My internship experience with McKinsey

Katarina Smolarova – Business Analyst

Just before getting my BSc in Mathematics and with prospects of spending another year in the UK, I looked around for a professional summer break back in the Czech Republic. My dream was an investment bank, but I could not find one here with serious interest in interns.

My friend suggested McKinsey. I had never heard of it or management consulting before, but the little I learnt on the internet – solving the toughest problems for the world’s leading companies – grabbed my attention.

If my first day was to be an indication of what the future had in store for me, I knew I was in for quite some ride. No training, no explanation, just the name of my client and an instruction to join the team, by then already 30 minutes into their problem solving. They told me to sit down. No computer, no mobile phone, just an open invitation to listen in and understand the context of the study.

I did get my computer later and with it my immediate next challenge: learn to use PowerPoint. As a mathematician, you never use PowerPoint. As a consultant, you use it all the time to communicate anything and everything! They told me to read all I could find about the energy industry. I was shocked to see that the “documents” they referred me to were all PowerPoint presentations.

I had a great time as an intern, working as a regular, full-time consultant. I got to co-lead a pilot, spending 4-5 hours per day with six clients 3 days a week, and the responsibility for making progress was mine. So, when I got my offer to join when I finish my MSc, I knew exactly what to expect.

I had some 2 months to decide, and I need to admit I took my time. Consulting is not for everyone, and it can be very demanding. Having said this, I have never had second thoughts since becoming a regular employee. With my background in mathematics and financial economics, I would probably have ended up as an investment banker. Many of my friends have, and most of them say it’s a very time-consuming and boring job. Management consulting, on the other hand, is an extremely interesting job, and when you do stay late, it’s not because you have to but because you desperately want to crack the problem with the great people on your team!
Internship program in McKinsey Prague office

Thinking about entering the world of management consulting? Would you like to get a taste of consulting for a few months, and experience what it’s like to work in a team developing solutions for our clients?

Why Internship at McKinsey?
The objective of the Internship is to get a first-hand impression of the day-to-day working life of a McKinsey consultant, including some of the challenges and pressures presented by an actual engagement (our term for client projects). Our internships offer a real chance to meet and work with our people: from the partner who’ll oversee your progress to the consultants who’ll work shoulder-to-shoulder with you, to the “buddy” who’ll act as an informal mentor and answer your questions.

Experienced consultants will provide you with ongoing guidance and coaching which is fundamental to how we work, while showing you the spectrum of our practice and most importantly, giving you a sense of the people, values and spirit of our Firm. As an intern, you’ll work on a client project from your first day with us, and you will have direct contact with our clients. Interns help to solve a specific management problem. They perform analytical work, participate in meetings, and act as full-team members. Interns bring in their own knowledge and skills, of course, but at the same time learn more about consulting, the client company, and its industry.

Apart from attractive compensation, you may receive an offer for a full-time consulting position based on your performance during the internship.

Who can apply?
The internship is most suitable for students with fluent English and Czech/Slovak pursuing their Master’s or a Ph.D. with about a year left to graduation. You should have good analytical and communication skills, and an outstanding academic record. You should like to find solutions to problems and enjoy working as part of a team, and are expected to have been involved in extra-curricular activities.

When and where?
The internship program runs throughout the whole year and thus can be joined at any time during the year. It should last a minimum of 8 weeks and a maximum of 12 weeks. The intern will be based in Prague, and cannot transfer to another McKinsey office. The start date and the length of the internship are always agreed on based on the student’s curricular commitments. The internship is a full-time activity, thus it is impossible to attend classes at the same time.

Recruiting process
Should you wish to apply, please send us your CV, cover letter, and copy of your academic transcripts. The recruiting process consists of an initial problem-solving test and three 60-minutes interviews. The best time to apply is about four months prior to the planned internship term.

After reading all the information, you may still have questions, which I will be happy to answer. I am reachable at helena_tkadleckova@mckinsey.com or +420 221 414 111.

With kind regards
Helena Tkadlečková
Senior Recruiter

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