

The Consulting Roadmap: Your Personal Guide to Breaking Into Management Consulting

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Section I. Why we wrote this guide and what you're going to learn

Getting a top management consulting job is hard. The odds are against you. **If you're serious about it, you have hours and hours of preparation ahead of you.** Sadly, in the hundreds of emails we get every month, we've seen a consistent pattern – because of the perceived impossibility of the task ahead, **candidates waste ridiculous amounts of time** without an 80/20 approach to applying and interviewing for their dream job in consulting.

This guide – here in your hands – is your key to starting off on the right foot and using your energy on what's most important to getting the job.

Despite the caution of our best advisors, we are giving this super-valuable guide away for a super-low price because we've included in it all the stuff that we believe should be common sense in the industry. Getting everything in here right – like what you're supposed to be doing when and what position you should apply for – will allow you to **focus on the hard stuff** – like writing a stand-out resume, crafting a personalized cover letter, and networking like a ninja.

Please realize the use of **this guide does not guarantee you a magical position at your dream firm.** However, if you're thorough, it should keep you from disqualifying yourself by doing stupid stuff, and will allow you to focus on the firms and positions where you have the best chance to succeed – or to bulk up quickly on your weakest areas.

With our comprehensive roadmap, you get access to our **exclusive MC exercises** and more, all in one place, so you're able to make headway and keep track of your progress. Our unique roadmap takes you from “Is consulting right for me?” to an **action plan that will actually get you there.**

The exercises here are required background work for the clients we accept for our 10-hour Black Belt Interviewer program and suggested work for our other premium service (interview prep and editing) clients. If you're interested in taking advantage of our one-on-one case coaching or resume and cover letter editing services – just [send us an email](#).

Enjoy your journey – may it be as full of adventure as ours has been (and still continues to be)!

Section II. Quick guide to using our website

Before we dive into the roadmap, we wanted to give you a quick guide for getting the most out of our website. There's tons of information on there, and it can be easy to miss some of the best insight. Follow the tips below to leverage the heck out of our online resource.

On your very first visit, hit the [FAQ page](#) and the [Articles page](#).

The FAQ page is stocked full of basic questions people have (about consulting, the site, where we came from) as well as a **central place for questions** that we've answered through emails and posts.

We've written consulting **articles** on topics ranging from travel to salaries, from resume mistakes to summer internships, from exit opportunities to case study preparation.

If you're looking for a **particular answer**, *Ctrl-F is your best friend*.

If you didn't get this guide as a subscriber to our site, your next stop is to [subscribe](#) to our witty and valuable email updates.

With our Manic Monday Newsletter, as well as sneak previews to great new stuff on the way, you get subscriber-only content, discount codes, FREE stuff, and more.

Stay engaged with us. Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, sign up for RSS feeds...



Other cool stuff you don't want to miss on our site:

Consultant Interviews. Read interviews from current consultants, recent hires, and seasoned pros with successful careers at top firms. Get detailed insight into recruiting cycles, interview secrets, and firm-specific biases. (Find links in the grey column to the right of the home page.)

Visit the [Lingo page](#) for a list of consulting vocab. We give you a list of vocab so you can sound smart – or at least hold your own! – in conversations with current consultants.

Product Pages. We're overachievers when it comes to world-class products and services for management consulting. Check out our must-have e-books – [The Consulting Bible](#), [The Consulting Resume and Cover Letter Bible](#), and our newest [Consultant's Networking Bible](#); our resume/cover letter [editing services](#); and our [interview prep](#) sessions. The pages are a great way to learn more if you're curious about what we do and what our clients say about us.

The [Plans & Pricing page](#) outlines all of our products and services. For the best value, be sure to check out our [packages](#).

Recommended Reading. Perfect for prospective consultants and new hires wanting to start off on the right foot. Find links below Consultant Interviews.

Enjoy!

Section III. Is consulting right for you?

While you may know for sure that consulting is what you want to do, some of you are on the fence. This section will help you determine whether consulting is right for you.

A. Key traits in consulting – education and experience

You could say that in any job employers are looking for candidates with the best education and the most relevant experience. How is it any different in management consulting?

First off, education is unequivocally the **most important factor** in consulting prospects. **Pedigree, performance, and leadership** in education are the cornerstones of your strength as a candidate. While an employer in another industry won't weigh your alma mater that heavily 3 years after graduating, consulting firms still deem it the most critical factor in your application.

Second, not all experience is created equal. You've got to have the **right kind of experience** – the kind that shows you can think like a consultant. Without demonstrative examples on your [resume](#) that demonstrate your **analytical ability** and **business understanding**, you'll never impress enough to win an interview slot.

Here's a quick summary of what firms are looking for in terms of education and experience.

Education	Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pedigree• Relevance• Performance (GPA, Honors)• Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brand name• Analytical ability• Business understanding• Distinction

Because it's so critical, we're going to have you take a deep dive into your education background here. While **pedigree** (where you went to school) is indisputably the most important element, there are other factors to consider.

Here are the questions to ask yourself:

Question #1: Did you go to a target school?

If the firm recruits at your school, it's a target school. The [top U.S. undergrad schools](#), [top U.S. MBA](#), and [top international MBA](#) programs are target schools for management consulting firms.

If you're unsure whether yours is a target school for your firms of interest, **check the firm website** to see if they dedicate resources to on-campus recruiting at your school, like A.T. Kearney's site for [Haas](#) and Oliver Wyman's site for [Cornell](#).

For those of you interested in M/B/B firms, we've identified the core, no-question-about-it undergraduate and graduate programs targeted by M/B/B, as well as the schools that fall under the "possible" category.

M/B/B Target Schools table:

<u>M/B/B Core</u>	<u>M/B/B Possible</u>
UNDERGRADUATE	
Brown	Brigham Young
Chicago	Cornell
Columbia	Dartmouth
Dartmouth	Emory
Duke	Georgetown
Harvard	Georgia Tech
Penn	Notre Dame
Princeton	NYU
Stanford	Rice
UC Berkeley	SMU
UVA	UCLA
Yale	UNC
	USC
	UT Austin
	Vanderbilt
	Washington University
GRADUATE	
Chicago Booth	Anderson at UCLA
Harvard	Carnegie Mellon Tepper
Michigan Ross	Columbia
MIT Sloan	Dartmouth Tuck
Northwestern Kellogg	NYU Stern
Stanford GSB	UNC Chapel Hill Kenan-Flagler
UC Berkeley's Haas	UT Austin
UVA Darden	Yale
Wharton (Penn)	

Question #2: Is your degree relevant?

We're talking about **majors only** here – minors don't matter – and how well they relate to **business, economics, and finance**.

If you're having trouble, think about the courses required for each program. On first glance, a master's in international relations could seem completely irrelevant, for instance. Yet with required courses in finance, economics, and statistics, the program, although not as relevant as an MBA, still has some redeeming qualities.

Question #3: Do you have a top GPA?

Recruiters are going to look at your **overall GPA**. You want to shoot for a 3.7 or above. If you're under a 3.5, leave your GPA off your resume because it'll only work against you.

Recruiters will consider your major GPA only if you call it out specifically on your resume, which you'll usually only do in two cases:

- (1) your major GPA score puts you in the top percentile of your class (showing distinction)
- (2) your overall GPA is not great enough

Question #4: Did you receive any scholarships or merit awards?

These should be highly selective awards that distinguish you from your classmates. Fellowship awards to fund your summer internship or the top award in your business program are great examples.

Question #5: Were you a recognized leader on campus?

Did you start any clubs or lead any campus initiatives? Did you receive special recognition from the university President for your commitment to campus diversity, or change the face of freshman orientation as an upperclassman group leader?

Now that we've given you a chance to assess your education, rate yourself in the Education Fit Score table below. If you have 2+ degrees, complete the table for each degree then take an average. How do you measure up?

To give you an idea **where we're heading**...we give you a few more scoring tables in the next sections, then have you calculate your **grand total "fit score."** This will give you two huge insights:

- (1) **How fit you are** for a career in management consulting
- (2) The **areas where you're weak** and need to do some bulking up

Your education fit score:

EDUCATION	Score
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pedigree (Target School?)</i></p> <p><i>Scoring:</i> 5 = yes 3 = maybe or non-core (refer to M/B/B Target School table) 1 = no</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Relevant Degree(s)?</i></p> <p><i>Scoring:</i> 5 = highly relevant 3 = somewhat relevant 1 = not at all relevant</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Performance (Top GPA?)</i></p> <p><i>Scoring:</i> 5 = GPA is 3.7+ 3 = GPA is 3.5-3.69 1 = GPA is 3.0-3.5</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Performance (Honors)?</i></p> <p><i>Scoring:</i> 5 = substantial national or school-wide award 3 = department or degree honors 1 = Dean's list</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Leadership?</i></p> <p><i>Scoring:</i> 5 = founder/president/director of 1+ groups 3 = officer (not director) of 1+ groups 1 = involved in activity but with no real responsibility</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">TOTAL SCORE:</p> <p>Top Score = 25 Mid Score = 18 Low Score = 15 and below</p>	

Okay, education is out of the way. Let's move on to experience.

