Get the inside scoop on the top Asia Pacific consulting firms!

Read this extended excerpt of the *Vault Guide to the Top 25 Consulting Firms, 2009 Asia Pacific Edition* and get the inside story on 40+ firms, including:

- Exclusive prestige and quality of life rankings, including Vault’s ranking of the top 25 firms in the Asia Pacific region
- Recent firm news
- Information on hiring
- Insider info on corporate culture

This PDF is an excerpted version of the full 362-page guide.

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- Downloadable e-Books of 50+ Vault career guides, such as the *Vault Career Guide to Consulting*, the *Vault Guide to the Case Interview*, *Vault Career Guide to Investment Banking*, and many more
- Employer profiles of 4,500+ top employers
- 1,000s of career advice articles, including sample resumes, sample cover letters and more

**Contact your career center today to find out how to access the Vault Online Career Library.**


ABOUT VAULT
Founded in 1996, Vault is the leading global media company focused on careers. With offices in North America, Europe, India and Asia, Vault provides graduates and young professionals worldwide with insider information on careers and education through its award-winning web sites and career guides.
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Introduction

Across Asia Pacific, the consulting industry has experienced a boom over the last three years. The region has gone from virtually nonexistent on the consulting radar to the fastest-growing consulting market in the world. Economically, these countries are opening up to foreign trade and private investment, creating an ideal environment for companies that are pursuing growth for the first time. Deregulation of certain government-controlled sectors—such as telecom and utilities—has opened the floodgates for consulting firms to play a part in establishing new companies. Across countries like China and India, an active M&A market and private equity boom is spurring a stream of engagements for consultants specializing in financial services. Thanks to transformation taking place industrywide, consulting firms are now on the hunt for talent to meet the exploding demand, making this an exciting time to work in Asia Pacific’s consulting industry.

We are pleased to present this first edition of the *Vault Guide to the Top 25 Consulting Firms* (Asia Pacific edition), covering both Asia Pacific-based consultancies and the Asia Pacific operations of international consulting organizations. For the purposes of this guide, we have defined Asia Pacific as the (very large) region of the world stretching from India to Australasia, including Southeast Asia, China, Japan and Korea. Vault profiled 41 top consulting firms throughout Asia Pacific, and included rankings of the top-25 most prestigious firms, as well as rankings in a variety of quality of life areas.

The profiles in our guide are based on research and extensive feedback from over 1,000 practicing consultants—talking about everything from company culture to compensation, travel schedules to community service. The guide covers a range of consultancies, from gigantic multinational consulting firms to boutique firms with fewer than 100 employees.

Established in 1996, Vault is the leading global career information publisher. Vault is headquartered in New York, with offices in London, Hong Kong and Mumbai. The *Vault Guide to the Top 50 Management and Strategy Consulting Firms* (North American edition) is now in its 11th edition, and the *Vault Guide to the Top 25 Consulting Firms* (European edition) is now in its 3rd edition. Graduates and young professionals have used our guides and network of web sites to find employee surveys and insider information on more than 5,000 employers and 4,500 universities, including the world’s top business schools and hundreds of industries and professions.

In spring 2007, Vault established its first Asian office in Hong Kong, and an office in Mumbai, India, followed in 2008. We have also launched several
region-specific web sites: Vault India (www.vault.co.in), Vault China (www.vault.com.cn), Vault Australia (au.vault.com) and an umbrella Vault Asia site (asia.vault.com). These sites are dedicated to providing objective, insider information about top employers and career paths in each region.

We are excited about this first annual edition of the *Vault Guide to the Top 25 Consulting Firms* (Asia Pacific edition), and hope it will be of great value to current and future consultants in Asia Pacific.

Vault Editors
E-mail: editors@vault.com

A Guide to this Guide

If you’re wondering how our entries are organized, read on. Here’s a handy guide to the information you’ll find packed into each firm profile in this book.

**Firm Facts**

**Locations (AP):**
A listing of the firm’s offices in the Asia Pacific region, with the city (or cities) of its headquarters in bold (even if the headquarters is not based in Asia Pacific). For firms with a relatively small number of offices, all cities are included. Countries are typically not specified unless the location is uncommon, or unless there are many offices located in a particular country.

**Practice Areas:**
Official departments that employ a significant portion of the firm’s consultants. Practice areas are listed in alphabetical order, regardless of their size and prominence.

**Pluses and Minuses:**
Good points and, shall we say, less positive points of the firm, as derived from consultant interviews and surveys, as well as other research. Pluses and minuses are perceptions based on surveys, research and interviews, and are not based on statistics.
Employment Contact:
The person, address or web site that the firm identifies as the best place to
send resumes, or the appropriate contact to answer questions about the
recruitment process. Sometimes more than one contact is given.

The Buzz
When it comes to other consulting firms, our respondents are full of opinions!
We ask them to provide their opinions and observations about firms other than
their own, and collect a sampling of these comments in The Buzz.

When selecting The Buzz, we include quotes most representative of the
common perceptions of the firms held by other consultants, even if, in our
opinion, the quotes do not accurately or completely describe the firm.
Please keep in mind when reading The Buzz that it’s often more fun for
outsiders to trash than praise a competing consulting firm. Nonetheless, The
Buzz can be a valuable means of gauging a firm’s reputation in the consulting
industry, or at least of detecting common misperceptions. We typically
include two to four Buzz comments. In some instances, we opt not to
include The Buzz if we do not receive a diverse pool of comments.

The Stats
Employer Type:
The firm’s classification as a publicly traded company, privately held
company or subsidiary.

Ticker Symbol:
The stock ticker symbol for a public company, as well as the exchange on
which the company’s stock is traded.

Chairman, CEO, etc.:
The name and title of the leader(s) of the firm, or of the firm’s consulting
business.

Employees:
When disclosed, the total number of employees, including consultants and
other staff, at a firm in all offices (unless otherwise specified). Some firms
do not disclose this information; figures from the most recent consecutive
years the information is available (if at all) are included.
Revenue:
The gross sales the firm generated in the specified fiscal year(s). Some firms do not disclose this information; numbers from the most recent consecutive years the information is available (if at all) are included.

The Profiles
The profiles are divided into three sections: The Scoop, Getting Hired and Our Survey Says.

The Scoop:
The firm’s history, clients, recent firm developments and other points of interest.

Getting Hired:
Qualifications the firm looks for in new associates, tips on getting hired and other notable aspects of the hiring process.

Our Survey Says:
Actual quotes from surveys and interviews with current consultants of the firm on topics such as firm culture, feedback, hours, travel requirements, pay, training and more. Profiles of some firms do not include an Our Survey Says section.

The Best of the Rest
Even though the name of this book is the *Vault Guide to the Top 25 Consulting Firms*, we don’t stop there, and include additional firms we consider notable and/or interesting enough for inclusion. These firms are listed alphabetically.
THE VAULT PRESTIGE RANKINGS
Ranking Methodology

For the 2008 Vault Asia Pacific consulting survey, we selected a list of top consulting firms to include. These firms were selected because of their prominence in the and their interest to job seekers. This year, over 800 consultants responded to our survey.

The Vault survey was distributed to consultants at all of the firms on Vault’s list. In some cases, firm managers distributed the survey to consultants on behalf on Vault, while in other cases, Vault contacted practicing consultants directly.

Survey respondents were asked to rate each consulting firm on the survey on a scale of 1 to 10 based on prestige, with 10 being the most prestigious. Consultants were unable to rate their own firm, and were asked to rate only those firms with which they were familiar.

Vault collected the survey results and averaged the score for each firm. The firms were then ranked, with the highest score being ranked No. 1, down to No. 25.*

We also asked survey respondents to give their perceptions of other consulting firms besides their own. A selection of those comments is featured on each firm profile as The Buzz. In some instances we opt not to include The Buzz if we do not receive a diversity of comments.

Remember that Vault’s Top 25 Asia Pacific consulting firms are chosen by practicing consultants at top consulting firms. Vault does not choose or influence the rankings. The rankings measure perceived prestige and not revenue, size or lifestyle.

Also note that Vault’s ranking is an attempt to give a sense of regionwide perception—there are certainly differences in firm perception from country to country. We received responses from throughout the region with the largest number of responses coming from Australasia, Greater China (including China and Taiwan) and Southeast Asia, with relatively fewer responses from India, Japan and Korea. In future editions, we aim to provide rankings for specific regions and countries. Below is a breakdown of the geographic distribution of respondents for our first Asia Pacific consulting survey.
For this first edition of the Vault Guide to the Top 25 Consulting Firms (Asia Pacific edition), we chose to include only Deloitte Consulting from among the Big Four professional services firms in our pool of consultancies eligible for the prestige rankings. We made this decision as we began our survey process because KPMG International, PricewaterhouseCoopers Ltd and Ernst & Young had all sold or spun off their consulting units (KPMG with the spinoff of BearingPoint, PwC with the sale to IBM, and Ernst & Young with the sale to CapGemini) in the wake of the Enron/Arthur Andersen episode and the ensuing Sarbanes-Oxley reforms. Unlike those firms, Deloitte elected not to sell or spin off its consulting unit. As we progressed in our survey process, we found that many respondents were indicating that KPMG, PwC and E&Y had formidable consulting practices in the Asia Pacific region. As such, we have included profiles of those three consulting units, and they will eligible for the prestige rankings in the next edition.
# The Vault 25 • 2009

The 25 most prestigious Asia Pacific consulting firms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>FIRM</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>HEADQUARTERS/LARGEST OFFICE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>McKinsey &amp; Company</td>
<td>8.275</td>
<td>New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Boston Consulting Group</td>
<td>7.839</td>
<td>Boston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bain &amp; Company</td>
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<td>Boston</td>
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<td>Monitor Group</td>
<td>6.230</td>
<td>Cambridge</td>
</tr>
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<td>Shanghai</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mercer</td>
<td>6.032</td>
<td>Singapore/New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A.T. Kearney</td>
<td>5.761</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Accenture</td>
<td>5.627</td>
<td>New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Roland Berger*</td>
<td>5.286</td>
<td>Munich</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>IBM Global Services</td>
<td>5.258</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
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<td>5.228</td>
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<td>Oliver Wyman</td>
<td>5.225</td>
<td>New York</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>BearingPoint**</td>
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<td>Tokyo/McLean</td>
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<td>Arlington</td>
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<td>Hay Group</td>
<td>3.780</td>
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<td>PA Consulting Group</td>
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<td>Wipro Ltd.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Satyam Computer Services Limited</td>
<td>3.198</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Roland Berger Strategy Consultants

**BearingPoint, Inc. Management & Technology Consultants
Vault also asked consultants to rank the best firms in several areas of business focus. These areas are economic consulting, energy consulting, financial consulting, human resources consulting, operational consulting, and pharmaceutical and health care consulting. Consultants were allowed to vote up to three firms as the best in each area.

The following charts indicate the rankings in each practice area, along with the total percentage of votes cast in favor of each firm. (As long as at least one consultant voted for more than one firm, no firm could get 100 percent of the votes; if every consultant had voted for the same three firms, for example, the maximum score would be 33.3 percent.)

### Economic Consulting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>McKinsey &amp; Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Boston Consulting Group</td>
<td>10.51</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Bain &amp; Company</td>
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### Energy Consulting

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<td>3</td>
<td>Booz &amp; Company</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Bain &amp; Company</td>
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<td>5</td>
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### Financial Consulting

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### Human Resources Consulting

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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>McKinsey &amp; Company</td>
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<td>4</td>
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### Pharmaceutical & Health Care Consulting

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<td>6 (Tie)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>BearingPoint</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE VAULT
QUALITY OF LIFE RANKINGS
CONSULTING FIRMS
Quality of Life Ranking Methodology

In addition to ranking other firms in terms of prestige, survey respondents were asked to rate their own firms in a variety of categories. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest and 1 the lowest, respondents evaluated their firms in the following quality of life areas:

- Overall satisfaction
- Compensation
- Work/life balance
- Hours in the office
- Formal training
- Interaction with clients
- Relationships with supervisors
- Firm culture
- Travel requirements
- Offices
- Diversity with respect to women

Ranking the firms

A firm’s score in each category is simply the average of these rankings. In compiling our quality of life rankings, we only ranked firms from whose consultants we received 10 or more responses for a particular question. Only consulting firms that distributed the survey to their consultants on Vault’s behalf were ranked.

Please note that our rankings are not based on objective measures (i.e., hours, salaries, etc.), but reflect consultants’ views of quality of life at their own particular firm. The rankings take into account that individual perception depends, in part, on expectations that can vary based on the type of company for which one works.

Firms that distributed the survey this year were:

- Alvarez & Marsal
- Arthur D. Little
- Bain & Company
- Booz & Company
- The Boston Consulting Group
- Corporate Value Associates
- Deutsche Post World Net Inhouse Consulting
- Fusion Consulting
- Hay Group
- IBM Global Services
- L.E.K. Consulting
- Monitor Group
- NERA Economic Consulting
- Oliver Wyman
- Opera Solutions
- Satyam Computer Services Limited
- Tata Consultancy Services
The Best 10 Firms to Work For

Which are the best firms to work for? For some, this is a far more important consideration than prestige. To determine our Best 10 firms, we analyzed our initial list of 41 firms using a formula that weighted the most relevant categories for an overall quality of life ranking. Each firm’s overall score was calculated using the following formula:

- 25 percent overall satisfaction
- 15 percent compensation
- 15 percent work/life balance
- 10 percent hours in the office
- 10 percent travel requirements
- 5 percent formal training
- 5 percent interaction with clients
- 5 percent relationships with supervisors
- 5 percent firm culture
- 5 percent gender diversity

Like our Top 25 rankings, our Best 10 is meant to reflect the subjective opinion of consultants. By its nature, the list is based on the perceptions of insiders—some of whom may be biased in favor of (or against) their firm.

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Overall Satisfaction

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means very poor and 10 means excellent, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with your firm?

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Work/Life Balance

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is very poor and 10 is excellent, how would you rate your firm’s efforts to promote a livable work/life balance?

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<td>IBM Global Services</td>
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<td>Tata Consultancy Services</td>
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OVERVIEW OF THE
ASIA PACIFIC
CONSULTING
INDUSTRY
Asian invasion

In 2007, Asia Pacific emerged as the fastest-growing capital market in the world. The region’s recent rise to economic power has put many companies on the brink of becoming international players. Only a decade ago, countries such as China and India were closed economies closely regulated by government. As these countries have opened their doors to competition, and as the economic sector undergoes deregulation, profitability has become a priority. To transition from emerging market-based companies to entities that compete globally, domestic companies are increasingly looking to consulting firms for strategic direction. Consultants are able to offer critical strategies for growth, as well as a deep knowledge of the international marketplace—issues that, until recently, many Asia Pacific businesses weren’t forced to consider.

The more open economy, as well as the privatization of public assets and a cheaper labor pool, have invited foreign investment and created favorable conditions for economic expansion throughout Asia Pacific. Over the next decade, industry analysts predict the region will take off, capturing an increasingly larger piece of the $100 billion global consulting market. Despite some anxiety about the credit crisis and the shaky economy in the West, consulting firms in Asia Pacific (unlike their brothers in banking) are going full steam ahead, with business showing no sign of slowing. While more established North American and European consulting markets anticipate a slight slowdown in client spending, IDC Research predicts the consulting market in Asia Pacific will climb at a steady rate of 7 percent through 2008.

China takes off

For the first time in many Asian countries, companies are oriented toward growth. Leading the pack is China, where conversion of state-owned enterprises to shareholding corporations has created a number of large companies seeking to participate in global trade. In addition, recent deregulation in the financial sector and IPOs of four of China’s big banks in the past few years have resulted in a stream of consulting engagements. Though many Chinese companies may be financially ready to compete, they often lack focused strategies and the international business experience needed to succeed in the global marketplace. This has created broad opportunities for
consulting firms that are quickly setting up shop in Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai, as well as in smaller business centers like Guangzhou and Shenzhen. Analysts now pinpoint China as the most rapidly developing consulting region, set to grow at a compound annual rate of 32 percent through 2008, according to Kennedy Information.

**New adopters**

Japan, South Korea and Taiwan are relatively new to the concept of hiring outside consultants to steer business decisions—historically, corporate decisions were the result of a consensus among all levels within an organization. However, these countries are gradually warming up to the idea of seeking advice from outside company walls, as the tremendous growth of local companies has created a management vacuum. International consultancies, like The Boston Consulting Group and Bain & Company, have seen an increase in demand for their strategy services. These Western-based firms were ahead of the curve when they first landed in Japan over a decade ago, but over the years, more local niche consultancies have sprung up to compete with the more established names. For example, Hong Kong-based Fusion Consulting focuses on Asia Pacific market entry and business expansion; Melbourne-based Oakton Ltd offers sourcing and business transformation; and Tokyo-based Nomura Research Institute specializes in IPO consulting.

**Trailblazers**

Also paving the way for consultancies in Asia are the Big Four consulting firms: PricewaterhouseCoopers, Deloitte, Ernst & Young and KPMG. These firms are able to leverage their existing business in tax and audit to offer business advisory and consulting services to existing clients. The Big Four spun off their consulting divisions in 2000 and 2001, when the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission enforced stricter regulations regarding conflict of interest. The firms ended their noncompete agreements with the spin-offs in 2006, and have since jumped back into the consulting arena with fervor. In 2007, advisory and consulting services for all four consultancies combined grew 21 percent to $21.9 billion globally, and Asia has already proven to be the most promising region in terms of growth—Ernst & Young’s 2007 revenue in Asia grew 27 percent across all service lines. Deloitte’s revenue for the same period was up 17 percent in the region, with revenue from Mainland China surging 48 percent for the year. At KPMG, Asia Pacific revenue rose 21.6 percent, while PwC saw a 19 percent increase in Asia Pacific business.
M&A craze

Until recently, demand for consulting in Asia was driven by the business process outsourcing boom. Since the turn of the century, overseas clients seeking to trim costs and improve profit margins were drawn en masse by cheap skilled labor in India and China. However, in 2007, it was the unprecedented number of M&A deals that drove the expansion in the Asian consulting industry. Economic growth in Australia, China and India set the scene for an active M&A market. Australia led in cross-border M&A activity for the year, with over 125 deals valued at $30 billion. As the total value of mergers and acquisitions in Asia Pacific topped $63 billion in 2007, consulting firms have been in demand to advise a range of clients, from international corporations to local companies looking to expand. The main strategy firms, like McKinsey and Mercer, along with the Big Four, are benefiting from a stream of postmerger integration, due diligence and implementation projects. However, with current M&A activity hitting new heights, projects are also trickling down to the local M&A advisory firms, such as ABeam Consulting, which focuses on the Japanese market.

BPO going strong

Business process outsourcing still accounts for a large portion of the consulting industry in Asia, as companies continue their efforts to cut costs. The Asian BPO market is expected to hit $15 billion by 2011, corresponding to a 16 percent annual growth rate, according to IDC. The largest percentage of BPO work comes from the finance and HR sectors. Consultants may be brought on to help firms improve operations, speed up production or move processes offshore. But while the total revenue generated by outsourcing contracts was up again in 2007, it was the first year that the number of contracts declined (by 12 percent), signaling that clients are becoming wiser about choosing BPO services that add significant value.

India still accounts for 40 percent of the global BPO market, but with a more mature talent pool and resulting wage hikes, it’s no longer the most affordable option for cost-conscious companies. These days, consultants are turning their clients on to the Philippines and other untapped Southeast Asia locations for outsourcing services. According to Canadian research firm XMG, Inc., BPO in the Philippines expanded at a compound annual rate of 62 percent in 2007, beating out China, India and Malaysia in terms of future growth.
India expands

Now, more than just a top outsourcing and call center destination, India has become a fixture on the radar of enterprising strategy firms. Like in other Asia Pacific markets, the force behind this growth is the country’s booming M&A market. In the past four years, India has become a major contender in the international acquisitions field, with the value of outbound deals growing at a compound annual rate of 108 percent. In 2007, Indian firms made over 75 foreign acquisitions, including Tata Steel’s purchase of the Netherlands’ Corus Group for $13 billion and aluminum producer Hindalco’s $6 billion acquisition of Canadian firm Novelis. From January to October, Indian firms closed deals totaling $34 billion. This frenzy of M&A activity has created plenty of opportunities for consulting firms to cash in on complex postmerger strategy needs. The BPO consulting market in the country also remains strong. NASSCOM forecasts that the BPO industry will expand from $11 billion to $50 in 2012.

Assets on the rise

Private equity has also become a driving force behind the consulting industry in Asia. Bain was the first to offer private equity consulting in 1994, but today almost every strategy consulting firm is fighting for a piece of the lucrative market. In Asia, the private banking industry is booming, thanks to the strong economy, new private investment opportunities and the surge in the number of high-net-worth individuals in the region. China and India alone account for more than 64 percent of the private equity in Asia Pacific. The Boston Consulting Group estimates that the region, excluding Japan, has $10.6 trillion in assets under management. Asian banks, hedge funds and private equity firms have tripled their assets since 2000, driving a greater need for consulting expertise—particularly in the area of investments, valuation and IPOs.

Staking a claim

To take advantage of the growing market and to serve existing multinational clients in Asia Pacific, American and European consultancies are expanding their presence in the region with new offices. With revenue from China rising over 40 percent per year, Deloitte aims to have 20,000 employees in China by 2015, up from 8,500 in 2007. In December 2007, Accenture announced the opening of its first dedicated management consulting office in Gurgaon, and plans to hire 2,000 consultants there by August 2008. And Ernst & Young plans to expand from 8,000 to 30,000 in China over the next decade, adding two or three new branches in Asia annually over the next few years.
Particular challenges arise for Western newcomers to the market. Consulting firms must adapt to the cultural preferences of the local clients, while retaining similar standards across all offices; for instance, they must maintain a consistent level of quality with respect to their procedures and internal practices, like training. To deal with these issues, some consultancies send groups of senior employees from the company headquarters to establish an office in Asia. Others set up region-specific knowledge centers in place of (or in addition to) a physical office in Asia. For example, in 2004, McKinsey established Asia House in Frankfurt, originally to work solely with Chinese clients, though now the office supports European clients as well. In 2007, Roland Berger Strategy Consultants opened a Japan desk in Düsseldorf to serve Japanese companies in the European market and in Japan.

**Talent squeeze**

Perhaps the biggest current challenge Western-based consulting players face is the talent crunch in Asian countries. Since the industry is only at the start of its growth spurt, the local labor market hasn’t yet been cultivated. With the population lacking the necessary skills and experience, firms are importing talent from their more established offices in other parts of the world. International consultancies are also recruiting foreign nationals studying at American and other Western universities, and relocating them to offices in their home countries in Asia.

Due to the especially tight market for talent in 2008, top-tier consultancies are willing to offer whatever it takes to get skilled recruits in the door. In 2007, the consulting base salary increased at a median rate of 4 percent globally, while annual bonuses increased 5 percent, according to Kennedy Information. Firms have upped recruiting budgets for the year, and recruiters are canvassing campuses in Asia to round up enough recruits to meet hiring targets. Analysts see the aggressive pace of hiring as a positive sign for future growth in the region, since firms are confident enough to invest in large numbers of new staff.

Consulting recruiters are in hot pursuit of MBAs with experience in a specific industry sector, such as banking, risk assessment or investment management. New hires are particularly needed in the financial services consulting sector, which is driving a large portion of the business. Though specialists are in high demand, firms are also seeking graduates without industry experience to fill entry-level generalist positions. Salary offers for those with specialized skills are expected to rise slightly in 2008, especially for those who speak Chinese. In fact, for candidates hoping to land a spot with a top multinational consultancy, foreign language skills are key. New recruits are typically expected to be fluent in the
native language, as well as in English. Recruiters are sticklers for this requirement, and regularly test language skills during the interview process.

Practice Areas

Operations and implementation

Operations consulting involves helping customers gain a competitive advantage by evaluating and changing internal processes. During an economic squeeze, operations consultants might be focused on cutting costs and making things run more efficiently. Today, more clients have growth and profitability in mind, so operations consulting tends to center on getting quick market response, customer needs, strategic partnerships and innovation. Consultants who specialize in this area help clients quickly respond to ups and downs in the market or to changes in the competitive landscape. While strategy consulting involves evaluating strengths and weaknesses, and how they affect the bottom line, operations consulting centers around practical steps that will help a company reach its strategic goals. That might mean implementing tactical initiatives, developing an interactive customer service system or evaluating the cost of sourcing talent offshore. Kennedy Information estimates that the $45 billion operational consulting market will grow at a compound annual growth rate of 7.1 percent through 2010.

Examples of typical operations and implementation engagements may include:

• Developing a postmerger operational model for two companies
• Migrating a portion of a Western bank’s business processes to Asia
• Forecasting customer demand for a new computer product

Human resources consulting

A critical part of any firm’s strategy or operations is getting the right people to successfully manage them. HR consulting addresses how to maximize the value of staff and how to place employees in the optimal position for each individual. HR consulting firms get involved in organizational restructuring, talent management, benefits planning and compensation, competitive salary benchmarking and payroll systems implementation. Kennedy Information
TOP 25 CONSULTING FIRMS
McKinsey & Company

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• Mumbai • Seoul • Shanghai •
Singapore • Sydney • Taipei •
Tokyo

PRACTICE AREAS
Business Technology
Corporate Finance
Marketing & Sales
Operations
Organization
Strategy

THE STATS
Employer Type: Private Company
Managing Director: Ian Davis
2008 Employees: 15,000
2007 Employees: 14,000
No. of Offices: 90

PLUSES
• The name speaks for itself
• “Very dynamic and fast-moving work
  environment”

MINUSES
• “Immense travel due to the office
  covering over eight-plus countries”
• Culture of workaholics

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.mckinsey.com/careers

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING
• “Global benchmark”
• “Cookie-cutter”
• “Perfect teeth, polished”
• “Arrogant, internally competitive”
THE SCOOP

Don’t ask, they won’t tell

Perhaps the best-known consulting firm in the world, McKinsey & Company keeps stubbornly mum when it comes to its clients and its earnings. Unlike many of its PR-happy competitors, McKinsey maintains an absolute confidentiality policy on all engagements—though everyone knows it could certainly brag about its A-list client roster (and, for that matter, its growing revenue). This rule simply adds to the “McKinsey mystique,” which is further strengthened by a code of conduct that’s been in place at the firm for decades. Created by legendary Managing Director Marvin Bower, who worked directly under founder James O. McKinsey, the code insists on putting client interests ahead of the firm’s, behaving professionally, remaining independent, delivering excellent yet cost-effective results and never revealing deal-related information to outsiders.

