Corporate and Consulting Life

Idea In Short

New hires should keep learning, communicate constantly, find purpose beyond work and build relationships early. Avoid office politics, manage your time deliberately and remember that consulting rewards those who do great work and stay in the game long enough to compound their skills.

Keep Learning From Everyone

There is so much to learn from so many people in corporate and consulting environments. Manage your ego because other people will be better than you at some things, and you will be better at others. That balance is what makes a good team function well.

Imposter syndrome is real and most consultants do not know exactly what they are doing at all times. 1 explains how focusing on facts rather than feelings helps professionals separate fear from reality. Do not be hard on yourself. Learn as much as you can and try your best.

The learning curve is surprisingly steep at the beginning of your career. Proficiency requires many components beyond technical skill, including communication, email management, presentation design, time management, data gathering and analysis. The volume of skills to develop can feel overwhelming, but steady progress compounds over time.

Communicate Effectively and Concisely

Consulting is about breaking complex problems into pieces and explaining both the problem and solution in an easy-to-digest manner. Structured thinking and concise communication to leadership are essential skills. Always over-communicate rather than hold back, because your team members need to know your progress constantly.

Organization and time management separate effective consultants from overwhelmed ones.

Block your lunch and dinner time, and do not answer managing directors during those periods. It is not worth it, and you get promoted anyway. Establish boundaries early so the job does not consume your entire life.

Find Purpose at Work and Outside Work

You can like your job, but at the end of the day it is still a job. Find other things in life to derive meaning from. Purpose at work can come from case work, but also from relationships, internal initiatives and helping younger colleagues learn what you wish you knew at their age.

In school, the focus is on finding the highest-paying, best-company job and ignoring everything else. Once you start working, you realize there are other priorities. Life without homework is great, but find something outside work to stimulate you, or you will turn into a corporate robot. Life is not all about work.

Enjoy the Freedom and Independence

Coming from a structured school schedule, many new hires are surprised by the level of independence in corporate life. The job ebbs and flows, with some weeks non-stop and others quieter. Corporate life is easier than college in many ways, and not all bosses, companies or coworkers are bad.

There is more room to have fun and express yourself than new graduates expect. Remain professional, but it is more enjoyable to work with interesting people who want to have fun while delivering excellent results. Only the horror stories make it to you, while most people and places are fine.

Do Not Burn Out

Run your own race. Many colleagues burn out from trying to compete on hours. The longer you stay in the game, the better the rewards. 2 emphasize designing systems that manage energy, not just time. Burning yourself out early does you no favors.

Different projects affect your wellbeing and outlook differently. Being healthy physically and mentally serves you better than performing at unrealistic rates for unrealistic periods.

Monitor your own indicators, including energy on Monday mornings and the ability to focus without stimulation.

Watch Out for Office Politics

Corporate politics are real, whether it is actual political conversation or office drama. Steer clear of all of it. Doing good work gets you 70 percent of the way, but the other 30 percent is maintaining relationships and advocating for yourself. Keep your opinions to yourself and keep them as non-spicy as possible.

This is not the advice this generation wants to hear, but it is the advice you should follow. There is a time and place to speak freely, and your workplace is not one of them. Company bureaucracy is real, and navigating it requires tact and discretion.

People, People, People

Everything is done in teams, and teams can accomplish anything. Consulting is relationship-based and personality-driven. People who succeed are not only smart but can articulate their ideas to the right person. Relationships with internal and external partners matter because people help those who have shown partnership.

Networking does not stop once you get a job. 3 shows how building authentic relationships unlocks opportunities, mentorship and insider knowledge. Reach out to peers, partners and principals to understand the firm and the types of work available. Your team is the key to your success, so hold on to great teams.

Do Great Work and Step Up

What you put in is what you get out. Be diligent and evidence-based with your work, and answer the so-what concisely. People are invested in your learning, so do not assume you must know everything when you start. Your work builds trust, and there is always a better way to do things.

The amount of responsibility you take on depends entirely on yourself. If you volunteer, you get opportunities to step up. On a first project you might edit slide decks, and on a second you might run daily client meetings. Ask your manager for what you want and deliver on it.

The autonomy you have, even at low levels, can be surprising.

Explore What You Like and Remember the Audience

Pay attention to what functions or industries interest you. Advocate for yourself to do what you love. Consulting is more than strategy, as firms mix strategy, technology and transformation. Take a random walk and see what you like best. Do not put too much pressure on yourself, because many classmates switch companies after claiming they found their dream job.

Client relationships take precedence over everything. If the client is happy, your life is much easier. Follow the platinum rule, which is to treat others the way they want to be treated. Find a manager you work well with and learn their preferences, pet peeves and working style to make both your jobs easier.

- 1Asana's Guide To Imposter Syndrome
- 2Strategies For Preventing Burnout In Consulting
- 3Networking Strategies For Consulting Careers

Summary

Corporate life rewards initiative, resilience and relationships. Keep learning, communicate clearly and find purpose outside work. Do not burn out chasing hours. Remember the platinum rule, treat others how they want to be treated. Most importantly, enjoy the journey because everyone is figuring it out as they go.