therefore, all the Finance Concentration courses were very useful. I am actually taking training courses in finance that are a review of the finance courses for me. Also, because I am in IT system consulting, the IT class during CORE became valuable as well.

SMG 2006/BearingPoint

## **Resources**

Wall Street Journal's College Journal website was most helpful for me. And while big firms are very different than small firms, a lot of the big firms have good industry information on their websites (McKinsey, etc.).

SMG 2004/ZweigWhite, Natick, MA

The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century (Thomas L. Friedman) gives a great history of outsourcing.

SMG 2004/Accenture, Boston

### The Economist

SMG 2006/Analysis Group Inc., Boston

The BCG (Boston Consulting Group; [www.bcg.com](http://www.bcg.com)) website has a lot of case studies that are good preparation for interviewing for consulting jobs. Really, any management strategy and theory books are good background to being a well-read consultant.

SMG 2005/PA Consulting, Boston

Consulting is about people and relationships.

There are no must read books unless you want to specialize in a particular field (i.e., IT or Finance). In that case, learn as much about that field or industry as you can and gain whatever relevant experience that you can.

SMG 2005/Deloitte Consulting, Boston

[www.Wetfeet.com](http://www.Wetfeet.com)  
[www.vault.com](http://www.vault.com)

SMG 2006/BearingPoint

Vault – Career Guide to Consulting. This book is fantastic! It describes common brain teasers, business cases, how to handle an interview, dress code, and feedback from people who interviewed at top firms.

SMG 2007/Arthur D. Little

Reading the Wall Street Journal, the Financial Times, The Economist and other business periodicals is always useful. The Vault Guide to Finance Interviews was very useful for me during my interview process.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Case studies from any academic class. Real-life examples are the most effective in conveying an idea.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting, Irving, TX

The company's website is a great place to find out about a company and then just "googling" the company name and going to page 6 or 7 of the results helps you find the new articles published about that company (first few pages are actually from the company and no bad information is usually on those)

SMG 2006/Accenture

The Vault Guide to Consulting has some great information about the different types of consulting firms, positions and interview questions. I found that the practice brainteasers section was really helpful for the estimating and "out-of-the-box thinking" questions I was asked in my interviews. If you are interested in some more lighthearted and perhaps pessimistic insights into the consulting industry I recommend "Consulting Demons: Inside the Unscrupulous World of Global Corporate Consulting" by Lewis Pinault.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

### **Resume/Cover Letter Tips**

Highlight anything showing problem-solving and analytical skills; these make you marketable. You should definitely be able to prove that you have good time management skills and can handle several different tasks/projects at once without getting frazzled.

SMG 2005/PA Consulting, Boston

As always, cover letters should be tailored to both the firm you are applying to and the industry and profession they are in. Your cover letter should highlight your work and experience in areas that relate to what you would be doing at the job you are applying for. Likewise, your resume should be similarly tailored to suit your needs. Be sure to highlight projects or work experience in areas that the job is in (I put emphasis on my work in banking and Sarbox compliance for my job in the risk and compliance practice within the banking group) and emphasize your strong skills.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Tailor cover letters to each specific company. Find out what differentiates Accenture from IBM or Deloitte. Look in the 401K for specifics. Also, in consulting clients often times reflect the value of the consulting company (e.g., a JP Morgan client versus mid or small tier investment bank client). Research the specific clients associated with the consulting firm of choice and mention those client names in the cover letter or when interviewing.

SMG 2005/Accenture, New York City

NO FORM cover letters. Write a custom cover letter for each consulting firm that you apply to and talk to someone at that firm to see what they are looking for in an analyst / consultant.

Your resume must have leadership experience. While a high GPA is necessary, leadership and personality are what gets you the job.

SMG 2005/Deloitte Consulting, Boston

Be very polished and professional in all documents you submit. Consulting firms get so many applicants that any misspelling or mistake can be a reason to eliminate a candidate during the screening process. Try to quantify the impact that you have made during internships to make it easy for recruiters to see that you were successful in your job.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

State your research experiences.

SMG 2006/Analysis Group Inc., Boston

Outline your ability to manage your time and deliver projects; show examples of team contributions.

SMG 2004/Accenture, Boston

Be honest. Do not exaggerate your resume and write down your honest experiences. A former business analyst at my firm wrote down on his resume and spoke about his tremendous internship experiences in an industry, which our consulting firm happened to be very involved in at the time. However, it turned out that the analyst only worked at his internship for a week and when asked to help on the project, he did not know very much at all. He struggled a lot and over sold himself during the interview process. He did not stay at the firm for a month.

SMG 2007/Arthur D. Little

High GPA and relevant internship experience. Highlight your GPA for your concentration and overall GPA if it's over a 3.4

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting, Irving, TX

Stress analytical abilities you have gained during internships or on class projects. Make sure you come across as a team player, as a consultant you need to work with your team and with the client.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Stick to the suggested templates offered by the Feld Career Center – make sure that your resume and cover letter are proof-read and error free.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting

## **JOB SEARCH TIPS**

### ***Internships as a Feeder?***

Try to find consulting internships through companies that are recruiting on campus and post on the SMG job site. Internships in consulting are definitely NOT necessary to land a job in consulting after graduation. Pursue internship opportunities that you are enthusiastic about – this will come through in your interviews.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting

Internships are very competitive for the consulting field. Many times, intern positions may be very similar to positions of newly graduated students. You have to treat the internship search much like that of a job search.

SMG 2004/Accenture, Boston

Since consulting involves a heavy (and expensive) travel schedule, consulting internships seem rare. Maybe, consulting companies with focus on the industry prominent in the local area will be your best bet.

Internships in consulting are not necessary to land a job in consulting. I had internships in Marketing and Financial Services – the most important thing during the recruiting process was that I showed analytical skills during my internships.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

I don't have experience with consulting internships. I had them in unrelated fields and still landed a job. They'd be a plus, but not necessary.

SMG 2004/ZweigWhite, Natick, MA

Students can find internships with consulting firms either by searching the website or by being referred by a current employee. An internship with a consulting firm is encouraged, but not necessary to be considered for an entry-level position.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting, Irving, TX

In my experience, internships at a consulting firm are not necessary to obtain an entry-level position. Internships in a particular interest area, however, are very valuable (e.g., if interested in financial services consulting, finance-based internships are highly regarded).