Founded in 1926, McKinsey has grown to include approximately 90 offices in 51 countries around the world. Its Asian operations are located in Bangkok, Beijing, Gurgaon, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Mumbai, Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore, Taipei and Tokyo—and as of 2007, nearly two-thirds of the firm’s revenue came from non-U.S. engagements.

Southeast strength

Although McKinsey’s official home address is in New York, the firm strives to maintain an international, decentralized structure. Its teams often move between countries and regions, and cross-border collaboration is simply business as usual. McKinsey’s Bangkok, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Manila and Singapore offices are organized into what’s called the Southeast Asian Complex, and that’s one of the corners of the world where the firm has seen the most growth in recent years. McKinsey first arrived in the region in 1995, with the opening of the Jakarta facility. Since then, its consultants have worked with public, private and government organizations, as well as with community and economic development programs.

McKinsey consultants have advised top political leaders and organizations throughout Southeast Asia, including Indonesia’s Poverty Alleviation Agency, Bank Indonesia and the Indonesian Ministry of Finance, the Malaysian government, the Philippine president and her right-hand ministers, Bukas Palad and a number of top private-sector entities in Thailand. In many Southeast Asian countries, McKinsey is
called on to help strengthen specific industries in the name of national economic growth; one of its early regional projects was the creation of the Malaysian Multimedia Super Corridor in the mid-1990s. The firm has also played a major role in restructuring national economies after the financial crises that struck the region in the late 1990s.

In July 2006, McKinsey was tapped to assist Pertamina, Indonesia’s state oil company, in preparing for tough competition as it planned to enter the global market. The one-year, $15 million contract enlisted McKinsey to map out a strategy and implement transformation. Also that year, McKinsey signed a $1 million contract with Bank Mandiri, Indonesia’s largest financial services company, to help the bank increase its assets.

**Nice view**

The Kuala Lumpur office, which opened in 1997, holds the distinction of being the highest office in McKinsey’s worldwide network—it occupies the 57th floor of the famed Petronas Twin Towers, the tallest towers in the world. Since its development of the Malaysian Multimedia Super Corridor, McKinsey has built close relationships within the country’s major industries, including financial institutions, energy conglomerates, and high-tech and telecommunications companies.

The firm’s presence in the Philippines dates to 1999, with the launch of an office in Manila. In a relatively short period of time, McKinsey became an integral part of development in the country, helping boost tourism by 10 percent and advising on the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001. The Manila office has also played a part in regional economic integration through its work for ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations). In March 2007, the Business Process Association of the Philippines hired McKinsey to draft a five-year roadmap for the country’s BPO industry. The firm will help the BPA identify niche areas where the country can compete with India and other low-cost outsourcing hotspots.

Manila-based consultants also make significant contributions to McKinsey’s charitable efforts, donating to groups such as the World Wildlife Fund and the Young Presidents Organization.

**Welcome to our House**

The McKinsey European Asia House, known in shorthand as Asia House, was opened in 2004 to develop cross-continental business opportunities between Europe
and Asia. The project began as a collaboration between McKinsey’s Frankfurt office
and the Greater China offices; today, its reach extends to most of the firm’s Asian
operations, and has an advisory board of European partners from the Swiss, French,
Benelux and Scandinavian offices. Asia House’s clients are concentrated in Asia and
Europe, with additional projects taking place in the Middle East and North America.
The facility remains headquartered in Frankfurt, which is McKinsey’s biggest
regional office, the largest travel hub in Europe and home to strong communities of
expatriates from Asian nations.

Asia House is staffed by consultants hired directly into its two- to three-year
program, which includes an initial year in Frankfurt followed by an assignment in
Asia. From the start, Asia House was a success—in its first 18 months of operation,
its staff grew to 50 consultants. By 2007, approximately 20 Asia House alums had
completed the program and settled into one of McKinsey’s Asia offices. So far, Asia
House has completed over 200 engagements in 20 countries, covering key industries
like chemicals, financial institutions, telecommunications and automotives. In
partnership with the Greater China offices, Asia House manages the China sourcing
services line, which collaborates with the China Sourcing Center, a team of
information specialists based in Shanghai. Asia House also maintains a dedicated
research group in Düsseldorf and is a hub for McKinsey’s global private equity
practice.

India’s ready to grow

Consumer Market,” India could overtake Germany as the world’s fifth-largest
consumer market by 2025. Luckily, the firm is poised to play a role in the coming
consumption craze: Its Mumbai office has been in operation since 1993, serving the
government and leading Indian companies on issues ranging from operational
efficiency to national economic strategy. In September 2007, the firm was hired by
IDBI Bank, one of India’s leading public-sector banks, to assist in smoothing out
legacy issues resulting from the bank’s 2006 merger with United Western Bank.
McKinsey’s work will involve restructuring the bank’s branches, re-engineering
processes and implementing business strategy. In June 2007, McKinsey consultants
team ed with the Confederation of Indian Industry to present an in-depth report on
rural growth to Dr. Manmohan Singh, India’s prime minister. McKinsey and CII are
working together to advise the Indian government on Bharat Nirman, an ambitious
initiative launched in 2005 to strengthen the country’s rural infrastructure. One
The Boston Consulting Group

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PRACTICE AREAS

Functional Practice Areas
Corporate Development • Information Technology •
Marketing & Sales • Operations • Organization • Strategy

Industry Practice Areas
Consumer Goods & Retail •
Energy & Utilities • Financial Services • Health Care •
Industrial Goods • Media • Technology, Media & Telecommunications

THE STATS

Employer Type: Private Company
President & CEO: Hans-Paul Bürkner
2008 Employees: 4,300 (consulting staff only)
2007 Employees: 3,900 (consulting staff only)
2007 Revenue: $2.3 billion
2006 Revenue: $1.8 billion
No. of Offices: 66

PLUSES

• “The firm does everything it can to compensate for challenges of the consulting role”
• “Able to work at client without being micromanaged”
• “Southeast Asia system feels like a big family”
• Output-driven, not face time-driven

MINUSES

• “Repetitive work”
• Little downtime—consultants are constantly on the go
• “Less money for the hours put in”
• “Some individuals within the firm are workaholics and expect their teams to be the same”

THE BUZZ

WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING

• “Thought leaders”
• “All PowerPoints, no substance”
• “Good culture and nice people”
• “Sometimes can be nerdy”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT

www.bcg.com/careers
THE SCOOP

Pioneering ways

The Boston Consulting Group was founded in Massachusetts in 1963, when the CEO of the Boston Safe Deposit & Trust Company challenged Bruce D. Henderson to build a consulting arm for the bank. Henderson, a former Bible salesman, had attended Harvard Business School—but dropped out a few months before graduation to take a job with the Westinghouse Corporation. He got his start in consulting at Arthur D. Little’s management services unit, then decided to take on the Boston bank’s challenge.

The firm Henderson created was originally organized as the Management & Consulting Division of Boston Safe Deposit & Trust, which was itself a subsidiary of The Boston Safe Deposit & Trust Company. By 1965, Henderson was doing well enough to have brought 11 more consultants onboard, and that year he called a staff meeting to determine a distinct identity and specialty for the fledgling firm. Though many ideas were considered, Henderson decided to focus on business strategy, a nearly unknown field that he felt he could define. In the 1970s, BCG developed a concept called the “growth-share matrix,” a tool for corporate managers to determine when they should consider using profits from “cash cow” business to fund growth in other businesses. Although the rise of capital markets and global competition in the 1990s made the matrix less important, for nearly two decades it was a standard part of capital allocation in multisegment companies.

In 1973, a handful of BCG executives, including Bill Bain, left the firm to form Bain & Company. Two years later, Henderson arranged an employee stock ownership plan that allowed the remaining employees to purchase BCG from The Boston Safe Deposit & Trust Company. The buyout was completed, and independence attained, in 1979. Today, BCG has 66 offices in 38 countries, and employs roughly 4,300 consultants among its 6,500-plus global workforce.

Early in Asia

BCG took its first steps in Asia in 1966, when it acquired TFM Adams Ltd., a small firm with an office in Tokyo. As a result, BCG has the distinction of being the first Western strategy firm in Japan. These days, over half of its Asian business comes from local governments and companies—in marked contrast to other U.S.-based consultancies, which derive the bulk of their revenue from multinational or American
OUR SURVEY SAYS

“Relaxed but serious”

BCGers boast that their firm’s culture is “genuinely team-based,” yet still diverse enough to make room for all types. Notes an insider, “We are very open and understanding. There is no pressure to fit into any one mold or personality.” One source appreciates the fact that there is “little hierarchy—the right answer counts for everything and the firm is accommodating of differences.” Insiders also express that the feel of the firm is laid-back—with a brainy bent. “BCG has a collegiate and free-thinking culture. It feels almost like a university, but with just the smart kids,” a staffer notes. Another consultant agrees, stating, “It’s relaxed but serious, intellectual yet grounded.” “I’m impressed that it is a firm full of people who are determined, motivated and driven, with a strong culture of working together and helping each other succeed,” gushes a cohort. According to one associate, the team-based culture tends to promote an “amazing lack of politics and competition between staff.” Explains a senior source, “What impressed me from the start was the openness with which people communicate and interact. Hierarchies are very flat and everyone openly shares views around the office and in case team meetings.”

Indeed, respondents give their co-workers kudos for being “extremely approachable and helpful.” One associate notes, “There is a fantastic bunch of very talented people in the office who respect each other and have fun at work.” Asserts a co-worker, “BCG has the knack for hiring nice people who are highly supportive and helpful, particularly to new hires.” And though most BCGers tend to be intellectual, that doesn’t mean they lack “people skills,” we’re told. “People are very smart, but social as well. Strikingly humble and friendly—definitely not the swaggering, arrogant consultant stereotype. All-around very interesting and nice folk,” a source declares. “My colleagues are amazingly down-to-earth, despite their many and varied achievements. I am surrounded by brilliant thinkers who are also excellent communicators, at all levels of consulting staff and support staff,” explains another.

Jump right in

Not only do insiders rave about their peers, but they also have loads of compliments for their managers. “Senior partners at BCG listen to what you have to say in meetings. In fact, they expect you to have a contribution to make—which is exciting,” comments an associate. Echoes one source, “I have bosses that are generally understanding, able to balance appreciation and discipline, along with the
occasional ‘super-good’ bosses that are totally good in their work and you actually like to work with.” A first-year feels that “partners are very approachable and hands-on. There is excellent apprenticeship.”

And so the story goes with client leadership, as well. The firm reportedly offers “great opportunities for junior officers to interact and present to senior management of clients.” One insider hints that consultants are “expected to step up,” adding, “There’s no territory around the client.” Remarks a staffer, “The access to top-level clients is unparalleled. I have had several opportunities to present directly to clients’ global senior management.” Another insider shares, “In one of my first projects working on financial modeling, I presented the business case and explained/defended our assumptions to the CFO of our client and deputy CFO of their parent company.”

In some sectors, though, exposure many not be given as early: “Working in the public sector, I’ve found the client to be fairly hierarchical. They don’t expect junior consultants to have access to senior management, so we have less contact. That said, our managers insisted that we come (and present) to major steering committee meetings and run workshops with senior-level clients, which I appreciated and enjoyed,” an associate explains.

The weekly grind

Sources say the “number of work hours varies from country to country, and also depends on the office.” Consultants in Bangkok report that 60 to 70 hours is average, while counterparts in Seoul say workweeks are typically 75 to 80 hours. In Singapore, Hong Kong and Taipei, however, 60 to 65 hours is the norm, and in Sydney, most insiders say 55-hour weeks are common. According to a Sydney consultant, “I usually work 55 to 60 hours per week and am able to accommodate personal commitments.” A Melbourne source explains, “Hours are very much as I was told when I joined, although at the moment my hours are a bit heavier than the goal (55 hours per week max)—partly since I am relatively new and have lots to learn. I expect average hours to drop to around 50 to 55 hours per week over the next year, with periodic weeks of 60 to 65 hours.”

“Finish the job yesterday”

When it comes to maintaining work/life balance at BCG, sources say it’s “a challenge, but not impossible.” A source remarks, “Consulting is time-consuming ... not because our bosses make it so, but because the client wants us to finish the job yesterday.” In addition, one consultant notes, “It’s not entirely the firm’s fault. Long
THE STATS

Employer Type: Private Company
Chairman: Orit Gadiesh
Managing Director: Steve Ellis
2008 Employees: 4,400
2007 Employees: 3,700
No. of Offices: 38

PLUSES

• “The chance to work with clients in various industries”
• The ability to focus on your own professional development
• “Lots of opportunities to work on international cross-border issues for clients”
• Noncompetitive atmosphere

MINUSES

• “Lower compensation relative to our friends at private equity firms”
• “Scope of project is not always clear”
• A very strong culture that may require more adjustment when switching careers or jobs
• Constant pressure to do better

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT

www.bain.com/join

THE BUZZ

WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING

• “Stylish, highly professional”
• “Aggressive”
• “Fast-growing”
• “Lower client diversity”
“The elite of the already elite”

Bain & Company is a global consultancy considered to be one of the foremost firms in the strategy field. Bain has earned a solid reputation from its work on projects across every industry and geography to help companies develop successful strategies, such as growth targets and private equity investments. CNN has described the firm as “the elite of the already elite field of management consultants.” Founder Bill Bain launched the practice in 1973 when he left The Boston Consulting Group, bringing with him a handful of consultants (and a couple of clients). Since then, the firm has grown to a staff of over 4,400, spread across 38 offices in 25 countries around the world. Bain’s motto, “helping make companies more valuable,” conveys its goal of focusing on real results for clients. The firm seems to have done a good job of standing behind that philosophy: According to Bain, its clients have historically outperformed the stock market four to one.

Bain offers a variety of services aimed at increasing efficiency and streamlining business processes through 24 practice areas. It has served over 3,600 clients in a wide variety of industries, including consumer products, financial services, health care, industrial products, retail and technology. A large portion of its client list—over 40 percent—hails from the Global 1000. Small and midsized companies, as well as private equity firms and nonprofit institutions, round out its client base.

Gaining ground in the East

Bain & Company has offices in nine cities in the Asia Pacific region, with the first having opened in Tokyo in 1981. Today, the Tokyo office works in a diverse range of industry sectors, ranging from consumer goods to telecommunications. The office provides consulting services to Japanese, American and European corporate clients in Japan. The office also coordinates customers’ Asia-wide strategies with Bain’s other Asia Pacific offices.

After opening the Tokyo office, Bain branched out into other parts of the region. In 1989, it opened an office in Sydney. Due to the fact that the firm’s presence in Asia has grown, the Australian practice, which includes a Melbourne office, now focuses primarily (80 percent local, 20 percent multinational) on clients down under and in New Zealand. In 1991, the firm opened an office in Seoul, which has grown at an exponential rate since 2000. Bain Hong Kong was established in 1992, and the
solving, creativity and solid business judgment. These interviews will also usually include a brief quantitative exercise that is relevant to the case.”

Once through the interviews, candidates usually don’t have to wait too long for a response, according to one insider: “Bain aims to have a transparent and efficient process; within a week of my first interview I had already gotten an offer!” We’re also told that “candidates will typically see at least five members of the leadership team before an offer is made.”

Amazing summers
All of Bain’s Asia Pacific offices offer paid summer internships for those in business school and many also offer summer internships at the undergraduate level. Typically, internships last 10 weeks. College and university students should apply for associate consultant internships, and MBA students should apply for summer associate internships. Students and soon-to-be grads interested in opportunities at Bain should first visit the firm’s web site, where they can look up procedures for their school in an online index, and complete an online application.

Virtual recruiting
As Bain increases its international presence, it has been experimenting with virtual recruiting techniques. In August 2007, Bain Asia Pacific held a virtual recruiting event in the computer-based interactive platform Second Life. Manny Maceda, Bain’s Asia Pacific chairman, logged into the event from Sydney, where he was attending a meeting; Russ Hagey, chief talent officer, was a speaker at the event and attended the event from his office in Los Angeles. Bain also targeted students at the Indian Institute of Management in 2006 with a special podcast, only accessible to 100 select students at IIM’s Ahmedabad campus.

OUR SURVEY SAYS

“More than peers”
Bain insiders give high ratings to the firm’s culture, describing the environment as “very easygoing and down-to-earth.” A source relates, “You probably meet some of the best people while working at Bain,” and a colleague boasts, “It’s like a bunch of college friends around you.” And, says a Tokyo-based respondent, Bain consultants
are a “group of friendly, outgoing, smart people, who strive for change,” adding that the company “feels like just the place to be if you are in consulting.”

Praises one consultant in Australia, “Bainies are fun and interesting—more than peers, they are my mates. When work is great, they make it outstanding, and when work gets tough, they make it more than bearable.” Lots of staffers at this firm seem to pride themselves on the “strongly collaborative” atmosphere. Insiders carry on about the “sense of team responsibility” that drives the culture. “Bain is incredibly collaborative and supportive. New people coming into the firm are struck by the lack of politics, and the way ‘a Bainie never lets another Bainie fail,’” declares a co-worker. Another Aussie comments on the lack of cutthroat competition: “It is a very challenging environment, but Bain’s meritocracy system means that people in a peer group are not force-ranked or directly compared to each other, allowing for a more cooperative environment.”

The culture translates

No matter where they work, sources claim that Bain’s culture is consistently positive. One staffer calls it a “seamless culture,” adding, “This means that every time you work in or transfer to a new office, you immediately feel like you belong there. People are always fun and welcoming, which makes this kind of transition very easy.” Agrees another insider, “The thing that always stands out to me is the consistency in the culture. Having spent time in New York, Boston and Tokyo, it is shocking to see how well this translates across cultures.” Explains one source, “Bain’s culture is the No. 1 reason why I chose to join the firm.”

Excellent exposure

Much like their colleagues, Bain supervisors earn top reviews from insiders. “Bain Australia is very nonhierarchical. Managers and partners truly care about peoples’ development and spend a significant amount of their time coaching us and giving us feedback,” states a source. A colleague exclaims, “They’re amazing! The partners I work with are very supportive and provide great opportunities to interact with client top management.” Indeed, sources agree that managers encourage interaction with client leadership from an early stage. “I’m consistently in touch and in meetings with the most senior of client executives, right back from when I was a new associate consultant, to now as a manager,” a respondent explains. And a manager in Seoul comments, “I have very frequent exposure to top management at global leading companies. It is an excellent opportunity to learn and grow.”
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PRACTICE AREAS
Capability Building
Capital Management
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Innovation & Product Development
Marketing & Pricing
Organization & Leadership
Strategy

THE STATS
Employer Type: Private Company
Chairman: Mark Fuller
2008 Employees: 1,500
2007 Employees: 1,200
No. of Offices: 30

PLUSES
• “More responsibility and exposure than other firms”
• Strong sense of camaraderie
• Informal culture
• “Growing international operations offer room for many leadership positions”

MINUSES
• Scale still limited in Asia
• “Lack of transparency”
• “Limited opportunities to choose cases”
• “Sometimes we lose work to McKinsey, which is annoying”

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING
• “Strong boutique firm”
• “Underrepresented in Asia Pacific”
• “More hip, cool”
• “Seems to lack focus”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.monitor.com/join
THE SCOOP

Ivy League pedigree

In 1983, a group of six Harvard University graduates and professors created the Monitor Company, a strategy consulting firm focused on organizational and managerial development. The firm grew rapidly from its headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts, adding offices in Europe and Asia in the early 1990s. From there, it entered the merchant banking business, expanding its practice to include equity, principal investing, venture capital and advisory services.

Along the way, the company changed its name to Monitor Group, which better reflects Monitor’s unique structure: Instead of operating as a centralized company with satellite operations, it has evolved into a worldwide network of interconnected offices. As such, Monitor consultants may move back and forth between offices, depending on their clients’ locations. A typical Monitor client is a C-level executive, business unit head or a member of a multinational company’s senior management team.

Think globally, act globally

In keeping with its philosophy and structure, Monitor believes it’s not enough to field a worldwide network of consultants with local experience. The phrase the firm uses to describe its people is “truly global”—that is, its consultants have experience in multiple locations worldwide. Though it is based in North America, Monitor has an extensive presence in Asia, with offices in Beijing, Dubai, Hong Kong, Manila, Mumbai, Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore and Tokyo. Its clients in the region include national private and state-owned enterprises, governments, multinational companies and private equity firms, and Monitor consultants advise clients on a range of strategy, marketing, innovation, organization and economic development issues.

Some of the firm’s work in Asia has involved analyzing the roles of India and China in multinationals’ strategies (both as local markets and as offshoring destinations). Monitor consultants have helped clients determine the impact of rising labor rates and expanding consumer markets; they have also evaluated the business ramifications of a growing middle class and trends in aging and savings. Developing economies, like Vietnam’s, are another source of interest for Monitor, as clients want to understand when and how these areas will play more substantial roles in the global economy.
Adaptable interviews

Occasionally, recruiters bypass the last interview step, according to an insider: “If we do not have enough candidates for a round of group interviews, we will have another fit interview with the candidates.” In that instance, the fourth round is a “general chat where the firm actually tries to sell itself.” That’s just one of the ways Monitor recruiters might mix things up when the situation calls for it. “We are quite flexible in the overall recruitment process. We may sometimes have changes depending on the quality of the candidates—like if there is a strong fit candidate with poor performance at the case interview, we may offer him/her another round of case interviews.”

As for what recruiters are looking for, it’s important to be sharp but social. “One round includes a group interview, which tests how you interact with others under pressure. Being smart but not effective socially will get you nowhere at Monitor, thank God,” a consultant states.

OUR SURVEY SAYS

Family style

Repeatedly, insiders tell us that they feel their colleagues are “like a family.” “Since the offices in Asia are of small to medium size, we have a very close internal community. Everyone is friendly and helpful to each other. Consultants in Asia offices are flying around frequently to conduct cases together, so there is not only an interoffice community, but we also have a close intraoffice community,” a source relates. “Consultants are both friends and colleagues, and the senior guys look out for us like they would younger siblings.” “It’s a very open and warm place. People like each other and put a lot of effort into making working together fun,” asserts a source in Tokyo. A colleague notes, “Our firm is small enough to make close friends, while still large enough to learn and grow.”

Monitorites claim that a lack of competition creates an atmosphere that is “dynamic, engaging and cooperative.” One consultant notes that there is “no up-or-out policy, hence the culture is not very aggressive,” while a colleague boasts, “I’ve cracked some intellectually tough problems with colleagues in a wide range of places. We always take advantage of our locations to do cool stuff on the weekends like wake boarding off a yacht in Hong Kong, partying in an infinity pool at a private villa in the mountains of Phuket, Thailand, and diving at the Great Barrier Reef.”
Quirky? Maybe just a little

But just because colleagues are like family doesn’t mean they are all alike. “I’ve been repeatedly impressed with the international mix of consultants on my various case teams. The greatest part about my experience is the people I’ve had the pleasure of working with, who have all been intelligent and down-to-earth, while having dynamic and diverse backgrounds.” Another insider comments, “People tend to be a little quirky, in a good way. A colleague on my current team who just joined us from Wharton is on his way to Mongolia as we speak, where he will make his third attempt to cross a frozen lake on foot—he is insane. I am glad we hire such interesting people.”

Lots of togetherness

It’s a good thing Monitorites seem to enjoy each others’ presence, since they spend so much time together during the week. While one associate puts in “at least 60 hours, but on average 70 to 80 hours,” a co-worker claims his schedule is more like “80 hours, including weekend work.” And though a “minimum 60-hour week is expected,” the workload isn’t consistently heavy for everyone. Explains an insider, “Work hours are very much project- and location-dependent. I worked on very demanding projects requiring 80 to 90 hours per week, as well as more relaxed ones where we worked from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., five days a week.”

“Weekends are not sacred”

In addition to weekday toil, “weekends are not sacred” at Monitor, sources say. Many report working at least 10, and some as many as 45 weekends a year. The extended weekend hours all add up to a hard-to-handle work/life balance. “Work/life balance is quite hard at Monitor, especially if you are working on commercial due diligence cases, which is one core business of Monitor in Asia. In addition, consultants are also participating in nonconsulting work, like recruitment, office activities, organization, etc., so we have to work also on weekends in order to fulfill these needs.” In the long run, staffers claim there will be a few weeks with downtime in between projects. In the experience of one staffer, “It is extremely difficult to balance work and life during projects, but I was able to get beach time between projects, typically two to three weeks.”

Some insiders assert that the intensity of work hours depends on the particular office. “The Seoul office is notorious for overtime and weekend work due to hardworking clients,” cautions an insider. A manager agrees that “work/life balance is very much
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PRACTICE AREAS
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Operations & Logistics
Organization & Change
Product & Service Innovation
Sales & Marketing
Strategy & Leadership

THE STATS
Employer Type: Private Company
Chairman: Joe Saddi
CEO: Shumeet Banerji
2008 Employees: 3,300
FY 2008 Sales: $4.8 billion (includes results from Booz Allen Hamilton)
No. of Offices: 57

PLUSES
• “We’re small enough that bureaucracy and hierarchy aren’t really issues”
• Junior staff members get a lot of exposure to clients
• “The community is close-knit”

MINUSES
• “Brand not well established in China—still catching up”
• Smaller size of some offices leads to some issues, i.e., training, processing
• Work product for the client must always be translated from English to Chinese

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
recruitment.greaterchina@booz.com

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING
• "Respected"
• "Strengths depend on geography and industry"
• "Good analytical skills"
• "An older firm—a bit bureaucratic"
THE SCOOP

Pioneering ideas
Booz & Company, created in May 2008 by the formal separation from its corporate sibling Booz Allen Hamilton, will continue its winning streak in the commercial and international government sectors. Its founder, Northwestern grad Edwin Booz, is credited with coming up with the idea that an outsider could analyze a business and find ways to make improvements and increase profit. Along with Partners James Allen and Carl Hamilton, Booz established the firm in Chicago, working with companies like Montgomery Ward, Goodyear Tire & Rubber and General Mills. In 1940, the firm was hired to help the U.S. Secretary of the Navy with World War II preparations, a project that marked the start of a longstanding relationship with the U.S. federal government. Now, with more than 3,300 people in 57 offices around the world, Booz is committed to carrying on the tradition of its namesake.