Everyone has experience – whether or not you've been paid for it. Volunteer jobs, externships, internships, part-time work, full-time positions – they all count. But **not all experience is created equal**. Bussing tables at Buca di Beppo or working as camp counselor at the Y Summer Camp will not hold the same weight as shadowing a stockbroker on Wall Street.

Great experiences **worthy of talking about** on your [resume](#) or in your [elevator pitch](#) have these 4 things in common:

- they're at a **brand name** organization ([Goldman Sachs](#) carries much more prestige than Joe's Painters)
- they've provided the opportunity to develop and demonstrate your **analytical ability** (while waitressing at Applebee's can require some quick math and problem-solving skills, financial modeling for [GE](#) is a league apart)
- they require a strong **business understanding** (an entry-level business development role is preferred over 3 years as head camp counselor)
- they attest to your achievements through **distinction** (second runner-up for a case competition may have made points for your team, but it has nothing on an offer to return at the end of your summer internship, or a promotion within the first 6 months on the job)

If you're still in undergrad, you can go back as far as your sophomore year when sharing your experiences (any earlier than that will send a signal that you haven't progressed past your freshman year activities, or that everything important you did was back in high school).

If you're in a MBA or advanced degree program, you want to stick to your experiences there, at your most recent employer, or at most refer to your crowning achievements in undergrad.

If you're out of school and already working, pick the most relevant experiences from your school and professional life to highlight.

Okay, time to **scrutinize** your experience. Use the experience fit score table below with the following guidelines for scoring. Enter your **top 5** experiences. If you don't think you have enough **self-awareness** to evaluate your experience objectively, ask a friend to help you. (Or spend a [Power Half Hour](#) with us!)

Scoring key

5 pt. = Your example provides a clear, concise, and relevant story.

4 pt. = You give a strong example but it lacks adequate context.

3 pt. = Your example portrays a group or team's achievement instead of your own.

2 pt. = The challenge in your example is not substantial.

1 pt. = Your example is too personal, not personal enough or lacks relevance.

Your experience fit score:

Experience (work, volunteer, externship, internship, etc.)	Brand name 1 (lo) to 5 (hi)	Analytical 1 (lo) to 5 (hi)	Business understanding 1 (lo) to 5 (hi)	Distinction 1 (lo) to 5 (hi)	Totals
1 -					
2 -					
3 -					
4 -					
5 -					
Total Score:					
Top Score = 100 Mid Score = 70 Low Score = 50 and below					

B. Sum it up – your consulting fit score

So, **are you a fit** for management consulting? The numbers don't lie...you'll now be able to answer with confidence with 1 of the following 3 responses:

- *Yes* (you're in a great position to start [networking](#))
- *Could be* (you've got work to do, but with some smart decisions and effective networking, you're on your way).
- *Not likely* (you've got a decision to make – make a serious effort to plan next steps, or bow out now)



Remember, we're not saying that anything is *impossible*, we're just giving you a sense of what's important from a recruiter's perspective. We also want to help you focus on your strong areas – so when you do start applying, you're presenting your best story.

Time to face the music. Compile all your scores from above into the table here to get your **fit score**. Compare your fit score to our [fit guide](#).

Remember, this score will tell you two things: **how fit you are** for a career in management consulting and the **areas where you're weak** and need to do some bulking up. We'll deal with that in the next section.

Your consulting fit score:

Education Total Score	
Experience Total Score	
YOUR CONSULTING FIT SCORE	

Fit Guide

- **120-125** = Outstanding! You're an excellent fit for a position in management consulting! Consider applying for the Top 3 firms. [Get your resume and cover letter ready](#) to apply for Tier 1 and start practicing your case interviews.
- **100-119** = Very good! You're a strong candidate, but not a shoo-in for the Top 3 unless you've got a few connections and are ready to absolutely nail the process. Put some time into [networking](#) to get interviews at the best firms you can.
- **80-99** = Hmm, we're on the fence about you. If you have a serious interest in a management consulting career, you'll need to add some impressive experience to your resume in the near future at some heavy-hitting employers. [Talk to us](#) for a plan.
- **Under 80** = Without a [killer resume](#) and a strong networking contact inside a firm of interest, you need a long-term plan to bulk up on your weak areas and build relevant experience. Your best bet is to employ one of our experts to help you devise your plan. [Email us](#) with your score and we'll make a recommendation for you.

C. Your plan to bulk up on weak areas

Now that you know where you stand, you can **identify your weaknesses** and put together a plan to **bulk up** in those areas.

The more specific you can be when identifying your weak areas, the more focused (and more attainable) your action plan will be. Think hard about what you can do to improve on tough spots like a low GPA, lack of leadership examples, or too little relevant experience. (For ideas, feel free to [email us!](#))

Implementing your action plan won't happen overnight – be patient and persistent. Some of your plans may even take financial investment (pursue a summer [business leadership program at Stanford](#)) or skillful networking (to land an internship at a brand name firm). One thing is for sure – you can count on all of them requiring investment of your time and reaching outside your comfort zone!

We've given you an example action plan below. See how the weak areas are focused and the brief **action statements** are clear and precise? You want to do something similar.

Ready to build your own? We've included an [Action Plan template](#) in the appendix.

Example action plan to bulk up on weak areas:

Weak Area	Current Score	Action Plan	Timeline	Completed
Non target school	3	Focus on getting into an MBA program at a target university	App due Nov 1	
Low GPA	3	Get tutoring for Managerial Decision-Making and Finance 101 classes	Jan	X
Degree irrelevant	2	Pursue a summer business leadership program at Stanford	App due Mar 15	
No leadership examples	3	Start a consulting club at my university	Fall semester	
No distinctions	1	Submit application for Summer Fellowship	App due Apr 20	
Low analytical ability score	3	Choose highly analytical project topic in Corporate Finance class	Mar	X
Weak business understanding	2	Join prestigious, business-focused club on campus	Attend 10/3 info session	
Too little relevant experience	2	Apply and network for jobs at brand name firms/pursue increased responsibility at current firm	Sep	

We often spend **an hour on the phone** with juniors and seniors in college on this topic who have low scores in multiple areas. We're great at helping you come up with **action plans** that are right for you, so feel free to [contact us](#) if you need help getting started!

Section IV. Defining what you're looking for

You've determined your fit for consulting and identified areas where you need to strengthen your application. You're on your way! Next step is to define exactly what you're looking for.

A. Consulting 101: Know the basics

You need to know the basics for any field you're pursuing, but when it comes to management consulting, there are very specific reasons why you need to **have the groundwork mastered**.

- Your knowledge of current business issues will be **tested**, directly and indirectly, throughout the recruiting process. The only way you'll make it through the fit and case interviews is if you're up to speed.
- You will be **exposed to business issues** on a daily basis. If you don't have a rock-solid understanding of who you're up against and what's expected of you, you'll find yourself in deep water without a life jacket.
- You'll get a **faster start at the new job** and sound smarter from day one, opening you up to promotions and raises earlier on.

Here's a list of resources you can access to build your foundation of consulting knowledge.