SMG 2005/Accenture, New York City

They are few and far-between, as far as I know. They're not really necessary though – what's useful, however, is an internship in a field of potential expertise that can give you good background in the topic with which you'll be consulting.

SMG 2005/PA Consulting, Boston

There are mostly IT internships. Consulting internships are not critical to securing a position in the field; gain relevant experience and be able to talk intelligently about the value you have added.

SMG 2005/Deloitte Consulting, Boston

It is not a prerequisite to have prior consulting experience to be hired for a full-time consulting position, but it is necessary to have some internship experience. In an interview with a consulting firm, you need to be able to talk about the challenges you faced during internships and the impact that you made. Although it can be difficult to find a consulting internship, the best way is through networking and contacting alumni at the firms you are interested in. Many of the firms that recruit at SMG only have full-time positions on MiTRAC so it's necessary to be creative when searching for internships.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Internships in consulting will definitely help to get a job after graduation; however, consulting companies often do not have structured internship programs for undergraduates. Internships are valuable but don't have to be in the consulting field. Any internship will help as long as you learn general business skills like time management, business writing, MS Office, team work, etc. As long as you can relate the story during the interview process, any work experience is good.

SMG 2006/BearingPoint

Internships in the field aren't critical to the full-time job search. Just make sure you can explain a logical plan for how you went about to decide what you want to pursue as a career.

SMG 2006/Analysis Group Inc., Boston

All major firms are always looking for interns. Try looking on the company's website for a Careers area or e-mailing the HR representative at a local office. Even if they are not looking, your name will be out there and they will have heard of you, which is helpful when you're applying.

The nice thing about consulting is that it is a practice, not an actual field. To say I am a consultant gives no reference to the work I actually do. Instead, consultants work within different fields. I never took an internship at an actual consulting firm, but I had experience at a hedge fund, asset-backed securities firm, work on a bank's Sarbanes-Oxley compliance and at a major wall street bank. Having any experience always helps, but it helps even more to have experience within the field you want to work.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

### ***Timelines and More Research***

The timeline varies depending on the size of the firm. Just with any job search timeline, it is never too early to start your investigation.

SMG 2006/Analysis Group Inc., Boston

The timeline depends on the firm. Usually, there are several weeks for resume submission, then we hold an info session, round one interview, round two interviews, then a final decision is made.

The investigation process should start when you decide you are interested, it's never too early. If you are a junior, start doing your homework now.

SMG 2005/Deloitte Consulting, Boston

Consulting companies usually hire all year around. But the campus recruiting starts in the fall. Start doing the job search during the summer between junior and senior year and start applying in the fall.

SMG 2006/BearingPoint

Students should already have begun investigating [before fall of senior year]. You cannot begin the job application process too early. Companies are not looking to wait to see if they get a great last-minute deal. They look constantly and send out interview offers constantly. Do not wait until the last minute to apply, because while you may be qualified for the position, if all of the interview spots are full, you are out of luck.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

I got my job randomly in August on monster.com and didn't follow any typical recruiting schedule. If you want the big firms, you have to go with those schedules. Otherwise, smaller firms may have more real-time hiring

SMG 2004/ZweigWhite, Natick, MA

As soon as possible. There is a lot to learn about this field, whether it is about the firms, news stories about the consulting industry, the interview process, or how to succeed at business cases.

SMG 2007/Arthur D. Little

Junior year opens up to a lot of specialized classes. Begin applying the knowledge you learn to real world cases.

SMG 2004/Accenture, Boston

It is important to get started early in the year so that you best position yourself for the recruiting process. You can visit the advisors in the Feld Career Center in the beginning of the school year to tailor your resume for consulting firms and complete practice interviews. Firms start to visit campus during the middle of the Fall semester and nearly all the recruiting is finished by winter vacation.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Varies by company, but typically consulting practices begin recruiting in the fall of the students' senior year. Deloitte has rolling recruiting.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting, Irving, TX

Ideally, start investigating your Junior year. Try to fit in some of the Career Center's information sessions – often you can ask if you can join the consulting sessions that are mainly for graduate students (there seemed to be more Consulting sessions targeted to grad students my senior year).

The recruiting takes place early in the fall semester. Often applications were due in September / early October, with multiple rounds of interviews in October & November. I had my job offer shortly before Thanksgiving.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

I believe consulting firms recruit around the same time as other companies - I was recruited in the fall around October, had two rounds of interview, and was finally made an offer by end of December/early January. When I interviewed with IBM, all of the interviews were mainly behavioral but many consulting firms (especially the strategy ones like Bain, BCG, and McKinsey) are known to make interviewees do case studies - if you're lucky and smart enough to get an interview in the first place...If you're one of these fortunate few and serious about doing well, you should purchase some case study prep books and start preparing ASAP.

SMG 2006/IBM

### **Key Components to the Job Search**

The key components to a consulting jobs search is first determining which consulting firm you would like to join. This is important because many of them differ in their atmosphere and corporate philosophy. So once you find a company that suits your personality and attitude, go for it.

SMG 2006/Accenture

To be competitive you must have a solid resume, be confident about your abilities, and ask questions – show that you are interested.

SMG 2004/Accenture, Boston

Prepare to answer case interview questions. You are already familiar with analyzing cases from your classes and there are materials available in the Feld Career Center. If you have too much time on your hands, there are a couple of books dealing with case interviews.

Decide on which consulting fields you are interested in. Do you want to join one of the big management consulting companies, a consulting company focused on IT, etc.? Do you want to work for a small niche consultancy or one of the big players in the consulting industry?

In addition to the companies recruiting at the Feld Career Center, look up other consulting companies online and see what they're application process and deadlines are. Often they are early in the semester, so get a head start over the summer doing your research before the semester starts.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

First, identify the consultancy you want to join. Many people say they want to consult and are willing to apply to any company. By researching the companies thoroughly, you can narrow your search and spend more time focusing on a few firms rather than dividing your time amongst many. Once you have identified the firms you are most interested in, research them thoroughly to understand structure and differentiating factors.

