Guide to Consulting Interviews

Overview
Often, companies will begin the internship process with a brief (30-60 minute) screening interview, either on campus or via telephone or Skype. Consulting interviews fall into two types: the behavioral interview and the case interview. The former determines the extent to which you fit the consultant profile and the firm’s culture. The latter tests your problem-solving skills and displays your thinking patterns to the interviewer. Please see our case interviewing guide and programming resources for more detail on case interviewing.

Preparation
• Consulting Club
• Crack the Case Certificate Program: ideally, this program should be taken during junior year
• Successful candidates practice an average of 20-30 cases before interviewing with employers. Crack the Case Certificate Program is a great method to hone and improve your skills.

The Behavioral Interview
This section of the interview tests the applicant’s fit into the company’s culture in terms of personality and career fit, and your ability to portray yourself as a good consultant. Some consulting firms use behavioral questions almost to the exclusion of more traditional consulting case questions, more so at the undergraduate level than MBA. Interviewers look for:
• Leadership
• Teamwork
• Analytical skills
• Presentation skills
• Creativity
• Personality

Behavioral Questions
This list is not intended to be comprehensive, but should help you get your head in the game.
General:
Why do you want to do consulting?
Tell me about a time when you failed.
Tell me about a big challenge you have taken on.
What position do you normally take on a team?
How do you deal with someone in your group who isn’t pulling his or her weight, or disagrees with your goals?

Types of Case Interviews
Case interviews simulate live scenarios to test your mind’s quickness and confirm the skills you claim on your resume. The interviewer cares more about how you arrived at your answer than if you answer correctly, so be sure to explain your thought process.

Business Cases
The business case is the most common case interview question, in which you’re presented with a business scenario and asked to analyze it and make recommendations. Most cases are presented in oral form. However, there are a few variations, such as a written case, handout/slides case, or even a group case interview, where the candidates must work together to form a solution.

Guesstimates/Market-sizing
Guesstimates often ask you to estimate market size. For example, estimate how many watermelons are sold in...
the United States each year. You will not be expected to get the exact number, but your answer should make sense.

**Brainteasers**
Brainteasers are typically based more on logic and may be timed. This type of question allows interviewers to evaluate your analytic skills and creative thinking, in addition to how you work under pressure.

**Questions to ask the employer**
- What is the history of this position? Why is it vacant?
- What aspects of the job would you like to see improved?
- What are the key challenges and/or problems facing the person in this position?
- How would you describe the ideal candidate?
- What are the top three tasks you want the candidate to perform after being hired?
- What are some current projects you are working on?
- Do you have any questions or concerns about my ability to perform this job?

**Follow-up**
Within 24 hours, send the interviewer a thank-you email. Make sure it expresses your continued interest in the firm, your enthusiasm about the position, and your appreciation for their time. Don’t let the company forget your name, but make a follow-up call about a week after the interview. Let them know of your continued interest, and ask if there is any further information they need from you. If they are still deliberating on the job, ask for an estimated time frame and follow up. If they decided not to hire you, thank them for their time and consideration. If you receive the job, thank them and be enthusiastic!

**Typical Recruiting Timeline**

- **September**
  - Fall Career Fair
  - Meet the Firms Application Deadlines

- **Oct/Nov**
  - On-campus Interviewing Program
  - Crack the Case Certificate

- **January**
  - Spring Career Fair

- **February**
  - Application Deadlines
  - Spring Break; goal date to have internship secured

- **March**
  - Back-up plan for summer

**Fall semester, companies recruit primarily for full-time positions, along with some early internship recruiting.**

**Spring semester has more of a focus on internships.**