1. MC web articles

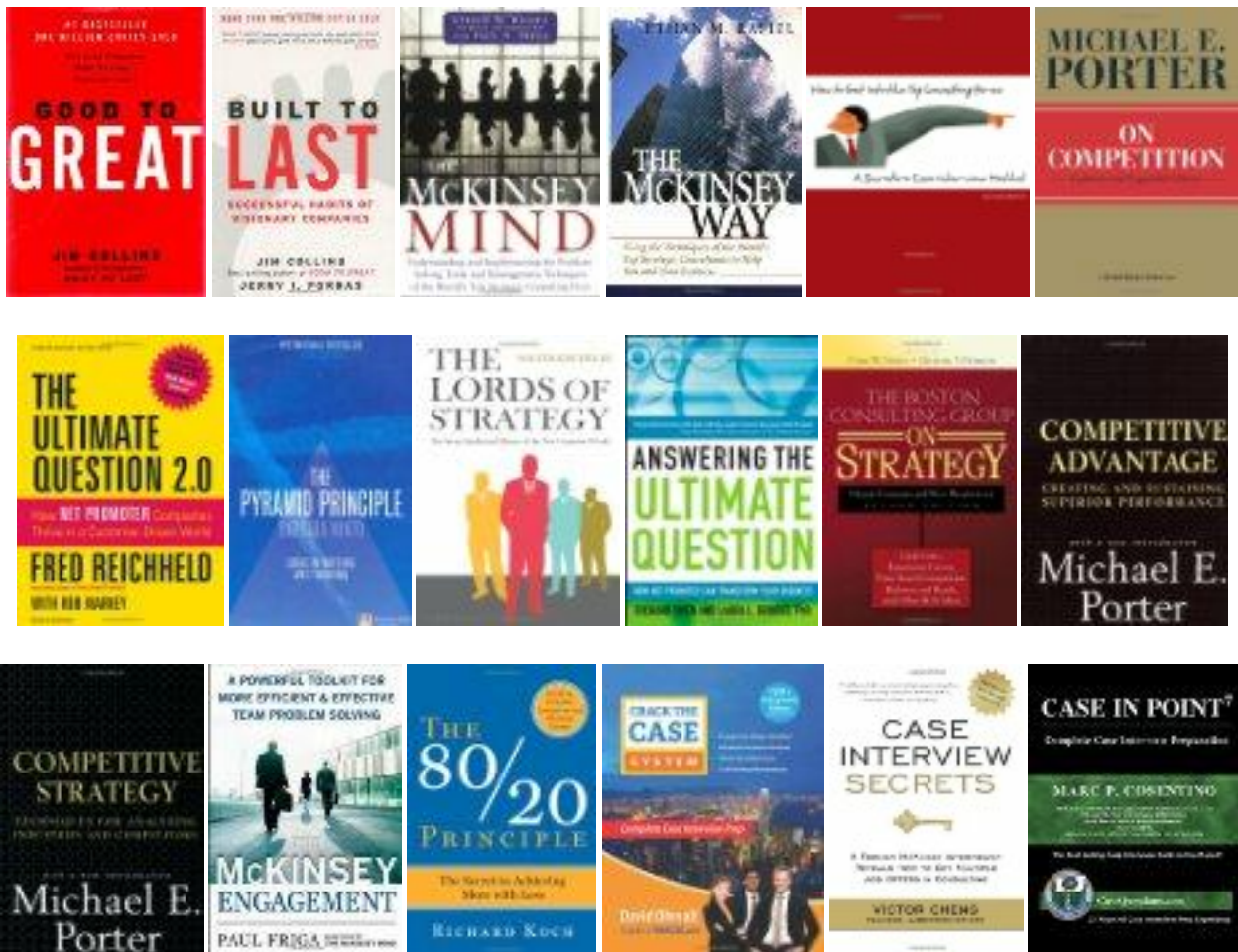
These are **must-read articles** from our website that give a comprehensive look at what life is like in management consulting.

- [Consulting 101](#)
- [Why Companies hire management consultants](#)
- [Day in the Life](#)
- ["Lingo" – words and phrases that applicants and interviewees should know](#)
- [Consulting MBA 101: Great books, magazines, and websites](#)

2. Books

Must-reads for anyone considering a career in management consulting. We've categorized titles into various topics – core consulting, company/leader bios, MBA prep, etc. Our links will take you directly to Amazon.

