

Essay on Career Development and Planning

Abstract

Business/management consulting services entails the provision of action-oriented, customized, and practical solutions that assist organizations achieve their sustainability goals. The work areas for business consultants include marketing, accounting, management, and human resources (Wet Feet, 2008). The paper is divided into five main parts. The introduction section gives details regarding the definition of the concept of business consultancy and mentions what business consultants do. The second section of the report provides information about the business consulting current labor market trends in the United Kingdom. The third part of the report uses the PESTLE model in evaluating the impact of the external factors influencing the work and career patterns in business consulting. The fourth section analyzes the methods of advertising, recruitment, and selection used in business/management consulting. The report winds up with an examination of the relevant professional standards and competencies within business consulting.

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Introduction

The Business/management consultancy concept initially emerged at the onset of the 20th Century, but it remains hard to define despite its long history. For example, Clark and Salaman (1998, p.155) asserted that the concept remains a difficult and an intangible service to define. As a result, a clear comprehension of the responsibility of business consultants can be realized only if the whole process of consultancy is analyzed. Nevertheless, some authors have attempted to define business consultancy in different ways. For instance, Greiner and Metzger (1983, p.7) defined the concept of business consultancy as a consultative service that specially trained as well as qualified individuals provide to the organizations. The Institute of Management Consultancy (IMC) defined management/business consultancy as the service that a qualified and an independent individual provides to public, business, and other undertakings (McLarty and Robinson 1998, p. 256).

The above definitions of business consultancy reveal that a career in business consulting calls for a suitable level of knowledge and specific skills if the business consultants are to assist organizations both identify as well as solve their problems. In essence, business consultants help in developing strategies that reflect the organization's culture as well as implementation plans that integrate sustainability into all that the organization

does. Thus, business consultants assist businesses identify problems and recommend solutions to those problems. The senior managers within organizations search for business consultants' services to help them choose a suitable management strategy from various available alternatives (O'Mahoney & Markham, 2013). Ajmal, Nordström, & Helo (2009, p. 527) asserts that the consulting emphasis has essentially changed from problems solving to building the capacity of customers to diagnose their individual problems and, therefore, manage their businesses in a more effective manner. For this reason, this report analyses the existing employment opportunities in business/management consulting career path under the below sub-headings.

Current Labor Market Trends in the United Kingdom

The labor market is essentially the employers' demand for labor and the possible supply of individuals of the working age to meet this demand. The ONS estimated the size of UK labor force at 32.7 million employees out of a projected population of 63.7 million individuals. The business consultants industry within the United Kingdom covers a very wide collection of consulting including business process management, marketing and IT consulting, organizational and strategic planning, and human resource consulting. The business/management consultation industry revenue is anticipated to increase at a compound yearly rate of 2.6 percent over the five years throughout 2014-2015.

Of late, business consulting has grown rapidly. The business consultancy uses are becoming more common in both business and non-business fields as the need for specialists and professional support increases. Therefore, employers continue procuring the services of business consultants and this reveals their increasing demand. There are various employment opportunities in management consulting industry within the United Kingdom. Business/management consultants engage in various responsibilities, implying that business consulting industry within the United Kingdom contributes immensely towards the overall employment in the country. For one, the consultants gather and organize the information regarding the procurements that need improvements or problems that need solutions. In addition, they recommend new procedures, systems, or organizational changes besides developing alternative practices or solutions. Furthermore, management consultants make recommendations to the management by means of written reports or presentations. It is also the responsibility of the management consultants to confer with the business managers to make sure that the changes they recommend are working (Buono, 2004). Moreover, the consultants analyze financial as well as other data such as employment reports, expenditure, and revenue. What's more, business consultants conduct on-site observations and interview personnel to determine the equipment, methods, and required personnel. The United Kingdom organizations continue to expand their businesses overseas that indicates that they will hire business consultants to assist them form suitable strategies for entering the overseas markets.

The Impact of External Factors Influencing Work and Career Patterns

There are various external factors that influence work and career patterns in business consulting. These factors include political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, legal, and environmental/ecological factors. For this reason, this section uses the above-mentioned external factors in evaluating their impact on work and career patterns in business consulting industry.

Political factors

Political factors essentially include the regulatory and legal issues that control individual businesses and industries. The political factors originate from the influences by the government and determine the extent to which the government influences work and career patterns within the business consulting industry. A political change introduces various influences in business/management consulting. For example, a new tax introduction by the government among the business consultants and other employees changes their compensations, and this may discourage the individuals wishing to pursue careers in management consulting. In addition, the introduction of a given trade policy or fiscal policy by the government may affect the work and

career patterns in business consulting industry. In essence, favorable trade policies or fiscal policies encourage many people to follow careers in business consultancy whereas the unfavorable policies discourage individuals to pursue careers in the same industry.

Economic factors

Economic factors are the external factors that are associated to the economic performance of a certain area. The economic factors have long term impacts on work and career patterns in various industries including business consulting industry due to their direct impact on the businesses. The economic factors such as an increase in the rate of inflation have an effect on the way businesses price their services and products. A continued increase in inflation might force organizations to shut down, and this has a negative impact on the work and career patterns in business consulting. As a result, many individuals might be discouraged to pursue careers in this promising industry. In addition, a deep recession that is an economic factor might lead to loss of jobs including business consultation jobs. What's more, favorable foreign direct exchange policies encourage organizations to invest in overseas countries. As a result, the policies increase the work and career opportunities in business consulting thus encouraging many people to pursue such careers.