Winds of change
Booz operates from offices all over the globe. Prior to May 2008, the firm claimed that what set it apart from most consulting firms was its deep expertise in both strategy and technology work, organized along two units: the Worldwide Technology Business and the Worldwide Commercial Business. However, in May, the firm announced that it would split up its U.S. government and global commercial consulting businesses. In conjunction with the split, a majority stake in the U.S. government business was sold to The Carlyle Group for $2.54 billion. The commercial business became Booz & Company, a separate entity owned and run by its existing officers. The U.S. government business continues under the Booz Allen Hamilton name, in partnership with Carlyle. Booz will operate as a subsidiary of Booz Allen until the realignment is finalized. Closing of the transaction is planned for mid- to late 2008, though it remains contingent upon shareholder and regulatory approvals, as well as certain other conditions. The company’s board of directors has recommended the realignment unanimously. Booz Allen Chief Executive Ralph Shrader will continue to lead the government business, and Shumeet Banerji will head the commercial side as CEO.

Some of the motivating factors behind this realignment are evident in the hard statistics of the business. As a combined company, the firm generated over $4 billion in annual sales, with $1.3 billion coming from the commercial side. However, around two-thirds of the firm’s partners worked in the commercial business. The
OUR SURVEY SAYS

A "can do" spirit

The culture at Booz is all about teamwork, according to insiders who call it a “very collaborative” place to work. “Team spirit is great, people are pleasant,” proclaims a source. “As we are relatively small and newly established in Beijing, there is a ‘can do’ and an entrepreneurial spirit,” one associate states. A colleague elaborates, “Co-workers are friendly and helpful. I’ve never been on a project where I didn’t like working with my colleagues. There is no real conflict between co-workers, and the office is a good size—small enough that you know everyone by name and even get to be friends with a large proportion of the staff, but large enough that there’s also a good amount of diversity of experience, etc. People are almost always willing to help, and team members will readily offer to help you with something if you’re having trouble or if they’re done with their tasks.” The only potential downside of this emphasis on teamwork is that it might be “harder to differentiate between individual responsibility and collective responsibility, which makes it more difficult to split work,” according to a source. Overall, though, consultants appreciate the fact that the firm is “not internally competitive.”

Busy Boozers

Consultants at Booz put in an average of around 50 to 60 hours a week, depending on the project. “In reality, when working on a project, hours probably range from 60 to 80 hours a week, with the upper range including conference calls and random work on weekends or after hours,” says one insider. Comments a cohort, “Depending on the project, I get home anywhere between 7 p.m. and 3 a.m., with the average probably being around 10 or 11 p.m.” A colleague explains, “Work hours very much depend on projects and team dynamics (e.g., does your team want to take one or two hours for a team lunch or dinner, or do you order in and leave earlier). In the past year, I’ve probably worked past midnight about 15 percent of the time.” Insiders tell us they stay quite busy, whether working on an engagement or not. “Regarding non-billable hours, when not on a client-sponsored project, consultants are expected to help out with proposals or development of intellectual capital or marketing. Excluding vacations, I’ve probably had a total of two weeks (10 working days) where I was completely unstaffed and not doing anything,” one associate explains.
Four days away

Many of these consultants’ weekly hours are spent away from their home office, though that isn’t always the case. One source lays it out: “Typical nonclient-based projects will require traveling maybe 15 to 25 percent of the project duration to conduct interviews around China (i.e., probably four or five days of travel for a one-month project). For client-based projects, the firm’s standard is to travel four days and three nights a week if the client is based away from your home city, unless urgent meetings require you to be at the client site. The typical travel schedule for client-site projects is to depart Sunday evening/Monday morning and return Thursday evening.”

And how’s that three-nights-away schedule working for them? One insider admits, “It’s tough to be constantly away, but this is mitigated by the fact that the firm does try to keep you in your home office. To some degree, you can choose how much travel you’re prepared to make, and they try to accommodate as much as possible.” Another respondent notes, “The firm is actively trying to manage the travel schedule, which is a positive sign.”

Live for the weekend

Despite these effects to accommodate scheduling needs, respondents say it’s tough to maintain any sense of work/life balance. Admits a staffer, “It’s difficult—a small team of people creating highly customized proposals and projects causes 16-plus-hour days, especially before deadlines or presentations.” “Senior management is making efforts to promote a more livable work/life balance, so it will be interesting to see how this changes in the next couple of months. Prior to efforts in 2007, long hours were quite common for many projects on weekdays,” one source notes. Another notes, “This is probably endemic to the consulting profession, but travel can make it difficult to have a personal life outside of work. I feel like I’ve had to make active efforts to try to schedule meetings with friends on weekends because otherwise people sometimes forget that you’re in town. It’s also an added burden on relationships, but as long as we get weekends in our home city, it’s manageable.” A colleague confirms: “We work long hours during weekdays (12- to 14-hour days) but we have the weekends for rest. This makes things sustainable.”

No lack of training

Much of the training at Booz comes in the form of “institutionalized” and official classes that take place “every two or three months.” Explains one insider, “New hires
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LOCATIONS (AP)
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PRACTICE AREAS
Communication
Global Investments
Health & Benefits Consulting
Human Capital
Information Product Solutions
Investment Consulting
Mercer HR Services
Mergers & Acquisitions
Retirement Consulting

THE STATS
Employer Type: Subsidiary of Marsh & McLennan Companies Inc., a Public Company
Chairman & CEO: M. Michele Burns
2008 Employees: 17,000+
2007 Employees: 16,500
2007 Revenue: $3.4 billion
2006 Revenue: $3 billion
No. of Offices: Offices in 41 countries

PLUSES
• Entrepreneurial atmosphere that allows consultants to follow their interests
• Diverse workforce
• “So much variety of services and expertise”

MINUSES
• “Those who work hard don’t always get the credit or promotion or pay raise”
• Subpar compensation
• “Culture can be a bit siloed across the business lines”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.mercer.com/joiningmercer

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING
• “Large and steady”
• “Too focused”
• “Friendly, supportive”
• “Fragmented”
THE SCOOP

HR heavyweight
Mercer was founded in 1937 as the employee benefits department of New York-based Marsh & McLennan Companies (MMC). The unit’s name was changed to William M. Mercer in 1959, when MMC acquired Canadian consultancy William M. Mercer Limited. William M. Mercer became a wholly owned subsidiary of MMC in 1975; in 2002 its corporate name was changed to Mercer Human Resource Consulting, and in September 2007, the consultancy simplified its name to Mercer. According to the firm, the new brand “reflects Mercer’s full range of consulting, outsourcing and investment services, many of which extend beyond the category of human resource consulting.” Mercer Investment Consulting, which operates in some parts of the world as Mercer Sentinel, is a unit of Mercer.

Today, Mercer is the one of the world’s top HR consulting firms, with over 17,000 employees in 41 countries worldwide. Its parent company, MMC, is a $12 billion global consulting and solutions conglomerate with operations in more than 100 countries. MMC’s consulting work is handled by both Mercer and Oliver Wyman, a brand created in 2007 to combine the operations of Mercer Oliver Wyman, Mercer Management Consulting and Mercer Delta Organizational Consulting. Oliver Wyman is the keystone of Oliver Wyman Group, which also encompasses corporate siblings NERA Economic Consulting and Lippincott (formerly Lippincott Mercer). In 2007, Oliver Wyman contributed 31 percent of MMC’s total consulting revenue. Mercer brings in the rest, at 69 percent.

New heads in Asia
Mercer’s Asia Pacific operations, headquartered in Singapore, encompass over 2,000 employees in 31 offices. In October 2007, the firm named its chief executive for Australia and New Zealand, Peter Promnitz, as region head for Asia Pacific, expanding his role to support the growth and expansion of Mercer in Asia. “Growth in this region is currently outpacing Mercer’s global growth rate, and we expect this to continue as we bring the best of the global model to the Asian region,” Promnitz stated. Another new executive position was created in February 2007 to help handle growth in the region: Longtime executive Rosaline Chow Koo stepped up to become the firm’s first Asia business leader of Mercer HR Services.
discuss their interests and background, and may face several case study questions. The last step is the decision, which Mercer says is made within a few weeks of the final interviews.

OUR SURVEY SAYS

Be yourself

Insiders at Mercer say the firm offers the benefits of both an entrepreneurial atmosphere and supportive teammates. “Mercer is a place where you can reinvent yourself and do things that interest you as long as you add value,” a source states. Another staffer notes, “We have relationships with great clients and are able to work with really nice, smart people.”

Consultants also say that Mercer allows enough leeway to give employers to a reasonable work/life balance. “I am a senior exec who has two small children and I work four days a week [in the office] and one day from home, and I have a lot of flexibility to juggle work life.” As for travel, an associate tells us, “It depends very much on your role and your interest in overseas work.” Insiders give less-than-favorable ratings to compensation, however, describing it as simply “not competitive.”
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Global Business Policy Council
Operations
Procurement Solutions
Strategic Information Technology
Strategy
Sustainability

THE STATS
Employer Type: Private Company
Managing Officer & Chairman of the Board: Paul Laudicina
2008 Employees: 2,500
2007 Employees: 2,400
2007 Revenue: $785 million
2006 Revenue: $750 million
No. of Offices: 51

PLUS
• “Collegiality and teamwork”

MINUS
• Travel takes its toll

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING
• “Operationally focused”
• “Transitional period”
• “Down-to-earth, very friendly”
• “Old fashioned”
THE SCOOP

The boss’s ulcers

Since its start in 1926, A.T. Kearney has been dedicated to what it calls “CEO-agenda concerns”—the big-picture problems that plague top executives, like merger integration, growth and operations improvement, and supply chain and technology management. Founder Andrew Thomas Kearney began his consulting career in the early days of McKinsey & Company, joining that firm’s Chicago office in 1926. He soon departed to establish his own company, which operated from a single Chicago office until the early 1960s. By 1964, A.T. Kearney opened its first non-U.S. office in Düsseldorf; from there, it expanded into other parts of Europe, North America, South America, Asia and Africa.

Today A.T. Kearney’s Asia Pacific division includes offices in Bangkok, Beijing, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Melbourne, Mumbai, New Delhi, Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore, Sydney and Tokyo. The firm employs just over 2,500 people worldwide, 1,600 of whom are consultants. It has 51 offices in 33 countries, and divides its services into six general practice areas: strategy consulting, operations consulting, enterprise services transformation, procurement solutions and the Global Business Policy Council. Industry groups include aerospace and defense, automotive, chemicals, communications and media, consumer and retail, financial institutions, government, high tech and electronics, pharmaceuticals and health care, process industries, steel, utilities, and transportation and travel. The consumer and retail group handles the firm’s growing sports and entertainment practice, which serves sports governing bodies, event organizers, teams and sports franchises.

Set free

Independent for most of its life, A.T. Kearney was acquired by Texas-based technology services firm EDS in 1995. The idea was for A.T. Kearney to shore up EDS’ struggling consulting arm while gaining access to deep-pocketed high-tech clients, but the ensuing decade proved difficult for both parties. EDS made the consultancy leave Chicago, its hometown of nearly 70 years, for a new headquarters in Texas. A.T. Kearney showed positive growth at first, earning more than $1 billion in revenue in 1998. But as the tech bubble began to burst, EDS’ business slowed significantly, and the two firms found themselves increasingly at odds. The A.T. Kearney culture had historically followed an apprenticeship model, whereas EDS took a more conventional corporate approach to doing business; EDS also tended to
China’s food crisis

The firm’s research on the food safety crisis in China was recently featured on NPR and CNBC. According to A.T. Kearney’s June 2007 report, the country’s food safety process will require a $100 billion overhaul to update and improve food safety standards, warehousing, transportation and training. The report reveals that China’s inadequate distribution system and lack of consistent safety and quality standards make it impossible to get food safely to consumers. The analysis was presented at the CIES World Food Business Summit in Shanghai, and predicts that China’s growing middle class will spend more than $650 billion on food by 2017, a combined annual growth rate of 17 percent.

Tabs on retail

One of A.T. Kearney’s best-known (and most quoted) reports is its “Global Retail Development Index,” or GRDI, an annual study of retail investment attractiveness among 30 emerging markets. In the 2006 GRDI, India topped the firm’s list of most attractive countries for international retail expansion, with Russia and Vietnam close behind. A.T. Kearney also found that Asia beat out Eastern Europe as the dominant region for global retail expansion, thanks in large part to Vietnam’s rising appeal. China, however, keeps slipping down the GRDI—a fact Kearney researchers attribute to its increasing saturation with international retailers.

By the time the 2007 GRDI came out in July 2007, A.T. Kearney had added a new wrinkle to its analysis: While India, China and Russia remain attractive markets for retail growth and investment, more and more retailers are choosing to enter these countries through smaller second- and third-tier cities, as major urban areas are fully saturated by competition. And, as the firm found, the influence of television and the Internet means that even residents of smaller towns in China are eager to embrace Western retailers and products.

A.T. Kearney also published a May 2007 study on multinational companies that use offshoring for different reasons. The survey revealed that companies that stressed both improving performance and cutting costs saved more than companies that implemented offshoring only to save money. Companies that focused on operational improvement saved an average 44 percent thanks to offshoring activities, compared to those that saved about 30 percent by only focusing on reducing expenses.
Linking buyers and suppliers

In March 2006, A.T. Kearney’s procurement solutions division teamed up with UGS Corp, a software and service firm, to launch a global sourcing solution—the Asian Sourcing Network. The venture will work with Tata Consultancy Services to establish the ASN center in Coimbatore, India. The companies will enable manufacturers to connect with producers of engineered machine parts in low-cost countries through a joint solution of IT, software and consulting services. The firm’s base in India will serve as the local link to nearby low-cost country sourcing activity.

Reducing the footprint

A.T. Kearney is well on its way to becoming the first carbon-neutral consulting firm, after it announced its commitment to global sustainability in September 2007. Its goal is to become carbon neutral in two years, primarily by using technology more effectively to reduce the need for business travel. Chairman Laudicina emphasized the need for consulting firms to take on more responsibility in a September 2007 Consulting Times article, stating, “The travel inherent in the consulting industry gives it a disproportionately large carbon footprint compared with many other professional services organizations.” Other efforts include shifting from air to rail travel, selecting carbon-efficient airlines and hotels, increasing the use of public transit and investing in climate-protecting projects in all of its global locations.

GETTING HIRED

Watch your region

A.T. Kearney hopefuls will find a plethora of information on the firm’s web site, including accounts of what it’s like to work at the firm, how to apply and how to climb the career ladder once you’re in (with detailed descriptions of the six levels of employees—business analyst, senior business analyst, associate, manager, principal and officer). Open positions are listed on country-specific web pages, and each country has its own application process (for example, in Japan, resumes should be submitted in English and Japanese) and campus recruitment policies.

Serious about case questions

We’re told that there are “typically four rounds” of interviews, including an initial screening and a final “partner round.” Case questions are a critical part of the
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www.accenture.com

LOCATIONS (AP)
More than 30 locations throughout Asia, Australia, India and New Zealand

THE STATS
Employer Type: Public Company
Ticker Symbol: ACN (NYSE)
CEO: William D. Green
2007 Employees: 170,000+
2006 Employees: 140,000
2007 Revenue: $19.7 billion
2006 Revenue: $16.65 billion
No. of Offices: Offices and operations in more than 150 cities in 49 countries

PRACTICE AREAS
Management Consulting • Customer Relationship Management • Finance & Performance Management • Strategy • Supply Chain Management • Talent & Organization Performance • Outsourcing • Application Outsourcing • Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) • Infrastructure Outsourcing • Systems Integration & Technology • Complex Solution Architecture • Enterprise Architecture • Enterprise Solutions • Information Management Services • Infrastructure Consulting Services • Integration • IT Strategy & Transformation • Microsoft Solutions • Mobile Solutions • Research & Development • Service-Oriented Architecture • Operating Groups • Communications & High Tech • Financial Services • Products • Public Service • Resources

PLUSES
• Globally recognized brand name
• Training is a well-oiled machine

MINUSES
• Size makes it easy to feel lost in the shuffle
• Projects tend to be more tech-focused than strategy-related

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING
• “IT consulting behemoth”
• “Strong IT and processes, but no strategic imagination”
• “High brand value”
• “Macho, hero culture”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.accenture.com/careers
GETTING HIRED

Worldwide web of recruiting

Accenture recruits fresh graduates and experienced professionals from all over the world. Accenture’s web site is a valuable resource for checking out career opportunities in its Asia Pacific offices. Interested individuals should start out by taking the online interactive quiz to help find out where they would best fit in at the firm, according to skills and preferences. Accenture also maintains an online careers newsletter and a podcast from an employee discussing what it’s really like to work at the firm.

Accenture maintains relationships with top universities throughout the region, and hosts campus events ranging from career fairs to information sessions to various competitions. During the recruiting season, each country’s careers web page posts a calendar of upcoming recruiting events.

The firm is also open to hiring individuals with prior work experience. On the careers site, professionals seeking opportunities are able to search openings and submit their CV for consideration directly to their location of interest. Accenture’s recruitment also extend to social networking web sites such as Facebook, where Accenture in Australia communicates with prospective candidates, and Second Life, where the firm has a careers resource and in which some countries conduct initial interviews.

Must-haves

Each location’s requirements for candidates differ slightly depending on local client needs, but in general, Accenture is looking for the following qualities in those it hires into the consulting workforce: “confidence and intelligence, passion, specialized expertise, solid analytical skills and deep-rooted professionalism.” Since consultants work in teams, the firm also notes that “a strong team spirit and the ability to effectively collaborate with others are also extremely important for consultants.” And because its clients are widespread, an interest in travel and working overtime as needed are also definite pluses.

Working your way in and up

The interview process may vary for each office, but generally includes screening, or fit interviews, and situational interviews. The situational interviews hone in on past
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Beijing
Hong Kong
Shanghai
Tokyo

PRACTICE AREAS
Corporate Development
Information Management
Marketing & Sales
Operations Strategy
Restructuring & Corporate Finance

THE STATS
Employer Type: Private Company
CEO: Prof. Dr. Burkhard Schwenker
2007 Employees: 2,000
2006 Employees: 1,700
2007 Revenue: €600 million
2006 Revenue: €550 million
No. of Offices: 36

PLUS
- Solid training for new hires

MINUS
- Firm is more well known in Europe and North America

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.rolandberger.com/careers_index.html

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING

- “Top notch”
- “Eurocentric”
- “Fun, energetic”
- “Long hours”
One-man brand

In 1967, German-born Roland Berger founded Roland Berger International Marketing Consultants—an impressive name for the small startup, which boasted just one secretary and a single office in Munich. After winning some major contracts in the German tourism, manufacturing and financial services sectors, Roland Berger’s star began to rise. By 1973, it was the third-largest consultancy in Germany. Three years later, it became the first European consulting firm to be accepted into the Association of Consulting Management Engineers, the oldest association of consulting firms in the United States. The firm expanded throughout Germany, and by the mid-1980s it was known as Roland Berger Strategy Consultants, reflecting the fact that over half its business came from strategy engagements. In 1987, Deutsche Bank acquired a majority stake in Roland Berger; that relationship lasted until Berger and his partners arranged a buyout of the bank’s shares in 1998.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, the firm was able to open offices in Central and Eastern Europe. It made its way to Tokyo in 1991 and America in the mid-1990s, opening a New York office in 1995. These days, the firm has over 2,000 employees in 36 offices worldwide. It is operated as an independent partnership, fully owned by its 160 partners. Roland Berger’s business is organized into global functional and industry lines called competence centers. Its practice areas include corporate development, information management, marketing and sales, operations strategy, and restructuring and corporate finance. Industry verticals include automotive, consumer goods and retail, energy and chemicals, engineered products and high technology, financial services, information communications, pharmaceuticals and health care, public services and transportation. In Asia, it has four offices in China and Japan.

Busy in China

Roland Berger took on its first engagement in China in 1985, but it wasn’t until the 1990s that the firm established offices there. Today, over 100 Roland Berger employees work from locations in Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong, serving local private companies, multinational corporations and Chinese government agencies. (Domestic clients account for 70 percent of Roland Berger’s business in China.) Some of its major private and state-owned Chinese clients include the China Minmetals Corporation, the Yutong Group, China Mobile and China Eastern Airlines. The firm has served government agencies like the Beijing Commission of ommerce,
Dalian High-Tech Park and the Shanghai Foreign Economic Relations and Trade Commission. It has also assisted a number of major international firms doing business in China, including DHL, Toyota, Shiseido, Audi, Microsoft and BNP Paribas.

In March 2007, Roland Berger partnered with *Global Entrepreneurs Journal* to create the Most Globally Competitive Chinese Companies Awards to recognize companies in a number of categories, including Best Chinese Company in Europe, Best Chinese Company in America and Best Chinese Company in Developing Markets. At the same time, Roland Berger Greater China CEO Charles-Edouard Bouée unveiled the first Chinese edition of the firm’s award-winning management quarterly, *think: act*. The first issue of the Chinese version focused on the automotive industry, one of Roland Berger’s strongest industry sectors in the region.

**Transcontinental deals**

Also in March 2007, Roland Berger announced that its China and Portugal offices would team up to launch a China desk aimed at helping Portuguese companies enter the Chinese markets. The new facility offers a full range of services, including business strategy and investment advisory, market evaluations and leads on potential partnerships. According to Greater China CEO Bouée, domestic Chinese companies tend to have manufacturing and sales advantages, but Portuguese firms can compete with the big dogs, as long as they have the right long-term management strategies. He added that Roland Berger aims to show Portuguese firms how they can profit in China by acting as suppliers to domestic industries.

**Tokyo’s way**

Roland Berger opened its Tokyo office in 1991, and today it supports foreign companies doing business in Japan as well as Japanese clients in most major industries. This has been one of the firm’s fastest-growing international offices, reporting double-digit growth year over year since 2003.

Like the firm’s other locations, the Japan business is organized around competence centers, but Tokyo has its own set of divisions. Functional practices are corporate strategy, corporate and business revival, leadership, marketing and sales strategy, operational strategy and R&D management. Its industry centers are automotive; consumer goods and distribution; machinery, electronics and materials; finance; construction, real estate and housing; information communications; pharmaceuticals and health care; and public utilities and transportation.
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LOCATIONS (AP)
Shanghai (Asia Pacific HQ)
Armonk (Global HQ)
52 offices countries throughout
Asia Pacific

PRACTICE AREAS
Global Business Services
  Application Management Services
  Consulting
  Systems Integration
Global Technology Services
  Integrated Technology Services
  Maintenance
  Outsourcing Services

THE STATS
Employer Type: Division of IBM
Ticker Symbol: IBM (NYSE)
Senior Vice President: Ginni Rometty
Managing Partner, Asia Pacific:
Andrew Stevens
2007 Employees: 200,000
2006 Employees: 190,000
2007 Revenue: $54.1 billion
2006 Revenue: $48.3 billion
No. of Offices: 300

PLUSES
• “Good scope for career advancement”
• Flexible working hours
• “Freedom to manage your own work”
• Strong sense of community responsibility

MINUSES
• “Too slow to react due to cumbersome internal processes”
• Complex organizational structure
• “Many don’t think my firm is a consulting firm anymore”
• “Hard to get promoted or increase pay by more than 10 percent”

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING
• “Global, brand name”
• “Arrogant”
• “Work from home, challenging work”
• “In search of its identity”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www-03.ibm.com/employment
THE SCOOP

May we serve you?

Yes, IBM stands for International Business Machines, but these days Big Blue goes well beyond computer manufacturing. IBM Global Services, which provides business and IT consulting, has become an increasingly important factor in its parent’s bottom line—in 2007, IBM Global Services contributed roughly 55 percent of IBM’s $98.8 billion revenue. IBM’s first foray into IT services was in 1989, when the company signed a deal with Eastman Kodak to design, build and manage a state-of-the-art data center at Kodak headquarters in New York. Around the same time, IBM began offering business recovery services to its hardware and software clients.

Today, IBM’s Global Services solutions typically revolve around consulting services, IT infrastructure and software, but competitor products will be called into play if a client requires it. Within IBM Global Services, there are two separate segments: Global Technology Services (GTS) and Global Business Services (GBS). The former works primarily in infrastructure, relying on IBM’s global scale, standardization and automation. This unit provides outsourcing services, integrated technology services and maintenance. GBS, meanwhile, is the professional services arm of the company, offering consulting, application management services and systems integration.

IBM solidified its reputation as a services—not just software—provider in 2002, when it acquired PricewaterhouseCoopers Consulting. The deal added 30,000 employees in 52 countries to IBM’s consulting teams, and formed the largest consulting services organization worldwide. That same year, Sam Palmisano, current chairman and CEO of IBM Global Services, stepped up to become IBM’s CEO, pledging to keep his former division strong. Then, in 2005, IBM sold off its PC business—further proof that the sum of Big Blue is greater than its computer parts.

Asia Pacific leads the pack

In all its divisions worldwide, IBM has over 386,000 employees; of those, 30 percent are based in the Asia Pacific region. At the close of fiscal year 2007, the firm’s non-U.S. operations had generated approximately 60 percent of its revenue, with almost 20 percent coming from Asia Pacific operations. Among all of its country coverage, Asia Pacific showed the strongest revenue growth (bringing in $19.5 million, 11 percent over 2006). IBM has offices and subsidiaries in 170 countries, including
universities and polytechnics in Singapore,” while the Malaysian office holds events at “most local universities and colleges.” Seoul recruiters head to the top-five Korean universities as well as overseas universities to find qualified candidates. If there are no recruiting activities at their university, interested applicants can also check the country-specific web site of the office in which they want to work for details on how to apply.

The IBM web site is a helpful resource for not only job postings and application procedures, but also for resume and interview tips for candidates fresh out of college.

**Easy interviews**

Interviews are a bit different for each IBM office, but typically the process won’t cause too much stress. One source says there are “at least two interviews for all, and aptitude tests for fresh graduates,” while another staffer claims there is an “average of about four rounds of interviews.” A consultant in Malaysia reports that the process in his office involves “a phone interview, competency test and a final interview with the hiring manager.” Aside from a written English test and aptitude tests, candidates don’t typically face case studies. However, interviewees might be asked how they would approach “real-life situations of the issues happening on a project.”

**OUR SURVEY SAYS**

**50/50 culture**

According to insiders, IBM’s culture has two sides: the giant firm’s organizational side and the “people” side. As one source puts it, “50 percent of the culture is brought in by its people and the other 50 percent is cultivated by the company.” That said, insiders attribute many positives of the culture to the people, whom they describe as “nice and professional peers.” One source claims, “The people I work with are the best things about working at IBM.” The firm also promotes camaraderie among its staff: “There are lots of fun-filled activities and events available for staff to take part in, and there are free movie sessions provided,” a contact tells us.