Core Consulting



Company/Leader Bios





MBA Prep

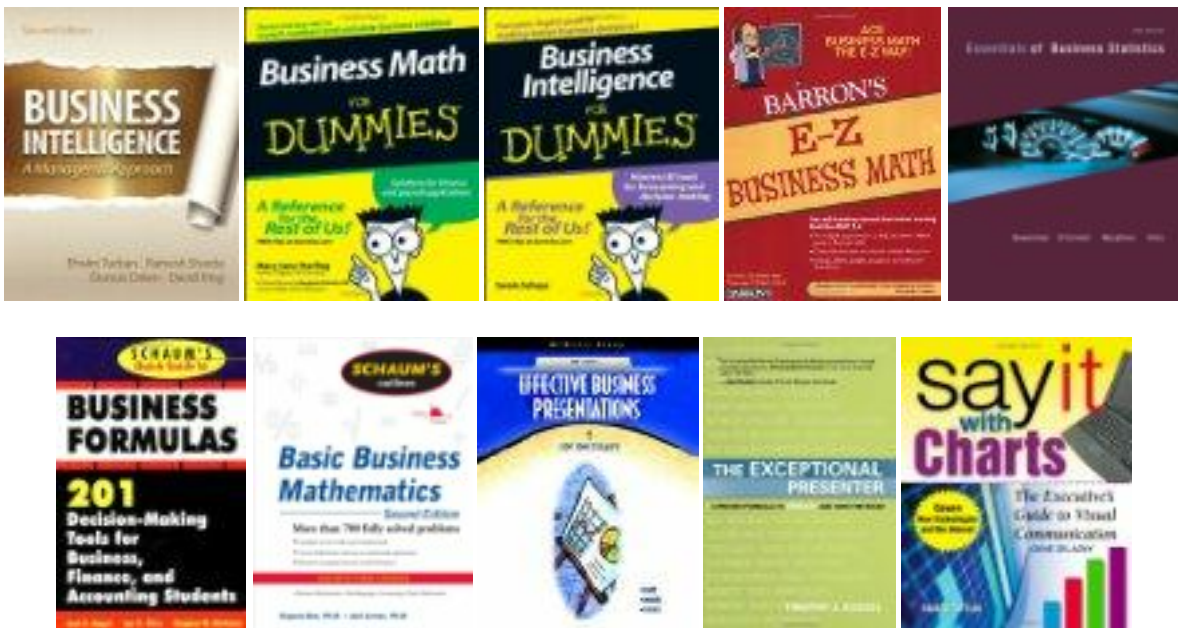


Leadership

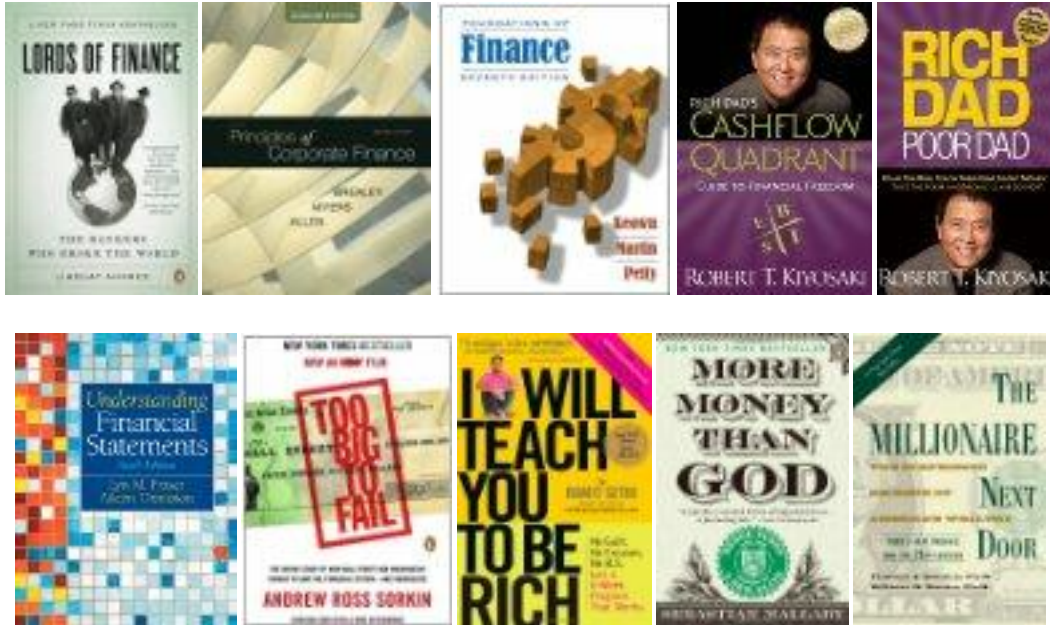




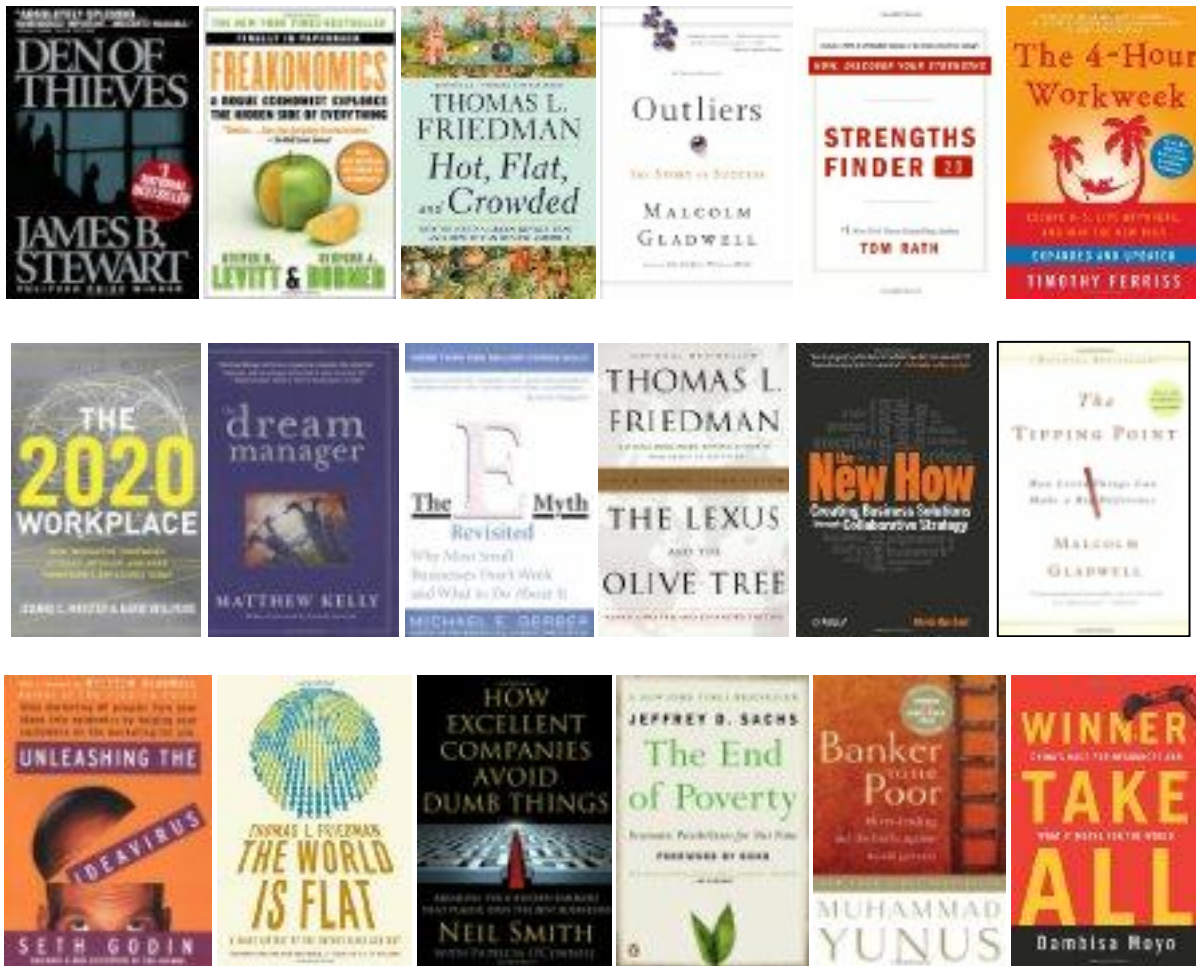
Basic Business Skills



Finance

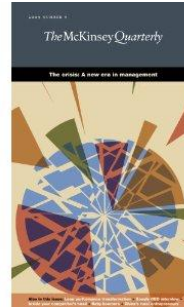


Other Interests



3. Magazines and periodicals

These are top quality and **cutting edge** publications that get into detail on U.S. and global business issues. They'll keep you relevant and ready for current events questions in interviews.



4. Websites and blogs

Choose 3 (at *minimum*) to **subscribe** to and review them daily to keep current on business news.

Websites

- [Business Insider](#)
- [New York Times](#)
- [San Francisco Chronicle](#)
- [Businessweek](#)
- [Wall Street Oasis](#)
- [Bloomberg](#)
- [Forbes](#)
- [Business World News](#)

- [BBC News - Business](#)
- [Wall Street Journal](#)
- [Business in Asia](#)
- [BusinessEurope](#)
- [Financial Times](#)
- [Harvard Business Review](#)
- [Consulting Magazine](#)
- [Booz & Co's strategy+business](#)



Blogs

(Check out the article we did on [the consulting blogosphere](#) awhile back)

- [Consultant Insider](#)
- [Killer Consultant](#)
- [The Crazy Lives of Consultants](#)
- [The ANALyst](#)

- [Considering Consulting](#)
- [Steve Shu's blog](#)
- [Marquis's Weblog](#)
- [Consultant Ninja](#)

B. The Position: Where you fit

With an understanding of the industry, your next step is to determine which position is right for you. More than anything else, your levels of education and experience will determine your point of entry at a firm.

Most prospects out of undergrad are hired into the lowest level position, unless you have a few years of relevant experience. With an advanced degree, you can break in at a higher level (read: higher salary). It takes either specific industry experience or several years in consulting to reach the manager/leader levels and above.

Where do you fit? We've done the research on **job categories** at M/B/B to show you their breakdown. We'll get more specific on exact job categories in the next section, after you've identified your target firms. For now, get an idea of where you fall in the job category matrix.

Job categories:

	McKinsey	Bain	BCG
Undergrad	<i>Business Analyst</i>	<i>Associate Consultant</i>	<i>Associate</i>
Experienced hire (2-3 yrs, no MBA)	<i>Business Analyst</i>	<i>Sr. Associate Consultant</i>	<i>Associate</i>
M.A./M.S. and/or 2-3 yrs experience	<i>Business Analyst</i>	<i>Sr. Associate Consultant</i>	<i>Associate</i>
MBA	<i>Associate</i>	<i>Consultant</i>	<i>Consultant</i>
Ph.D.	<i>Associate</i>	<i>Consultant</i>	<i>Consultant</i>
J.D.	<i>Associate</i>	<i>Consultant</i>	<i>Consultant</i>
Graduate Degree and 5+ yrs industry experience/ 7+ yrs industry experience, no higher degree	<i>Engagement Manager</i>	<i>Case Team Leader</i>	<i>Project Leader</i>
Graduate Degree and 7+ yrs industry experience incl. project management	<i>Associate Principal</i>	<i>Manager</i>	<i>Principal</i>
Industry expert with 10+ yrs experience incl. business development	<i>Associate Principal/Principal</i>	<i>Manager/Partner</i>	<i>Principal/Partner</i>

C. The Firms: Which are a match for you?

If you've already begun talking to management consulting firms, you've realized the **industry is segmented** into categories – M/B/B are the “Top 3” global leaders, the “Big 4” are the major accounting firms, “Tier 2” are highly competitive but a rung below M/B/B, and “Boutique” firms have a narrower industry focus.

What does this structure mean to you? How can you **determine which segment(s)** to target? We have an enormously insightful article on the **differences between global management consulting firms and boutiques** – [read it now](#).

Let us give you a quick intro to each segment, and then we'll show you the factors you need to consider when determining the companies that are a match for you.

Top 3



You'll often see these referred to as MBB or M/B/B. These are **the top global management consulting firms**. They're so competitive that they only interview the ideal candidates—they can be that picky. You have to be the cream of the crop to set your target here.

Big 4



These are the four largest international consultancies in accountancy. Core competencies for the firms are in **accounting**, specifically handling the vast majority of audits for publicly traded companies as well as many private companies – but consulting is a major part of their portfolios too.

Tier 2



These are highly acclaimed firms, just after the Top 3, and totally worthy of your attention. We've only listed a few here – check the [Vault Top 50](#) list below for more.

Boutique

Boutique companies typically focus on specific client issues and/or develop a core in 1-2 key industries. In boutiques your exposure is more narrow – for example, at [Kurt Salmon](#) your primary focus would be on retail and consumer goods companies. This is both a **pro** (you start building expertise) and a **con** (what if you decide the retail sector is not for you?).

Vault's 2012 List of Top 50 Global Consulting Firms

We've categorized the firms from [Vault's Top 50 list](#) into the various segments found in the industry. Check it out:

Vault 2012

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Firm Name</u>	<u>Headquarters</u>	<u>MC Category</u>
1	Bain & Company	Boston, MA	Top 3
2	McKinsey & Company	New York, NY	Top 3
3	Boston Consulting Group (BCG)	Boston, MA	Top 3
4	Deloitte Consulting LLP	New York, NY	Big 4
12	PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP	New York, NY	Big 4
47	Ernst & Young LLP	New York, NY	Big 4
50	KPMG LLP	New York, NY	Big 4
5	Monitor Group	Cambridge, MA	Tier 2
6	A.T. Kearney	Chicago, IL	Tier 2
7	Oliver Wyman	New York, NY	Tier 2
10	Booz & Company	New York, NY	Tier 2
11	Accenture	New York, NY	Tier 2
26	L.E.K. Consulting	Boston, MA	Tier 2
43	IMS Consulting Group	New York, NY	Biotech
23	Putnam Associates	Burlington, MA	Biotech/Pharm
31	Trinity Partners, LLC	Waltham, MA	Biotech/Pharm
44	Quintiles Consulting	Hawthorne, NY	Pharm
8	The Cambridge Group	Chicago, IL	Business
13	Jabian Consulting	Atlanta, GA	Business
14	Point B	Seattle, WA	Business
17	Milliman, Inc	Seattle, WA	Business
27	Strategic Decisions Group	Palo Alto, CA	Business
29	Strategos	Chicago, IL	Business

