Management & Strategic Consulting

General Description
Management consultants are professionals who are trained to solve problems, devise strategies, and improve the general health of their clients no matter what the industry. Management consultants help clients solve specific problems (usually focused on the short-term), while a strategy consultant researches and develops strategies for improving the long-term goal of the company. Companies hire consultants not only for their problem solving abilities, but also for their objectivity. Typically, consultants conduct research, analyze data, prepare reports, and present findings; less frequently, a management consultant will become involved in the actual implementation of the plan. Work weeks of between fifty to seventy-five hours are not unusual. Management consultants tend to work in teams of 3 to 4 individuals, and travel is an important aspect of the consultant's life, in order to spend time on-site with clients.

Qualifications
Most consulting firms tend to hire people with advanced degrees, typically in law, business, and other specialty areas, or with some specialized experience. Academic excellence, team skills, leadership, and private sector experience derived from internships are important in the consideration process. Firms want people with outstanding academic records and who are problem solvers, creative thinkers, good communicators, and who have a keen understanding of and interest in business. Important consultant qualities include excellent oral and written communication skills; strong analytical abilities; attention to detail/deadlines; proven leadership capabilities; high energy and enthusiasm; ability to work on teams; excitement about consulting; and strong interpersonal skills.

Application and Interview Process
Traditional application timelines for applying to a top management consultant firm start with information sessions in the early fall and interviews beginning as early as October and concluding as late as April. Apply to a consulting firm earlier rather than later in the academic year. Interview processes vary, but two to three rounds of interviews are common. One interview will be a “fit” interview, which will assess the candidate’s background and experience. The other interview will be a “case” interview, which is highly structured and involves a business problem scenario. The applicant will assess the problem and provide a strategy and possible solution in 20-25 minutes. The interviewer is looking for problem analysis skills and problem resolution skills. The interviewer is not looking for technical expertise – this is truly an evaluation of how the applicant thinks. Mock case interviews are strongly recommended for masters candidates. The interviewee should be prepared to demonstrate quantitative skills and highlight leadership skills, all while being a team player. The interviewers will be asking themselves whether or not they would feel comfortable having you present in front of a client.

The Case Question
The most important part of the interview is the case question. Consultants must be able to effectively synthesize mass quantities of foreign data, structure an approach to a given client issue, and hypothesize logically and creatively. The case question is designed to test a candidate’s ability to think logically, to determine tolerance for ambiguity and data overload, to observe his/her thought process, to assess poise and communication skills under pressure, and – ultimately, to determine if the candidate is a good “fit”. More information on case studies can be found at:

- Case in Point: Complete Case Interview Preparation, by Marc Cosentino
- Mastering the Case Interview, by Alexander Chernev
- How to Get Into the Top Consulting Firms, by T. Darling
General Online Resources for Management Consulting
- Hoover’s http://www.hoovers.com
- Vault http://www.vault.com

Sample Management Consultant Employers List
- Booz Allen & Hamilton http://www.boozallen.com
- Boston Consulting Group http://www.bcg.com
- J.P. Canon Associates http://jpcanon.com/
- Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu http://www.deloitte.com
- Ernst & Young http://www.ey.com/global/
- LEK Consulting http://www.lek.com
- Mercer Management Consultants http://www.mercer.com/home
- William Kent International http://www.wkint.com

Associations and Internet Resources
- Association of Management Consulting Firms http://www.amcf.org/index.asp
- International Council of Management Consulting Institutes http://www.icmci.org/

Publications
- The Boston Consulting Group of Strategy: Classic Concepts and New Perspectives, edited by Carl Stern and Michael Deimler
- In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America’s Best Run Companies, by Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman