

Amrita School of Business

Ettimadai, Coimbatore

Course: Foundations of Management Consulting

Jan- March 2018

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Course Objective:

Business/Management consulting is one of the top three career choices for MBA professionals and is predominantly a day zero company for placements in most B-schools. Apart from pure consulting organizations, many mainstream firms have specialist teams embedded within their organizations for internal consulting assignments. Consulting skills are a prerequisite for business analyst roles in technology firms such as Accenture, Capgemini, IBM (and like) as well as firms such as Cisco, Dell-EMC and a host of Global In-house centers/captive firms based in India. In addition, new age firms such as amazon, Uber and Ola who work on a matrix HR structure significantly appreciate consulting skills. In short, consulting skills are increasingly being considered as base line requirement in an MBA professional.

Despite its importance in the industry, the required consulting skills are not comprehensively covered in the B School curriculum or for that in any of the professional PG courses leaving the newly hired consultants struggling to adapt to the demands of the industry. Consulting skills can be acquired through a combination of classroom training by practitioners and/or apprenticeship in consulting centric organizations. This elective program aims at accelerating the skill acquisition process and involves opportunity upon the vast hands-on consulting experience of the faculty across different client situations. In addition to enhance the learning, the course will include live sessions from active consulting professionals drawn from the industry.

Note: Please look up www.iimjobs.com/c/consulting-jobs-16.html to get an idea of the range of employment opportunities that comes with possessing business consulting skills.

Learning Objectives:

This course aims to introduce the world of business / management consulting to MBA students. The course involves understanding the nuances of business consulting as well as aid acquisition of key management skills for a career post-MBA. The course will directly help students to inculcate an “analytical” / consultative approach in problem identification and framing, analysis and problem solving, making recommendations that are heard and finally the skills needed for execution.

Course Outline (1 session = 1 hr 15 mins)

- **Session 1 & 2 – Overview of Consulting landscape**
 - a. Introduction to Consulting as a discipline
 - b. Consulting industry structure and dynamics
 - i. Market segments
 - ii. Segmentation by activity type (strategy vs ops, advisory vs execution, internal vs external)
 - iii. Segmentation by study type (blue-ocean vs red ocean, incremental vs radical)
 - iv. Key players

- **Session 3 & 4**
 - a. Consulting hierarchy
 - b. Role of consultants within consulting organisations
 - c. Consulting roles within non consulting firms (internal advisory/ execution teams, Executive assistant to leadership, Business analyst roles, Program managers in Global in house centres, captives and start-up organisations)
 - d. Horizontal vs vertical alignments – skill sets required

- **Session 5 & 6**
 - a. Consulting lifecycle (Market scouting to delivery)
 - b. Consulting proposals and contracts
 - c. Consulting process (steps in consulting engagements)

- **Session 7, 8 – Step 1 – Problem identification**
 - a. Problem identification and definition – use of conceptual frameworks, ideation workshops and mind maps
 - b. Project Management – How to manage within triple constraints of time, quality and cost.

- **Session 9 & 10 - Hands on Exercise (step 1) with grading (assignment 1)**
 - a. How to draw mind maps –using a specific case
 - b. Visualising conceptual frameworks

- **Session 11 & 12– Step 2 - Data collection and Analysis**
 - a. Types of data and data collection methods
 - b. Art of interviewing
 - c. Techniques to fill vacuum spaces - Art of triangulation and grounding

- **Session 13 & 14 – Hands on exercise (step 2) with grading (assignment No: 2)**
 - a. Group/ Individual exercise on primary data collection through interviews using a specific case

- **Session 15 & 16– Step 3 – Overview of analysis techniques**
 - a. Overview of analysis techniques -(value map, benchmarking)
 - b. Tools overview (excel)

- **Session 17 & 18 – Step 4 – Recommendation and Presentation**
 - a. How to structure recommendations (strategic options and handholding)
 - b. Presentation hard skills (power point)
 - c. Presentation soft skills (verbal)

- **Session 19 & 20 – Hands on Exercise with grading (assignment No: 3)**
 - a. Presentation with powerpoint (group / individual activity)

- **Session 21 & 22 – Managing Implementation**
 - a. Implementation Plan (Program management)
 - b. Managing transitions (Change management)

- **Session 23 & 24 –Hands on Exercise with grading (group assignment no: 3)**
 - a. Creating a full-fledged Implementation plan for a specific case
 - b. Creating a high level change management plan

Course Grading (out of 100 points):

- (1) Assignment 1 – Mind maps and conceptual frameworks (15/100)
- (2) Assignment 2 – Data collection (15/100)
- (3) **Mid Term** –Analyzing a case based on portion covered (20/100)
- (4) Assignment 3 – Power point and presentation (15/100)
- (5) Assignment 4 – Implementation plan (15/200)
- (6) **End Term** – Analyzing a case based on portion covered (20/100)

Recommended Readings (Pdf's attached)

1. Ethan, M. R. (1999). *The McKinsey Way*, McGraw- Hill
2. Rigby, D. K. (2015). *Management tools 2015. An Executive's Guide*, Bain & Company.
3. Block, P. (2011). *Flawless consulting: A guide to getting your expertise used*. John Wiley & Sons.
4. Kim, W. C., & Mauborgne, R. (2005). *Blue ocean strategy*. Harvard Business School Press, Boston, 240.

In addition, it is recommended to read the Dork trilogy by Sidin Vadakut, a series of 3 books which depicts the consulting industry/ professional in a humorous manner. It makes an enjoyable reading for all. The books are (1) *The Incredible Adventures of Robin 'Einstein' Varghese*, (2) *God Save The Dork* and (3) *Who Let The Dork Out?*