35	The Brattle Group	Cambridge, MA	Business
39	Stern Stewart & Co.	New York, NY	Business
46	Dean & Company	Vienna, VA	Business
41	Kaiser Associates	Washington, DC	Business/Econ
19	West Monroe Partners	Chicago, IL	Business/Tech
9	Analysis Group, Inc.	Boston, MA	Economics
33	NERA Economic Consulting	New York, NY	Economics
40	Bates White	Washington, DC	Economics
45	FTI Consulting, Inc.	West Palm Beach, FL	Economics
25	Novantas LLC	New York, NY	Finance
24	Health Advances, LLC	Weston, MA	Health Care
28	The Chartis Group	New York, NY	Health Care
30	Triage Consulting Group	San Francisco, CA	Health Care
32	Easton Associates, LLC	New York, NY	Health Care
37	Pearl Meyer & Partners, LLC	New York, NY	HR
48	Mercer LLC	New York, NY	HR
42	Capgemini	New York, NY	IT
49	IBM Global Business Services	Armonk, NY	IT
15	Cornerstone Research	San Francisco, CA	Economics
38	Charles River Associates	Boston, MA	Economics
36	Navigant Consulting, Inc.	Chicago, IL	Legal & Risk
21	PRTM (a PwC Company)	Waltham, MA	Operations
34	Simon-Kucher & Partners	Cambridge, MA	Pricing
20	Alvarez & Marsal	New York, NY	Restructuring
18	ZS Associates	Evanston, IL	Sales/Marketing
22	OC&C Strategy Consultants	London, UK	Strategy
16	Censeo Consulting Group	Washington, DC	Supply Chain

It goes without saying that you're going to pursue the best, most prestigious firm you can because, the reality is, **the better the firm, the better the perks**. It's a well-known fact—at the top firms, you can expect higher pay, better training, and a fancier lifestyle when you travel. The question isn't whether you'd choose a prestigious firm—it's whether you can cut it.

Given that you're going to reach for the stars, here are some realistic **factors to consider** when deciding which firms to spend time applying to.

- 1) **Fit score** – What did your fit score tell you about how strong a candidate you are? Are you an ideal applicant who's going to be recruited by the big dogs? Are we “on the fence” about you and not sure you're going to be invited to interviews? Do you have a good action plan for bulking up on your weak areas to increase your competitiveness?
- 2) **Location** – In our [top 50 list](#) above, we list the headquarters for each firm. While it's great to know where the business is centered, most groups have locations nationwide if not worldwide, so don't disqualify a firm just because they're not headquartered in a city where you want to be.

True, there are some firms—especially boutique—who prefer to hire local talent, but most firms have offices in busy, metropolitan locations where their clients are based. If you do have a strict **location preference**, be sure the firm you’re applying to has an office in your region.

For candidates applying for positions in foreign countries, **language ability** is a huge factor in whether or not you’ll get the job. For example, a Chinese national graduating from Yale had better have exceptional English skills if he’s going to apply to a top 3 firm—**no exceptions**.

Work authorization is another key factor. Don’t waste time on applications in countries where you’re not authorized to work. Focus on firms that have offices in your region(s).

- 3) **Industry** – Is there a specific field you’re interested in or have significant experience in? With a strong background in Human Resources, for instance, you may want to target [Mercer](#) or [Pearl Meyer & Partners](#) for a better chance at getting hired.
- 4) **Lifestyle** – Do you love to travel and don’t mind being away for weeks at a time? Do you have a family or partner who want to see you home once in awhile? Do you like to build relationships with your colleagues outside of work? Travel, overtime, and culture are all important components of [lifestyle](#) that will play into your decision on where to apply.
- 5) **Exit opportunities** – The more prestigious firms have better [exit opportunities](#). When you leave more general firms (strategy and operations), the door is open for high upward mobility positions like corporate development roles, whereas exiting from IT or public sector consulting (or something just as narrow), you can disqualify yourself from certain positions.

Is

Wondering why we didn’t include **salary**? While you will find differences among first-year offers from the various consulting firms, they won’t vary all that much. Read our all-time popular article on [2012 management consulting salaries](#) for **firm-specific offers** for undergrads, MBA, advanced degree, and interns.

your fit score high enough for a position with M/B/B? Are you willing to relocate to anywhere in the US? Are you a supply chain expert and a Six Sigma Black Belt looking to consult with global manufacturing firms?

Use this next exercise to **elaborate on what you’re looking and/or qualified for**. Give each factor a priority rating to reflect how important each is to you.

Factors important to you in choosing a firm:

Factor	What you're looking and/or qualified for	Priority 1 (low) – 5 (high)
Fit Score		
Location		
-Language ability		
-Work authorization		
Industry		
Lifestyle		
Exit opportunities		

Taking what you just learned about yourself—what you're looking and/or qualified for and what's important to you—you're ready to **make a list of target firms** that are a fit for you.

1. Review the [top 50 list](#) and any other lists you may have compiled on your own.
2. **Choose 9 firms** you will apply to, following these criteria:

Pick **3 stretch** (you'd be lucky to get), **3 in the zone** (they're a good match), and **3 easy targets** (they're not as prestigious as you'd like them to be but you know you'll get in).

3. Write the firm names in the table below.
4. For each of your 9 target firms, **research the title of the position** you're best matched for, based on your levels of education and experience. You can do this by checking job postings on the firm websites, searching [LinkedIn](#) profiles of current employees, and viewing company information on [Glassdoor.com](#). (For more ideas on using LinkedIn, check out our [Networking Bible](#).)
5. Add the **target position** title to the table below.

We get a lot of questions about job titles at various firms, so feel free to [email us](#) if you want help! It can be tough to track down position titles in a firm that keeps its org charts on the down low, but **we also have connections** who work at the firms – we rely on them for a lot of our key content!

Your list of target firms and positions:

		Target Firm Name	Target Position Title
Stretch	1		
	2		
	3		
In the zone	4		
	5		
	6		
Easy Target	7		
	8		
	9		

D. Timing: Recruiting cycles and strategies

In a perfect world, you're attending a [target school](#) and you know months ahead of time when the resume drop for the top firms will occur. You've got time to [prepare your resume](#), [prep for interviews](#), and attend info sessions ([read this article](#) on how to maximize your effectiveness at info sessions).

But what if you're not so lucky, and a firm isn't coming to your campus? How do you strategically break into great firms and get an interview? It's **all about timing**.

Ideally, you're 1+ year(s) out from graduating from your undergrad or MBA program – giving you time to plan out your trajectory into management consulting. But not everyone knows that early that they want to compete for one of the best jobs in the country.

If you're not in (or preparing for) your senior year, second year MBA, or Ph.D. completion, the next best scenario is that you're fresh out of school. When you start pushing it to 1-2 years out from graduating, you must have a good story about what you've been doing in the meantime – great examples are working in an investment bank, starting your own company, or globe-trotting.

If you're more than 2 years past graduation, you've likely taken a job (probably not in management consulting, otherwise you wouldn't be reading this), or you've gotten lazy and wasted your time – in both cases, you're going to have a hard sell to convince recruiters you're worth a look.

Here are your options based on whether or not you attended a target school:

- You attended a [target school](#) and graduated 1-2 years ago. We have good news for you! You can still liaise with your university's career services center to see if you can be included in the on-cycle resume drop. This puts you in with the regular recruiting cycle.
- You're a student at a **non-target school**, or an experienced hire from a non-target school. Here are your 3 options:
 1. Apply during the fall, which is the **standard recruiting season**. You're best off applying early (late July/early August). Firms battle to fill the earliest interview slots in August and many prospects haven't gotten their case practice on yet so they opt to delay. Knowing this in advance, you can prepare early and jump into an open interview slot.
 2. Apply with a "**snap-bid**" in the spring. This is a riskier option, but it can be quite effective. You count on slipping into a spot left open because the firm under-hired in the previous recruiting cycle. For most firms, the time to apply for this slot is March/April or even into early May.
 3. Apply **through a networking contact**. Especially if your "in" is in a position of authority in the firm, this could be your most effective option.

The hiring timeline for **experienced professionals** trying to break into consulting can vary widely. Because the process is less defined for you, you should be prepared for interviews prior to dropping your resume. Instead of knowing the firm will be on your campus next month – like MBA candidates do – you could be called in for an interview next week. Start preparing earlier on for your fit and case interviews so you don't lose an opportunity due to lack of preparation.

For **juniors or first year MBAs**, the recruiting process is the same -- only the timing is different. Your work is done over the summer, so you can land an offer in the late winter/early spring.

Below we've broken out for you a **month-by-month timeline** – by degree and level of experience – to guide you through the application process.

For U.S. interns, **get your resume to us** in December for standard [editing service](#). For more intense [coaching](#), get one of our 4+ hour [prep packages](#) and work with us in the Dec/Jan timeframe.