Sources have a few criticisms about the more “corporate” side of life at IBM. While one insider sees the culture as “realistic and business oriented,” another consultant dislikes the “political issues and bureaucracy.” According to one, “It’s a good company, with good HR practices. However, we are too process-driven (bureaucratic) and too financials (shareholder)-focused.” A colleague adds, “Our organizational climate is so
competitive.” But another respondent maintains that despite the detractors, there are benefits to big-firm life: “It is a comfortable place to work and an excellent platform for career development at your own pace. Opportunities for upward movement and cross-functional development are plentiful.”

**Go your own way**

Consultants also explain that IBM is a great place for lone rangers, thanks to the flexibility granted in each individual’s working schedule. “You need to be very independent to work here,” asserts one source. But, that doesn’t necessarily mean staffers can take it easy. Another colleague verifies, “You have the ability to manage your own career. There is a lot of freedom to do your job, but if you do not perform, it does catch up to you.”

**Self-managed schedule**

For those who know how to manage their time, the firm is a place where a balanced life is attainable. “It is totally up to you to manage work/life balance. So, you choose to strike the balance here. Sure, you are encouraged, but the bottom line is that it is totally up to you to manage,” explains a source. A Singapore associate notes, “I make time to do things that are important to me—I work out either in the early morning, over lunch, or late at night after I knock off from work. It’s all about time management and discipline.”

There are some insiders who claim that with 50- to 60-hour workweeks, on average, and “critical issues” always looming, it’s difficult to maintain equilibrium. “The firm promotes balance, but at the execution level, pressure is mounted from executives to deliver the results. So in all, it is unrealistic,” a source states. But one manager claims the policies supporting balance are in place, even if they haven’t yet been perfected: “Work/life balance is manageable, but we need to re-engineer the way we work to make it more effective, efficient and competitive.”

**“The most flexible employer”**

On that front, the firm is reportedly willing to work with consultants to help them juggle work and personal life. Boasts one insider, “IBM is the most flexible employer I have seen in my life: flexible location in terms of working from home, and flexible hours to rotate around personal work.” According to staffers, managers are very understanding about the need to attend to family responsibilities. Remarks one consultant, “I can come to work late or get back early on the day that I have a
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LOCATIONS (AP)
New York (HQ)
Australia • China (Hong Kong, Macau) • Guam • India • Indonesia
• Japan • Korea • Malaysia • New Zealand • Papua New Guinea • Philippines • Singapore • Taiwan • Thailand • Vietnam

THE STATS
Employer Type: Subsidiary of Deloitte & Touche USA, the US member firm of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu
Chairman & CEO: Doug Lattner
2007 Employees: 25,000
2006 Employees: 22,500
2007 Revenue: $5.2 billion
2006 Revenue: $4.5 billion
No. of Offices: Offices in 142 countries through the member firms of DTT

PRACTICE AREAS
Enterprise Applications
Human Capital
Outsourcing
• Application Management
• Business Process Outsourcing
• Outsourcing Advisory Services
Strategy & Operations
• Business IT Strategy
• Corporate Strategy
• Customer & Market Strategy
• Mergers & Acquisition: Integration Services
• Operations Excellence
• Supply Chain Strategy
• Technology Integration

PLUS
• Lots of senior-level exposure

MINUS
• Consulting often confused with the firm’s audit and tax practices

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
careers.deloitte.com

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING

• “Solid, reliable”
• “Very process-oriented”
• “Family-friendly”
• “Macho, arrogant”
THE SCOOP

Everywhere you want to be

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu (DTT) is a global professional services organization made up of 70 member firms in 142 countries and comprises nearly 150,000. Combined, the DTT member firms earned $23.1 billion in revenue in 2007. Member firms offer services in four business lines: audit, tax, financial services and consulting.

Deloitte Consulting is a subsidiary of Deloitte & Touche USA, the American member firm of DTT. However, Deloitte member firms around the world offer their own brand of consulting services, and Deloitte’s Asia Pacific presence includes Australia and New Zealand, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. Industries covered can vary from country to country, but most of Deloitte’s consulting services focus on human resources, strategy, information technology, enterprise applications or outsourcing services.

Growth field

Deloitte’s worldwide results for 2007 proved that its Asian member firms are becoming increasingly important to the overall bottom line. The Asia Pacific region grew steadily by 17.2 percent to hit $2.46 billion in revenue. The Mainland China practice was the region’s superstar, with 48 percent revenue growth for the year.

Another move DTT has taken to boost its business in Asia was a regional restructuring that began in June 2006. According to DTT, the move is part of “aggressive plans” to double Deloitte member firms’ strength in Asia by the year 2011. The restructuring moved Deloitte member firms in Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Guam, Vietnam and the Philippines into a regional cluster dubbed Deloitte Southeast Asia. This grouping, which includes 15 offices, is staffed by more than 150 partners and about 3,500 staff. As a result, Deloitte Southeast Asia has become the second-largest practice in Asia Pacific in terms of headcount, and it has vaulted into the top-20 of Deloitte practices worldwide. Chaly Mah, regional managing partner of Asia Pacific, is ready for even more expansion.

Awards night

In 2007, Deloitte consulting teams racked up a number of awards and recognitions. In a wide-ranging study of global human resources consulting practices, Kennedy
Information ranked Deloitte as the No. 2 human resources consulting firm in the world. The study also found that Deloitte’s HR practice had the largest growth rate (21 percent) of the firms it reviewed. Later, in a July 2007 report on risk consulting, Forrester Research found that Deloitte member firms provide the “most complete range of services” and received higher overall scores than any other firm evaluated. The Forrester report awarded scores based on a number of factors, such as thought leadership, service offerings and ongoing strategy.

Deloitte’s people picked up recognition that year, as well. Punit Renjen, principal and leader of Deloitte Consulting’s merger and acquisitions integration services and global leader of the strategy and operations group, was named one of the Top 25 Consultants for 2007 by Consulting magazine. And Working Mother magazine listed Deloitte among its annual ranking of Best Companies for Multicultural Women.

Decades and dollars in China

Deloitte has had a presence in China since 1917, when it opened its first office in Shanghai. Today, Deloitte China occupies 10 offices across the country, and provides consulting services in four major areas: strategy and operations, financial management transformation, enterprise application and technology integration, and human capital advisory. (Like other Deloitte member firms, it also offers tax, audit and financial advisory services.) Hong Kong has been a hot spot for Deloitte since 1972, and its current operations there are the result of several newsworthy mergers. Over the years, Hong Kong acquisitions brought Spicer & Oppenheim and Kwan Wong Tan and Fong under the Deloitte umbrella.

In 2004, Deloitte launched a five-year plan to invest $150 million in Hong Kong, Macau and the Chinese mainland—the largest investment the firm has ever made in a single market. The following year, Deloitte China acquired two leading professional service firms, Beijing Pan-China and Shenzhen Pan-China Schinda.

Clients in China range from large multinational corporations to midsized, state-owned enterprises in several industry sectors, including financial services, technology, energy, and media and telecommunications. In 2006, the Bank of China enlisted Deloitte to strengthen internal risk controls, after its listings on the Hong Kong and Shanghai markets.
Oliver Wyman

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Seoul
Shanghai
Singapore (FSC track only)
Sydney (FSC track only)

PRACTICE AREAS
Business Transformation
Finance & Risk
Marketing & Sales
Operations & Technology
Strategy

THE STATS
Employer Type: Subsidiary of Marsh & McLennan Companies Inc.
Ticker Symbol: MMC (NYSE)
President & CEO: John P. Drzik
2007 Employees: 2,500+
2006 Employees: 2,000
2007 Revenue: $1.24 billion (Oliver Wyman Group)
No. of Offices: Over 40

PLUSES
• “The intellectual buzz”
• Great pay
• “Flexibility to fit personal needs—sabbaticals, light program, locations”
• Relaxed, low-stress environment

MINUSES
• Recent branding confusion
• “Get used to not being the smartest around”
• Project assignments can be too short
• “A bit less structured in everything compared with other consulting firms”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.oliverwyman.com/careers

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING
• “Intellectual but practical”
• “Limited scale”
• “Innovative, driven”
• “Not very localized”
company; exploring pan-Asian growth strategies for logistics service providers; and successfully reducing customer churn at a top wireless provider.

**Covering it all in Seoul**

Oliver Wyman Korea operates from an office in downtown Seoul, where its primary clients are domestic companies. The firm is gaining ground in Korea, working across multiple industry sectors, including financial services; automotive and other manufacturing; transportation and logistics; telecommunications, media and technology; energy and retail. Its consultants have worked on engagements like creating a corporate strategy for a top Korean insurer, assisting a major consumer goods company with its globalization strategy, analyzing a leading energy company’s distribution channel and making optimization recommendations, and plotting new business strategies for a consumer finance company.

**GETTING HIRED**

**Making the rounds in Asia**

Oliver Wyman’s campus recruiting focuses on the region’s most selective universities. In Korea, Seoul National University, Yonsei University, Korea University and the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology make the cut. Recruiters from Shanghai make the rounds at Fudan and Shanghai Jiao Tong, and in Beijing at Tsinghua and Peking University. In Singapore, INSEAD is the campus of choice and recruiters select from the best students at National Taiwan University to work in Singapore and Shanghai as well. The University of New South Wales, the University of Sydney and Australia National University are on the list for the Australian recruiting team. Top candidates also come to the firm from abroad, through recruiting held at “most Ivies—MIT, Stanford, Oxford and Cambridge—the usual suspects.” A complete updated recruiting schedule can be found on the career page of the firm’s web site.

**GMC, FSC, what’s the difference?**

Oliver Wyman offers two distinct tracks of employment: the general management consulting track or the financial services management consulting track. In the GMC track, consultants work across many industries and are exposed to a wide array of project experience before specializing in their industry of choice (outside of financial
services). In the FSC, consultants focus on strategy issues for top financial services institutions. This track is advantageous for those candidates who are interested in financial services and wish to start focusing their career from day one, which offers them greater experience and increased client exposure and, thus, a faster career path to partnership.

Candidates are encouraged to apply for both tracks, if interested. The application and interview process for both tracks are run separately and candidates could potentially have offers from both. In the Asia Pacific region, the GMC track hires into Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong and Seoul, and the FSC track hires into Singapore, Shanghai, Sydney and Seoul.

“Posers beware”

Candidates face two rounds of interviews, with “both fit and case questions,” though each office has its own criteria. “You’re supposed to go through five or six interviews to get in here. Case interviews are basically the same as those from the likes of McKinsey or Bain. But my feeling is that Oliver Wyman puts a bit more focus on the fit part,” says a Seoul consultant. By contrast, a Singapore source claims that it’s the case questions that are emphasized, and reports a hiring process consisting of “a numeracy test, group discussion, case interviews and a fit interview.” Says one Beijing insider, “I went through five interviews (two with peers and three with partners) and three of them were intensive case interviews.” In general, there are usually two or three fit interviews and three to four case interviews in the process. Another staffer insists that there’s an “emphasis on raw intellect, rather than anything one may learn in school.”

Aside from “a lot of numerical and guesstimation-type questions,” an insider reveals that interviewers give “some traditional consulting cases, some technical cases (shorter and much more quantitative) and some fit interviews.” “Posers beware,” a consultant cautions—indicating that it’s an intense and thorough process.

OUR SURVEY SAYS

“Great esprit de corps”

According to insiders, the culture at Oliver Wyman couldn’t be better—“absolutely fantastic,” exclaims a consultant. Raves a Singapore source, “It’s an exceptional
bunch of smart and very friendly people. It is a pleasure to spend time with them at 
work as well as after work.” A colleague agrees, “There’s no unnecessary 
formality—it’s very relaxed, fun and enjoyable.” Other staffers attest to the “family-
like, warm and caring” atmosphere where colleagues enjoy interacting with one 
another. Expresses one insider, “It’s very collegial with lots of smart people who are 
willing to take the time to explain things to you.” And, much to the satisfaction of 
these staffers, the firm has retained its “small-firm feel.” Cheers an insider, “There’s 
still great esprit de corps.”

Although Oliver Wyman is reportedly “down-to-earth with lots of collegiality,” the 
firm tends to attract a certain type: “This is not a place for straight-laced, corporate 
type ladder-climbers; it’s a place for laid-back academic types who want to do 
something smart,” claims an insider. Another states, “Colleagues across offices in 
different regions are consistently nice and easygoing people—quite a pleasant 
working environment.” “Oliver Wyman likes quirky intellectuals: smart over 
polished, flexible over anal-retentive. It’s very much a rationalist corporate culture. 
Most people here have rationalist Myers-Briggs indicators, i.e., xNTx,” a manager 
explains.

No ladder-climbers allowed

The lack of hierarchy and office politics is also a selling point at the firm. Reports 
one consultant, “Communication is open and honest. There’s no office politicking, 
no sucking up to the boss. People who engage in such ladder-climbing tactics are 
quickly identified and weeded out.” A colleague notes, “We have a very flat 
hierarchy, so supervisors are encouraged to be as collegial as possible. Even as a 
first-year, you’ll have the opportunity to have an informal chat with the head of the 
firm or go out partying with him. I don’t think there are many other firms that go to 
the same extent on flat hierarchy.” Agrees another insider, “It’s a nonhierarchy. All 
levels of people are encouraged to express ideas—sometimes critical ideas—about 
the case work, the firm development and the culture.” That egalitarian feel also 
extends to travel amenities: “The same flight and accommodation policy applies to 
everyone—from CEO down to new support staff,” a manager points out.

Prove yourself

Insiders insist that Oliver Wyman provides excellent opportunities for client exposure 
from the start—“perhaps too much exposure, but great exposure,” opines one source. 
“My supervisor is often a bit like my father: friendly and teaching me the things
L.E.K. Consulting

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LOCATIONS (AP)
London (HQ)
Auckland
Bangkok
Beijing
Melbourne
Mumbai
New Delhi
Shanghai
Singapore
Sydney
Tokyo

PRACTICE AREAS
Finance
Marketing & Sales
Operations
Organization
Strategy
Transaction Services

THE STATS
Employer Type: Private Partnership
Chairman: Iain Evans
2008 Employees: 850 +
2007 Employees: 700
No. of Offices: 19

PLUSES
• “Fast career progression”
• “Being in the private equity action without the hours being too bad”
• Noncompetitive environment
• “Shorter hours compared to other consulting firms”

MINUSES
• “A lot of cold calls as the primary method for research”
• “Too many due diligence cases”
• “Uninspiring compensation level”
• Shorter projects, which results in more intensive bouts of work

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.lek.com/careers/index.cfm

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING

• “Insightful, innovative”
• “Bust your butt on private equity work”
• “Young, energetic, fun”
• “Small, European style”
From early 2006, L.E.K. conducted an evaluation of carbon emissions for each of its offices. Through the process, the firm analyzed the company’s overall energy consumption, paper usage and carbon emissions due to business travel. After the evaluation, the firm estimated its carbon footprint at approximately 7,000 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year. L.E.K.’s new carbon-neutral initiative aims to reduce emissions by 20 percent by 2011. To meet that target, the firm has engaged a five-pronged approach: reducing emissions from each office building by switching to low-power lighting and heating/cooling systems; encouraging responsible use of IT equipment, utilizing more environmentally-friendly travel modes, increasing recycling within offices, encouraging employees to lead reduction initiatives within each office.

For further reading

Executive Insights is L.E.K.’s monthly industry-specific publication. Each issue covers a single topic in depth; recent editions have looked at “Developing a Total Supply Chain Carbon Strategy,” “Creating Ancillary Revenue Opportunities” and “Succeeding in China’s Multi-Layered Consumer Products Market,” a follow-up to the previous month’s “Succeeding in China’s Multi-Layered Retail Environment.” Another publication, Shareholder Value Insight, discusses current strategy and competitive advantage issues.

There’s also the annual Shareholder Scoreboard, which was developed in partnership with The Wall Street Journal. The Scoreboard analyzes shareholder returns for the 1,000 largest U.S. companies, categorized by market capitalization as listed in the Dow Jones U.S. Total Market Index. The success of the U.S. Scoreboard prompted L.E.K. to produce similar rankings for the Asia Pacific region, publishing the results in The Australian and the Bangkok Post.

GETTING HIRED

Hone up your language skills

Entry-level candidates at L.E.K. usually go through a “pre-talk” interview, which covers “resume questions” as well as, if necessary, an “English language check—or Chinese if you are a foreigner.” “Sometimes there is a short written test” on language skills as well.
Estimate your way to employment

Applicants for higher-level positions often skip this pre-talk stage, but everyone generally has “two rounds of case interviews” with “two cases each round.” A final interview usually takes place with a partner. “Both logic and analytical/numerical capabilities will be tested,” and we’re told that case questions fall under the categories of market sizing (such as, “Estimate the crowd scale at one specific metro station in Shanghai at 8 a.m.”) and “Estimate the total number of syringes sold in Shanghai annually”) and qualitative (“Compare the business attractiveness of two different retailing models” or “Try to explore why Beer A has lost share to Beer B and Beer C over the last five years”). For its Asia Pacific offices, L.E.K. predominantly recruits in China, but also “at most top MBA programs” worldwide.

OUR SURVEY SAYS

We are family

The “family-like atmosphere” has everyone raving at L.E.K—and it’s a functional family at that. “Everyone is nice and funny here,” we’re told, and the “supportive environment” means that co-workers “are actually your friends.” Staffers are also “young and energetic,” contributing to “lots of laughter in the office.” A recent grad describes, “It feels like my extended friends and family instead of just co-workers. We all like to have lunch together, dinners, go to karaoke on the weekends, play sports and go out to bars and discos together. Everyone is very close-knit and very friendly.” A colleague praises, “I think, in terms of culture, there are no other top consulting firms better than L.E.K.”

Lots to learn

In addition, the firm offers “challenging tasks” and diversity with respect to “geography and culture, roles and responsibilities, clients and industry focus.” The “down-to-earth and smart colleagues” make for a “good working environment” where, as one associate puts it, “I can learn a lot from the people around and the work I do every day.” A manager agrees: “I have worked for this firm a long time, but am sure I have seen a much broader set of experiences than somebody who has been job-hopping three or four times in his career. Things are constantly moving and that is a fantastic environment in which to develop as a person and a professional.”
Quality time together

It’s a good thing these staffers get along so well, because they tend to spend a lot of time together. Insiders report average workweeks of 60 to 70 hours, although “busy weeks may mean 70 to 80 hours,” and “very light weeks mean 50 hours”—in which case you are “probably not assigned to a client project.” One consultant states, “There are cases when I cannot see my family members for a week because I came back so late that they all have gone to sleep, and when I got up, they are still asleep.” The intensity of these projects may be especially high since most projects are short term and last only about four to six weeks.

Demanding hours elicit few complaints; as one associate puts it, “There are some unnecessary overtime hours during the week every now and then. But overall, our work/life balance is good compared to other professional services firms, and the firm is working actively to reduce unnecessary overtime.” A colleague echoes, “Usually you cannot balance work and life well on weekdays, but almost all weekends are open for personal life. Therefore, I still think work/life balance at L.E.K. is good.” Most staffers agree that they spend “less than 10” weekends in the office per year. A longtimer feels that the interesting projects make any sacrifices worth his while: “The work/life balance could be better, but when you are in strategy consulting, you need to trade off working on very exciting but demanding projects, and that sometimes impacts other interests. You really need to take into consideration the type of projects you want to work on (e.g., long and predictable implementation projects versus challenging strategy or private equity projects) and then weigh that against other factors that are important to you.” And another staffer says it’s a plus rather than a minus that he and his co-workers are “highly client-focused and very willing to put in the extra hours in order to over-deliver on client expectations.”

And generally, we’re told, “L.E.K. values work/life balance.” A staffer remarks, “They are willing to work with you around your schedule, let you go out to have dinner with friends and come back to work or honor your prior commitments.” And to keep spirits up, “The firm organizes and sponsors fun activities after work on a regular (quarterly, at least) basis.”

Enjoy the view, from your own desk

For all the time spent at work, it’s convenient that offices are “well located” and “surrounded by many restaurants and premium departments,” with “nice views.” In Shanghai, “there is a company driver and maids,” as well as a “very nice pantry” with “a whole range of free food offered, including fresh fruit in the afternoon.”
Capgemini

THE STATS

Employer Type: Public Company
Ticker Symbol: CAP.PA (Paris Bourse)
CEO: Paul Hermelin
2007 Employees: 82,000
2006 Employees: 68,000
2007 Revenue: €8.7 billion
2006 Revenue: €7.7 billion
No. of Offices: 300+

PLUSES

• Top-notch training opportunities and room for career growth
• Youthful environment

MINUSES

• Resources are not always allocated efficiently
• “Compensation policy should be reviewed and should be at par for all”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT

www.capgemini.com/careers

THE BUZZ

WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING

• “IT-focused, massive projects”
• “Static”
• “Teamwork”
• “Lost in Asia Pacific”

LOCATIONS (AP)

Paris (HQ)
Australia • China • Japan •
Indonesia • Malaysia • Philippines •
Singapore • Thailand • Vietnam

PRACTICE AREAS

Consulting Services
Finance & Employee Transformation
Global Sourcing
Information Strategy
IT Planning & Management
Supply Chain
Technology Innovation
Transformation Consulting

Outsourcing Services
Technology Services

THE STATS

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• Resources are not always allocated efficiently
• “Compensation policy should be reviewed and should be at par for all”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT

www.capgemini.com/careers

THE BUZZ

WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING

• “IT-focused, massive projects”
• “Static”
• “Teamwork”
• “Lost in Asia Pacific”
THE SCOOP

Parlez-vous Capgemini?

Headquartered in Paris, Capgemini S.A. provides management consulting, technology services, outsourcing and local professional services in the Asia Pacific region, Europe and North America. There are just over 4,200 employees in the firm’s Asia Pacific offices, with regional locations in China, India, Taiwan and Australia. Clients in Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines are served by two strategic partners—NTT DATA Corporation and Frontline Technologies Corporation Limited. Capgemini consults in a number of industries, including automotive, consumer products, distribution, energy and utilities, financial services, health care, life sciences, manufacturing, public sector, retail and telecommunications, media and entertainment.

Capgemini got its start as Sogeti, a French IT services firm founded by Serge Kampf in 1967. After a series of mergers, the company became Cap Gemini Sogeti, which was shortened to Cap Gemini. (The Sogeti name lives on as a local professional services subsidiary, offering application services, infrastructure services and technology consulting.) In 2000, Cap Gemini acquired Ernst & Young’s consulting business, creating a major global management consulting and outsourcing firm with a rather unwieldy moniker: Cap Gemini Ernst & Young. A massive rebranding campaign took place in April 2004, and Capgemini was the catchy result.

Nice trade

Capgemini operates in Japan through an alliance with NTT DATA Corporation, a technology solutions firm with roots that go back to 1967. Under the alliance agreement, the Tokyo-based NTT subsidiary Zacatii Consulting is the preferred partner for Capgemini’s clients in Japan; reciprocally, Capgemini is the preferred partner for Zacatii’s clients in Europe and the United States.

The alliance was formed in July 2005 when NTT acquired Capgemini’s Japanese subsidiary, Capgemini Japan K.K. As an independent subsidiary of NTT, the business was renamed Zacatii Consulting. Today, its clients hail mostly from the manufacturing, technology, communications, consumer goods, life sciences and financial services sectors.
GETTING HIRED

Paperless recruiting

Capgemini’s online recruitment center is the place to start if you’re interested in applying to one of the firm’s offices. Instead of campus recruiting, the firm keeps it all digital. By selecting the location of their desired office, candidates can register, submit a resume and receive notifications of job openings by e-mail.

Each region’s career opportunities are a bit different. For example, the firm divides its career paths into three service lines: technology services, financial services and outsourcing services. In India, applicants interested in consulting (within the financial services group) choose from among the capital markets, insurance, banking, payments, compliance and risk management or wealth management practices. In Australia, candidates choose from the three main service lines, then select an industry-specific team, a competency-based team or a solutions-based team. For offices in Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines and Thailand, recruiting is conducted through the firm’s partner, Frontline Technologies. Candidates interested in those countries can find more information and apply through the Frontline web site (www.frontline.com).

Capgemini’s career paths

New recruits fresh out of university enter Capgemini as analysts or consultants. After two or three years, the next step is project lead; then senior manager and, finally, partner or director. The firm places a big emphasis on its learning and development programs to help consultants progress along the career path. With a “holistic approach” to training, Capgemini claims to focus on every aspect of the consulting business—from domain knowledge and technical tools to “soft skills” like selling and business writing.

The firm runs proprietary training through two global facilities: the Financial Sector School, for financial services courses, in France, and the Global Learning Center, which supports training globally, located in Pune, India. The campus has over 30 classrooms, a library and an auditorium.
BearingPoint, Inc. Management & Technology Consultants

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LOCATIONS (AP)
Tokyo (Asia Pacific HQ)
McLean (HQ)
Bangalore* • Beijing • Dalian* •
Melbourne • Nagoya • Osaka •
Pudong* • Sapporo** • Seoul •
Shanghai • Sydney • Tokyo •
Wellington
*Global Development Center
**Regional Development Center

THE STATS
Employer Type: Public Company
Ticker Symbol: BE (NYSE)
President, CEO & Director: F. Edwin Harbach
2008 Employees: 17,000+
2007 Employees: 17,700
2007 Revenue: $3.46 billion
2006 Revenue: $3.44 billion
No. of Offices: 170

PRACTICE AREAS
Asset Management • Customer Relationship Management • Enterprise Performance Management • Enterprise Resource Planning • Enterprise Risk Management • Enterprise Strategy & Transformation • Finance Advisory • Growth & Innovation • Human Capital Management • Information Management • IT Strategy & Transformation • Managed Services • Merger Integration • Operational Excellence • Oracle Supply Chain Management • SAP Systems Integration • Technology Infrastructure

PLUS
• Strong global network

MINUS
• Still rebuilding its reputation after recent financial turmoil

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.bearingpoint.com/careers

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING
• “Many employees, global”
• “Going through challenges”
• “Good work”
• “Lacks direction”
THE SCOOP

Young and restless
Management and technology consulting firm BearingPoint was spun off from accounting giant KPMG in 1999 (it was originally known as KPMG Consulting). Its move to independence was helped along by a $1 billion investment from Cisco Systems; in 2002, the firm severed its last ties to KPMG by adopting its new name. Though it’s less than a decade old, BearingPoint has over 17,000 employees in 170 offices worldwide, numbers it can attribute to its past as part of KPMG and its 2002 acquisition of Andersen’s global consulting operations. In the Asia Pacific region, the firm works with clients in Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand.

