



<b>Profiles</b>	Management consultancy
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<b>Age</b>	39
<b>Job</b>	Senior consultant

I became drawn to management consulting because of the challenge. It's complex, dynamic, varied and often requires working with difficult issues. My science background gave me the analytical and critical reasoning skills that are so valuable in management consulting.

### Career path and qualifications so far

I completed my Chemistry degree while working for the Laboratory of the Government Chemist (LGC) in London. Here I was an analytical and research chemist, mainly working in the environmental field. I then went to work for a chromatography instrument and supplies manufacturer, in the role of product specialist and sales adviser. Here I took on the additional responsibilities of leading a training and development division, as well as providing support to distributors in Scotland and Ireland.

While helping customers develop unique solutions to their analytical problems, I was offered the role of consultant in an environmental consultancy. A number of promotions within this field of work made me more concerned about business and people management rather than the technical environmental tasks.

I began studying business management part time, in addition to keeping down a busy job. My passion in managing business began to supersede interest in the environment and so I quit work and completed a full time Master of Business Administration (MBA) at Cranfield University School of Management with the express aim of working in management consulting, rather than environmental consulting. Now, after three years working in management consulting, I'm helping a wide range of organisations (public and private sector) manage their businesses and people better.

### Has anything you've done been especially useful in your career?

My interest in management came a long time after my initial university studies, although I imagine now that taking a management studies module with chemistry may have been an advantage. Part time business studies and then the full time MBA at Cranfield have definitely helped my career. Other activities included managing and working with like-minded professionals (chemists, microbiologists, geologists, engineers) and understanding how people interact and work to achieve organisational objectives.

### What is a management consultant?

Management consulting involves a broad range of activities and roles. In short, it is a professional service that helps clients identify, analyse and diagnose management problems or opportunities. Depending on the extent of the management consultant's brief or experience, they may help implement change and move the clients' business forward.

In some firms, you may be part of a team, but depending on the level you are at and/or the style of the firm, you might be expected to be all of the following: sales person – finding and clinching deals; analyst – diagnosing the problem and potential solution; team member or client manager – responsibility for delivery; product/service developer – finding solutions to future management problems.

### Day to day activities

Activities include analysis, planning, organising, operating and controlling business functions; conducting studies and reviews; preparing proposals and recommendations and providing implementation support; dealing with management policies, procedures, systems, methods and organisation relations and potentially introducing new ideas, concepts and methods.

### Further qualifications

My science background gave me the analytical and critical reasoning skills that are so valuable in management consulting. In addition, the MBA qualification is fast becoming a requirement. However, I would say that experience and understanding of business is equally valuable. So it's not just qualifications, experience is vital, an understanding of people is a must in this professional service area and how you work with clients and client teams is strongly linked to success.

### Why management consultancy?

I became drawn to management consulting because of the challenge. It's complex, dynamic, varied and often requires working with difficult issues. It requires working with a range of like-minded people from all different sectors, including commercial companies, government and public bodies as well as not-for-profit organisations and charities. I find it very personally rewarding helping individuals and organisations do things better.

### What do you most enjoy about your job?

There is a high level of variability, since two projects are rarely the same. This also makes it a job in which you learn something new every day and are expected to assimilate this and apply it to your practice in future projects. Working with people is fun but demanding and you get a sense of achievement when a project goes well.

### What other skills do you need?

As the role can be quite varied and indeed may well be a highly specialist role, it's not possible to be highly prescriptive about the additional skills required. Generally, however, good communication and people skills are vital.

### Why is it useful to study a science subject at university?

The strong emphasis on analytical and logical reasoning that comes to the fore when studying a science subject is very useful. However, it is also important that people and communication skills flourish, hence my comment earlier about taking a business or management module at the same time as science. This may be a useful shortcut to a career in management consultancy in some cases.

### Further information/contacts

The Management Consultancies Association (MCA) Tel: 020 7321 3990 [www.mca.org.uk](http://www.mca.org.uk)

The Institute of Management Consultancy (IMC) Tel: 020 7566 5220 [www.imc.co.uk](http://www.imc.co.uk)

Management Consultancy Magazine [www.managementconsultancy.co.uk](http://www.managementconsultancy.co.uk)

Consultants Advisory [www.consultants-advisory.com](http://www.consultants-advisory.com)

Top Consultant [www.top-consultant.com](http://www.top-consultant.com)

### For further information on careers in the chemical sciences contact:

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