Intern (Junior Year Undergrad/MBA First Year)

Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug
Research consulting industry											
	Networking										
		Identify target firms/application dates									
			Prepare resume and cover letter								
			Prepare for case interviews								
				Attend info sessions							
				Drop resume							
				Prepare for fit interviews							
					Interview						
						Offer!					

Full-Time (Senior Year Undergrad/MBA Second Year)

May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Research consulting industry											
	Networking										
		Identify target firms/application dates									
			Prepare resume and cover letter								
			Prepare for case interviews								
				Attend info sessions							
				Drop resume							
				Prepare for fit interviews							
					Interview						
						Offer!					

Experienced Professional

Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
Research consulting industry											
	Networking										
		Identify target firms/application dates									
			Prepare resume and cover letter								
			Prepare for case interviews								
			Prepare for fit interviews								
				Drop resume							
					Interview						
						Offer!					

Section V. Resume and Cover Letter

In this section we cover [resume](#) and [cover letter](#) basics and give you a few tools to keep you on track.

If you want even more detail than we cover here, we highly recommend you buy our [Consulting Resume & Cover Letter Bible](#) (prequel to [The Consulting Bible](#), which is focused on interviews and [The Consultant's Networking Bible](#), which is focused on networking), where we give you specific tips on **WHAT reviewers are looking for**, **HOW they review** and **HOW step-by-step** to create consulting resumes and cover letters that convey exactly what they are looking for. We also provide you with **24 tailored templates** for specific roles – you can start with one of ours and have a ready-to-go, top-notch resume in no time.

[Get all 3 of our Bibles and save \\$80 - buy MC Book Bundle here.](#)

A. Writing your resume and cover letter

Writing your resume and cover letter can take you anywhere between **1 and 10 hours** – and it may mean the difference between literally tens of thousands of dollars a year, so don't be shy about investing!

Before writing your first (or re-writing your current) resume and cover letter, check out our articles on the topic. These give you detail on **what consultants look for** in resumes, **common mistakes** that will cost you an interview slot, and **what to focus on**.

- [Consulting Resume Guide](#)
- [10 Resume Tips](#)
- [Top Posts on Resumes](#)
- [Guide to Cover Letters](#)
- [Top 10 Tips for Cover Letters](#)

If you're going for a complete overhaul, check off each document feature as you complete it:

Resume:

- _____ Heading
- _____ Education section
- _____ Experience section
- _____ Personal section
- _____ Additional section 1 (optional)
- _____ Additional section 2 (optional)
- _____ Additional section 3 (optional)

Cover Letter:

- _____ Heading
- _____ Paragraph 1 – Thesis statement
- _____ Paragraph 2 – Your timeline
- _____ Paragraph 3 – Work experience
- _____ Paragraph 4 – Tie it together
- _____ Paragraph 5 – Wrap it up
- _____ Closing

B. Resume screening exercise

You have **under 10 seconds** to make your **first impression** on recruiters once your resume is in front of them. Your goal is to capture their interest in a few seconds so they will spend another 2-3 minutes reading about your responsibilities, project results, and awards – which also need to be well-presented, by the way!

In those first crucial seconds, the **top 5 things** recruiters see when scanning a resume are:

Presentation
Past employers
Education
Address
Anomalies

Use this exercise if you want to **get a sense** for what someone else sees when they first review your resume. Hand your resume to a trusted editor, giving them **30 seconds to review**. When time is up, ask them to rate how you did in each category from 1 (poor) to 5 (awesome!)

Resume screening exercise:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Rating (1-5)</u>	<u>Comments:</u>
Presentation	_____	_____
Past employers	_____	_____
Education	_____	_____
Address	_____	_____
Anomalies	_____	_____

Don't be afraid to ask the most honest or experienced person you know - you're looking for **constructive criticism** here. Make sure you say thank you and smile in response to any positive comments you get. Address any categories that received a rating of 3 or below first -- then see what you can do to improve any 4s to a 5.

As a note – your friendly experts at Management Consulted **provide resume screening for FREE**, so if you don't have someone you trust who can do this for you, [email us](#). We will give you actionable suggestions to take your resume to the next level.

C. Editors

Always have your documents edited by a friend, colleague, or professional. Not only can they help you catch grammatical/spelling errors (which are easy to miss when you’ve spent 10 hours looking at the same document), saving you embarrassment, but they can tell you if everything you have on your documents makes sense.

If the person you’re thinking of having do a review is working in the firm you are applying for, send them the documents last – you want to give them **your best version** before sending it off to them, instead of potentially leaving a terrible first impression.

If you’re not working with one of our [editing experts](#) to do a **world-class resume** or cover letter edit, no sweat – list 3 people you can enlist to edit your resume and cover letter. Check off once they’ve reviewed your documents.

Identify 3 editors:

Name:	Resume	Cover Letter
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____

D. Tailoring your application

We don’t recommend that you submit the exact same application to each firm you apply to – instead, tailor your resume and cover letter in small ways to convey your genuine interest in the firm and your understanding of their culture and the position.

Each firm has core assets – the brand they market and the qualities they value. Your resume and cover letter need to reflect your understanding of those and how you’d contribute to them. Doing your research ahead of time will also help you craft answers to the firm-specific interview questions later on in the process (which we’ll get to later).

Here’s a snapshot of some of the **core assets at M/B/B**:

- ❖ **McKinsey** – industry expertise, large global network
- ❖ **Bain** – results-driven (“results not reports”), “true north”, client-centric
- ❖ **BCG** – thought leadership, tailored focus to clients

What are the core assets at your target firms?

You'll have to do some research to identify them. Talk to people, network, scour firm's website, etc. (**For help on networking**, get the [Consultant's Networking Bible](#) or jump ahead to the section below on [building your asset file](#).)

Once you've identified **3 traits** for your target firm, take some time to think about:

- (1) **how you've demonstrated** that trait
- (2) your understanding of **how the firm demonstrates** it

Use the table below to keep track of your brainstorm, then weave these messages into your cover letter. In order to **stand out from the pack**, you've got to relate your interest in the firm **in a way no one else can**. Tie your interests and experience to the firm's core culture in a personal way and they'll want to hear more from you. These insights will also come in handy later on in the [fit interview](#).

Demonstration of core assets:

Trait:	
You	
Firm	
Trait:	
You	
Firm	
Trait:	
You	
Firm	

While your target research is focused on the firm, **key words** are usually specific to a position. Because computers are increasingly being used to complete a first screen of applications for relevance, your application materials must include the key words **recruiters are looking for** – especially for non-M/B/B firms.

We’ve built an exercise you can use to identify key words from the position description and incorporate them into your resume and cover letter.

1. Review the position description and **circle key words** and terms, like “project management” or “business development.”
2. Do another scan for any **key technical terms** and circle those.
3. List your circled items in the left-hand column below.
4. **Include an assortment** of these key words in your cover letter when describing previous work experience—“I managed business development for....” Another great spot for placement of key words is in your Profile or Summary of Qualifications at the beginning of your resume.
5. Make sure to use any key technical terms **at least once** between your cover letter and resume. Use the columns to the right to track where you’ve used each key word.

Key Words / Key Technical Terms	Used in Resume	Used in Cover Letter

Your cover letter thesis statement engages your reader on the **key reasons why they should consider interviewing you**. When written well, it encourages them to read on for more details in the rest of the letter.

Here’s an exercise to develop the thesis statement for your cover letter when you’re applying for a specific firm or position:

1. **Explain what you are applying for, with what firm, and in which office** – in 2-3 sentences max.
2. Briefly state a few of **your key characteristics** and/or past work or educational experiences that have set you up for success in the position you are applying for.
3. Your thesis statement caps off your first paragraph, and should be **substantiated by the experiences** you go on to explain in the rest of your letter.

Your thesis statement:

Section VI. Networking mastery

Networking is a huge topic that everyone wants to know more about. Start out by reading our articles dedicated to stealth networking for management consulting jobs:

- [How to network at company presentations and info sessions](#)
- [Networking 101 podcast – We spill the beans on how to network your way into any job](#)
- [Networking 102 podcast – It’s never been more important – And it truly. Does. Work.](#)

A. Elevator pitch

Your elevator pitch is a brief, catchy introduction of who you are and what you’re looking for. It’s **your brand statement**—your very own “1-minute sound byte”—and one of the best networking tools available to you.

You’ll use your elevator pitch in interview settings, but it’s probably the most important when you’re networking – either at information sessions, with family friends or in informational interviews with a key contact in a firm. Read our [networking at company presentations and info sessions](#) (even when you’re not a current student) for insider tips.

A well-constructed and interesting elevator pitch gives a chronological story of your education and work history, starting with your educational background and ending with your current or most recent position. It highlights your best leadership experiences and distinctions as well as evidence of your analytical ability and business understanding.