BearingPoint’s life as a public company has meant some tough times, however. 2002 and 2003 brought several rounds of layoffs and bonus reductions as part of internal restructurings. By 2004, the firm was headed for a storm that’s taken years to weather: a series of earnings restatements made for grumpy shareholders and piqued the attention of the Securities and Exchange Commission. (Many of the restatements reportedly occurred because of simple clerical errors and mistakes in record keeping.)

You’s cleanup crew
Although BearingPoint managed to clean up most of its record keeping and internal processes in 2006, it took until 2007 to settle a lingering dispute with its former parent. KPMG had asserted that BearingPoint was liable for $31 million in technology service termination costs associated with the spin-off; after years of wrangling, the issue was finally resolved in May 2007. Neither company admitted any liability or wrongdoing, but BearingPoint agreed to pay KPMG $5 million over a three-year period. It also agreed to amend a number of real estate subleases with KPMG and consented to further subletting of other properties.

CEO Harry You, who came onboard in March 2005, stuck to his guns: When he took his post, he vowed to bring order and credibility back to BearingPoint. Since the start of his tenure, You completely revamped the executive ranks, naming a new chief compliance officer, a new COO, a new CFO, a new corporate controller, a new director of investor relations and a new executive vice president of finance.
At the start of 2007, BearingPoint announced other changes to its business structure—it aligned its managers who had industry-specific experience with either the public services, commercial or financial service lines. The rest of the employees were assigned across all industry-specific operations. Execs also set a new goal to focus sales on the firm’s most profitable clients in the year ahead.

What’s worth more than money?

Even with these changes, revenue again remained flat in 2007 at $3.46 billion, compared to $3.44 billion in 2006. Furthermore, BearingPoint forecasted that 2008 net revenue will remain flat or increase slightly. More importantly, however, 2007 marked the first year that BearingPoint was able to issue its SEC filings on time—an achievement perhaps more valuable than cash. The firm attributed its mild gains to increased activity in EMEA, public services, Asia Pacific and Latin America, though losses in the financial services practice and the commercial services practice offset some of those gains. Looking ahead to 2008, current CEO Ed Harbach stated, “In 2008, we are focused on controlling costs, increasing cash flow and improving utilization of our talented workforce. We are investing in our people, in our systems and in our technology—all of which will lead to a stronger and more flexible organization.” To that end, in October 2007, BearingPoint appointed Rick Martino as executive VP of human resources and gave him the responsibility of leading and transforming the firm’s HR programs. The firm hopes to put an end to its high turnover rate, which has been a persistent problem since its financial troubles began in 2002.

After You’s few years at the helm failed to turn losses into profits, he announced his resignation in December 2007. That same month, the firm named Ed Harbach, former president and COO, as president and chief executive officer and a member of the board of directors.

Plans to grow

BearingPoint entered the China market in 2001, and is headquartered in Shanghai with a second office in Beijing. Over 1,000 employees work in the Greater China region, providing management and technology consulting services to their clients. Clients include state-owned enterprises, private-owned enterprises and foreign-invested enterprises, as well as national and regional government agencies. In China, BearingPoint has focused on the telecommunications, finance, oil and gas, high tech, manufacturing and automotive industries. The firm’s client base in China is equally
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LOCATIONS (AP)  
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Delhi • Hong Kong • Jakarta •  
Kolkata • Kuala Lumpur • Manila •  
Melbourne • Mumbai • Seoul •  
Shanghai • Shenzhen • Sydney •  
Taipei • Tokyo • Wuhan

PRACTICE AREAS  
Benefits  
Human Capital  
Insurance & Financial Services  
Investment Consulting  
Technology & Administration  
Solutions

THE STATS  
Employer Type: Public Company  
Ticker Symbol: WW (NYSE)  
President, Chairman & CEO: John Haley  
2008 Employees: 7,000  
2007 Employees: 6,700  
2007 Revenue: $1.49 billion  
2006 Revenue: $1.27 billion  
No. of Offices: 93

PLUS  
• Strong global reputation in the HR benefits consulting industry

MINUS  
• Difficult recruiting process

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT  
www.watsonwyatt.com/careers

THE BUZZ  
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING  
• “Brand value”  
• “Demanding work schedule”  
• “Diverse”  
• “Too much corporate political fight”
THE SCOOP

Going global

Watson Wyatt Worldwide, headquartered just outside Washington, D.C., is a global human resources consulting empire that began as the world’s first actuarial firm. Reuben Watson opened R. Watson & Sons in the U.K. in 1878; by the early 1900s, he had become a leading advisor to the government on social insurance programs. From there, Watson opened additional offices throughout Europe. The other half of the company is named for the American B.E. Wyatt, who co-founded actuarial consulting firm The Wyatt Company in 1946. Wyatt’s company grew rapidly in the 1980s, moving beyond North America into Asia, Europe and Latin America. The two companies formed a global alliance in 1995, and began operating as Watson Wyatt Worldwide; the American arm of the company launched its IPO in 2000. Five years later, the partnership was sealed with a formal merger.

Today, Watson Wyatt has surely earned its worldwide moniker, boasting 7,000 employees across 32 countries. Its specialties include employee benefits, technology and administration solutions, human capital strategies, and insurance and financial services. In addition to its HR consulting practices, Watson Wyatt maintains a busy (and rapidly growing) investment consulting group.

Building up

The 2005 Watson-Wyatt merger spurred revenue growth, a trend that has continued on into fiscal year 2007. Revenue totaled $1.49 billion, a 17 percent increase over 2006. Net income was up by 33 percent, going from $87.2 million in 2006 to $116.3 million in 2007. As is typical for the firm, the benefits group was its biggest earner, bringing in 59 percent of total revenue. This division was given a boost by Watson Wyatt’s February 2007 acquisition of Watson Wyatt Brans & Co., its longtime alliance partner in the Netherlands.

The human capital group, which was responsible for 12 percent of the year’s revenue, saw an earnings increase of about 16 percent. Technology and administration solutions represented 12 percent of revenue for the year, at 19 percent growth; both of these divisions attributed their results to increased demand in North America. Finally, the insurance and financial services group and the investment consulting group brought in 8 and 9 percent of annual revenue, respectively. Despite its relatively low contribution to the bottom line, the investment consulting group was
GETTING HIRED

Use your head

Candidates seeking work with Watson Wyatt in the Asia Pacific region can find much of what they need on the company’s web site. It features a careers section with links to opportunities in Australia and Greater China (the latter translated into Chinese), both of which offer general information on life at the company and job benefits, as well as specific details on current openings and student programs. Promoting the firm’s emphasis on employees with excellent “mental agility,” each page of the careers section randomly loads a brain teaser in the sidebar, many of them mathematically based, and a few calling for abstract reasoning. (Correctly solving each brainteaser—while impressive—will unfortunately not guarantee a position at Watson Wyatt.)

Recent or imminent graduates can apply online for a few open seats as actuarial or investment analysts with the firm’s Asia Pacific offices. Applicants are asked to submit a resume, cover letter and academic transcript, then complete—in one sitting (estimated at 90 minutes)—a test with five short-answer questions. Qualifying candidates will be given interviews and follow-up tests, and will have their references checked. The company also sponsors a vacation work program aimed at Australian undergraduates, focusing on investment consulting or actuarial and employee benefits consulting. The program runs in January and February each year.

More experienced applicants can make use of the web site as well, searching through a database of current openings.
8 Shenton Way
#38-03 Temasek Tower
Singapore 068811
Phone: +65 6297 2300
Fax: +65 6292 7631
www.adlittle.com

LOCATIONS (AP)
Singapore (Asia HQ)
Paris (HQ)
Beijing
Hong Kong
Kuala Lumpur
Seoul
Shanghai
Tokyo

PRACTICE AREAS
Automotive & Manufacturing • Chemicals & Healthcare • Energy & Utilities • Financial Services • Operations & Information Management • Strategy & Organization • Sustainability & Risk • Technology & Innovation Management • Telecoms, Information, Media & Electronics

THE STATS
Employer Type: Subsidiary of Altran Technologies
Ticker Symbol: ALTRAN TECHN (Paris Bourse)
CEO: Michael Trăm
2008 Employees: 1,000+
2007 Employees: 1,000+
No. of Offices: 30

PLUSES
• “Good experience from the rapid growth of the practice”
• “Diversity of projects (from operations to high-level strategy work)”
• “There’s no absolute labor division, so new hands can get more comprehensive learning from various functions”
• Supportive environment with strong mentorship opportunities

MINUSES
• “Current high-growth environment creates very high work pressure”
• “Insufficient training and career development support”
• Little brand power in newly developed markets
• Not many women in the upper ranks

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.adlittle.com/careers

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING
• “Good firm”
• “Dinosaur”
• “Niche”
• “Withdrawn from APAC”
THE SCOOP

From Massachusetts to Malaysia

In 1886, an MIT chemist named Arthur Dehon Little, along with co-worker Roger Griffin, formed the first consulting firm devoted to improving processes and products. (As the inventor of acetate, Mr. Little knew a lot about such things.) By 1909, the two men had incorporated their firm, Arthur D. Little, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Its early work focused on industrial technology and R&D, but by the 1950s, assignments with Johnson & Johnson and General Electric prompted an expansion into management consulting.

ADL was one of the first consulting firms to build a presence in Asia, opening a Tokyo-based subsidiary in 1978 to focus on the Japanese electronics and automotive industries. A Singapore office followed in 1984, Hong Kong in 1986, Kuala Lumpur in 1990 and Seoul in 1994. More recently, in 2004, ADL opened offices in Beijing and Shanghai. From these seven offices, the firm provides services to other countries throughout the region.

Moving forward

After a corporate restructuring in 2002, Arthur D. Little sold off parts of its business (and reduced its workforce by almost half) to firms eager to buy into the well-known brand, with the French technology and consulting giant Altran Technologies eventually buying the Arthur D. Little name and its core management consulting business. The firm’s global headquarters was moved to Paris, and German-born Michael Träm was named CEO. Today, more than 1,000 ADL associates work in 30 offices around the world.

Research-ready

In China, ADL provides services to help Chinese enterprises improve their management competencies with a strong focus on strategy, innovation and technology—a focus that would no doubt please the firm’s founder. Other services include organization, operational management, corporate finance, information management, and environmental and risk management. Chinese clients have included multinational companies and government agencies, as well as larger domestic firms.
management level, and not only in Europe. An increasing demand for environmental sustainability expertise is increasingly evident in our consulting work for our Asian clients.”

**New leadership in China**

ADL named a new head of its Chinese operations in January 2007, tapping Dr. Thomas Schiller to lead the firm’s growth in China. A nine-year veteran of ADL, Schiller’s responsibilities had included mergers and acquisitions services, developing new business models and providing consulting advice to Fortune 100 companies. He came to his new post with over four years of experience in the Chinese market, with particular emphasis on the automotive and manufacturing industries. A graduate of German universities, Schiller worked for Siemens AG and the University of Bamberg before joining ADL. His appointment has ushered in a triple-digit growth period for the firm’s China practice—he has been tasked with expanding ADL’s presence and client list throughout China.

**GETTING HIRED**

**Mulling over tractors and coffee cups**

We’re told that the firm recruits at “mostly prestigious schools,” including “top Chinese universities and MBA programs in the U.S., Europe, Hong Kong and Singapore.” Recent graduates tend to interview in groups, particularly for the business analyst position; a senior manager explains, “As for hiring new school grads, we start with a group discussion where six candidates sit together and have a discussion on a case given at the office. And then we select the best one to two candidates out of the group and send them to a series of in-person interviews with experienced consultants from the junior level to senior level.” He adds, “A candidate usually needs to see four to five professional consultants before he/she gets the final offer.”

Questions of the classic consulting-type may include, “How would you reduce the garbage in Tokyo by half?”, “How many tractors does Shanghai have?”, “How many tons of iron re-bar are consumed in Korea annually?”, or “How many cups of coffee can be sold in China per month?”
Eight is enough

Most insiders say qualified applicants can expect to go through at least four interviews, and sometimes as many as eight. One manager notes, “There are no paper tests like in other firms, since we tend to see interpersonal skills more than skills such as logic.” Experienced hires will be asked questions that cover “past experience and motivation,” and they will be faced with “a case interview with a presentation in a simulated client setting.”

OUR SURVEY SAYS

Logic with laughs

Staffers praise the “very good culture” at Arthur D. Little, where “knowledge-sharing” is encouraged and “everybody shares a mutual respect mindset.” Insiders call their colleagues “bright with excellent capabilities,” and report that they are “supportive of each other” and collaborate to “solve challenging client tasks.” An analyst in Tokyo states, “I feel that my firm is very professional in that each individual strives to provide the best for our clients. Working with very bright, hardworking people is a great learning atmosphere.” A colleague describes the makeup of the firm as a “good balance of logical, sharp people and warm-hearted, humorous people.”

Insiders also tell us that ADL is a “flat organization and a meritocracy,” where individuals feel they have the “ability to make an impact.” A manager in Seoul comments that the “open organizational structure [promotes] good relationships,” while others say they are pleased with the “direct access to seniors.” Although several staffers wish the firm would “make promotion policies clear,” most agree that the firm is a good place to “develop the career path.” It helps that there’s a “well-established apprenticeship system with side-by-side coaching (both by formal mentors and other colleagues)—as one source puts it, a “coaching culture is enforced” throughout the company. By and large, we’re told that training comes on the job through “formal and informal mentoring,” though there are some official training opportunities—as much as 60 hours per year, a business analyst tells us.

“Like milk in the coffee”

Despite most insiders reporting 65- to 70-hour workweeks, on average, some still say they are able to achieve a “very good balance” between work and personal
Hewitt Associates

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LOCATIONS (AP)
Hong Kong (Asia Pacific HQ) • Lincolnshire (HQ) • Bangalore •
Bangkok • Beijing • Chennai •
Guangzhou • Gurgaon • Hong Kong
• Kuala Lumpur • Manila •
Melbourne • Mumbai • Nave-Mumbai • Pune • Secunderabad •
Seoul • Shanghai • Singapore •
Sydney • Tokyo • Wellington

THE STATS
Employer Type: Public Company
Ticker Symbol: HEW (NYSE)
Chairman & CEO: Russell P. Fradin
2008 Employees: 24,000
2007 Employees: 24,000
2007 Revenue: $2.99 billion
2006 Revenue: $2.79 billion
No. of Offices: 92

PRACTICE AREAS
Human Resources Consulting
Actuarial Services
Compensation & Rewards
Employee Engagement
Hewitt Academy for Strategic HR
High-Performance Organizational Cultures
HR Efficiency & Effectiveness
Leadership & Management
Development Solutions
Organizational Change, Mergers & Acquisitions
Retirement
Talent Management

Human Resources Outsourcing
Benefits Administration
Payroll Services

PLUS
• Global reputation in the HR field

MINUS
• Getting over some recent financial hurdles

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
See the Working Here section of the firm’s Asia Pacific web site

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING
• “Strong niche position”
• “Limited”
• “Gentle, friendly, approachable”
• “Limited resources support from the company”
THE SCOOP

A big idea

In 1940, American Ted Hewitt opened a small insurance firm in Lake Forest, Illinois. At first, the firm specialized in financial planning for business executives—but in the process of serving his first client, an office supply company, Hewitt realized that what his client really needed was a better employee benefits package. After its founder’s epiphany, Hewitt Associates became a pioneer in human resources consulting, complementing its actuarial services with outsourcing and HR consulting services.

During the 1940s, Hewitt created the first noncontributory pension and employee savings plan to be registered with the United States Internal Revenue Service. A decade later, it became the first consulting firm to measure ongoing investment performance for defined benefit plans; in the 1970s, Hewitt Associates created the now-standard total compensation measurement methodology to conduct valuations of pay packages. As the firm’s prestige grew, so did its geographical presence. After opening several offices in the U.S., Hewitt’s first international branch debuted in Toronto in 1976. Locations in France and Great Britain followed in 1985, and a joint venture in Tokyo brought Hewitt to the Asia Pacific region in 1987.

Rapid expansion through Asia followed in the 1990s, as Hewitt locations sprouted in Hong Kong, Bangkok, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Shanghai and Beijing. The firm got its feet wet in India in 1992 with the partial acquisition of a local firm (the total buyout was completed in 1998). And, of course, a number of outsourcing centers opened; today, nearly 20 percent of Hewitt’s global workforce is based in India. Hewitt Australia and New Zealand grew from a 1995 joint venture with Australian firm Colonial Mutual.

Outsourcing pros

These days, Hewitt keeps things simple with two business units: human resources consulting and human resources outsourcing. In 2004, the firm acquired Exult, a business process outsourcing concern that enjoyed a large chunk of the world’s HR BPO market share. The deal gave Hewitt an additional 42 BPO centers in 15 cities around the world.

Geographically speaking, Hewitt oversees its Southeast Asian offices (including those in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines) from a headquarters in Singapore. Other regional operations in Australia, China, India, Japan and South
Korea have their own headquarters. Hewitt has received its share of awards and recognition for its business around the world: *SMART Fortune Magazine* recognized it as the Outstanding HR Consulting Firm in China for two years in a row (2004 and 2005), and according to the publication, it’s the sixth-largest American diversified outsourcing company. In 2005, *ChinaSTAFF Magazine* called Hewitt China the Outsourcing Firm of the Year and the Consulting Firm of the Year for Change Management. And according to an October 2006 TPI survey, Hewitt leads the global HR BPO industry in terms of market share.

**Welcome to China**

In February 2007, Hewitt launched a global sourcing and business transformation consulting practice in China. This practice, which operates from offices in Guangzhou, Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong, assists companies around the world with outsourcing and offshoring strategies, providing analysis, design, implementation support and operations backup. Domestically, Hewitt uses the practice to help Chinese firms with organizational restructuring, HR business process reengineering, implementation of shared services and HR delivery consulting. And as more multinationals turn to China for outsourcing needs, Hewitt has begun to counsel local and provincial Chinese governments on strategies that will make them attractive destinations.

**Where to work?**

For the past several years, Hewitt has conducted an annual study of the best employers in Asia, Australia and New Zealand. The 2007 results were released in March, and results showed that Spansion China Ltd. and the Four Seasons Hotel in Shanghai were the top two employers in the region. The comprehensive Best Employers in Asia 2007 study was further broken down into regional divisions (Australia and New Zealand, China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea and Singapore), and it’s Hewitt’s most far-reaching study to date. To gather the results, Hewitt works closely with the American Chamber of Commerce, the European Union Chamber of Commerce, Beijing University’s International MBA program and *Global Entrepreneur* magazine.

Hewitt’s researchers also track compensation trends in Asia Pacific. In August 2007, the firm issued its first “Managing Compensation in Asia” report, which proved that companies in the region are starting to demand clear metrics and systems for measuring returns on compensation. Hewitt concluded that, while many Asian
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LOCATIONS
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Auckland • Melbourne • Shanghai •
Sydney • Tokyo • Wellington

PRACTICE AREAS
Antitrust & Competition Policy •
Commercial Litigation & Damages •
Communications • Employment &
Labor Economics • Energy •
Environment • Financial Risk
Management • Healthcare •
Intellectual Property • Market
Design • Mass Torts/Product
Liability • Postal Services •
Regulation/Public Policy/Survey
Design • Securities & Finance •
Transfer Pricing • Transport •
Valuation • Water

THE STATS
Employer Type: Subsidiary of Marsh &
McLennan Companies
Ticker Symbol: MMC (NYSE)
President: Dr. Andrew S. Carron
2008 Employees: 600+
2007 Employees: 600
2007 Revenue: $4.9 billion (all Oliver
Wyman Group divisions)
2006 Revenue: $4.2 billion (all Oliver
Wyman Group divisions)
No. of Offices: 22

PLUSES
• “Working on high-stakes, high-profile
matters”
• Reasonable workweeks

MINUSES
• Small size
• “Lack of training and professional
development”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.nera.com/NERA_Challenge.asp

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THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING

• "Best player in this niche market"
• "Rigid, academic"
• "Excellent work"
• "Old school"
Harnessing the power of econ

In 1961, Americans Dr. Jules Joskow and Dr. Irwin Stelzer, an economics professor and an economist, respectively, decided to create a think tank dedicated to cutting-edge economic research. They formed National Economic Research Associates, now known as NERA Economic Consulting, and soon began offering business consulting services based on their econometric analysis. The New York-based firm operated independently for over two decades until it was bought by insurance conglomerate Marsh & McLennan Companies in 1983. The purchase placed it within MMC’s Oliver Wyman Group consulting division, which also includes Oliver Wyman (management and strategy, financial services and organizational design consulting) and Lippincott (design and brand strategy consulting).

Today, NERA provides economic analysis and advice to corporations, governments, law firms, regulatory agencies, trade associations and international agencies. Its work typically focuses on business and legal issues surrounding competition, regulation, public policy, strategy and finance; its consultants are often called in to provide unbiased opinions in business litigation. Although economics is its stock in trade, NERA works with what it calls a “multidisciplinary approach,” which includes elements of statistics, econometrics, game theory, mathematics and computer science in its consulting. The business is divided into 18 practice areas, covering everything from antitrust and competition policy to water and wastewater regulations.

The firm operates from 22 offices located in Asia, Australia, Europe and the Americas, with global headquarters in White Plains, New York. As of 2008, its staff surpassed the 600 mark, 450 of whom are economists by trade. Parent company MMC has plenty of resources at its disposal, too, with annual revenue of $11.4 billion and operations in 100 countries worldwide.

The latest additions

In March 2008, NERA opened for business in New Zealand, establishing offices in Auckland and Wellington. The team is led by Director James Mellsop, with close support from two Victoria University of Wellington economics Professors, Lewis Evans and Neil Quigley. The new offices focus on competition policy practice, as well as an established portfolio of clients in the energy, securities and finance
OUR SURVEY SAYS

Feeling valued

Insiders say they feel “valued and respected” in NERA’s “relaxed atmosphere.” “The firm is very collegial,” describes a senior consultant in Sydney, adding that her colleagues are “always willing to lend a helping hand even when they have a full workload themselves” and that “we all get along with one another on both a personal and professional level.” Others agree that they “respect” their co-workers who are “skilled and smart,” and claim that the firm has “more integrity than its peers.”

And although NERA isn’t known for its community involvement, we’re told that it does do a good job of aiming for a diverse staff. One senior consultant comments, “We have always had a large proportion of women (consulting staff) in our office, although there are no particular programs specifically for women (or men for that matter).” The firm does, however, offer “pretty generous maternity leave.”

An easy balancing act

The 40- to 50-hour workweeks help NERA consultants maintain a “reasonably good work/life balance,” even though most report spending a fair amount of weekends on the job. One consultant explains, “We put a lot of effort into ensuring that resources are used as efficiently as possible to make sure that as many people as possible do not need to work longer than contractual hours. This doesn’t always happen, but it generally does.” The system seems to have worked well for one recent hire in Melbourne, who comments, “I find it quite easy to balance my work and life.” Others feel that achieving a balance at NERA is “very easy compared to other companies,” and note that “the firm has flexible working arrangements that allow us to fit work around important personal commitments.”

Stay close to home

Some would still like to see the firm set up a “work-from-home system,” especially as travel is not a given. Few say they spend more than one day a week on the road, and one staffer shares, “I probably do a couple of three-day trips a year and a few day trips. That’s enough.” A senior consultant in Sydney reports, “Travel requirements are not excessive and consideration is given to personal circumstances.” One source even wishes for “more travel,” and adds that many times travel “depends on a person’s preference.”
With all the time spent close to home, it’s handy that offices are in “good locations and in good condition,” although they “lack facilities, such as a restaurant or gym.”

**Chocolate Fridays**

Fortunately, it seems likely that most staffers can afford their own gym memberships, because salaries are reportedly above average at NERA, with “good pay” and a “comprehensive benefits package that includes an excellent defined benefits pensions scheme.” One consultant claims that the pension is so good, the firm is “probably industry leading in this regard.” Most staffers expect a bonus, but we’re told the firm offers “profit sharing only at the very senior level.” Otherwise, one of NERA’s best perks is “chocolate Friday”—we’re not quite sure what that involves, but with a name like that, it must be good.

**Banner bosses**

Supervisors also get high marks from respondents. One insider describes having an “excellent working relationship” with his managers that is “built on a high level of mutual trust and respect.” A colleague agrees, stating, “Our senior staff are very relaxed and approachable. Junior staff are given the opportunity to interact with all types of clients at a very early stage.”

This contact is especially important since training largely comes in the form of on-the-job learning and mentoring. In that regard, though, one consultant remarks that there is a “lack of support from more senior staff on occasion.” Perhaps as a result, others comment that “more formal training should be considered”—but one new hire points out that there are some “trainings in New York and functions in Sydney.”
Tata Consultancy Services

LOCATIONS (AP)
Mumbai (Corporate HQ)
Australia • China • India •
Indonesia • Japan • Malaysia •
Singapore • Taiwan • Thailand

PRACTICE AREAS
Business Process Outsourcing
Consulting
Engineering & Industrial Services
IT Infrastructure Services
IT Services
Product Based Solutions

THE STATS
Employer Type: Public Company
Ticker Symbol: 532540 (Bombay Stock Exchange), TCSEQ (National Stock Exchange)
CEO & Managing Director:
Subramaniam Ramadorai
2008 Employees: 111,000
2007 Employees: 83,500+
2007 Revenue: $4.3 billion
2006 Revenue: $2.97 billion
No. of Offices: 155

PLUSES
• “Reasonable amount of autonomy regarding assignments at client sites”
• “Access to many experienced professionals and resources”
• Diversity of engagements
• “Potential of the company”

MINUSES
• “Support to those working full time on client sites is not as good as it could be”
• Little interaction with other consultants
• “Lack of clear processes/procedures”
• “Over-competitive peers”

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING
• “Up-and-coming”
• “Aggressive”
• “Growth unlimited”
• “Antiquated HR policies”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
Go to the Career Seekers section of the firm’s web site
OUR SURVEY SAYS

Culture in flux

Tata insiders say the firm’s culture is, in a word, “evolving.” According to a Melbourne staffer, “The practice was formed through an acquisition of a private firm. There has been a very high rate of change in the first year.” With consultants being generally dispersed among clients, it seems there is not much opportunity for camaraderie or collaboration. States a colleague, “They do not communicate what is going on well to people who are on the road all the time.” Some associates don’t seem to mind that, however. Comments one insider, “They leave me alone to get on with the job I do for the client.”