Always make a good impression on the first point of contact. Have a strong resume and strong initial interview – that sets the tone. Always follow through with Thank You email.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting, Irving, TX

You need to assess your priorities because consulting can often involve 100% travel, where you don't even have a desk to call your own at an office. So a lot of soul-searching and research into the different jobs would be smart.

SMG 2005/PA Consulting, Boston

An impeccable resume and cover letter are key. One of the most important aspects of consulting is attention to detail; therefore, it is very important to make a good first impression. I recommend attending any or all information sessions for various consulting firms. It is very helpful to get acquainted with the various types of consulting that firms offer, so you can narrow down what interests you. I applied to the top 100 consulting firms on each company's website. I received initial responses from most within 2-3 weeks. Timing is also crucial – it's important to apply during the recruiting season for consulting firms.

SMG 2007/Arthur D. Little

The most important part of a consulting job search is finding the company with a corporate culture that is the best fit with your personality. It's important to understand the culture of each company to which you apply.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting

- Know you what kind of consulting you want to do (i.e., IT, Strategy) and why.
- Research different firms and decide where you are a good fit... and know why you are there.
- Try to talk to a recruiter at that firm to see if they recruit at BU.
- Try to talk to a consultant at that firm to identify the critical skillset for the firm.
- Avoid small mistakes on your resume.
- Write a great cover letter
- Be yourself in the interview.

SMG 2005/Deloitte Consulting, Boston

Identify the firms you want to work at early in the process and pursue them aggressively. No two firms are the same and they will not all suit you, so find out which ones you like and apply. Leverage existing contacts, either through your experiences, family and friends or Boston University's alumni network, to speak to people at the firm. It is important to talk to people at all of the firms you apply to, as it shows interest in the company, that you did more than just a cursory look at the company's website and 10-k and also will provide you with invaluable information about the company. It never hurts to reach out to people to talk to them.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

- Company specialty (IT, Strategy, Marketing, etc.)
- Industry practice area (what industry are you going to be practicing? focused on one or cross-industry?)
- Training support
- Organization structure (group size, hierarchy system)
- Employee turn-over ratio

SMG 2006/BearingPoint

Find a firm that practices in the industries of your interest.

SMG 2006/Analysis Group Inc., Boston

Attend all the information sessions you can and learn how to tailor your resume and cover letter for consulting firms. Contact alumni and network with people who work for the firms that you are interviewing at as this will give you an insider's perspective and show that you are serious about your job search. Practice case questions through Vault and Wetfeet Guides. Understand the differences between the companies in the industry and be prepared to explain why you are a good fit for the firm in the cover letter and interview.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

## **NAVIGATING THROUGH THE NETWORK**

### ***Protocol... and attire***

Don't be too dressy. Get a feel for the firm – are they relaxed or conservative?

SMG 2004/Accenture, Boston

You should always be very professional and dressed sharply, because they need to know that they can feel comfortable putting you in front of a client.

SMG 2005/PA Consulting, Boston

If you have a connection at a firm use it, regardless of the level the person is at. While many consulting firms are business casual, on any job interview you should dress your best.

SMG 2005/Deloitte Consulting, Boston

Business formal is always recommended, unless HR specifies otherwise.

SMG 2006/Analysis Group Inc., Boston

Contacting a human resource liaison is the best start. That person will put the student in contact with the right person in the firm. Regardless of what the firm's corporate culture is, students should always dress in business formal attire at interviews. A crisp white shirt and a good suit always does the trick.

SMG 2007/Arthur D. Little

Be professional in manner and appearance but there is no particular order people at different levels need to be contacted in. I found that even as a new university hire my opinions are asked for and appreciated by the management team of my project so don't feel as if you are not qualified to contact somebody because they have an impressive title.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Usually the people you meet/speak with is decided by the company or in the pre-set interview process. The attire for the interview is standard for all interviews – business formal.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting, Irving, TX

Dress code is business casual, but business formal should be more appropriate during networking. As for informational interviews, analyst to consultant level will be appropriate. To get the foot in the door, managers and above will be great. Key HR personnel are also essential in getting an interview.

SMG 2006/BearingPoint

Always wear business attire. Make sure that everything about you is neat, from your hair to your tie to your shoes (shine them!). Everyone you meet will be constantly evaluating everything that you say and do, so be conscious of everything that you are doing. Avoid nervous tics, such as cracking your knuckles or drumming your fingers. Stand up straight and sit up straight at all times. Practice your handshake - it is the first thing you will do when you meet your interviewer and the last thing you do before leaving. Make sure that you have a good, firm handshake. Cut your nails - I know it sounds silly, but if you accidentally scratch an interviewer while trying to shake his hand, it will not help your cause. Avoid polarizing issues like politics, because people do not need any good reason to dislike you. If you bash the president and the interviewer is a Bush supporter, they may hold that against you. Be polite and do not interrupt. Most importantly, be punctual. That means being early to every single meeting and making every phone call on time.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

## ***Developing... and Managing Your Network***

Students can initially develop contacts through email, but the best way to develop a solid relationship is through personal contact. Students should not be afraid to schedule phone calls or an “informational session” in person. Winter and spring breaks are perfect opportunities. While everyone is busy, most people can spare 30-45 minutes one afternoon.

SMG 2005/Accenture, New York City

The Career Advisory network is a great resource to find alumni who work at many different consulting firms. I found that nearly everybody responded to my emails and offered insights into the consulting industry and their particular firm. I also built contacts at the information sessions and recruiting events by emailing follow-up questions to the company representatives.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

By connecting with people you know. Think outside the box when trying to expand your network – people are willing to help. You have to take the initiative. Also, use the BU network, including the Feld Career Center, to meet people.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting, Irving, TX

The very best contacts that you will have are people that know you personally. Reach out to people that you have met, worked with or otherwise know and talk to them first. People you know personally will be better resources for you and are more inclined to help than people you do not know. Leverage your friends' networks as well - you may know someone at the accounting firm they want to work at and they may know someone at your preferred consulting firm. Finally, the alumni network is an invaluable networking tool. There will be a BU alumnus at every firm you apply to and they will probably be willing to talk to you and help you out.