Time to **craft your pitch**. Work with what you have (read: you can’t include things you’ve lined out in your action plan unless you’re actually doing them now), and make sure you hit **these key points**:

- **Education**, including school(s), degree(s), and any major distinctions/awards. Don’t include GPA (unless it comes up naturally in the conversation) – save it for your resume. You’ll sound like you’re trying too hard to impress the person on the other end of the conversation.
- Highlight your **leadership roles**. Give enough context to set the scene, yet be concise.
- **Name drop, name drop, name drop** – this goes for schools, employers, friends in the biz etc. Don’t underestimate the pull this can have in a networking conversation!

It’s helpful to have someone **look objectively** at what you’ve put down to make sure you’re effectively connecting the dots into a complete story and steering clear of selling yourself short.

Your elevator pitch:

If you're having any trouble at all, consider working with us for a **one-on-one coaching session** – we are experts at this, and a great elevator pitch will open more doors for you than anything else! Our [Consulting Job Hunt](#) and [Consulting Boot Camp](#) are our most popular packages. [Email us](#) with questions!

B. Building your asset file

Your asset file consists of the names of **anyone and everyone who can help you** – either directly or indirectly – get a job in management consulting. It's made up of the key people in your immediate network, plus the networks of those people, and so on. Think of it as your 6 degrees of separation to an **insider track**.

The whole point of building your asset file is to **connect with a specific person at a target firm**. You'll use your asset file to gain access to recruiters, consultants, etc., who are in a position to offer you an interview or at the very least give you up-to-the-minute information on [recruiting cycles](#) or [tailoring your resume/cover letter](#) for their specific firm.

We've laid out a tool for you to use to **build your asset file** – a quick how to on getting contacts to firms when you don't have them already. Before digging in, read our [article here](#) for specifics on all the resources at your fingertips.

Now, let's start building your asset file...

B. Brainstorming worksheet

There are 2 parts to networking – tapping your existing network, and piggybacking on someone else's. With this next exercise – an abbreviated version of the 10-step process we give you in the [Consultant's Networking Bible](#) – you'll do both.

For a huge head start, piggyback on our network! Get the [Consultant's Networking Bible](#) with **2500+ names** and contact info of recruiters, consultants, and HR personnel at **110+ firms**.

Remember that list you made of the [9 firms](#) you're going to apply to? Now you're going to access your network to **find personal contacts** at as many of the firms as possible.

Your goal is to **obtain at least 10 contacts** – by which we mean names and email addresses/phone numbers. It's okay to have more than 1 contact person for the same firm, but more than 2 aren't really useful.

Scan the worksheet on the next page – this is your tool, and **here's how to use it**.

1. List all the **people you know** working at consulting firms.
2. List all the **people you know who know people** working at consulting firms.
3. List consulting **firms you're interested in**.
4. Start tapping into **your asset file** to find people working at your target firms.
5. Document your **new contacts**.

As you begin to have conversations with each of your contacts, keep a record of **important information about each firm** like deadlines and application requirements. Use the Notes column to capture key insights like the firm's key cultural attributes and typical interview questions.

For target firms where you can't identify a personal contact or some kind of inroad, **close the gap** by doing as much research as you can on the hiring and application process. This marks the beginning of the giant **black hole of impersonal applications**, and you want to stay out of it wherever possible.

If you want help with this process – and we understand that you might, because it's super important – consider signing up for a [1-hour coaching session](#) with us. We'll ask you to fill out the list first with your firms of interest, but we'll help you **put legs on your approach** – finding contacts, discussing strategies, and leaving you with a plan that will significantly increase your likelihood of getting an interview call!

Asset File Brainstorming Worksheet

	Firm	Contact Name	Contact Email	Contact Phone	Referred to you by	Informational Interview?	Office Location	Deadline(s)	Notes
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									

Section VII. Interviews

If you're like the majority of our clients, you're **stressing big time** about the interview process. Unfortunately, we can't be in the room with you to coach you on each answer (or set up a hidden microphone in your ear – yes, we've been asked!), but we can give you **all the resources you'll need** to get through with flying colors.

Most candidates lose sleep at night over the [case studies](#) portion of the interview (and rightly so, they can be excruciating!), but keep in mind, **there are multiple parts to a [successful interview process](#)**.

In terms of order of importance, the case interview comes first followed by the fit interview – but preparation-wise, **we recommend you practice them in reverse order**. Here's why: preparing for the fit interview is the easiest way to practice for the whole interview process, and the best way to practice for networking (part of telling your story, talking about yourself and what you do, in a way that sounds like you). If you can **nail structure** on content you know something about, you're set up for doing it well on topics you're clueless about (like random market sizing or investment cases).

The **fit interview**, even in abbreviated form (“walk me through your resume”), comes first in 90% of interviews. The impression you make in the **first few minutes** leads the interviewer to decide whether you're a *yes* or a *no* **before you even get to the case interview**. Don't under-prepare just because the fit interview is not as hard, or you know you won't get any questions that you can't answer – make sure to carve out time to practice so you can **answer well**.

What are firms looking for in fit interviews?

“Someone who I want to work with from 8am to 8pm.”

-McKinsey Interviewer

Fit questions measure where you fall in these 3 areas:

1. A **good communicator**
2. An **effective hard-worker** (you not only put in the hours, but you work smart as well)
3. A **positive**, generally likeable person

Second, and unequivocally the **most important**, is the [case interview](#). In fact, many firms (especially the top 3) won't ask you one question about yourself until you demonstrate you can do at least one business case **like a consultant**.

Why is the case interview so important? Because doing well in cases requires the **same skills that consultants use**:

- Understanding of basic business concepts (e.g., revenues and costs, suppliers and customers, market structure, etc.)
- Analytical, structured-thinking
- Business-oriented creativity and insight
- Communication and presentation

We've written several articles on interviews that you should read before moving ahead:

- [Interview Prep](#)
- [10 Interview Tips](#)
- [Best Follow-Up Questions](#)
- [Case Studies 101](#)

A. Basic fit questions

You can 100% count on an interviewer – at some point in your process – to ask you **two standard questions**. In this section we'll make sure you're prepared with answers that demonstrate your career progression, excellent communication skills, and ability to summarize.

Question #1: "Walk me through your resume."

When interviewers ask this, they want a succinct chronological story, starting with your educational background and ending with your current or most recent position. You want to give them a picture of your history and why you're there in **less than 2 minutes**. Use your [elevator pitch](#) as a starting point, then add context as needed and smooth segues to round out your answer.

Practice your answer with a friend ([or us!](#)) to make sure you don't exceed 2 minutes.

Write your answer to "walk me through your resume":

Now, let's practice summarizing!

If you only had 30 seconds to spend on your answer, what would you say? This should reflect your most meaningful experience, preferably a work experience where you had a quantifiable impact.

Rewrite your 30-second answer:

Question #2: “Why do you want to work for us?”

Your interest in and enthusiasm for the firm you’re interviewing with is extremely important. If you’re not asked directly, “Why do you want to work for us?” you should strategically weave your reasons into the conversation. This exercise will help you develop compelling reasons describing **why you want to work for a specific firm**.

Remember, this is not a question about what *you* want to get out of the position. The firm knows what a career in management consulting offers you—excellent professional development and training, case variety, C-level interaction, global teams, accelerated responsibility, and prestige. Your interviewers want to hear about **what you’ll give them** and how you’ll grow.

And if you’re wondering...yes, this question needs to be tailored for each potential employer you interview with.

There are the 3 key components your answer should embody:

Component #1: Know the position you’re vying for. Summarize the scope of the position and responsibilities in your own words.

Component #2: Know the firm. Summarize the clientele and industries the firm serves. List any of the firm’s major awards or achievements.

Component #3: Know your goals. Describe how the position supports your career goals. Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?

Pulling from the points above, **summarize your answer** to “why do you want to work for us?”

Your 30-second answer to “why do you want to work for us?”:

B. Talking about your education

80% of new hires at consulting firms originate from undergrad, MBA, or advanced professional degree programs. These are individuals who have little to no professional work experience. This puts a lot of emphasis on what you’ve learned at school!

Write your answers to the typical interview questions below - then practice them out loud. Answers should be **1-2 minutes** in duration.

1. What was your favorite class and why?

2. In 60 seconds, explain a concept or topic you learned.

3. Why did you major/concentrate in [X]?

4. Given your major/concentration, why are you interested in management consulting?

Check out [The Consulting Bible](#) for powerful insight into **preparing for any fit interview question**. We include 50 questions with actual answers we'd feel comfortable giving in an interview setting.

C. Hero stories

Because you can't possibly know every question you'll be asked in an interview, it's best to build an **inventory of experiences** you can pull from—we call them hero stories!

Hero stories describe you as someone who **saved the day**, doing something impressive that made an impact. They demonstrate your leadership qualities, your initiative, and your teamwork orientation.

