BCG Tackles Loose Dogs

Idea In Short

Study consulting decks regardless of their topic, because the craft of structuring data into a story transfers everywhere. BCG's stray dog report for Dallas demonstrates framework design, prioritization and projection in one package.

A Closer Look at the Deck

It always pays to study consulting decks, because they show how firms assemble data into a coherent story. Structuring information persuasively is a craft and an art form. This particular presentation surfaced on Reddit and dates to 2016. Boston Consulting Group [BCG] advised the City of Dallas on how to reduce its stray dog problem, and the final deck runs 406 pages. Yes, the topic is unusual, but the techniques inside apply to any client engagement.

When consultants hear BCG and dogs in the same sentence, they usually think of the growth share matrix. Bruce Henderson pioneered that framework in the 1970s, and it categorizes business units as stars, cash cows, dogs and question marks. The matrix stole market share from McKinsey and cemented BCG's brand in corporate strategy. 1 explains how the framework became central to business school teaching on strategy. This Dallas engagement is a different kind of dog entirely, and likely pro bono work. Imagine consultants billing 300 to 500 dollars per hour turning their attention to a loose dog problem.

Slides That Tell a Story

Regardless of the topic, the slides look polished. As students learn early, consultants collect PowerPoint presentations, and this deck contains reusable tricks and tips. Look past the canine content and the formatting surpasses many conference decks. The slides are built for a client report-out, not a conference stage, so the density and structure reflect a working document. That distinction matters, because client decks carry more analytical weight than

marketing presentations.

BCG levels sets with the client at the outset, clarifying what the project will and will not cover. For extended stakeholders who did not work closely with the team, the deck demonstrates rigor in data collection and analysis. The underlying message reads simply: we did the work. A unifying framework anchors the narrative, and here BCG uses buckets as a simple analogy to show how many loose dogs roam Dallas.

Executive Findings and Primary Research

Junior consultants should always start with the summary. Executives have limited time, strong opinions and a need to know where the conversation is headed. State recommendations in the first few pages and use the pyramid principle to structure the supporting detail. 2 places the governing thought at the top and groups supporting arguments beneath it, so readers grasp the conclusion before they dive into evidence.

BCG earns credit for genuine primary research. The team conducted a market sizing of the stray dog population in South Dallas, counting dogs along a 235-mile stretch of highway. That is the kind of fieldwork clients respect, because it shows commitment to first-hand evidence rather than recycled assumptions. Benchmarking follows naturally, and here the deck shows Dallas is understaffed relative to comparable operations. The benchmarking tells a sympathetic story for the Dallas Animal Services department that commissioned the study.

Data Visualization and Organizational Design

Good consulting charts tell a story on their own. One chart in the deck climbs almost straight up at a 45-degree angle, showing a surge in citations and stray dog counts. The visual needs no narration. Organizational design surfaces as a root cause, because much organizational dysfunction stems from unclear responsibilities, lack of clear mission and inadequate headcount. BCG notes that org design also affects the dog problem, which is a reminder that structure shapes outcomes in every context.

BCG went further and contacted peer organizations to compare how they were structured. That industry comparison required real effort, and it gave the client decision-grade data. The team contacted multiple jurisdictions, gathered their operating models and translated

the findings into actionable comparisons. Consultants love benchmarking not because it reveals the answer, but because it shows where the client stands relative to peers.

Multiple Recommendations and Prioritization

The deck contains 28 recommendations across 55 pages, because the stray dog issue has multiple root causes. Bucketing the issues by type makes the list navigable. No one can attack 28 recommendations at once, so BCG re-buckets them into quick wins and longer-term initiatives. Quick wins are immediate, low-risk actions. Long-term initiatives are difficult but useful and should follow in sequence.

The deck shows potential results to make the case concrete. With more spay and neuter services, BCG estimates the number of dog bites could drop dramatically over time. The team also projects the stray dog population after a standardized spay and neuter program, putting a number on the outcome. Executives appreciate forecasts, because projections signal confidence and provide a sanity check on the recommendation. 3 reflects the firm's broader methodology of grouping, sequencing and quantifying impact. Some subjectivity is acceptable, and one scatterplot compares initiatives by cost per dog and total dogs impacted with the source line reading BCG analysis, which signals an estimate meant to show relativity between initiatives.

Implementation and Takeaways

The back of the deck lays out an implementation timeline, which is typical for consulting reports. Sequencing events into a roadmap makes it easy for the client to plan actions. Without a roadmap, things do not get done. A waterfall chart shows that more funds are needed, starting from a 10 million dollar budget and rising to a 20 million dollar requirement, with steps in between showing where investment should flow.

The engagement has a human dimension. The City of Dallas was euthanizing more than 8,000 dogs, which is not a good thing, and a credible plan to reduce that number matters. If a BCG deck helps, good for them. The topic may be comic relief, but the craft on display is serious. Consultants who study this deck will find a complete playbook for framing a problem, gathering primary evidence, benchmarking against peers, prioritizing recommendations and projecting outcomes. That playbook travels to any industry and any client.

The broader lesson is that good consulting methodology is domain-agnostic. The same techniques that structure a stray dog engagement, namely clear frameworks, primary research, benchmarking, prioritization and projection, apply equally to a supply chain redesign or a market entry strategy. Junior consultants who internalize this transferability accelerate their development. They learn to look past the surface topic and focus on the underlying craft, which is what clients ultimately pay for regardless of the industry.

- 1BCG's Growth Share Matrix, Revisited By The BCG Henderson Institute
- 2The Pyramid Principle, A Communication Standard In Consulting
- 3Boston Consulting Group's Approach To Prioritization And Strategic Recommendations

Summary

Consulting decks succeed when they tell a coherent story with clear frameworks, prioritized recommendations and defensible projections. BCG's Dallas animal services report proves the craft holds even when the subject is unconventional. Collect good decks and study them.