Eight Recruiting Tips

Idea In Short

Recruiting is a marathon, not a sprint. Start early, network relentlessly, practice cases, know your story, and stay humble. Eight graduates who succeeded share what worked for them.

Tip One: Start Early and Stay Organized

Recruiting for consulting begins long before applications open. The most successful candidates start preparing six to twelve months in advance. They research target firms, attend information sessions, and build relationships with recruiters. Organization is critical because recruiting involves multiple deadlines, events, and follow-ups across dozens of firms. Create a spreadsheet tracking contacts, application deadlines, and conversation notes. Treat recruiting like a project with milestones and deliverables. The candidates who succeed treat the process with the same rigor they would bring to a client engagement. 1 They track every interaction, every name, and every promise. They follow up when they say they will and show up prepared to every event. This discipline signals to recruiters that you will bring the same rigor to client work.

Starting early also means building your case practice habit early. You cannot cram for case interviews the week before. Practice with partners several times per week over months. This builds the pattern recognition and mental frameworks needed to perform under pressure. Start with simple profitability cases and gradually move to market entry, mergers and acquisitions, and unconventional cases. The variety matters because you never know what type of case you will receive in the actual interview. Practice with different partners too, because each person brings a different style and set of assumptions.

Tip Two: Network With Purpose

Networking in recruiting is not about collecting business cards. It is about building genuine relationships with people who can advocate for you. Reach out to alumni from your school

who work at target firms. Ask for informational interviews and come prepared with thoughtful questions. Follow up after every conversation with a thank-you note that references something specific you discussed. 2

Purposeful networking also means attending firm events consistently. Consultants notice candidates who show up repeatedly, ask good questions, and engage meaningfully. These interactions often lead to referrals that fast-track your resume through the pile.

Tip Three: Know Your Story Cold

Every consulting interview begins with a behavioral question. Tell me about yourself. Walk me through your resume. Why consulting? Why this firm? Your answers must be crisp, compelling, and authentic. Craft a narrative that connects your experiences to your motivation for consulting. Practice your story until it feels natural, not rehearsed. Use the STAR method to structure behavioral answers with situation, task, action, and result.

Your story should highlight transferable skills like problem-solving, leadership, and teamwork. Avoid generic statements about wanting to help companies. Be specific about what draws you to consulting and why this particular firm fits your goals. Authenticity matters because interviewers can tell when you are reciting memorized lines. They have heard hundreds of candidates say they want to make an impact. Tell them a specific story about a time you solved a hard problem or led a team through ambiguity. Show rather than tell. Use concrete details that prove your claims. Numbers speak louder than adjectives, so quantify your achievements whenever possible. Mention the scale of the project, the size of the team, or the measurable result you delivered.

Tip Four: Practice Cases Relentlessly

Case interviews are the defining challenge of consulting recruiting. There is no substitute for practice. Aim for 30 to 50 live cases before your first interview. Practice with partners rather than alone because the interactive element is critical. After each case, reflect on what went well and what needs improvement. Focus on structure, math accuracy, and synthesis.

Use resources like Victor Cheng's Case Interview Workshop and standard casebooks from top business schools. Do not memorize frameworks but develop flexible thinking patterns. The goal is to approach each case with a clear structure that you adapt to the specific

problem. Interviewers want to see how you think, not whether you can recite a template.

Tip Five: Master the Math

Consulting cases involve quantitative reasoning under pressure. You need to perform mental math quickly and accurately. Practice multiplication, division, percentages, and compound growth until they become second nature. When you make a math error, acknowledge it immediately and correct it. Interviewers care more about your recovery than perfection.

Write your calculations clearly so the interviewer can follow your logic. Narrate your thought process as you compute. This shows structured thinking and gives the interviewer confidence in your approach even if you stumble on a number.

Tip Six: Ask Insightful Questions

At the end of every interview, you will be asked if you have questions. This is not a formality. It is an opportunity to demonstrate genuine interest and strategic thinking. Prepare questions that show you understand the firm's practice areas, recent projects, and culture. Avoid questions easily answered by the website. Ask about the interviewer's personal experience, recent engagements, or industry trends. 3

Insightful questions also keep the conversation flowing and leave a positive final impression. Interviewers remember candidates who made them think. Your closing questions are the last thing they hear before writing their evaluation.

Tip Seven: Stay Resilient Through Rejection

Recruiting involves rejection. Even the strongest candidates receive rejections from firms they wanted. The key is resilience. Do not let one rejection derail your confidence or momentum. Ask for feedback when possible and use it to improve. Many successful consultants were rejected by multiple firms before landing the right offer. Treat each rejection as data that refines your approach.

Resilience also means managing your emotional energy. Recruiting is exhausting and can feel personal. Surround yourself with supportive peers who are going through the same

process. Celebrate small wins like a callback or a positive networking conversation. Keep perspective because one rejection does not define your potential.

Tip Eight: Be Authentic and Humble

Consulting firms hire people, not resumes. Interviewers are assessing whether they would want you on their team for 60 hours a week. Be yourself rather than performing what you think they want. Show genuine enthusiasm for the work and the people. Humble confidence goes further than bravado. Acknowledge what you do not know and show eagerness to learn.

Authenticity also means being honest about your motivations. If you are exploring consulting alongside other career paths, say so. Interviewers respect candidates who are thoughtful about their choices. Pretending consulting is your lifelong dream when it is not comes across as insincere. Be genuine, be prepared, and let your personality come through. Remember that interviewers are rooting for you to succeed. They want to find great colleagues. Your job is to show them you would be someone they want working alongside at midnight before a big deadline. Bring energy, curiosity, and humility to every interaction. The candidates who stand out are not always the ones with the best resumes. They are the ones who make the interviewer think, I want this person on my team.

- 1Victor Cheng On Case Interview Preparation
- 2Tim Ferriss On Routines And Habits Of Top Performers
- 3McKinsey On Generative AI And The Future Of Work

Summary

Recruiting rewards persistence and preparation. Start early, practice cases daily, build genuine relationships, and stay true to your story. Every rejection teaches something. Keep going.