Socio-cultural factors

The socio-cultural factors arise from potential customers or already existing customers within businesses (Cadle, Paul, & Turner, 2010, p.4). Each culture possesses an exclusive mindset and that exclusiveness essentially cast an impact on the businesses as well as sales of their services and products. Organizations employ business consultants to assist them in studying the domestic structures, cultural implications, and social lifestyles to understand their customers and market better. Therefore, business analysts help such organizations in developing strategic long-term plans. The organizations that are linked to the disposable business get opportunities when there is a rise in the disposable fashion in the society. Therefore, the socio-cultural factors help in increasing the work and career opportunities in business consulting.

Technological factors

Organizations need to integrate technology developments so as to remain connected along the way. There are two categories of technological changes that happen within organizations as a result of technology developments. One of the technological changes is the developments in IT that can instigate huge business impacts on various organizations and, as a result, influence work and career patterns in business consulting. The other change that results from technology developments is the developments in the technology explicit to a certain market or industry (Cadle, Paul, & Turner 2010, p.4). For instance, the manufacturing technology enhancements introduce opportunities to organizations, and, thus, encourage people to pursue careers in business consulting.

Legal factors

Legal factors are the legislation that change from time to time and have an effect on businesses. Organizations seek the services of business consultants when legislation such as food safety law and labor law change. The business/management consultants assist such organizations in changing their strategies, and, thus, the legal factors in one way or another influence work and career patterns in business consulting.

Environmental factors

The environmental factors originate from the natural environment and specifically affect industries such as agriculture and farming. In essence, the increasing concerns with regards to packaging as well as pollution

increase affect businesses (Cadle, Paul, & Turner 2010, p.4). Therefore, the mentioned environmental factors might influence individuals pursuing careers in business consulting

Advertising, Recruitment and Selection Methods in business Consulting

A fundamental human resource management activity is effective employees' recruitment and selection. There are some cost implications for employers that engage in ineffective recruitment methods including higher levels of labour turnover, loss of business opportunities, and low morale that affect the performance of employees (Evans et al., 2007, p. 7). The process of both recruiting and selecting the suitable individuals for various jobs is a complex undertaking that demand for trained employees that are aware of both antidiscrimination laws, as well as guidelines (Dale, 2003). Within the business consulting career path, there are a number of methods used in advertising, recruiting, and selecting the job applicants. The various methods used include external outsourcing, internal outsourcing, third-party sourcing, and interviewing. External Sourcing

External sourcing is one of the recruitment methods that are greatly utilized in business consulting. The employers look for prospective business consultants via the external recruitment tools, for example, newspaper advertisements, trade publication announcements, and job boards. In addition, the employers use external outsourcing when the open positions within the organizations cannot be filled by the existing workers due to the specialty or technicality of the positions.

Internal Sourcing

Internal sourcing is essentially the practice of advertising a recently vacated or new position in the organizations. The employers use the method as a way to recruit business consultants laterally or upward in the organization since little training is required. In using this method, the organizations spare the operating costs that include advertising and running background checks. Third- Party Sourcing

The employers use head-hunters or placement agencies to find qualified business consultants. The third-party sources utilize numerous tools and techniques to look for suitable business consultants, for example, improved salary compensation and other flexible benefits packages.

Pre-Selection/Interviewing

After they advertise the job positions, the employers interview the prospective business consultants through a number of methods and finally select the best candidate for the position.

Relevant Professional Standards and Competences

One of the key relevant professional standards and competencies in the wide field of management is the management consulting competency framework. Management consulting competency framework describes the competencies and the standards necessary for management consultants as ascertained by Kubr (2002). Further, it constitutes the basis for the qualification of certified management consultants. According to the management consulting competency framework, three progression levels are primarily deemed important for one to be considered as competent and professional in the practice of consultancy. The progression levels entail early level, advanced, and mastery level as highlighted by the professional ethics and conduct. The consultancy management competency is applicable to all the management/business consultation practitioners ranging from big firms to independent consultants.

Competency framework illustrates the necessary competency needed for a triumphant management consultant. The competencies entail the behaviours, expertise as well as the information that business/management consultants must comprehend, apply and demonstrate in the execution of their duties (Davis & Trompeter 2000,

p. 138). Competency framework elucidates the requirement of an efficient consultant, in which it identifies the need to balance the aforementioned competencies. The framework expects an effective consultant to balance market knowledge and capability, consulting skills, behaviour and ethics, as well as consultation competencies.

There are numerous codes of ethics that enshrine principles that guide the conduct of the management consultants. The main intention of the ethical code is to ensure that professionalism is observed, and a high level of ethical standards is adhered to accordingly (Anderson, 2003). These codes of conduct involve the following: professional, competence and due care, technical standards, integrity as well as objectivity. The code of ethics requires that clients should be served with integrity, honesty and professionally. Any information pertaining to clients must not be disclosed to a third party for whatsoever reason, and also, consultants should not take advantage of their clients' information. Furthermore, they should only agree to an engagement that is qualified by competence and experience.

The overall standards of the consulting services profession are embodied in the AICPA rule 201, and it is applicable to all the services offered by the members (Schwartz 2002, p. 35). These standards encapsulate observing the following virtues. For one, professional competence must be observed, and this implies that professional services should only be conducted if the member foresees that the services can be delivered in a professional manner. Secondly, members are expected to plan and supervise the performance of the professional services sufficiently. Additionally, a member must be in a position to obtain all the relevant data that would enable him/her to make an informed decision or recommendations.

Additionally, the code of professional ethics establishes the standards that are crucial to the understanding of how a consultant should handle clients. The standards are coded in the rule 102 of the AICPA code of conduct (Haas & Hansen 2005, p.11). Client interest should always be served by devoting to achieve the goals established by the understanding of the client and at the same time sustaining integrity and objectivity. The code of professional conduct requires the consultants to develop a written understanding concerning the responsibilities of the both parties and the scope of the commitment. It also requires communication to be maintained with the client to inform him/her of any incidence of conflicts of interests.

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