

Consultancy as a Profession after MBA

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Consultancy as a process and consultants as a role have and always been around in the world. Parables, metaphors folk tales and folklore have stories where the most insignificant and invisible of the entity comes up with a suggestion or an advice which saves the lives of many. For centuries the role of a consultant and advisors has addressed social, cultural, ethical and moral issues. The most famous role model of consultants is the concept of Nav Ratna (nine gems) who advised the emperor on the most complex issues of those times.

Today's organizations encounter variety of problems. Organizations face financial crisis, labor turnover, and poor market response and so on. People problems faced by organization also add to lower productivity and efficiency in functioning of the organization. These organizational and individual problems are to be solved for effective running of organizations and systems. Managers try their best but when things go out of hand they seek help from consultants. Help can be sometimes available from internal systems or external environment. Person or persons who render such help is called consultants. If they are from the organization we call them as internal consultants. As where when the organization seeks help from outside organization they are then called as external consultants.

Today it is the era of industrialization and transformations occurring at a rapid pace. Management Institutions need to design curriculums which address the most complex managerial, management and organizational issues of the times. Management students need to learn from real live cases, and through case methodology to address complex issues of organizations. They work in groups and teams to discuss, share and stale their perspectives to arrive at alternatives and address their anticipated and unanticipated consequences. The management institutions need to facilitate the students to accept and appreciate the functional depth and corporate values that govern an organization.

Management students who wish to get into consulting need to understand the following issues:

1. Understanding the organization and its context in which the consultant is entering or going to be working as a consultant.
2. His/her ability in inter-personal skills in relating to people within the organization. Most employees in organizations may be suspicious and cautious and sometimes hostile in accepting consultants. This is a natural phenomenon and the consultant needs to accept this and work with it. To gain trust from the client system and organization is primary art and skill of the consultant.
3. The ability to gather data and analyze and interpret it meaningfully then to convey the understanding of the reality of the organization to the organization without making the organization or the people defensive. This means the consultant needs to state the truth, the bitter truth, and to make the clients appreciate that it is for their good, betterment and growth. The findings are a look into the mirror?? To encounter their own organization and not as fault finding or evaluations and judgments of the organization.
4. The ability to identify alternatives which are do-able and which excite and motivate the clients that if they act and operationally the recommendations, the organization becomes the beneficiary and would be the better of it.
5. The consultants then review the consequences of their consulting roles, styles, strategies and processes so that they learn from their experiences to be effective in the next assignment.

However, MBA graduates need to be equipped with the following qualities, characteristics and strengths.

1. Commitment to play a professional role.
2. Time bound completion of projects
3. Ability to burn the midnight oil
4. Conceptual clarity of the issue
5. Identify alternatives
6. Provide a multiple perspective
7. Ability to Analyze, Interpret and Presentation skills
8. Written Analytical skills to write a report

Also the MBA graduates need to keep in mind that management consultants are mainly involved in providing objective expertise, advice and specialized skills with the aim of improving business performance and maximizing its growth. As a consultant, their day- to - day activities are often varied and complex as it is project -based and essentially entrepreneurial in nature.