When reaching out to a contact, the most important rule to follow is to be professional. Your spelling and grammar should be perfect, with no chat-speak or contractions. Be sure to thank them for their time, regardless of whether or how much they help you. Remember, you may be at school, but they are on the job and must take time out of their day to speak with you. Be sure to give them contact information and offer many ways to contact you. Some people only spoke with me through e-mail while others spent a great deal of time on the phone with me discussing their firm and everything I would need to know about it. Sending a thank you note after they have helped you is a great way to keep your name in their head while also being polite and professional.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Realize that you are asking someone to take time out of their day. You should always respect that. I've been approached by students with an attitude that their schedule should be accommodated; that is a huge turnoff. Also, don't act as a complainer. I've had a couple students with bad attitudes: also a turn off.

SMG 2004/ZweigWhite, Natick, MA

Ask people in the consulting industry about some of their experiences – consultants like to network and talk about their projects!

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting

Professors are a great resource. Many take on the role of outside consultants.

SMG 2006/Analysis Group Inc., Boston

First, I would recommend asking for professional advice from contacts, telling them about your past academic and professional experiences and discussing your aspirations. Contact will give you advice and sometimes it could lead to them offering to look into opportunities at their employer. If they don't discuss opportunities at their firm, I would hint at it by saying something

along the lines of that you are interested in the contact's firm, its career development program, or professional training.

SMG 2007/Arthur D. Little

Be clear in what you are looking for. Are you interested in consulting in general? Are you interested in my firm? Do you want help with what your resume should look like?

Ask around, friends, family, FCC, Professors. When I started with Deloitte, I found out from Professor Clarke that one of her former students worked there too.

SMG 2005/Deloitte Consulting, Boston

Give a background of your skills and interests. What sparked your interest in consulting? Try to strike up a common bond.

SMG 2004/Accenture, Boston

Consultants are on the road most of the time, making it difficult to find time to network with them. Use alumni contacts, who still feel a connection to help out students. Usually email is the best way to reach me while I am on a project. I can use my time on the plane and in the hotel to answer emails.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

The best way to approach networking contacts is to be persistent while being understanding. You must be understanding because the people you are contacting have a set of deadlines for their work and need to attain those deadlines. But you need to be persistent too because many of them have full plates and might forget what you had asked them if they don't get a **friendly** reminder.

Best way to develop consulting contacts is to ask everyone and talk to everyone you know who is in the field. Do not be shy or hesitant because those same people you are asking were once in your position and understand the process of finding a job.

SMG 2006/Accenture

Best way is probably to attend consulting FAQ sessions and career fair days

SMG 2006/IBM

Start from the family and friends. Alumni will be another great way. In approaching the contacts, email is the way to go. Be patient but persistent. These people are very busy and might not get back to you. Don't take it personally -- they are just very busy, especially if you were contacting people above the manager level.

SMG 2006/BearingPoint

## **THE RIGHT CANDIDATE**

### **Characteristics and Skills of the Ideal Candidate**

Analytical, observant, team player, emotional intelligence, excellent writing skills, versed with the Office tools ... and willingness to travel.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Organization, communication (both written and verbal), self confidence, ability to listen, ability to learn, stress management, analytical skills.

SMG 2004/ZweigWhite, Natick, MA

Attention to detail, ability to communicate effectively, ability to work at all levels within a team, and ability to handle several projects simultaneously are just a few.

SMG 2006/Analysis Group Inc., Boston

Confidence – consultants are selling themselves more than their knowledge. A positive attitude is the most important characteristic. You have to have strong analytical skills – both quantitative and qualitative (people) skills. Understand emotional intelligence, but be comfortable working with numbers in spreadsheets.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting, Irving, TX

An ideal candidate acts professional and displays confidence throughout an interview. A business background is a strong plus; however, relevant experience within an industry that consulting firms offer their services to is helpful as well. Research and analysis skills are very important in entry-level positions. Make sure to highlight any relevant experience.

SMG 2007/Arthur D. Little

Strong Microsoft office background (especially PowerPoint and Visio), project life cycle knowledge, process flow/process design experience.

SMG 2005/Accenture, New York City

- Thrives in a fast-paced environment
- Good schmoozer/networker and salesperson – most times in consulting you do your own selling as well
- Flexible – sometimes you'll be told to get on a plane the next day to a destination you'll stay at for a month at least.
- Good analytical skills

SMG 2005/PA Consulting, Boston

Consultants come in all different forms, but they are all self-motivated and flexible. This job is not as structured as a job at a bank or accounting firm is. You will probably be moving from project to project and be given a long list of tasks without a manual or guide on how to do them, because every project is unique. It is important that you are a self-starter and will seek out the solutions and how to accomplish your tasks, as these will not be spoon-fed to you.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

The ideal skills in consulting are ability to be flexible and learn new things quickly.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting

Charismatic, but not fake. Smart. Personable, able to tackle complex problems and own them, someone who just gets the job done. Lastly, someone who is good at speaking in front of large groups of people.

SMG 2005/Deloitte Consulting, Boston

An ideal candidate is intelligent, interpersonal, patient, and understanding. Need all these characteristics on a day-to-day basis.

The key skill involved in consulting are the interpersonal skills. Much of your day will be in meetings and dealing with clients' requests or questions and knowing how to handle them while looking out for your consulting firm is a very important balance that must be attained.

SMG 2006/Accenture

Optimistic, persistent, analytical, and not afraid of making mistakes and asking for help.

MS office skills (Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Visio) are crucial.  
Business writing and manners are also important.  
Team work is essential and good listening skills.

SMG 2006/BearingPoint

The ideal candidate must be flexible. This is not a 9-5 job where you do the same thing day in and day out and a consultant must be willing to take on different role at a different project at a moments notice. It is important to understand the challenges of the lifestyle and you need to be prepared for 100% travel in the likely event that the client site is not located in your city. It is a given that the candidate will have strong analytical, organizational and communication skills.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Confidence, team leadership, ability to articulate your thoughts and patience.

SMG 2004/Accenture, Boston

**Desired Traits:**

Proven leadership skills  
Excellent oral and written communication skills  
Analytical problem-solver  
Quick learner  
Team player  
Flexible  
Outstanding academic performance  
Strong interest in technology & desire to work in information systems  
Ability to meet travel requirements, if applicable  
Record of Success  
Innovative  
Articulate  
"Interesting"

***Benefits of a Career in Consulting***

I really enjoy working in a team environment, meeting new people, learning new things, and the constant challenge. Over the past year and half, I have been on three different projects at three large investment banks. I met new people and developed different skills at each of the projects. In my second year out of college, I can say I have significant experience (6 months) at three large investment banks. Not many of my peers (outside the consulting field) can say that.