But others wish there was more interaction between the corporate leadership and employees. “More clarity of roles and responsibilities within management structure is needed,” notes one consultant. A Mumbai associate insists the culture varies depending on the client location: “Some of the offices are much better others. The culture and opportunities depend a lot on the client you are working for. For example, GE project teams have much better skill sets and work culture compared to other clients. There are a lot of opportunities to learn.” From one Sydney insider’s point of view, Tata is “a fairly relaxed and friendly company.”

Hands-off management

As for managers at the firm, it seems they don’t play a large part in most consultants’ experiences. Says an associate, “There is limited contact—perhaps one hour per month. That suits me as I am self-managing.” A cohort agrees, “Not a lot of contact with them, which is good.”

When it comes to the amount client exposure consultants get, it depends on whom you ask. “The ability to interact with client top-level management is limited in my current engagement,” notes an insider, while a colleague reports a different experience: “I work for a good client and have good relationship with them. It is what keeps me in the firm at the moment.”

Spotty travel

Though many consultants never see their local office, a source reveals that travel is “not universal across the firm.” There are those who are either on a long-term client engagement or in their home office—such as a Melbourne source, who comments,
“Personally, I have been on a single client engagement since being with the firm, requiring no travel. The expectation is that travel will increase when finishing with this client.” For another associate, “most travel is local day trips with the occasional overnight trip.”

But a number of Tata consultants are constantly on the go. One consultant says, “I have not worked at home this year, nor will I next year,” and a colleague notes, “As my role involves motivating and guiding our staff across several locations, travel is a crucial aspect of my job.” For these staffers, travel has a “very high impact” on their personal life. Remarks an insider, “While away from home, I typically work very long days. Luckily my wife doesn’t work and can manage the children and household in my absence.” Sources tell us long days can mean over 60 hours a week, although most respondents claim that, on average, workweeks stay in the 45-hour range.

Manage your own time

Even if travel schedules are hectic, insiders claim there is a positive work/life balance at TCS. For one thing, consultants are given a lot of independence with their schedule: “I have a high degree of autonomy and flexibility to manage delivery of my commitments,” a source notes. A co-worker mentions that Tata is “happy to support flexible work options.” “Balance is possible if planned ahead and boundaries are established. Of course, client deadlines come first 90 percent of the time,” states a Melbourne insider. And while schedules are usually flexible, one consultant warns that balance doesn’t always come easily for everyone: “Being in a significant growth phase, our company is fairly demanding on the front-end resources to keep the pipeline going.”

Training is “self-organized”

Tata’s take on training is also fairly laid-back, meaning there isn’t much in the way of firm-sponsored training. The “self-organized official training” doesn’t satisfy most staffers, we’re told. “There needs to be a greater focus on induction, general consulting training and specific competency/industry training,” a manager urges. Another source explains, “There is no official training offered. I need to set my own goals and then request funding.”
**Missing the mark**

Sources voice general dissatisfaction with Tata’s compensation structure, which one insider deems “low by market standards.” “There has been no pay review in the last 12 months, despite record revenue being realized and the market moving a lot for my skill set. There also were no promotions reviewed for people who are not present in the office,” vents an associate. A manager states, “Bonus structure and evaluation process are not clear.” A few insiders report that annual bonus is about 10 percent of salary, though some insist that “no bonus arrangement is in place.” One associate deduces that “they do not appear interested in keeping people, as they are not realigning salary and conditions to the market.” One redeeming feature of compensation is the “profit sharing for executives who were shareholders of the acquired firm,” though that doesn’t apply to consultants in every office.

**Quiet on diversity**

TCS doesn’t have many official diversity initiatives, but one source attests, “We do not let anyone’s sexual or gender preferences affect the hiring process.” Regarding gender diversity, an insider states, “We have several women on staff, but women are not specifically sought for key roles as far as I know.” Respondents say the disproportionate gender representation at the firm is a mark of the IT industry as a whole. “We have a very high percentage of staff that are men but there is no bias in the hiring—it just reflects the proportion of men that apply for jobs versus women for our field.”

Globally, Tata is known for its numerous educational and community improvement initiatives in its native India. Elsewhere, there isn’t much effort, insiders tell us. “There is good support of charities at a corporate level, but not locally,” a consultant states.
Hay Group

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LOCATIONS (AP)
Singapore (Asia HQ)
Melbourne (Pacific HQ)
Philadelphia (Global HQ)
Auckland • Bangkok • Beijing •
Brisbane • Canberra • Gurgaon •
Hong Kong • Jakarta • Kuala Lumpur
• Mumbai • Perth • Seoul • Shanghai
• Shenzhen • Tokyo • Wellington

THE STATS
Employer Type: Private Company
Chairman: Chris Matthews
2008 Employees: 2,625
2007 Employees: 2,430
No. of Offices: 88

PRACTICE AREAS
Building Effective Organizations
Capability Assessments
Executive Rewards
Job Evaluation
Leadership Transformation
Performance Management
Reward Information Services
Reward Strategies
Talent Management

PLUSES
• “You are the manager of your own career”
• International network
• “Well-designed, performance-based reward system”
• “Lots of chances for career development”

MINUSES
• Senior leadership should be stronger
• “Slow-changing processes”
• Some bureaucracy
• “Lack of systematic training”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.haygroup.com/ww/careers
OUR SURVEY SAYS

A place to feel at ease

Hay Group staffers say they tend to “become friends” with their “bright, capable colleagues who are extremely helpful and caring.” Insiders agree that Hay Group boasts a “very diverse workforce,” and an Australian director, who’s been with the firm for nearly a decade, notes that “55 percent of the leadership team are women.” The firm is “very focused on people and creating a climate where individuals and teams can do their best work,” and it also makes “a lot of effort to promote global relationships between offices.”

A consultant in Beijing, who’s been with the firm for more than six years, states, “I feel at ease in such an environment; my colleagues are honest and pure-hearted. I don’t have to take much energy on guessing what they are thinking about me, if they like me or not.” A colleague agrees: “I believe our corporate culture is the best, compared with our direct competitors in the China market.” And while a staffer in Beijing is just happy about “having the chance to serve and help the most leading company in China to grow faster,” a cohort in Sydney raves, “I am absolutely satisfied with the working environment at Hay Group. I love the work, the people, the clients and, most importantly, being constantly in an environment that challenges me and makes me produce the best results that I possibly can.” As a final accolade, the source adds, “The culture within Hay Group is by far the best environment that I have worked in since I left school 20 years ago.”

Focus on flexibility

Hay Group also gets top marks for its flexibility, which comes in the form of “breaks,” “working from home” and “taking time off in lieu of overtime.” A consultant in Shanghai says her “boss will encourage us to take annual leave and we are also trying to take more rest during the lunch hour.” And another staffer in Hong Kong agrees that the firm “has been promoting a balanced life for employees all along and has never invaded our personal time after work.” As a result, staffers say they are generally able “to balance work and life.”

Energizing travel

Minimal travel requirements also help make life as a Hay Group consultant bearable. We’re told that “travel tends to be more the exception than the rule,” and is often “at
the discretion and direction of individuals.” Some even describe their travel experiences as “energizing.” Most insiders say they spend one or two days on the road. A staffer in Bangkok notes that travel schedules are especially manageable “because most of the traveling is domestic.” And a senior consultant says of the firm, “We work to share the burden, and recognize that people need to stay connected by creating other opportunities for the whole team to be together.”

On the flip side, a few staffers complain about the “limited opportunity to work overseas.” But a consultant in Australia comments that the firm is “beginning to systematically promote international mobility.”

Choose your office wisely

Given that a chunk of their time is spent at a Hay Group office desk, staffers have much to say on their dwellings. In Brisbane, there are “excellent facilities for meals” and there’s also “privacy in individual offices for confidential discussions.” In Bangkok, staffers are pleased that there are “lots of free snacks and drinks provided at all times.” And in Hong Kong, “The office is divided by kind of tall partitions to ensure a certain degree of privacy at work.” Evidently, most offices are preferable to the Tokyo space, which, we’re told, “is so old and miserable that we cannot invite our clients.”

Look at the bright side

But even if you don’t have a comfortable desk, it won’t be the end of the world—insiders also claim that they’re rarely overwhelmed by their workload. A consultant reports that he is “sometimes really busy and sometimes not busy at all,” and a colleague comments, “The workload for each consultant depends on both the basic accountability and the desire to do more.” Workweeks tend to hover “between 40 and 50 hours” for most, although weekend work varies from none at all to 30 or more weekends per year. When the workload is heavy, a Bangkok-based staffer suggests looking at the silver lining: “Having a lot of work also means that the firm is keeping the consultants with new assignments—thus, a brighter future of growth.”

March to your own drummer

The firm offers growth opportunities on a personal level as well. Although one recent hire has found that the firm has a “lack of systematic training,” most staffers say that the “professional development” offered at the firm is a real plus. A research associate in Brisbane describes that there is “an excellent training program for entry-level
consultants, with both mentoring and formal training courses available.” And, we’re told that the firm “invests in its consulting staff via internal accreditation programs.” In addition, “exposure to top/senior management is very common,” but there’s no cookie-cutter mold that everyone needs to follow. There’s a “high degree of self direction,” and consultants have the “ability to forge a clear career path based around their own interests within the firm.”

**Satisfying salaries**

When it comes to salary, it may be better to join Hay Group at a higher level than to get promoted internally. A consultant with a few years of experience in the field comments, “There can be a lot of tension between remuneration of people who have climbed the internal ladder and people who are being brought in from outside. In other words, it seems to be better to job-hop every now and then to get a better salary within Hay Group.” That being said, most insiders still feel that their compensation levels are high for the industry. Salaries are boosted by a “profit share bonus” that is “dependent on performance,” and “discretionary bonuses are also possible.” The firm also “provides fairly decent health benefits,” although an Australia-based consultant says the “benefits policy in Australia needs review and clear communication.”

In an effort to share the wealth, the firm participates in “annual charity events,” including “helping disadvantaged groups around Christmastime” and getting involved in “in local community fund-raising activities.” Hay Group is also involved in “pro bono consulting in the not-for-profit sector” for a range of local not-for-profit organizations, including The Hunger Project.
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New Delhi
Tianjin
Wellington

PRACTICE AREAS
Business Operations
Decision Sciences
IT & Systems Integration
Market Analytics
Organizational Change
Program & Project Management
Sourcing
Strategy & Marketing
Technology Innovation

THE STATS
Employer Type: Private Company
President & CEO: Alan Middleton
2008 Employees: 2,800
2007 Employees: 3,400
2007 Revenue: $762.3 million
2006 Revenue: $659.5 million
No. of Offices: 32

PLUSES
• “Low-stress work environment”
• Interesting and varied projects

MINUSES
• “Not busy enough”
• “Travel can often be at extremely short notice”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.paconsulting.com/join_pa

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING
• “Owned by employees”
• “Over the hill”
• “Process-oriented”
• “Local players, not internationally focused”
THE SCOOP

London calling

London-based PA Consulting Group began as Personnel Administration in 1943. Originally, its business consisted of hiring and training workers for Britain’s busy factories during World War II; one of its first projects was a program that taught housewives how to assemble tail guns for bomber aircrafts. PA grew in the postwar years, bringing more consultants onboard and expanding its reach to Scandinavia and Australia, and by 1970 it was the largest management consultancy in the world. A worldwide consulting industry decline in the 1990s—the result of recessions in the 1980s—hit PA hard. Nearly half its staff was let go, and the firm spent most of the early 1990s in a state of restructuring and streamlining. It survived and was profitable again by 1993.

Today, PA has operations in 35 countries, mostly in Europe but also in Asia Pacific and North America. Its areas of focus include corporate strategy, human resources, marketing, and technology and systems integration, and it serves public- and private-sector clients in industries like energy, health care, manufacturing, telecommunications and financial services. Among its noteworthy clients are Nissan, Citibank, BBC, Pepsi and BP. With no audit arm or links to third-party vendors, the employee-owned PA likes to brag that its independence sets it apart from its competitors.

Virtually connected

Clients and potential employees can find PA’s Asia offices in Beijing, Tianjin, Bangalore, New Delhi, Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur. They can also pay a visit to PA’s office in Second Life, the online virtual community. PA set up shop in cyberspace in October 2006, becoming the first major management consultancy to create a public presence there. The PA Second Life outpost serves a dual purpose: Job candidates can chat about the firm and ask candid questions about recruiting (those wishing to remain anonymous may stay safely behind their avatar, or virtual self). Meanwhile, clients can discuss innovations with PA experts while experiencing 3D simulations of the firm’s technology innovations. PA also uses Second Life’s private islands as in-house R&D labs, running real-time demonstrations of new business models and testing product prototypes.

Perhaps PA’s people are so sharp because their boss encourages smart snacking. The British press had a moment of fun with the firm in May 2007, when it discovered that Chairman Jon Moynihan had imposed a “ban on biscuits.” When Moynihan joined the firm in 1992, he made a controversial decision to remove sweets and pastries from PA’s meeting rooms (instead, staff and guests can snack on fresh fruit). According to Moynihan, he made the move because “as soon as people started to eat the chocky biscuits, they waved their arms and talked irrationally. Then they got depressed, stared glumly out of the window and said nothing.” The no-cookies-at-meetings rule, he said, “was one of my more unpopular decisions. We had lots of complaints and an attempted rebellion.” Gradually, however, PA employees came to share Moynihan’s belief that sugar rushes are bad for brains (and business). “Nowadays,” Moynihan told the Financial Times, “nobody disputes it.”

GETTING HIRED

Tackling tests

Hopeful hires at PA Consulting should be prepared for a “rigorous round of interviews” as well as “psychometric testing.” PA’s web site links to a Cubiks Practice Test that interested applicants can take to get an idea of the types of verbal and numerical test questions they may encounter.

One recent hire recalls, “The interview process for me included two formal interviews with managers and more informal interviews with six other staff,” adding that he also had “aptitude and psychological testing, including an interview with an occupational psychologist who explained what the job was like and asked about possible conflicts with my personality. Also a written exercise was given.” Others tell us that “no case questions were asked,” but one staffer remembers coming across this question: “If an electricity retailer is facing decreased regulation that will lead to increased competition, should it diversify its products to offer telecommunication services? Explain.”
OUR SURVEY SAYS

Catch a wave during lunch

Insiders say they “work well together” in the “relaxed, friendly, encouraging and supportive” environment at PA—as one consultant puts it, “I am happy with my workplace.” But that doesn’t mean everyone is best buddies; we’re also told there is “little social interaction outside of work.” Still, there’s time to hang out with other friends and family because a “good work/life balance is supported” at the firm and the “hours are reasonably flexible.” One recent hire in New Zealand reports, “For example, I have just returned from a two-and-a-half-hour lunch break to have a surf and will now happily work late.” Across the board, weekly hours range from a light 35 to a manageable 50.

Making the best of travel

Sources are equally content with the travel policy at PA, where travel is just “part of the job” and no one seems too mind it too much. A consultant analyst in Auckland says that even if “plenty of travel” is required, it’s nonetheless a “pleasant amount,” and staffers view it as a bonus that travel comes with “an allowance.” And, as much of the travel is international, we’re also told that there’s “flexibility in which country you wish to be based.” One analyst in Wellington says that travel from his office “is usually for longer, more infrequent trips and thus more manageable,” adding, “I have enjoyed my travel thus far as it has involved exciting opportunities in interesting places, and obviously time to explore on the weekends.” Still, a principal consultant in the same office warns that trips can pop up, “sometimes at short notice,” and can last for as long as “three-plus weeks.”

Travel also comes up for training purposes, but again with a largely positive response from employees—an insider says he’s pleased to “get to go to the U.K. and U.S. for training.” A colleague explains that there are “five days of training a year in key consulting skills in London with senior consultants (up to three weeks in your first year).” In addition, there’s “plenty of unofficial training” that comes on the job.

Employee-owned

Most consultants are also happy to report that their salaries are above average for the industry, with bonuses in the form of “shares and share options.” We’re told by a staffer in New Zealand that the “compensation is very high for local standards.”
Nomura Research Institute, Ltd.

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Singapore
Taipei
Yokohama

PRACTICE AREAS
Consulting & Knowledge Services
System Solution Services

THE STATS
Employer Type: Public Company
Ticker Symbol: 4307 (TYO)
President, COO & CEO: Akihisa Fujinuma
2007 Employees: 5,600+
2006 Employees: 5,400
2007 Revenue: $2.7 billion
2006 Revenue: $2.4 billion
No. of Offices: 16

PLUS
• Opportunity to work in another global office

MINUS
• “Risk averse”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
E-mail: nri-rc-c@nri.co.jp
THE SCOOP

From one business, many

Japan-based Nomura Research Institute, Ltd. has just two lines of business: consulting and system solutions. Its management consulting services for corporate clients include management strategies, business strategies, human resources strategy, restructuring, mergers and acquisitions advisory, and organizational change. Through its system solutions arm, NRI offers system design, system infrastructure, system management and other services. The firm also offers IT infrastructure solutions services (hardware, software and operating systems), as well as IT outsourcing services. Nomura works primarily with clients in the financial services, distribution and government sectors.

The Nomura Research Institute was founded in 1965; a year later, a separate computing center was established. In 1988, NRI merged with the Nomura Computing Center to form the modern version of Nomura Research Institute, which remains part of the NRI Group. The Group is a sprawl of financial services and technology subsidiaries, all of which trace their roots to Nomura Securities Company, founded in 1925 as a spin-off of Osaka Nomura Bank Company’s securities department. Nomura Asset Management owns a 20 percent stake in NRI.

More intergroup mergers have shaped Nomura Research Institute in recent years—it combined with NRI Information Systems in 1999, and in April 2006 with NRI Data Services.

Private equity partners

In line with Nomura’s goal to raise private equity investment in Japan, the firm recently launched a new partnership venture. In September 2007, Nomura, along with The Norinchukin Bank and the Development Bank of Japan, announced an agreement to establish the Private Equity Funds Research and Investments Co., Ltd. The new company will evaluate and analyze private equity funds and offer investment advisory and discretionary investment management services in private equity funds globally. Nomura holds a 65 percent stake in the venture.

Custom R&D, anyone?

In April 2007, NRI inaugurated the Nomura Research Institute-Tsinghua University China Research Center in Beijing. Since 2005, NRI has worked with the Tsinghua
University School of Humanities and Social Sciences to conduct research on the Chinese economy and social trends. The newly-formed research center, which NRI describes as a “cooperative industry-academia project,” will house researchers from both institutions. The firm and the university will use the center as a lab for research on Chinese consumers and companies, as well as analysis of industrial trends in China.

During its first year of operation, the center focused solely on research requested by NRI. In the future, it will expand to accept requests for research from governments, foreign companies and Japanese companies operating in China. Initial research themes focused on areas where Japan-China cooperation or shared expertise is critical, especially in industry sectors like IT services, electronics, financial services, automobiles and the environment.

**Tackling big questions**

As Asia Pacific nations play an increasingly important role in the global marketplace, what will Japan’s economy look like in the year 2010? That’s the question NRI posed in October 2006 when it launched a multiyear research campaign called Proposing Japan’s Future Toward 2010. The firm drew on its own studies and research to create hypothetical growth scenarios, which it issued in the form of reports and papers. Researchers, consultants and executives from China, India, Thailand and Vietnam— as well as Japan, of course—contributed to the NRI studies. According to the firm, its goal is to publicize a series of opinions about Japan’s future, with the ultimate agenda of setting concrete goals for the country’s industry and society.

But NRI isn’t just interested in the future of the real world. In May 2007, the firm released an “IT Road Map” predicting the development of the 3D virtual world up to 2012. Looking at factors like improved technology and connectivity, the trend toward user-generated content and the rise of virtual realities like Second Life, NRI predicted that by 2010, virtual-world business transactions would be commonplace. What’s more, the firm concluded that by 2012, specialized software would be readily available, allowing individual consumers to create and operate their own virtual worlds.

**NRI by the numbers**

Of NRI’s two lines of business, system solutions services is by far the largest. For fiscal year 2007 (which ended in March), system solutions reported revenue of approximately $2.49 billion, compared to the consulting division’s $255 million.
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Pune • Secunderabad • Shanghai •
Singapore • Sydney • Taipei •
Yokohama

PRACTICE AREAS
Business Process Outsourcing
Consulting Services
IT Services
Product Engineering Solutions
Technology Infrastructure Services

THE STATS
Employer Type: Public Company
Ticker Symbol: WIT (NYSE)
Chairman & Managing Director: Azim
H. Premji
2007 Employees: 79,832
2006 Employees: 66,000
2007 Revenue: $3.47 billion
2006 Revenue: $2.39 billion
No. of Offices: 50

PLUS
• Clear promotion policies

MINUS
• Asia Pacific presence is concentrated in India

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
careers.wipro.com

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING
• “Watch out”
• “Factory”
• “Excellent organization to work for”
• “Indian pure play”
THE SCOOP

Cooking oil to computers

As a young man, Mumbai native Azim Premji decided he wanted to go to college in the United States. He convinced his family to let him enroll in Stanford University’s engineering program, but his father’s death in 1966 meant Premji had to return to Mumbai to take over the family’s vegetable oil business. (He was one semester away from graduation.) When Premji came home, he discovered that West Indian Vegetable Products, the company his father had founded, was struggling to stay afloat. With the help of his small but loyal workforce, Premji kept the company alive by diversifying its products, selling soap and household goods as well as oil.

In 1977, Premji got his big break: The Indian government imposed tougher regulations on foreign companies, prompting IBM to leave the country. That left a sizeable vacancy in India’s computer market, and Premji made a move to fill it by offering IT services and hardware solutions. He changed the company’s name to Wipro—a loose acronym for its original title. After rising to prominence in India’s IT market, Wipro began offering its expertise to companies around the world. Today, the firm is a major force in IT services outsourcing, with a global workforce of over 79,000 and annual revenue of $3.47 billion.

Break it down

At home, Wipro provides IT solutions and services for corporations in India, offering system integration, network integration, software solutions and IT services. In the Asia Pacific and Middle East markets, the firm provides IT solutions and services for global corporations. Its lines of business are divided into business process outsourcing, consulting, IT, product engineering services and technology infrastructure services. Industry coverage spans nearly 20 sectors, including health care, finance, telecommunications, software, consumer goods, transportation and insurance.

Hands down, IT services and products make up the largest chunk of Wipro’s business. In 2007, India and Asia Pacific IT services brought in 16 percent of the firm’s total revenue; IT services and products sold to the rest of the world accounted for a whopping 74 percent of revenue. Of the remaining 10 percent of revenue, 5 percent came from Wipro’s consumer care and lighting division. And for some extra
Wipro’s employee training focuses on self-confidence as well as language skills, Premji explained, because traditional Indian culture emphasizes more respect for authority than does modern business culture.

GETTING HIRED

Harnessing talent in India

Wipro conducts extensive entry-level recruitment in the Asia Pacific region, particularly in India. WiPro on Campus, a subsection of the company’s careers page on its web site, describes these efforts as being focused on premier Indian engineering colleges, selected for AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) recognition, infrastructure, faculty and history. School officials may also use the site to submit their institution for consideration as a recruitment stop. The company also offers an extended education program for recent graduates (holding computer and science-related degrees) known as Wipro Academy of Software Excellent, or WASE. Selection for the four-year program involves an aptitude test similar in format to the GRE or GMAT and the signing of a contract with the company.

The company’s non-Indian hiring in the Asia Pacific region is concentrated on Japan, although it also hires in China, Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia and Australia. Recruitment in this case is directed at experienced professionals, especially those with knowledge of programming languages, database administration, network technology and other technical specialties.

From start to finish

Wipro’s careers site supports online application for candidates seeking work in any of the company’s locations. Applicants can search or browse through a list of current openings, and resumes and profiles can be saved for later use, should they need to be repurposed for a new position. The site also features an advancement tree that lays out the expected career path from “team member” on to the upper reaches of the organization. At each stage of growth, an employee’s competencies are assessed, determining promotion from module leader to project manager, or onward to account manager and ultimately vertical head in the project consulting stream. Staff can also choose to shift from consulting to a functional (such as sales) or technical (such as software architecture) specialization, each with a vertical advancement path.
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Malaysia • Melbourne • Osaka •
Secunderabad • Shanghai •
Singapore • Sydney • Taiwan •
Thailand • Tokyo

PRACTICE AREAS
Application Development &
Maintenance Services
Business Process Outsourcing
Consulting & Enterprise Business Solutions
Extended Engineering Solutions
Infrastructure Management Services

THE STATS
Employer Type: Public Company
Ticker Symbol: 500376 (BOM), SAY (NYSE)
Founder & Chairman: B. Ramalinga Raju
Co-Founder & Managing Director:
B. Rama Raju
2007 Employees: 49,200
2006 Employees: 40,000
2008 Revenue: $2.13 billion
2007 Revenue: $1.4 billion
No. of Offices: 54

PLUSES
• “Freedom to pursue meaningful opportunities”
• Employee-focused

MINUSES
• Some bureaucracy
• Difficult hours, due to working across multiple time zones

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
careers.satyam.com
THE SCOOP

Modest beginnings

B. Ramalinga Raju was born in a small Indian village 250 miles north of Hyderabad. As a young man, he made his way to America to study business at Ohio University. After earning a master’s degree, he returned to India in 1987 and founded Satyam (Sanskrit for “truth”), with the help of one of his younger brothers. The firm began on a very small scale, outsourcing 36 engineers to U.S. companies. After rapid growth in just a few years—and a critical expansion into software services—Satyam went public on the Bombay Stock Exchange in 1992. Today the firm is a tech consulting giant and India’s fourth-largest software exporter, with operations in 57 countries. Its offices serve a regular client list of over 570 national, international and multinational companies, including 165 members of the Fortune 500.

Satyam offers IT consulting and solutions through industry verticals, including aerospace and defense, automotive, banking and financial services, chemicals, education, energy and utility, government, health care, industrial equipment, insurance, infrastructure, life sciences, manufacturing, media and entertainment, nonprofits, process industry, real estate and construction, retail, semiconductor, supply chain management, telecommunications, and travel and logistics. Its subsidiary Nipuna Services Ltd. manages most of its business process outsourcing work; another subsidiary, Satyam Infoway, became India’s first private Internet service provider when it debuted in 1998.

Satyam currently has eight offices in India, four in China and two in Japan, plus locations in Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Taiwan. It also has 25 IT development centers throughout Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

The right source

Don’t call it outsourcing at Satyam—call it RightSourcing, a unique model that the firm claims is more flexible and more efficient than the typical delivery center setup. According to each client’s need, Satyam professionals may work on site at the client’s location, or they may work offshore at one of Satyam’s development centers in India. Development centers in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, the United Arab Emirates, Hungary, Singapore, China, Malaysia, Japan and Australia offer what Satyam calls off-site or nearshore capabilities, so staff can work from whichever
Satyam was also recognized in 2007 as an outstanding employer. The American Society for Training and Development, as part of its annual BEST awards, named the firm No. 1 for its efforts in employee edification. Not only was this a leap forward from the firm’s position as No. 15 in 2006, but it marked the first time an organization outside of the U.S. received the top honor. Additionally, the company was identified by Hewitt Associates as one of the top-20 Best Employers in Asia and the No. 2 Best Employer in India.