Challenge stories describe a challenge or failure you faced and overcame. They relay your perseverance, your improvement ethic, and your ability to overcome obstacles.

Read up on best practices for hero stories in our [web article here](#).

When [working with us one-on-one](#), we have our clients write 4 hero stories and 2 challenge stories. We've given you the framework we use so you can **do it on your own**.

Let's start with your **4 hero stories**. Use the space on the next page to write about your experiences and follow these instructions:

- Highlight the **key qualities** of leadership, initiative, and teamwork.
- Use examples from work, school, or community activities—**steer clear of experiences from your personal life**.
- **Use bullets** instead of full sentences.
- When you practice, it should take you **30-60 seconds to deliver out loud**.
- Organize your hero stories **using this framework**: Context, Challenge, Actions, Results

Context – Challenge – Actions – Results

For those of you required to write a **leadership essay** for an application, these are marvelous examples to use as your responses.

Even though it's not published on our site, **we do provide editing services for these stories too** – [contact us](#) if you need help getting your “wow” factor across.

Hero Story 1:

Context –

Challenge –

Actions –

Results –

Hero Story 2:

Context –

Challenge –

Actions –

Results –

Hero Story 3:

Context –

Challenge –

Actions –

Results –

Hero Story 4:

Context –

Challenge –

Actions –

Results –

Now it's time for your **2 challenge stories**. Use the space below to write about your experiences and follow these instructions:

- Highlight the **key qualities** of perseverance, continuous improvement, and overcoming obstacles.
- Use examples from work, school, or community activities—**steer clear of experiences from your personal life**.
- **Use bullets** instead of full sentences.
- When you practice, it should take you **30-60 seconds to deliver out loud**.
- Organize your challenge stories **using this framework**: Context, Challenge, Actions, Results, **Re-assessment**
- In the re-assessment part, **show that you've learned** from your mistake and that you would do things differently if faced with the situation again. If you can, present another scenario that happened more recently under similar context, showing that you applied your learnings, took a different approach, and came out with **better results**.

Challenge Story 1:

Context –

Challenge –

Actions –

Results –

Re-assessment –

Challenge Story 2:

Context –

Challenge –

Actions –

Results –

Re-assessment –

D. Experience questions

You will inevitably be asked to describe a time when you demonstrated a particular quality **crucial to succeeding** in management consulting. Here are some of the typical qualities desired in consultants:

- *Leadership*
- *Initiative*
- *Teamwork*
- *Communication skills*
- *Work ethic*
- *Ethical behavior*

This is another exercise we use with our MC clients – **try it out on your own** to prepare for your fit interview.

Write 1-2 paragraphs on each quality (30-60 seconds of verbal explanation). Avoid examples from your personal life and don't bring up anything negative – focus on the positive!

Leadership

Initiative

Teamwork

Communication Skills

Work Ethic

Ethical Behavior

E. Mock fit interview practice

Ask anyone, scour all the relevant websites, read all of the articles on our site – **we all agree** on one thing for acing your interviews – **practice, practice, practice!**

The **8 questions** below are typical fit questions. Give this form to your mock interviewer or use it to practice on your own. (Read this article on [the biggest mistake to avoid in the fit interview](#) before you start!)

Mock Interviewer: _____ Date: _____

Question	Score (1-5) 1=poor 5=great	Time	Notes
<i>Walk me through your resume.</i>			
<i>Why are you interested in consulting?</i>			
<i>Why are you interested in [X] firm”?</i>			
<i>Tell me about a time when you demonstrated leadership.</i>			
<i>Tell me about a time when you faced a challenge and how you overcame it.</i>			
<i>What’s your greatest weakness?</i>			
<i>Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?</i>			
<i>What questions do you have for me?</i>			

Other Comments/Notes:

F. Case interviews

In the case interviews, you'll be tested on how well you understand what matters most to the firm – your ability to **think like a consultant**.

We've published 3 articles for serious candidates wanting exclusive insight into the case interview process:

- [Case Studies 101](#)
- [Two smartest case study techniques](#)
- [10 steps to solving any sizing question](#)

And don't even think about going into an interview without first reading [The Consulting Bible](#) – it's the **top global resource** for breaking into management consulting. With 5 sizing questions (mini-cases) and 4 case studies with exhibits, we'll put in front of you more challenging and complex scenarios than you'll face from **the likes of Bain and BCG**.

Some other required reading (that should look familiar):

- [Case in Point](#), by Marc Cosentino
- [How to Get into the Top Consulting Firms](#), by Tim Darling
- [CaseInterview.com](#)
- [Crack the Case](#), by David Ohrvall

Now that you've done your reading and you know what you're doing, **write out the framework you would use to open these 4 cases**.

1. Market sizing

2. Profitability

3. Market entry

4. M&A

G. Interview practice plan

One-on-one practice is the **best thing you can do** to prepare for the high-pressure interviews typical of the management consulting industry. Having to craft your answers aloud and in front of a real audience creates a setting that realistically tests your interview skills. Here you'll develop your practice plan to prep for your interview.

In the table below, identify people to practice with (or fill in the name of [one of our coaching experts](#)). **Schedule a day and time** for your practice interview with each person, mark whether the session will be recorded, determine whether you're practicing the fit or case interview questions (or both), and check "done" when completed.

If possible, take an **audio or video recording** of yourself so you can review your performance and identify areas for improvement.

Your interview practice plan:

	Practice Partner	Record?		Where	When	Done
		A / V	Fit / Case			
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						

Section VIII. Helpful tools

We'll leave you with a few helpful tools to keep you on track during your application process.

A. Application tracker

Use this tool to track your applications.

Firm	Submission date	Sent to	Date receipt confirmed	Follow-up date

B. Day of interview checklist

Use this checklist on the day of your interview to ensure you arrive prepared and on time!

	To-Do	Done
1	Know your route (get directions the day before)	
2	Have a plan for parking	
3	Dress appropriately	
4	Bring printed copies of your application materials (resume, cover letter, job description, etc.)	
5	Bring your "brag book" or portfolio	
6	Know your list of follow-up questions	
7	Know your salary range	
8	No fragrances	
9	Have 3 references ready	
10	Pack breath mints, snack, pens	
11	Turn off cell phone! (just before walking into the building)	

You're ready to ace your interview! Best of luck, and [keep us posted](#) on your progress!

Section IX. Appendix - Action plan template

Weak Area	Current Score	Action Plan	Timeline	Completed

Section X. MC Support

To support you in your quest through the consulting jungle, your expert team offers:

[The Consulting Guide to Resumes and Cover Letters:](#)

- 73 pages on tricks of the trade, examples, and specifics on how to create the world's best resumes and cover letters
- 24 best-in-class templates you can actually use

[The Consulting Bible:](#)

- 92 pages of insider secrets, 5 sizing questions and 4 case studies with exhibits

[The Consultant's Networking Bible:](#)

- 88-page networking manual on how to network your way into your dream firms
- Email templates and call scripts to use with cold and warm leads
- Complete contacts database with 2500+ names at 111 firms

[Editing \(Resume/Cover Letter\), where we complete:](#)

- **Resume & Cover Letter**
- **Personalize Your Application**
 - FREE screening review of your resume or cover letter so you know where you stand from a recruiter's perspective
 - Creating your first (or a like-new) resume or cover letter with 2 complete rounds of deep-dive edits on grammar, format, and content

[Coaching/Interview Prep \(1, 4, and 10-hour blocks\):](#)

- **One-on-One Advice on Breaking In**
 - Identify your weak areas and develop an action plan to bulk up
- **Networking**
 - Define a strategy on how to get your foot in the door at your target firms
 - Prepare your elevator pitch
- **Fit Interviews**
 - Prepare for the big day – mock interviews with comprehensive feedback
- **Case Studies**
 - Intensive coaching on how to prep for case studies
- **Prepare to Ace Your Interview**
 - Personalize your preparation for specific firms and roles

All sessions are conducted via Skype (you choose if you want to be on- or off-camera).

- [Packages](#) - **all of the above!**
 - We provide packages that include coaching, editing and our Consulting Guide to Resumes and Cover Letters. These are our BEST VALUE!

About Management Consulted

Our core team worked at Bain and McKinsey, and our guest posters on the site round out the insight we share from multiple top firms.

In the past few years, we've worked with the best and brightest students and professionals around the world to break into super-competitive consulting jobs at the likes of McKinsey, Bain, BCG, Booz & Co, and more.

Beyond the tips we learned through the mega-competitive interview process (as an interviewee and interviewer) at Bain and McKinsey, two of the world's most competitive consulting firms, we identified secrets we never knew we were applying when we got calls for job interviews with investment banks, tech companies, start-ups, and more that hundreds of others were drooling over. Together with the best team on the planet, we are building this company to personally guide you through the confusing, impossible, but terribly exciting consulting jungle.

We look forward to hearing great things from you!

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