SMG 2005/Accenture, New York City

Being on a client's site is always challenging but fun. That is where you actually get to learn the business, build skills, and network.

SMG 2006/BearingPoint

Consulting provides the opportunity to get a lot of experience in a short amount of time – it's an accelerated career path.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting

Variety of projects, exposure to senior staff at other firms, learning opportunities.

SMG 2004/ZweigWhite, Natick, MA

Every few months, I start a new project and get to face new challenges.

SMG 2005/Deloitte Consulting, Boston

Consulting is always changing – nothing stagnant. I've heard a lot of adjectives used to describe our jobs, but I've never heard anyone say they were bored. Every project is different.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting, Irving, TX

I like best the flexibility and diversity of experiences the position provides - I do different things from day to day and project to project. There is no one typical career path in consulting - you decide what you want to do. You can fill one or multiple roles - project manager, business analyst, data architect, testing specialist, etc - it's up to you. I also enjoy the travel, although I'm sure it will quickly get old. I've been working for only 2 months and I've already made trips to New York and Chicago for work and may be headed to New Jersey or San Francisco for upcoming projects

SMG 2006/IBM Consulting

I enjoy that being only a year out of college, I get access to senior executives at major companies... you're taught to think like a CEO right from the start, and given a lot of responsibility.

You never get bored because you're always presented with new problems, learning about new companies and meeting/working with new people.

SMG 2005

PA Consulting, Boston

The ability to change your work and move from project to project keeps things interesting. You get to see the operation of so many companies and understand their goals, competencies, and weaknesses.

SMG 2004

Accenture, Boston

Flexibility to choose my type of project.

SMG 2006

Analysis Group Inc., Boston

What I like best and most challenging happen to be the same thing, which is the interaction with the clients. When I say "interacting with clients," I mean the daily communications you have with your present client. I like this the best because I learn a great deal from them because of the diverse background and diverse thinking they present to me. This is also the most challenging because you have to balance the idea that you are working for them (the client) but you are also working for your firm. What the client wants might not be best for your firm and you have to balance that and make sure you find a happy medium

SMG 2006/Accenture

### ***Drawbacks of a Career in Consulting***

Consulting may require frequent travel – this can be tiring and reduce the amount of time you spend with friends and family.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting

Gaining credibility as such a young person – trying to tell a person who is 60 how to better run their business can be difficult.

SMG 2004/ZweigWhite, Natick, MA

Managing deadlines.

SMG 2006/Analysis Group Inc., Boston

Work/life balance is tricky – both working long hours and travel. But benefits tend to be very good – four weeks of vacation.

SMG 2005/PA Consulting, Boston

Always getting used to new working styles of your peers. Because every project is staffed with different people, every time you start a new project, it's like starting a new job.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting, Irving, TX

Change. I truly value change from an IQ perspective. I enjoy changing roles about every 6 months, as I am able to build a breadth of skills across a particular industry (in my case capital markets) and I am constantly learning something new. However, I find change particularly difficult from an EQ perspective. Every time I change projects, I am forced to leave behind the friendships, work relationships, and credibility I developed with the client as well as my colleagues. I have to essentially “start over” every six months.

SMG 2005/Accenture, New York City

The travel four days a week and at an entry-level position you are expected to do work whenever it needs to be done – that includes late into the night.

SMG 2005/Deloitte Consulting, Boston

Coming right out of college, I never feel ready or skilled enough to do anything. I always have to get into the mind set that I am constantly learning. The most challenging thing is that when you were asked to do something, it's not always very clear. I have to try my best to interpret the direction right and play by ear. Important lesson: never be afraid to ask rather than just make assumptions if you don't understand something.

SMG 2006/BearingPoint

What I find most challenging is the complexity of projects. I'm still very new to my job, and the learning curve is very steep. A lot of what you're expected to do is not necessarily what you learn in school - you learn on the job by doing. You must learn quickly, and this is often stressful since consultants are hired by clients who are demanding and expect you to deliver results.

SMG 2006/IBM

Dealing with stress and obtaining a work-life balance.

SMG 2004/Accenture, Boston

## **MASTERING THE INTERVIEW**

### **Standard Interview Process for Entry-Level Consulting Positions**

There is an initial resume screening process where the majority of candidates are eliminated. A small pool gets selected for interviews which usually are an hour in length and involve a review of your resume and a case. The case varies in length and quantitative requirements but is intended to demonstrate analytical and creative thinking in a professional setting. The final round of interviews may take place at the company office and involves upper management who review your resume and may give you another case.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Either phone interview with one or two consultants, then one-on-one interviews with managers and managing directors.

Some companies like to do case-study interviews, then one-on-one interview with managers and managing directors.

SMG 2006/BearingPoint

Depends on the firm – mine was not standard consulting (no case studies). Instead it was a regular interview.

SMG 2004/ZweigWhite, Natick, MA

Usually there are 2-3 rounds of interviews.

The first round interviews for me were mostly behavioral interviews – if there's a fit between you and the company and if the interviewers feel they can put you in front of a client. Also, be prepared to answer the standard questions of why you chose company X.

In my case, the second round was more focused on my skills and approaches to solving problems.

I've heard people encounter case interviews in either round. Sometimes you can avoid case interviews by describing a problem solving process encountered in a job or internship.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

For smaller firms, the interview process is faster than ones with larger firms. You will usually work your way up the ranks before a VP will make the decision of extending you an offer.

SMG 2006/Analysis Group Inc., Boston

Several interviews and a case study analysis where you have to work with a team, find a solution, and present it to the "client." This can be very tricky because you're working with a team of other job candidates, so it's tough to balance your competitiveness with being part of a team – this also is a really true test to how good of a consultant you would be, because that struggle OFTEN arises in consulting.

SMG 2005/PA Consulting, Boston

One personality interview and one case interview.

SMG 2005/Deloitte Consulting, Boston

Most firms begin with a first round interview consisting of a meeting with one or two of the partners or HR representatives assigned to the school or region. This interview focuses more on you as a person and your background. During this round, they are trying to find the type of people they want to work with - smart, hard-working and motivated. Of course, every student knows this, so they will test you on yourself by questioning your answers. The first round is all about selling yourself and showing that you are the type of person they want.