**More than money**

The Satyam Foundation, the firm’s charitable arm, is not what it calls “a cheque-book charity organization.” In other words, it doesn’t just make donations to good causes—it gets its employees involved in social initiatives in the areas of education, environment and health care. (The foundation’s annual goal is to have more than 20 percent of the firm’s staff give 5 percent of their time as volunteers.) Foundation chapters are currently located in Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai, Bangalore and Bhubaneswar, focusing on the needs of underprivileged people in some of India’s largest urban centers. HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness, youth education and child labor issues are among the causes Satyam’s foundation has tackled. A chapter recently opened in the U.K., and the firm says it will expand the foundation to all its major offices in coming years.

**GETTING HIRED**

**Talent search**

Satyam, through an initiative it calls “campulse,” not only recruits, but actually grooms talent at a number of Indian engineering and management colleges. With the ultimate goal of creating a knowledge pool from which future IT professionals can be drawn, the firm partners with institutions to enhance their educational capabilities. Satyam sets up mentors and provides online learning resources to the schools; sponsors on-campus academic or cultural events, such as debates, seminars and programming contents; and even trains faculty, who will then pass on improved curriculum and methodologies to students.
Four’s a charm

Qualified candidates at Satyam will likely encounter four rounds of interviews, usually consisting of an “aptitude test, a group discussion, a technical interview and an HR interview.” One recent hire in India describes his experience in more detail, saying, “I was asked to take a written test for 30 minutes, which included an aptitude test. Once I cleared that, I was asked to attend a group discussion. The short-listed candidates of the group discussion are asked to appear for a technical and HR interview. In the technical round they asked about our subject topics and also our programming skills. In the HR round, they asked about my interests, the most embarrassing moments in my life, my ambition in life, etc.”

In an interesting twist, consultants who decide to leave the firm can stay connected on the web through its alumni network, ReMember, linked from its careers page. As the firm explains, in addition to being a place to “revive old friendships” and “access various knowledge-sharing and leadership events,” the interactive forum also gives anyone with regrets the chance to “explore new professional possibilities in Satyam.”

OUR SURVEY SAYS

Happy at the top

Insiders insist that Satyam is “employee-oriented” and “entrepreneurial,” and generally a “very good company to work for.” One engineer praises the firm as “one of the top-four employers in India,” adding that it “is growing enormously in terms of business and also manpower.” We’re also told that, despite some “internal politics,” the firm “really has very good decision-makers and leaders.” Satyam also offers “a great chance for advancement” and “a lot of opportunities for learning new technologies.” One staffer is confident that the firm’s “very high vision” will ensure it “will always be on top.”

Plenty of work to be done

We’re also told that although Satyam comes across as “caring for its employees,” it’s still difficult to maintain a positive work/life balance, especially since “supporting multiple time zones puts pressure on regular work hours.” Workweeks tend to hover around 50 to 60 hours per week, and staffers report having to put in “early mornings and late nights.” One director says he and his colleagues “invariably have to do extended work hours at least on the phone.” That being said, another source reports
ABeam Consulting Ltd.

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Seoul
Shanghai
Singapore
Taipei

PRACTICE AREAS
Business Process Improvement
Operational Strategy
People & Organizational Performance
Technology Innovation

THE STATS
Employer Type: Subsidiary of NEC Group, a Public Company
CEO: Kazumasa Nishioka
2008 Employees: 3,500
2007 Employees: 2,700
2007 Revenue: $383 million
2006 Revenue: $284.5 million
No. of Offices: 20+

PLUS
• The firm is growing dynamically and expanding its global presence

MINUS
• Working to integrate staff from newly acquired companies

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
Go to www.abeam.com/locations.aspx to view recruitment details and contacts for each office

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THE SCOOP

You name it, they do it

Tokyo-based ABeam Consulting got its start as the Japanese arm of Deloitte Consulting, until its separation in 2003. ABeam’s global expansion was driven initially by its Japanese clients with large, global rollouts of business improvement initiatives. Less than five years later, ABeam has more than doubled in size, now boasting 3,500 professionals serving more than 700 clients throughout the Americas, Asia and Europe. More than 70 percent of the firm’s new business comes from existing clients.

ABeam’s operational consulting services are broken down into strategy, process, technology and people. Operational strategy services address enterprise performance management, mergers and acquisitions advisory, globalization advisory and performance benchmarking. Business process improvement services address customer relationship management, enterprise resource planning, financial management, shared services, SOX and J-SOX, and supply chain management. Technology innovation covers business intelligence, information management, IT advisory, outsourcing (including applications maintenance), software evaluation and implementation and systems integration. People and organizational performance services address change management, human capital management, learning and development, and organizational design.

The firm also has broad industry coverage, serving clients in manufacturing and distribution, telecommunications and media, financial services and social infrastructure, which includes energy, transportation and the public sector.

Working the network

Although it operates independently, ABeam Consulting is technically a subsidiary of NEC Group, a Tokyo-based conglomerate with 2007 revenue of over $40 billion. NEC’s main business lines are IT and network solutions, mobile and personal solutions, and electronic devices. In November 2004, NEC and ABeam released a joint statement, stating that they had formed a strategic partnership. The partnership agreement allowed for an initial investment followed by gradual increases in ownership, so NEC was able to acquire one-third of ABeam right away. By early 2005 its stake in the consulting firm had risen to 50 percent.

For ABeam, the infusion of capital from NEC has allowed it to expand its presence throughout Asia and other parts of the world, and to target large-scale projects.
Meanwhile, NEC has reaped the benefits of ABeam’s strategic consulting and ERP services. The tie-up was strengthened in July 2005 when NEC Solutions Asia Pacific Ltd., a wholly owned NEC subsidiary, formed its own strategic partnership with ABeam’s Southeast Asian operations. The companies also joined with Pointsec Mobile Technologies to deliver enhanced information security services to clients in the region.

**Team unity**

Unlike many global consultancies, ABeam operates as a global team, and does not maintain a country-based business model. As a truly client-driven firm, ABeam assembles support teams based on the right experience for the client’s objectives—regardless of country base or position in the firm. ABeam has operations in Belgium, Canada, China, Germany, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Singapore, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States. It’s also the parent of four Japanese specialty subsidiaries: ABeam M&A Consulting Ltd., ABeam Systems Ltd., IDA Capital Ltd. and SC-ABeam Automotive Consulting.

Like many global consultancies, ABeam’s expansion has come through acquisition—although many of its buys weren’t up for sale. ABeam looks for best-in-class consulting firms with proven track records, and with domain expertise that complements its own service and industry capabilities. ABeam also keeps the acquired companies’ leadership in place, many of whom go on to have global responsibilities. The firm maintains strong alliance relationships to extend its worldwide reach—with Akselera in the Nordics, BIP in Italy and Spain, and Vector Consulting in Brazil. These firms work closely with ABeam to support clients in these markets.

**A bigger reach**

ABeam made some significant growth moves in 2006, acquiring the Malaysian consulting firm Magnus Management Consultants and turning it into ABeam Consulting Malaysia. Besides serving domestic Malaysian clients, ABeam Malaysia assists Japanese, European and American corporations with offshore development and outsourcing projects. The deal was a good one for MMC, too; its consultants were asked to remain onboard and work on domestic projects. They were later joined by multilingual ABeam personnel who could help lead engagements for European and American clients.

Speaking of the United States, ABeam made major progress there in May 2006, when it acquired Qorval Integrated Solutions. Texas-based QIS was rebranded as ABeam
Alvarez & Marsal

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PRACTICE AREAS
Dispute Analysis & Forensics
Interim & Crisis Management
Performance Improvement
Supply Chain Management
Turnaround Advisory

THE STATS
Employer Type: Private Company
Co-CEOs: Tony Alvarez II & Bryan Marsal
2008 Employees: 1,200+
2007 Employees: 1,100
No. of Offices: 36

PLUSES
• “Recognition (in compensation and title) is awarded for merit, not gray hair”
• “Direct, nonpolitical culture is refreshing”

MINUSES
• “The infrastructure has a hard time keeping up with our pace of global growth, which can be frustrating”
• Lack of emphasis on training and development

EMLOYMENT CONTACT

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approximately 1,500 tax professionals with 300 international tax partners. (Alvarez & Marsal was one of Taxand’s founding firms—as head of A&M Taxand Robert N. Lowe stated, his ever-entrepreneurial colleagues were determined to create “an alternative to the Big Four.”)

Looking Down Under, A&M enjoys a strategic affiliation with McGrathNicol+Partners, an independent corporate restructuring and advisory services firm based in Australia and New Zealand. As McGrathNicol’s preferred global business partner, A&M’s Asia Pacific reach extends all the way to Aussie and Kiwi clients.

GETTING HIRED

“Lengthy but effective”

A&M doesn’t conduct on-campus recruiting in Asia, though it does round up new hires from graduate programs and business schools around the world. Sources claim the firm is “very selective” in its hiring—only those from “top-tier MBA programs” and high-performers with track records from industry and consulting firms are considered.

The interview process is “lengthy yet effective,” according to an insider. According to another, “There were five interviews for my hiring and they were all fun and informative.” Others say there is “no standard process,” but that “groups doing the hiring manage the interviews.” A manager notes, “It is long and informal, with a view to making sure that candidates meet everyone they would benefit from seeing, and to ensure cultural fit.”

OUR SURVEY SAYS

No lip service here

Insiders rave that Alvarez & Marsal is full of “entrepreneurial, straight-shooting, congenial” individuals, who make the firm an excellent place to work. “It’s very lively and friendly—an excellent environment to have fun and prosper,” assures one associate. “It’s all about living the culture, rather than giving it lip service, states a source.”

Other than the “fun colleagues,” consultants say the “freedom to pursue personal ambitions” is a hallmark of firm life. One staffer raves about “the chance to be very
self-directed and to explore entrepreneurial interests,” while another claims to appreciate the “exposure to senior-level decision-making at companies.”

**Family values**

Consultants tell us that with 60- to 80-hour workweeks and lots of travel, work/life balance is a challenge to achieve. As for travel, “It’s a reality of the job—at times very exciting, at times a drag and always a challenge for family,” one associate admits. Though there’s a lot of time away from home, it helps that A&M is “a very family-focused firm”: “The firm is extremely sensitive to being family-friendly, and they are doing a great job,” an insider insists. Another source states, “It’s difficult due to the travel, but the firm is supportive of making it work around the family.”

Training at the firm is largely self-directed, we’re told. “Most training is official, but outsourced. Employees are encouraged to sign up for courses and seminars on their own,” an insider notes.

**Perks are in the bonus**

Sources give positive marks to A&M’s compensation and benefits. A manager explains, “We feature a very transparent compensation scheme whereby performers earn as per their contribution to the bottom line.” Bonus is reportedly “on a case-by-case basis; we retain the option of additional forms of comp for high achievers.”

There aren’t a ton of lavish extras for consultants, nor do offices feature plush accommodations: “We believe in low overhead so we don’t spend on flashy offices,” a source tells us. But these consultants don’t seem to mind the lack of frills. “As for perks, there’s a golf shirt. That’s the best they come up with. A&M prefers to put perks in the bonus,” remarks an insider.
Corporate Value Associates

THE STATS

Employer Type: Private Company
Founder & Managing Partner: Paul-André Rabate
2008 Employees: 300
2007 Employees: 200+
No. of Offices: 16

PLUSES

• “CVA promotes increased responsibility early in your career”
• “No politics or backstabbing”

MINUSES

• “Extensive traveling combined with long working days”
• “Unpredictable and spontaneous lifestyle”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT

www.corporate-value.com/join/cva_join_working.asp

LOCATIONS (AP)

Beijing
Melbourne
Seoul
Shanghai
Singapore
Sydney
Tokyo

PRACTICE AREAS

Consumer Goods
Financial Services
Manufacturing
Mining
Pharmaceuticals
Retail & Distribution
Telecommunications
Transportation
Utilities

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THE SCOOP

Not your typical boutique

The privately held Corporate Value Associates calls itself a “global strategy boutique,” and indeed, its 300 professionals are spread across 16 offices worldwide. Unlike many boutique consultancies, CVA does not divide its professionals into functional groups—its employees are generalists, though many have specific industry expertise. The firm was founded in 1987 by Partners Paul-André Rabate, Didier Pain and Laurent Noual. From the outset, the trio wanted to take a new approach to consulting: While they were willing to work with traditional approaches like EVA (economic value added), TSR (total shareholder return) and CVA (cash value added), they believed that overuse of these methodologies results in nothing more than a list of indicators—not management of the people and systems that make up an individual business. Another common pitfall, according to CVA, was “an almost obsessive focus on delivering value to shareholders alone,” thereby ignoring other stakeholders like clients, customers and employees.

CVA opened offices in Amsterdam, Boston, Paris and London during its first year of operation. Today, it has 16 locations worldwide, including seven in the Asia Pacific region. It also has two American offices (one of which is home to its U.S. affiliate, Dean & Company), multiple locations in Europe and the United Kingdom, and a single African office in Morocco.

Reaching Asia

Bruno Sallé is a senior partner and the managing director of CVA Asia Pacific. He joined the firm in 1989 and worked in Europe until 1992, when he led the development of CVA’s Asia Pacific network. Singapore was the firm’s first office in Asia, established in 1992 to take advantage of the expanding regional markets. In the years since, this location has served as a launching point for the firm’s business in China, Southeast Asia and Australia. It is staffed by a multicultural and multilingual team, with consultants hailing from Europe and Asia. The Singapore office has worked with clients in a number of industries, including financial services, packaging and brewing.

A growing network

In 1996, CVA made inroads into China, opening its first office in Shanghai. Today, the Shanghai location serves as a hub for the firm’s business in the greater China region, which includes clients in the industrial manufacturing, packaging, brewing,
cosmetics and financial services sectors. CVA’s newest office is its Beijing outpost, opened in 2006. This location has become a key center for CVA’s telecommunications industry work.

The firm has been working with Korean clients since 1998, but it didn’t have a presence in Seoul until the start of 2001. Since then, the Seoul office’s client base has grown steadily, especially in the financial services and telecommunications industries.

**Expert bridge-builders**

CVA arrived in Tokyo in 1999, at a time when Japan’s economy was undergoing significant transformation—changes in the country’s economic structure and policies opened numerous doors to globalization. The firm quickly developed a roster of clients that includes domestic Japanese clients as well as Western companies trying to find a foothold in Asia Pacific markets. CVA has undertaken extensive local recruiting in Japan; because the firm encourages international staffing assignments, Japanese consultants may work at home or abroad.

Junichi Imakita is the managing director of CVA Japan, a position he has held since the Tokyo office opened. He has spent most of his career building links between Asian and European economies. Since joining CVA in 1999, Imakita has published a number of books and scholarly papers, including *Occidental Innovation, Oriental Innovation, Carpe Diem: Conversion of the Business Mindset* and *Moving to a Vision Beyond Orthodoxy*. He has also received the National Order of Merit from the French government for his contributions to the promotion of business and academic relations between France and Japan.

**Customers first**

CVA calls its way of doing business a “customer-centric approach,” which it implements through a trademarked framework known as Customer Centric Value Enhancement. The first tenet of CCVE is combining a customer’s needs with the cost and economic implications of meeting those needs. This analysis allows businesses to align their interests and their customers’ interests at the lowest possible cost. Secondly, CCVE helps clients predict customers’ behavior by using a variety of tools and techniques, like the relative attitudes framework (which seeks to understand the factors that influence customer satisfaction) and the individual and circumstance framework, which explains variations in price elasticity. The firm also uses something known as the CVA “mind” diagram, which tries to outline the links
between customers’ absolute needs, perceived needs, attitudes, behavior, importance and preferences.

**Clients as co-workers**

Another aspect of the CVA way is its joint team approach, which involves working closely with each client’s employees. Project teams always include junior- and senior-level CVA consultants and staff from the client company. According to CVA, this approach keeps its consultants’ work from getting lost in translation: If client staff are involved from the beginning, knowledge transfer can proceed seamlessly. This approach also helps CVA consultants move quickly from strategy and analysis to implementation and results.

CVA also boasts of its “global mindset,” which, in practice, means its staff rotates freely between international offices. In addition to providing a conduit for best practices and innovation, the constant exchange of consultants helps keep CVA’s small, far-flung network connected.

**A storied career**

Of the three men who founded CVA, French-born Paul-André Rabate has maintained the highest profile at the firm, working from the United Kingdom as a managing partner since 1985. (Didier Pain is a senior partner in Paris; Laurent Noual is no longer with CVA.) Rabate began his consulting career with The Boston Consulting Group; he and Dominique Mars left that firm in 1979 to strike out on their own, launching the strategic consultancy Mars & Company. Rabate went on to serve as vice president and head of the European insurance practice at Strategic Planning Associates (which was later acquired by Mercer Management Consulting) before co-founding CVA. A specialist in the financial services industry, Rabate is a frequent speaker at global conferences on retail banking, insurance and information technology.

**GETTING HIRED**

**Covering its bases**

Sources tell us that CVA’s recruiting team canvases a number of universities in Australia. Recruiters round up candidates from the University of Melbourne, University of Sydney, Monash University and the University of New South Wales—and specific recruiting dates and times in Melbourne and Sydney are outlined on the
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LOCATIONS (AP)
Bonn (HQ)
Singapore

PRACTICE AREAS
Benchmarking
Business Strategy & Business Development
Customer Services
Financial Management
Mergers Management
Organizational & Change Management
Process Design & Optimization
Project Management

THE STATS
Employer Type: Subsidiary of Deutsche Post World Net
CEO: Dr. Frank Appel
2008 Employees: 150
2007 Employees: 120
2007 Revenue: €63.5 billion (DPWN)
2006 Revenue: €60.5 billion (DPWN)
No. of Offices: 3

PLUSES
• “Steep learning curve”
• “Obligation to dissent”
• Teamwork is encouraged

MINUSES
• “Internal politics”
• Limited benefits
• “Too hierarchical”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
Go to the careers section at www.ic.dpwn.com to read about available opportunities
THE SCOOP

In-house indeed
Deutsche Post World Net is a direct descendent of Germany’s state-owned postal system, which was separated from government control in 1995. Deutsche Post went public in 2000, and in 2002 it acquired DHL, the air express company with roots in Switzerland. DPWN is a true global giant, employing 500,000 people in more than 220 countries and territories. The corporation is made up of four divisions—mail (under the Deutsche Post brand), express (under the DHL brand), logistics (also under the DHL brand, consisting of the supply chain and global forwarding and freight units) and finance services (operating through subsidiary Deutsche Postbank). In 2007, DPWN derived 9.1 percent of its revenue from Asia, 39.4 percent of its revenue from Germany, 31.7 percent from other European countries and 17 percent from the Americas. The remainder, slightly less than 3 percent, was generated collectively in other parts of the world.

As the name implies, Inhouse Consulting provides strategy, management, optimization and benchmarking consulting services to DPWN’s businesses worldwide. Created in 1999 with just three consultants, IC has grown to include 150 consultants and plans to expand to 200 by the end of 2008. Its official headquarters is in Bonn, like DPWN’s, but it also has offices in Singapore and Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The Singapore office, which opened in 2006, is staffed by a 20-member international team that focuses on engagements for DHL’s ever-expanding enterprises. Like the other IC offices, it also serves as a training ground, preparing its employees for executive roles within DPWN.

Whatever DHL needs
As an example of the support IC lends to DHL, its consultants were called on to perform a worldwide customer service benchmarking study, with special focus on DHL’s far-flung key account desks (KADs). The project involved operations in Hong Kong, Singapore, Sweden, Germany, Italy and the United States. Inhouse consultants made suggestions for improving KAD performance in each country and each region; they also helped harmonize KAD processes and developed a range of support tools.

You can do it!
According to Martin Seidenberg, a partner in the Singapore office, “We started in Singapore with a lot of enthusiasm and ‘can do’ mentality. The environment is very entrepreneurial.” He added that Asia is a “fast-growing region” for DHL, which suggests that IC will be adding more and more projects to its yearly roster. Like its sibling locations in Bonn and Fort Lauderdale, Singapore’s services include business strategy and
development, organizational management, mergers management, process design and optimization, customer services, financial management, benchmarking and project management.

GETTING HIRED

Make sure consulting’s the right fit

DPWN job seekers will find all the info they need for the application process on the firm’s web site. And, if you’re not quite sure that a career in consulting is right for you, you can take one of three career tests also posted on the site. Each test takes 30 to 45 minutes, after which, the firm says, “you will receive detailed, personal and possibly surprising feedback” about what path might be most suitable for you. If you’re still gung-ho about working for Inhouse Consulting, you can submit your resume online.

After an initial screening, qualified applicants at the firm go through three rounds of “CV and business case interviews.” If they make it that far, the final step is almost certainly a trip to Bonn, Germany, where they spend one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half days in interviews and exercises at the firm’s “assessment center.”

Don’t underestimate the value of experience

IC recruits at “many well-known MBA schools around the globe,” and both undergrads and MBA students can also apply for internships at the firm. Qualified undergraduate candidates “have to undergo a phone business case and CV interview.” Similarly, the firm says of MBA candidates (who must attend one of the firm’s partner schools), “If you have acquired international business experience and speak fluent English, you have already had a good chance of qualifying for an MBA internship.”

One recent hire says her internship at the firm was “tremendous,” both in terms of the amount she learned and the “extent of exposure to even the client’s management.” “In addition,” she continues, “as an intern, I could also contribute to the firm’s knowledge database with analytical papers made toward the end of my internship program.”

OUR SURVEY SAYS

Make friends at work

Staffers at IC praise their “high-caliber colleagues,” as well as their “challenging” and “very interesting” projects. The firm’s “entrepreneurial environment” makes employees
feel like they “can make a difference.” A project manager in Singapore explains, “Having worked for a major external management consultancy before, I very much appreciate the culture here as being between consulting (young, dynamic) and corporate (belonging).” And a senior consultant adds, “I can call many of my colleagues friends.” Many describe the firm as a “meritocracy,” with “very approachable colleagues and supervisors” and an “open-door policy.” Consultants are given “lots of responsibility from day one.”

Insiders are also proud to say that the firm is diverse and “international.” Regarding gender diversity, a junior staffer reports, “There is basically no distinction between males and females; the firm looks at hiring a consultant, a project manager or an assistant, it is not looking for a female or a male.”

**Plan ahead to get a break**

IC consultants don’t seem to be tied to their desks, but the firm also doesn’t bend over backward to promote a strong work/life balance. “Family life, drinks with friends and weekend activities with colleagues” are all within reach, but given the 45-plus workweeks, it requires some “well-defined scoping and planning, both at the team and the individual level.” “I am working hard,” notes a source in Singapore, “but if I have to have vacation on certain dates, I get it approved in advance.” And regular travel “is not the default” at the firm, where most staffers spend about 20 to 30 percent of their time out of the office. A junior consultant claims, though, that being on the road helps her make the most of her time. “Short trips each time have resulted in very hectic and even shorter working weeks,” she describes, adding, “This entails good work/life balance management and good time management.”

A colleague is pleased that the firm supports some nonwork events to ease the stress level: “Even during the month,” he states, “we organize team events where project working teams get away together to do something on a more informal basis that is encouraged and sponsored by the firm.” Staffers also appreciate that the firm does “pro bono consulting for the United Nations” and contributes to “food programs for the needy.”

**Little extras**

Respondents seem satisfied with their compensation. In addition to a reasonable base salary, IC offers a “performance-based bonus.” Time on the job also comes with decent professional development opportunities. We’re told that IC boasts a “strong internal training program supported by external trainings.” Official trainings of “three to five days” occur once or twice a year, and there’s also plenty of on-the-job learning.
Ernst & Young

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LOCATIONS (AP)
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India
Indonesia
Japan
Korea
Malaysia
New Zealand
Pakistan
Philippines
Thailand
Vietnam

PRACTICE AREAS
Actuarial Services
Business Risk Services
Financial Services Risk Management
Fraud Investigation & Dispute Services
Technology & Security Risk Services

THE STATS
Employer Type: Private Company
CEO: James Turley
2007 Employees: 69,521 (assurance and advisory only)
2006 Employees: 63,475 (assurance and advisory only)
2007 Revenue: $14.5 billion (assurance and advisory only)
2006 Revenue: $12.18 billion (assurance and advisory only)
No. of Offices: Locations in 134 countries worldwide

PLUS
• The firm makes training a priority

MINUS
• Still building up the consulting practice in Asia Pacific

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.ey.com/global/content.nsf/International/Careers

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THE SCOOP

A tangled past

Ernst & Young is one of the oldest consulting firms around, with a history that winds its way back over 100 years. In 1903, two brothers, A.C. and Theodore Ernst started their own small accounting shop in Cleveland, Ohio, and called it Ernst & Ernst. Shift focus to Chicago in 1906 when Scotsman Arthur Young and his brother Stanley opened an accounting business known as Arthur Young & Company. Both the firms were pioneers in their own way: Ernst & Ernst claims to have been one of the first to operate under the idea that accounting information could help businesses make better management decisions—the precursor to management accounting—while Young became involved in developing young accountants and established a staff school in the 1920s. The following decade, his was the first firm to recruit from college campuses. In 1957, Ernst & Ernst merged with British firm Whinney Murray & Co. to become Ernst & Whinney. Finally, in 1989, Arthur Young and Ernst & Whinney joined forces, establishing Ernst & Young.

The firm divides its business among seven geographic areas: Americas; Northern Europe, Middle East, India and Africa; Central and Eastern Europe; Continental Western Europe; Far East; Oceania; and Japan. It serves clients through assurance and advisory, tax, transaction services, strategic growth markets and online services. From its advisory business, Ernst & Young offers a range of consulting services, including risk management, fraud and investigation. The firm’s specialty advisory services cover areas such as employee benefit plans, global treasury advisory, government contracts, health sciences, insurance and actuarial, national cash management and structured finance. In fiscal 2007, the firm posted $21.1 billion in revenue, representing a 15 percent increase over 2006. In terms of revenue, Ernst & Young is the third-largest of the Big Four—coming in just behind PricewaterhouseCoopers and Deloitte.

