

MGMT 701 - Management Consulting Syllabus - Modules 4

Instructor: Deborah J. Barrett, Ph.D.

Meeting time and place: TT 4:00 – 5:30 HH 113

Texts & Materials

- Peter Cockman, Bill Evans, & Peter Reynolds, *Client-Centered Consulting: Getting Your Expertise Used When You're Not in Charge (CCC)*
- Sugata Biswas & Daryl Twitchell, *Management Consulting: A Complete Guide to the Industry (MC)*
- *Harvard Business Review* cases and articles:
 - “Deloitte & Touche Consulting Group”
 - “When Consultants and Clients Clash”

(Both texts are in the Rice Campus Store; I will hand out the cases in class.)

Objectives

This course has two primary objectives: (1) Introduce students to the skills needed to be good at consulting as an external management consultant and as an employee working inside a company and (2) Allow students to explore consulting as an industry and a career choice (pros and cons).

The goals are as follows:

- Introduce students to the basics of management consulting (internal and external), including
 - Understanding the phases of the consulting cycle;
 - Tailoring consulting approaches to various situations;
 - Using effective approaches for data gathering and problem solving;
 - Managing difficult client situations; and
 - Conducting meetings and working in teams with clients.
- Provide a forum for students to discuss the challenges and best practices in management consulting.
- Allow students to explore the diverse approaches to consulting and types of firms in the field of management consulting.

Assignments and Values

For this class, students are required to do the following:

1. Participate in class (includes contributing to case and other class discussions and responding to the class brain teasers and/or mini cases).

Brain teasers and mini cases: As a way to help those still facing case interviews, to give all of you typical consulting challenges, and to improve overall rapid problem solving, I will be using the brain teasers and cases in Appendix II of *MC*. I will select the brain teaser and case, give all of you a chance to think about it, call for volunteers in the first few classes, and then call on people at random to present approaches to the class. The class will have 5 minutes to think up an approach to solving the problem, and then, the selected person will have 5 minutes to present his/her answer to the class. I will then ask for others to critique the proposed answer/approach or otherwise contribute to the answers proposed. We will devote approximately 15 - 20 minutes to this exercise most class periods.

Value: 20% of grade

2. Write a 3 to 5 page (excluding exhibits) competitive analysis of two major management-consulting firms or three boutique firms, describing demographics, consulting expertise, hiring and interviewing practices, revenue, reputation, etc. **Or,**

Select a consulting area, such as change management, health care, communications, IT, or non-profit, and write a 3 to 5 page analysis of the trends and the leading consulting firms. **Or,**

Write a 3 – 5 page white paper on what it takes to be an effective internal consultant with examples from companies known for using internal consultants.

Value: 30% of grade

3. Write and present a team proposal to conduct a consulting project on an issue or problem in some company or organization. The proposal should include the following: (1) an analysis of the issues with a clear statement of needs and benefits; (2) a description of how your team would approach the problem; (3) a discussion of how much you would charge to complete the project and how long it would take; and (4) a section explaining why the company should hire you to perform the work. The proposal should exemplify the principles of client-centered consulting and be persuasive enough to get the job. The proposal assignment will consist of two parts: a. A formal written proposal (no more than 10 pages, excluding exhibits) and b. PowerPoint presentation (12 – 15 minutes). The audience for both of these is the client.

Value: Written 30%, Presentation 20% of grade

Course Content

The course will cover the following topics:

I. Being a consultant

- A. Defining consulting and the basic skills needed to be good at it
- B. Understanding the consulting cycle
- C. Applying different problem solving frameworks and tools
- D. Establishing what it means to be client centered

II. The consulting profession and industry

- A. Assessing consulting as a career
- B. Recognizing different types of consulting and firms
- C. Appreciating consulting as a profession and an industry

III. Client relations

- A. Managing expectations on both sides
- B. Managing difficult clients and using different intervention styles
- C. Establishing the appropriate role as the consultant
- D. Working effectively with a client team
- E. Managing client and team conflict

IV. Proposals and project management

- A. Writing a winning proposal
- B. Defining project scope and controlling it
- C. Developing and using project management tools
- D. Determining individual value and how to cost-out projects
- E. Establishing value/time trade offs and applying the 80/20 rule (knowing when and how to apply)

Weekly Schedule and Assignment Due Dates

Date	Topic	Assignment
January 17	Being a consultant	Introduction to course and consulting. Read Chapters 1 – “Consultants, Clients, and the Consulting Process” & 3 – “Consulting Skills” in <i>CCC</i> . Complete Checklists 1.1 and 3.1 in <i>CCC</i> .
January 22	The consulting profession and industry	Read “The Management Consulting Industry,” “Consultant’s Work and Lifestyle,” & “The Work of Consulting” in <i>MC</i> .
January 24	The consulting profession and industry	Read “The Generalist Approach to Consulting: The Strategic Value of Breaking Industry Barriers,” “Selecting a Small Versus a Large Firm,” “The Internal Consulting Practice of Strategic Planning,” & “The Emergence of E-Consulting” in <i>MC</i> .
January 29	Being a consultant Proposals and project management	Read Chapters 4 – “Starting the Consultation” & 5 – “Contracting” in <i>CCC</i> . Analysis paper due by noon on January 29.
January 31	Being a consultant	Read Chapters 6 – “Collecting Data” & 7 – “Making Sense of the Data” of <i>CCC</i> ; “Fifteen Essential Frameworks” in <i>MC</i> .
February 5	Being a consultant Client relations	Read Chapters 2 - “Intervention Styles,” 8 – “Implementation,” & “Disengagement and Follow-up” in <i>CCC</i> . Read and be ready to discuss “When Consultants and Clients Clash.”
February 7	Client relations	Read and be ready to discuss “Deloitte & Touche Consulting Group.”
February 12	The consulting profession and industry	Read “Can Consulting be a Career,” “Life after Consulting” & “Planning your Consulting Career” in <i>MC</i> . Course evaluations. Written proposal is due by noon on February 12.
February 19	Proposals and project management	Student team proposal presentations due – Final in HH 124