After that, there is a second, and occasionally third, round of interviews. These are generally located at the firm's office and give the partners a chance to really grill you on both yourself and how you will fit in. You will have to display your knowledge and skills and answer questions about everything that you tell them. One interviewer made me create pivot tables in Excel, while another questioned my experience and knowledge with Sarbox and a third gave me case studies on consulting practices and how I would handle them. Be prepared for literally anything - one friend of mine was asked how many parking meters there are in New York. Questions like these are designed to test how you think, not your knowledge, but are a good example of how companies can and will examine every aspect of you to make their decision.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Two rounds of on-campus interviews with a final interview at the local office.

SMG 2004/Accenture, Boston

Pre interview – either on phone or on-campus recruiting, 2 behavioral interviews, 1 case.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting, Irving, TX

My first interview was a telephone interview with a senior consultant. The conversation included, standard questions – such as the classics “Tell me about yourself” and why you are interested in the consulting field and the company, specifically. After talking about my experiences, I was given a half-hour business case. This is pretty challenging, since it is difficult to tell whether you are doing well or not. However, telephone business cases are not very popular among the consulting firms. The second interview included three business cases with three different interviewers at the office. In addition, you are asked to come prepared with a PowerPoint presentation of you background and experiences and why you would be a good fit with the firm. This allows the firm to see your presentation skills, how you portray yourself, and you experiences. Then, it's just a matter of waiting for the final decision from the firm.

SMG 2007/Arthur D. Little

## ***Preparing for Interviews***

Make sure you know your resume well and be knowledgeable about your abilities and experiences.

SMG 2004/Accenture, Boston

Speaking to a career counselor and doing mock interviews helps a lot. Even going on interviews to prospective firms, although the firm doesn't interest you that much, is great experience. You get the ability to practice your speech and talk about your experiences and you learn about a new business.

SMG 2007/Arthur D. Little

Read some typical case studies off BCG website and others.

SMG 2005/PA Consulting, Boston

Prepare to answer the standard behavioral interview questions about yourself.

Be ready to talk about your internship experiences in detail and how you used your analytical abilities – a recommendation you made, a process you worked on, a proposal that you had insight into, etc.

Prepare to answer case interview questions. You are already familiar with analyzing cases from your classes and there are materials available in the Feld Career Center. If you have too much time on your hands, there are a couple of books dealing with case interviews.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Know the company, you already know yourself and you already know how to do cases. Perhaps practice having someone giving you a case interview.

SMG 2005/Deloitte Consulting, Boston

Practice, practice, practice. Use any chance to have an interview, regardless of your level of interest with job. Also, read newspapers, magazines to remain updated with the current news. Don't be arrogant but be confident.

SMG 2006/BearingPoint

It is difficult to practice for interviews because they can be very random. Know the basic list of questions that most firms will ask about and have answers prepared for them. Be prepared to discuss and elaborate on your answers. Know your resume and what you would like to talk about and highlight on it for the interview. Do your research on the firm, which includes the basic information, such as who is the CEO and what the stock price is, to advanced information, such as what does that particular group do. Come in with a good definition for what a consultant is - it sounds simple, but how well do you really know what a consultant actually is?

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Follow standard interview procedures - dress to impress (business attire), prepare thoroughly, be confident and likeable, make a good impression, and have a list of thoughtful questions to ask throughout and at the end of the interview. Make sure you convince the interviewer that you're a good candidate and in demand - you're there to interview the company as much as they are there to interview you. Why should I choose \_\_\_\_ consulting firm.

Think of all the possible questions that they may ask of you, prepare the best answer you can think of, write it down, and then practice it orally over and over again.

SMG 2006/IBM

Pay attention in your classes – all we ever did were cases. Understand the structure of the interview process and prepare for potential questions. Have various people “mock” interview you. By doing so, you become more comfortable speaking on your feet.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting, Irving, TX

The Vault Guide to Consulting was probably the most useful tool I used to prepare for interviews. Attending information sessions is helpful to get a better understanding of the firm and corporate culture. Contact alumni who work at the firm to get an insider’s perspective from which to ask insightful questions during the interview.

Joshua Tully SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Be able to elaborate on every point on your resume. Remain calm.

SMG 2006/Analysis Group Inc., Boston

Gain as much information about the company as possible and then tailor some of your responses to the most asked questions around the company’s attitude and culture. A list of the most commonly asked questions can be found online and tailoring your answers to a specific company helps a lot. Do not use generic answers, if you are telling a story and it sounds the same at every interview, then you need to change it up.

SMG 2006/Accenture

Mock interviews are the best way to prepare.

SMG 2005/Accenture, New York City

“Don’t just think about winning in the interview. Think about the job... the company... the business. Picture the interviewer as the client.”

## **Typical Questions**

You will be asked about everything on your resume, from your academic experience to your extracurricular activities to your work experience. Be prepared to talk about everything on there, because any interviewer may choose any part of your resume to focus on and discuss with you. Interviewers may ask about your greatest successes and failures, your favorite classes, books or magazines or any number of things about you. It helps to have a few basic stories or situations in mind to discuss going into the interview.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

During the second round interview, Accenture asks behavioral and functional questions with a series of follow up-questions. The interviewer is evaluating the student's thought process and composure when pressed for additional details. It is best to select a situation where the student remembers distinct details. There are about 4 to 5 of these questions. The situations selected should vary for each question to demonstrate a well-rounded individual (i.e., school, work, sports).

- Tell me about a time you worked in a team, a conflict on the team, and how you resolved it?
- Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks. How did you figure out which task was most important?
- Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way. What was the final outcome?

SMG 2005/Accenture, New York City

Definitely be completely prepared to answer the following:

Why would you like to work in consulting?

Why would you like to work in the specific firm you are interviewing with?

Tell me about yourself? (I was asked that in every single interview)

Why you majored in the field you have chosen? If you have majored or minored in any additional field, make sure you can explain which one interests you the most.

SMG 2007/Arthur D. Little

These are all questions that I was asked during my interviews:

"What were the major challenges you experienced at each one of your internships and how did you overcome them?"

"How many man-hole covers are in New York City?"

"How would I paint my office if I only have half the amount of paint necessary to cover all the surface area?"

"Why are interest rates lower now than they were in the 1970s?"

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Name a time where you effectively led a team. Name an experience where you had to deliver bad news – how did you go about it?

SMG 2004/Accenture, Boston

Describe an inefficient process you observed at a job or internship and take me through the process of how you would improve it.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Why are you interested in consulting?

Tell me about your previous work experience.

Why are you a good fit for our company?

Why do you want to work for our specific firm?

Also, typical behavioral-type questions, case studies, brain teasers, estimation and math questions.

SMG 2006/IBM

They are not trying to figure out what you know, but more how you are going to fit in. If you made it that far in the process, they have faith in your intellectual capital.

Describe a leadership role.

What made you choose consulting?

What technical skills have you developed?

Describe a time when you've had to work with a difficult team member.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting, Irving, TX

A lot of "what-if" scenarios.

SMG 2005/PA Consulting, Boston

Why do you want to work in consulting?

SMG 2005/Deloitte Consulting, Boston

- Why are you interested in consulting?
- Why are you interested in working for XYZ company?
- What kind of team projects have you done?
- Describe one situation where you faced a challenge and what you did to overcome that challenge?
- What leadership positions have you taken?
- During your internship at XYZ company, what was your role; describe some of the work you have done.

SMG 2006/BearingPoint

### **Must-Know Consulting Concepts and Terms**

Roll on, roll off – join a project, be finished on a project.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

It's good to be up on the management "buzz" words (i.e., managing expectations).

SMG 2005/PA Consulting, Boston

No specific concepts or terms but DO know what the company does business in and what their major source of revenue is. Need to understand the company very well because no two companies are the same and they pride themselves on that

SMG 2006/Accenture

SMG students should understand all basic business terminology. No special terms necessary.

SMG 2005/Deloitte Consulting, Boston

Students should be reading the Wall Street Journal at least twice a week, if not more, before applying to any job. This will help build an overall knowledge of the business world that will add depth to their conversations and interviews. You do not really need to know the jargon of consulting because the firms realize that you are not already consultants - that is something they will teach you.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

One of the biggest criticisms from clients in consulting is that consultants have their own "consultant speak" or "consultant lingo." The most effective communicators keep their rhetoric simple and to the point. A few consultant incorporate buzz words that would be useful when describing a process or situation include the following:

- Efficient and effective
- Verify and validate

"Consultant lingo":

Pyramid – organizational structure

Pain points – areas in a process that require improvement

Ping – instant message

Disconnect – miscommunication

As Is – current state

To be – future state

Gap – difference between an "as is" process and a "to be" process

Roll on – role start date

Roll off – role end date

SMG 2005/Accenture, New York City

Students should really know why they want to be a consultant. You need to convince the interviewer that you will be successful in this position by showing you understand the challenges of the work/lifestyle and how you are going to overcome them.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Understand the structure of the company. By speaking with employees, past or present, you will become more familiar with the nomenclature used at the firm. Employing that could be beneficial.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting, Irving, TX

It is very important for students to learn a lot about the firm, by studying the company website. It is important to know the firm's services and potentially some clients, and news articles regarding the firm. Vault.com offers some good information regarding each company's interview process and salary on their blogs. Students should understand consulting terminology and concepts including the BCG matrices, Porter's Five Forces, SWOT Analysis, and the four P's of Marketing.

SMG 2007/Arthur D. Little

### **TIPS AND POINTERS**

I want to reinforce the fact that consulting can be very competitive and “every man for himself,” and yet you have to appear as a put-together team in front of the client. It’s a tough balance. Also, throughout your consulting career you will be marketing yourself to others WITHIN your own company, in order to “get sold” on a project and remain billable. To do this you have to have some sort of expertise or skill that sets you apart. It’s good to start to think about that before starting your career, even though you can figure it out and hone it more later on.

SMG 2005/PA Consulting, Boston

Know that not all firms are the same. You can still do consulting without working 100-hour weeks and traveling 90% of the time. Explore different kinds of firms; don’t feel pressured to stick with the big ones/name brands. The smaller firms can offer a lot.

SMG 2004/ZweigWhite, Natick, MA

Be yourself and understand that the consulting lifestyle is not for everyone.

SMG 2005/Deloitte Consulting, Boston

Know and understand the nature of consulting business.

Understand that there are different areas of consulting (IT, Strategy, etc.).

Usually consultants travel a lot, but that can also depend in your practice.

Consultants usually have long hours, and expected to perform the job on demand.

SMG 2006/BearingPoint

The most important thing I look for when meeting with potential candidates is their aptitude for learning and their enthusiasm/passion for work.

SMG 2005/Accenture, New York City

Do not change yourself to fit the company; rather look for a company that is the perfect fit for you.

SMG 2006/Analysis Group Inc., Boston

Before you consider a consulting job, know what you're getting into. It's a great profession but it's not for everyone. I will say that SMG does a great job of preparing students for a career in consulting, and I'd recommend it. It's a great way to gain experience and progress quickly.

SMG 2006/IBM

Be yourself. Be respectful but don’t go over the top. People are impressed with a quality product.

SMG 2004/Deloitte Consulting, Irving, TX

Really know why you want to be a consultant and why you want to work at the particular firm you are interview at.

SMG 2007/IBM Global Business Services

Many of the people you will interview with are going to be managers and above and know how to deal with people and read people very well because they do that on a daily basis in consulting, so just be yourself and do not force anything. They will be able to tell and make note of that going forward, after-all.

SMG 2006/Accenture

Consulting is a great field to be in if you are looking for a broad range of opportunities and experiences at your first job. You will not be stuck in one small area of any business and will probably not be doing the same thing for too long. That said, being flexible and adaptive are both important qualities for any consultant. You must be ready and able to move on to the next job and understand that you will not be settling down in one small area for the next few years. I have been on the job for just over a month and have already spent time in Fairfax, Philadelphia, Tampa and New York and will be traveling to London within the next few months. It is not always easy but it can be a very rewarding and gratifying experience.

SMG 2007/IBM Business Services

## ***ON-LINE AND PAPER RESOURCES***

Case in Point: Complete Case Interview Preparation, Fourth Edition by Marc P. Cosentino

The Fast Track: The Insider's Guide to Winning Jobs in Management Consulting, Investment Banking, and Securities Trading by Mariam Naficy

The Wharton MBA Case Interview Study Guide (Wharton Econometric Studies Series)

[www.wetfeet.com](http://www.wetfeet.com) (WetFeet Guide to Consulting)

[www.vault.com](http://www.vault.com) (available through MiTRAC; see the Vault Guide to Consulting; The Vault Guide to the Case Interview; message boards)

[www.consultinginfo.com](http://www.consultinginfo.com) (Consulting Information Services)

[www.strategy-business.com](http://www.strategy-business.com) (Strategy + Business Magazine by Booz Allen & Hamilton)

Top 50 Consulting Firms' websites

[www.consultingmag.com](http://www.consultingmag.com) (The Consulting Magazine website)

[www.mckinseyquarterly.com](http://www.mckinseyquarterly.com)

[www.amcf.org](http://www.amcf.org) (Association of Management Consulting Firms- check the Member List)

[www.bu.edu/library/management](http://www.bu.edu/library/management) (Pardee Library)

Recommended by Rafi Musher, CEO Stax Consulting (COM alum):

Competing on Analytics: The New Science of Winning by Thomas H. Davenport and Jeanne G. Harris

How Great Generals Win by Bevin Alexander

## CONSULTING CAREER PATHS

<b>Business Strategy</b>	<b>Systems Integration/Boutique</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Analyst (entry level)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Gather, analyze, synthesize data.</li></ul></li><li>▪ Associate (5-7 years industry or consulting experience)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ identify issues, form hypotheses, plan and conduct interviews and analyses, synthesizing conclusions into recommendations</li></ul></li><li>▪ Associate Principal (6-8 years)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Multiple engagements, business development and practice decision-making.</li></ul></li><li>▪ Principal/Director (8-10 years)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Superior ability to lead teams</li><li>➤ Manage every phase of engagement</li><li>➤ Build relationships with clients</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Analyst/Consultant (entry level)</li><li>▪ Senior Consultant (2-5 years)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Typical entry point for new MBAs</li><li>➤ Leads design efforts for specific segment of design/process improvement project</li><li>➤ Performance weighted on utilization rate.</li></ul></li><li>▪ Manager (5-7 years)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Manages multi-faceted business-improvement projects</li><li>➤ Leads project team</li><li>➤ Identify new sales opportunities</li></ul></li><li>▪ Senior Manager/Director (8-10 years)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Full client and project mgt. responsibility</li><li>➤ Develops sound business/ technology strategies.</li><li>➤ Generates new business</li></ul></li></ul>

# **Careers in Consulting**

**(available on the Virtual Career Center, [smg.bu.edu/vcc](http://smg.bu.edu/vcc))**

Consulting opportunities are varied and cover a wide variety of fields and areas of expertise—from IT, to human capital/HR, strategy, nonprofit or business analytics consulting, among others.

Make an appointment at the FCC (617-353-2834) early during your studies at SMG to discuss preparations for a consulting career with a counselor.

If you are interested in consulting opportunities, consider joining the BU Management Consulting Association ([bumca@bu.edu](mailto:bumca@bu.edu)), read the Vault Guide to Consulting (through [MiTRAC](#), under Quick Links, then click on Industry Guides), and target the type of consulting that is the best fit for you.

Then, make an appointment at the Career Center to develop your job search strategy. Consultants come with varied backgrounds depending on the type of consulting. Secure an internship or part-time job in your concentration during sophomore and/or junior years; this will build your resume, provide you with real-world experience in your concentration and increase your competitiveness when seeking full-time employment in consulting.

Prep for Case Interviews through club Case Interview Boot Camps, practice sessions with the FCC, and continuous informational interviewing and reading. Top consulting firms often have detailed information on interview preparation on their websites.

Get to know faculty members in your area of interest, as many do consulting work on the side and can provide valuable advice.

## **Consulting Contacts**

**Faculty:** Erik Molander, [molander@bu.edu](mailto:molander@bu.edu) (BUMCA faculty liaison)

**Boston University Management Consulting Association**, [www.bumca.org](http://www.bumca.org);  
[contact@bumca.org](mailto:contact@bumca.org)

**Alumni:** Alumni contact information is available through LinkedIn, the Career Advisory Network, and the Primer to Consulting. Please prepare carefully and approach alums professionally, not asking for a job or internship

## **Selected Consulting Fields**

Organizational Development Consulting  
Strategy Consulting  
Market Research  
Human Capital/Human Resources Consulting  
IT/MIS Consulting  
Nonprofit Consulting  
Business Analytics  
Marketing Consulting

## **SAMPLE PROFESSIONAL SALARIES**

Salary range of SMG graduates from classes of 2007 and 2008 in consulting roles: \$34,000 – \$65,000

Average reported entry-level consulting salary (41 alums reporting):\$53,650

**For additional information and detailed descriptions of possible career options please refer to the Occupational Outlook Handbook, [www.bls.gov/oco](http://www.bls.gov/oco):  
Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services**

**Sample Entry Level Job Titles**

Analyst  
Application Service Specialist  
Assistant Business Analyst  
Assistant Project Administrator  
BAS Associate  
Change Implementation Associate  
Client Services Consultant  
Consultant  
Human Capital Consultant  
IT Consultant  
Junior Consultant  
Management Analyst  
Research Associate  
Research Analyst  
Strategy Analyst  
Systems Process Analyst  
Technical Consultant  
TSRS Consultant

**Selected list of employers of BU alums in consulting roles**

Accenture  
Acosta Sales and Marketing  
Acquis Consulting Group  
Arthur D. Little  
Bain & Company (Singapore)  
BearingPoint  
Booz Allen Hamilton  
Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC)  
Decision Resources  
Deloitte Consulting  
Digitas  
Ernst & Young  
Forrester Research  
Grant Thornton  
IBM Global Business Services  
International Sports Properties  
McKinsey & Co.  
Mercer Human Resource Consulting  
Monitor Group  
Navigant Consulting  
Oliver Wyman  
PA Consulting  
PriceWaterhouseCoopers  
Spring Consulting Group  
Towers Perrin  
Yankee Group