Back in the game

As one of the Big Four accounting firms, Ernst & Young is renowned for its corporate auditing, accounting and tax services. But it also operated in the management consulting realm until 2001, when it was forced to spin off its consulting practice. As a result of the Securities and Exchange Commission’s tightening of regulations governing auditors, Ernst & Young’s consulting business separated and became an independent company, taking on the name CapGemini.
After the firms’ five-year noncompete agreement came to an end, Ernst & Young began slowly rebuilding its advisory services. But by 2006, the firm was no longer quiet about re-entering the consulting game; in a 2006 *Consulting Times* article, Steve Varley, head of the advisory business, stated that he envisions Ernst & Young’s consulting practice as filling a gap in the market between strategy consulting and “tech play” firms. He indicated that this time around, Ernst & Young’s advisory services will be more integrated with the rest of the practice than the former consulting division had been. So far, the strategy seems to be working: In 2007, the assurance and advisory services brought in $14.5 billion in revenue—a 16 percent hike over the prior year.

**Asian focus**

Ernst & Young has increasingly been sinking its teeth into the booming Asian markets. In July 2007, the firm announced plans to broaden its M&A department in China and India over the next three years. Other Asian outposts, such as Australia, have also proven to be promising in the M&A arena. In 2007, revenue growth in the region was significant: The Middle East, India and Africa and Oceania regions each posted 16 percent growth, while Japan grew 21 percent and the Far East region grew 27 percent. The firm operates in 13 countries throughout Asia.

**Planting roots in China**

China has become increasingly important to the firm’s Asian strategy. In 2006, the firm announced its intention to invest $200 million in the country over the next few years, and plans to hire 25,000 employees there in the coming decade. The firm entered China in 2001 when it took over Dahua, a Shanghai-based accounting firm. Today Ernst & Young has 10 offices in major cities including Hong Kong, Macao, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Wuhan and Chengdu, and offers services to over 200 companies there. The firm’s audit and consulting services in the region have been expanding by over 30 percent annually for the past few years. David Sun, chairman of Ernst & Young China, said the company plans to set up more offices in mainland cities in the near future. The firm’s focus over the next few years will be recruiting to staff those new offices and forming ties with local partners to help develop its business.

In March 2008, Ernst & Young boosted its Beijing presence with a new telecommunications center. From the facility, consultants will offer a range of consulting services as well as tax, risk and advisory services to telecommunications companies throughout the country. This location joins Ernst & Young’s network of global telecom centers in Paris, San Antonio and Delhi. And in February 2008, as
# Fiducia Management Consultants

**LOCATIONS (AP)**

Hong Kong (HQ)
Beijing
Shanghai
Shenzhen

**PRACTICE AREAS**

Accounting & Controlling
Corporate Services & Advisory
Market Intelligence
Personnel
Strategy Development
Trade Support

## THE STATS

**Employer Type:** Private Company  
**Managing Director:** Jürgen Kracht  
**2007 Employees:** 100  
**2006 Employees:** 90  
**No. of Offices:** 4

## PLUSES

- “Quick development of skills”
- Strong camaraderie within the office
- “Managers and owners are always willing to consider something new or different”

## MINUSES

- “Small-firm remuneration and perks”
- “No ‘partner system’ since the company is family-owned”
- “Limitations to personal growth due to limited high-level training”

## EMPLOYMENT CONTACT

[www.fiducia-china.com/Company/Careers](http://www.fiducia-china.com/Company/Careers)

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THE SCOOP

From West to East

How did a German wind up founding a Chinese management consultancy? Jürgen Kracht completed his university studies in Bremen, Germany, and in 1970 took a position at Jebsen & Co., an international trading company with an office in Hong Kong. Over the next decade, Kracht immersed himself in Chinese investment and trade practices, eventually joining Continental Engineering (now Techtronic) in its Hong Kong office. There he served as finance director, overseeing the export of electronic consumer goods to Europe and the United States. In 1982, Kracht took everything he had learned about business in Greater China and founded Fiducia Management Consultants. His wife, Cynthia Kracht, a Malaysian national and legal executive, became the firm’s second director.

With just four offices—in Hong Kong, Beijing, Shenzhen and Shanghai—Fiducia remains small and private, operating under the motto, “Your Bridge to Doing Business in China.” Jürgen Kracht is the firm’s managing director, while Cynthia runs the corporate services department, which focuses on the incorporation of Hong Kong limited companies. A staff of approximately 100 consists of multilingual Chinese, American and European consultants, many of whom have experience in Europe or the United States as well as in Asia. In addition to his duties at Fiducia, Kracht has served as an investment promotion ambassador for the Hong Kong government since 2004. He’s also a board member of the Hong Kong Management Consultancy Association.

All in the family

Kracht left his job to launch Fiducia when he and Cynthia had two small children and one on the way (according to Cynthia, she supported the move, even though it meant her husband had to quit an established position with benefits). In 2007, Fiducia celebrated its 25th anniversary by coming full circle: The Krachts’ son Stefan was appointed head of the consulting department.

Stefan, who shuttles between the offices in Hong Kong and Shanghai, first joined the family business in 2005. He had previously been responsible for human resources, infrastructure and administration firmwide. Before taking post alongside his parents, Stefan spent two years at Bain & Company in London, and co-founded (and later sold) a Shanghai-based materials trading company.
“Establish the market size for specialty chemicals in China,” and “How many bottles of wine are consumed in Shanghai on a Friday night?”

OUR SURVEY SAYS

The Fiducia family

Sources insist that because the firm is “family-owned and managed,” the culture is distinctive. One says that what characterizes the work environment at Fiducia is a “very close-knit team with a family feel.” An associate relates, “At Fiducia, your colleagues quickly become your close friends. We have a wide range of personalities and backgrounds, yet everyone gets along well. Team building is considered an important responsibility of project leaders, and the workplace is kept free of politics.” Respondents tell us the “strong team spirit” endures even after employees have gone on to work somewhere else: “Our relations with alumni are amazing. Consultants who left years ago stay in touch and continue to join us in activities outside of work.”

Furthermore, close relationships carry over between junior staff and the firm’s management, we’re told. An insider insists that “supervisors are always approachable.” Reports also indicate that consultants get a good amount of direct exposure to clients. A staffer explains, “There is close contact with superiors and direct contact with clients, even when new to the firm. Our consultants develop skills at the most junior levels that others won’t even begin to work on for several years at other firms. These are some of the best things about the company.”

The lighter side of travel

Travel doesn’t seem to affect the life of these consultants as much as it might at other firms, though the amount of travel “depends on the projects the consultants are assigned to.” “I enjoy traveling and it has no harmful effects whatsoever,” says an insider. Another source qualifies, “We have less frequent travel than many other firms, but because we focus on industrials, you often end up going to hellholes.”

Some travel is actually desirable, though, according to one consultant: “For me, travel is still often the fun part of the assignment. It’s when a team gets a chance to bond and there is just something fun for me about interviewing senior decision-makers and inspecting factories. By the end of an assignment, I’m usually tired of the industry or the main focus cities, but there are always some surprises.”
Even keel

Because hours are relatively sane and travel is minimal, insiders say work/life balance falls into place. Asserts a source, “Fiducia employees maintain a lively after-work culture.” According to another, “Work/life balance isn’t such a serious problem at Fiducia. During critical project times, the hours can become a bit excessive, but overall, Fiducia is largely at the same levels as other firms. Overwork or doing work at the wrong time or in the wrong context is greatly discouraged.”

In addition, the firm tries to make work hours as pleasant as possible. “They bring in fresh fruit a couple times a week. It’s a small thing, but it does show consideration and effort. On the downside, eating McDonald’s because of deadlines is still too common in the office,” a respondent tells us. And insiders indicate that while hours might get tough sometimes, the firm is fairly understanding about taking time off. Notes one staffer, “For personal issues or family emergencies, Fiducia is quite accommodating.”

Loyalty bonus

Insiders give mediocre marks to their salary, noting that for new consultants, compensation tends to be under market value at first. “Salary varies greatly by position, experience and special skills, but is generally in line with industry. Starting salaries are low, but loyalty and performance are rewarded, which can quickly make up for this if you’re ambitious,” a manager explains. A colleague reports, “A loyalty bonus is given after two years with the company—you receive a special bonus that increases each year.”

The firm offers a few other perks like “birthday leave and special leave (compensating for work on weekends/public holiday),” as well as “small presents for birthdays, Christmas and Chinese New Year.”

More mentors needed

About the only thing Fiducia consultants aren’t too pleased with is the availability of official training. “Training can be improved,” a source states, and a colleague elaborates, “Training is mostly informal and done through a mix of project leaders and seniors. Formal training is minimal, for better or for worse.” Another insider confirms, “Most training is on the job and informal mentoring by direct supervisor.” A co-worker mentions that training may be lacking because of the “limited number of mentors” to go around, a fact attributable to the size of the firm. As one staffer explains, it’s difficult when there is no one to look out for junior staff’s training.
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LOCATIONS (AP)
Tokyo (HQ)  
Offices throughout 15 countries in Asia, Australia and New Zealand

PRACTICE AREAS
Application Consulting  
IT Consulting  
Knowledge Management  
Management Consulting  
Security Consulting

THE STATS
Employer Type: Public Company  
Ticker Symbol: 6702.T (Tokyo Stock Exchange)  
President & CEO: Hiroaki Kurokawa  
2007 Employees: 161,000  
2006 Employees: 158,000  
FY 2007 Revenue: $53 billion  
FY 2006 Revenue: $42.3 billion  
No. of Offices: Locations in over 60 countries

PLUSES
• Strong mentoring program  
• International opportunities

MINUSES
• Decentralized network  
• IT all the time

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.fujitsu.com/global/about/employment/asia
THE SCOOP

Bought and sold

Fujitsu Limited, which employs over 161,000 people worldwide, derives 75 percent of its revenue from Japan, China and the rest of the Asia Pacific region, including Australia and New Zealand. It is the world’s third-largest IT services provider (and the leader in Japan), and its clients include over half of the Fortune Global 500. Founded in 1935 as the Fuji Tsushinki Manufacturing Corporation, the firm was originally an offshoot of Fuji Electric’s communications division. After moving into telecommunications and computers, the company was renamed after an internal organization called Fujitsu Laboratories. It began offering business services, solutions and consulting (as well as high-tech electronics and multimedia products) in the 1990s.

All across Asia

Although Fujitsu Consulting is based in New Jersey and is officially organized as part of the company’s North American business, consulting staff can be found in Fujitsu offices throughout Asia as part of the company’s services division. Fujitsu Consulting also operates global delivery centers in India and Costa Rica. The Indian operation was purchased along with IT consulting firm Rapidigm in April 2006, a move that added 1,200 North American consultants and 900 Indian consultants to the Fujitsu payroll. According to Fujitsu, this was just the beginning of its expansion in India—the firm announced it would hire as many as 2,500 employees in the country in 2007 and 2008.

Fujitsu’s wide range of products and services are country-specific, and Asia-based consulting is provided in the firm’s offices in India, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan and Thailand. Consultants also work at the Fujitsu Research Institute, located in Tokyo near company headquarters. FRI, which was founded in 1986, is a for-profit think tank that conducts research in the software field of industry and technology, and advises clients on strategic information and communication technology. In 1996, FRI’s work expanded to include a nonprofit research center. In addition to providing consulting services to governments and industries, FRI makes its research and policy recommendations available to the general public.

Nation by nation

In Singapore, Fujitsu provides consulting in seven fields: enterprise value management, application package deployment, customer relationship management,
enterprise application integration, e-business, process management delivery services and IT return on investment. Each of these divisions draws heavily on research and thought leadership conducted by the Fujitsu Consulting subsidiary in North America; the Fujitsu Consulting Center for Strategic Leadership, based in New Jersey and headed by John Thorp, turns out books and white papers on these and other topics.

Indonesia’s offerings make a slightly shorter list—consulting in that country falls under the general category of professional services, which also includes project management, system integration, maintenance, training, and system design and development. In keeping with Fujitsu’s tech focus, Indonesian consultants primarily provide application design and development services.

Fujitsu Malaysia’s consulting emphasizes a blend of business and IT expertise, with a roster that includes ProcureMart EDI services, IT strategy, enterprise integration, application development and integration, and solutions integration. (Application development is a particular strength for Fujitsu, which has been manufacturing software for over two decades.) In Thailand, consulting offerings are grouped under a broad umbrella called solutions, the division responsible for IT, back-office, front-office and industry services. Many of these services are provided in conjunction with Glovia, a wholly owned Fujitsu subsidiary that makes and distributes enterprise applications.

Japanese consulting is based at the Fujitsu Research Center, which includes teams of consultants with both industry and functional expertise, including change management, multimedia marketing and new business development. Finally, Fujitsu India offers a slew of business and consulting services, including the busy call center facilities brought into the fold with the Rapidigm purchase. It also provides business process outsourcing, application services, supply chain management, content management, enterprise compliance management, resource planning and risk management.

We’ll take it!

Judging by its purchasing habits recently, Fujitsu Ltd. seems determined to ramp up its professional services and solutions businesses. In September 2007, Fujitsu Consulting acquired OKERE, a privately held, New York City-based consulting and IT services company. The acquisition will form the basis of a new business unit that will provide a range of consulting, implementation and management services.

In May 2006, Fujitsu Consulting snapped up M3K, a Quebec City-based risk management consultancy owned by Amadeus International. Just a few months
Fusion Consulting

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LOCATIONS (AP)
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PRACTICE AREAS
Business Expansion Strategy
Commercial Due Diligence
Competitive Intelligence
Customer Intelligence
M&A Target Identification & Evaluation
Market Entry Strategy
Market Monitoring
Market Profiles
Market Sizing & Modeling
Partner Selection
Value Chain & Procurement Intelligence

THE STATS
Employer Type: Private Company
Directors: Peter Read & Marine Mallinson
2008 Employees: 60 + *
2007 Employees: 50 + *
No. of Offices: 3
*Includes both full-time and full-time equivalent project consultants

PLUSES
• “Haven’t sensed any politics or other funny stuff like that”
• Autonomy and freedom to pursue areas of personal interest
• “Your opinion is actively solicited in all important firm matters”

MINUSES
• “I suspect the monetary compensation is on the low side for a consulting firm”
• “The low walls in an open space, which can be distracting when you are doing your work”
• Limited training

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.fusionc.com/career.htm
E-mail: opportunity@fusionc.com
THE SCOOP

On the ground

Fusion Consulting is a business research and strategy consulting firm specializing in the Asia Pacific region. From its three hub offices in Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai, Fusion operates under a unique operating model, coordinating over 700 freelance industry consultants and domain experts living and working in 16 countries throughout the region. In-house staff and project managers at the hub offices build and coordinate local freelance teams for each project. Fusion says this system winds up being more efficient and cost-effective than the traditional model of sending full-time employees into countries where they might face steep learning curves, including language barriers and cultural differences. “Strategy from business intelligence” is the Fusion motto, pointing to its research-heavy services—market analysis and consulting, customer and industry analysis, value chain and procurement consulting, expansion strategy, partner selection, and M&A target identification and evaluation.

Do these approaches work? Fusion’s multinational and regional Asian clients seem to think so. Since its start in 2002, Fusion has conducted assignments in Asia for companies like American Express, Nokia, Hitachi, Unilever, Symphony Capital, BASF and Disney. Most of the firm’s consultants work in one of eight industry practices: chemicals, consumer and retail, financial services, industrial and logistics, infocom technology, life science, private equity, and media and leisure.

Practicing what they preach

In 2005, Fusion conducted a sweeping study of how the largest public and private enterprises in Asia Pacific make use of business intelligence in their strategic planning. According to the findings, China’s largest corporations were more interested in macroeconomic business trends than in tactical market research. At the time of the study, Fusion calculated that the Chinese business research and consulting industry—which got its start in the late 1990s—was worth about $800 million dollars, and growing at an annual rate of 20 percent.

To take advantage of those numbers, and to capitalize on China’s proven need for more competitive insight, market forecasting and strategic insights, Fusion promptly expanded its network of offices to include Shanghai. The Shanghai office, headed by Jennifer Ding, opened in late 2005. Ding is a veteran business intelligence consultant with over a decade of experience advising clients like Heinz, DuPont, Sony, HSBC and Philips on their market expansion in China and, more broadly, Asia.
The China team

Fusion’s freelance network includes research consultants, domain experts (consultants with expertise in a particular technology or industry) and senior consultants (who handle C-level interactions). Over 100 Fusion freelancers are based in China, serving clients like Intel, Motorola, Corning, LexisNexis and others. The China practice—which is considered one of the firm’s “specialist practices,” separate from but related to its industry practices—is based in Shanghai. Typical assignments for the China practice group might include analyzing customer behavior in lesser-known second- and third-tier cities, developing market-entry strategies, identifying and evaluating potential joint venture or acquisition targets, and applying supply chain best practices to get around local infrastructure and cultural challenges.

A helping hand

Another firmwide specialist group is the partner business practice (that’s Fusion’s term for outsourced business research). This practice serves three kinds of clients: competitive intelligence firms, management consulting and market research companies. Fusion’s competitive intelligence and business research clients—most of whom hail from Europe or the United States—subcontract their Asia research projects to Fusion. These deals are handled in total confidentiality; most of the time, Fusion’s teams don’t even know their client’s identity. This division also helps Japanese and other Asian business intelligence companies complete their research in the West and elsewhere in Asia.

Management consultants in Asia, Europe and North America turn to Fusion for help with market research and analysis in the region. According to Fusion, this service can be particularly useful for consultancies that lack in-house research centers or a local presence in Asia. Finally, Fusion says it can give market research companies a competitive edge by bringing strategic and analytical skills to the table, and providing targeted business-to-business interviewing, supply-side and expert interviewing, in-depth desk research, mystery shopping, industry analysis and strategic modeling.

Growth, indexed

Fusion’s trademarked Asia Pacific Business Vitality Index™ reports calculate growth and expansion for selected industries in the Asia Pacific region. By measuring major companies’ presence and growth, both physical and financial, the index provides a thorough overview of the companies’ success (or lack thereof) in Asia, as well as their relative ranking within an industry sector. These reports are regularly featured
in Asia Inc. magazine, and selected information is available on Fusion’s web site. Recent index reports have covered the retail, chemical, logistics and food and beverage sectors.

Fusion also releases industry white papers with titles like “Merging With the Mainland: China’s M&A Opportunities,” “China’s Personal Care, Cosmetics and Toiletries Industry” and “The Future of Renewable Energy in Asia-Pacific.”

**Fully networked**

Fusion is a member of the Global Intelligence Alliance, a worldwide network of market intelligence firms. Thanks to GIA, the firm is connected to partners in Europe, North America, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, and can team up with them on cross-border or international research projects. As a member of the GIA, Fusion can offer its market-monitoring clients access to Intelligence Plaza, a web-based intelligence software application that automates market intelligence, tracking and alerts.

Fusion also maintains membership in the Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals and ESOMAR, an international organization dedicated to promoting the value of market and opinion research.

**GETTING HIRED**

**Focus on the “total person”**

Fusion’s new recruits hail from “many of the top universities in Asia and the rest of world,” including HKUST, Shanghai Jiaotong and the National University of Singapore.

The interview process usually consists of three to four rounds with several different people at the firm. “The first round is taken by answering questions and doing a case study through e-mail,” a source explains. The following rounds focus on getting to know the candidate using “intense role playing” and “various tests on analytical, problem solving, people management skills and personality/character assessments.” Another insider states, “I had an interview with a manager and a peer, then a second interview with a director and two or three others, which included on-the-spot cases and role play.” One colleague declares, “It’s quite different from the norm, and [they] focus on fleshing out your ‘total person,’ not just desirable skills and qualities every firm wants, like initiative, analytical skills, etc.” For example, a source points out
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Phone: +91 120 253 5071
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www.hcltech.com

LOCATIONS (AP)
Noida (Global HQ)
Australia
Hong Kong
India
Japan
Malaysia
New Zealand
Singapore

PRACTICE AREAS
Business Process Outsourcing
Custom Application
Enterprise Application
Enterprise Transformation
IT Infrastructure Management
R&D & Technology Services

THE STATS
Employer Type: Public Company
Ticker Symbol: HCLTECH (NSE), 532281 (BSE)
Chairman: Shiv Nadar
CEO: Vineet Nayar
2008 Employees: 49,238
2007 Employees: 42,017
2007 Revenue: $1.39 billion
2006 Revenue: $976 million
No. of Offices: Offices in 18 countries worldwide

PLUS
• “Ownership mentality”

MINUS
• Strictly tech-focused consulting

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.hcltech.com/careers

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING

• “Great future”
• “Underscoped/overworked”
• “Good work”
• “Lower salary”
THE SCOOP

Six friends, one enterprise

Founded in 1976, HCL Technologies was one of India’s first IT “garage startups,” an enterprise created by six ambitious friends. Shiv Nadar, chairman and chief strategy officer, was one of the firm’s co-founders; he grew up in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu and earned an engineering degree at a regional college. He made his first trip to a big city after graduation when he landed a job at a Delhi textile mill. There, Nadar met five other young engineers, with whom he developed the idea of going into some sort of digital business. They began by setting up a calculator distribution firm, which soon became Hindustan Computers Limited (HCL). The six men used all their savings, about $165,000 total, to get the company off the ground. They also persuaded the government of Uttar Pradesh to chip in as a 26 percent equity partner, a move that helped the fledgling company sidestep some of the tough import restrictions and government regulations of the time. In 1978—the same year Apple showcased its computer in the American market—HCL unveiled India’s first domestically made microcomputer.

By the 1980s, HCL had become the largest IT company in India. Hewlett-Packard hired it to develop a microprocessor, which opened the doors to contract R&D assignments, and HCL later signed distribution contracts with Ericsson and Nokia. In 1997, Nadar reorganized the company, separating HCL’s hardware and R&D divisions into separate firms under one holding company, HCL Enterprise. Today, HCL Infosystems makes and sells hardware only inside India. It’s led by Ajai Chowdhry, one of HCL’s six original founders. HCL Technologies, meanwhile, has become a global software services company with $1.39 billion in annual revenue in fiscal year 2007. Nadar led HCL Tech’s successful 1999 IPO and continued to head up the company until October 2007, when he stepped down as CEO. Vineet Nayar, who had served as president of the firm since 2005, assumed the CEO position.

Several firsts

HCL has offices in Europe, the United States and throughout Asia Pacific, but its heart remains in India. Its headquarters resides in Noida, a suburb of Delhi, and it has 43 offices and service centers across the country. HCL’s partnerships with Oracle, SAP, Intel, JDA, KANA and Microsoft date back to India’s first years in the technology industry. In India, the majority of HCL’s clients come from the banking and finance, retail and consumer goods, and government sectors.
Spartan aircraft for Italian giant Alenia Aeronautica. Thanks to the recent boom in contracts, in June 2007, the firm announced plans to spend $150 million to build new centers and expand its capacity. Nayar also stated that the firm intends to add 25,000 new hires by the end of fiscal year 2008.

GETTING HIRED

A full recruiting calendar

HCL has a very active campus recruiting program throughout India. Among the universities where the firm participates in recruiting are the Delhi College of Engineering, Delhi University, Harcourt Butler Technological Institute, the National Institute of Industrial Engineering, the Faculty of Management Studies and the Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management in Mumbai. A complete list of recruiting events is maintained on the careers page of the firm’s web site. Candidates are also invited to register online, create a profile and search for jobs through the site’s database.

The interview process consists of three rounds that take place on campus and in the firm’s offices. According to an insider, “There is a written test for freshers, but for experienced candidates there are only technical interviews.” One source calls interviewing with HCL a “great experience.”

The journey to enlightenment

HCL claims that instead of a “factory-like approach” to employees, it places a “focus on the individual”—it tries to encourage personal growth throughout each new hire’s career. The firm’s “fivefold path to individual enlightenment” emphasizes five elements—support, knowledge, recognition, empowerment and transformation—that HCL believes will allow each employee to fully develop his/her talent. These values are all part of the strategy to help consultants find the best career track for themselves.

A source tells us that all this contributes to a positive culture at HCL: “There is freedom in work and decisions, teamwork and great learning opportunities.”
KPMG International

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LOCATIONS (AP)
New York (HQ)
Member firms in over 20 countries throughout Asia Pacific

PRACTICE AREAS
Accounting Advisory
Business Performance Services
Corporate Finance
Financial Risk Management
Forensic
Internal Audit Services
IT Advisory
Restructuring
Transaction Services

THE STATS
Employer Type: Private Company
CEO, KPMG International: Michael P. Wareing
Chairman, KPMG Asia Pacific: John B. Harrison
2007 Employees: 130,000+
2006 Employees: 113,000+
2007 Revenue: $19.8 billion
2006 Revenue: $16.9 billion
No. of Offices: Member firms in 145 countries worldwide

PLUSES
• “Clear career path”
• “I learned to develop my people management skills”
• “You’re not doing the same thing every day”
• Diverse pool of clients

MINUSES
• “Too many clients to satisfy and not enough resources”
• “Confusion between firm’s written regulations and actual practices in working”
• “The amount of time and effort you put into the job does not match the compensation and benefits package”
• Insufficient training and coaching

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING
• “Very strong reputation in research and publications”
• “Dull”
• “Increasing focus away from accounting”
• “Number crunchers”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.kpmg.com/careers

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GETTING HIRED

The recruiting ropes

KPMG participates in plenty of campus recruiting events at “all major universities” throughout Asia. In Australia, Melbourne University, Macquarie, Sydney and University of New South Wales are on the recruiting list. Thammasat and Chulalongkorn University are just a couple of schools from which the Thailand offices draw applicants.

The interview process varies slightly in each office, but generally candidates will face three interviews and an aptitude test. Explains one source, “We have an assessment center to recruit staff, where we will allow the applicants to make and join a presentation discussion, take an academic written test and interview.”

Tell me your strengths

Though the firm does not require a finance or accounting degree to get hired, it does seek candidates who are both verbal and math-savvy. For those who want to brush up on those skills for the interview, the KPMG web site offers online samples of typical numeric and verbal reasoning questions. Sources tell us there are usually no trick questions or case studies in the interviews, but candidates should expect to discuss things like “challenges in your previous work” or “your strengths and weaknesses.”

Most KPMG Asia Pacific offices welcome candidates from any country to apply, however oral and written English skills are a requirement in all locations. In some offices, interviews are conducted in the country’s native language as well as in English. Overall, KPMG is looking for well-rounded individuals with a strong record of academic achievement and involvement in outside interests. The consulting practices normally require applicants to have an MBA and some applicable experience, but each office details its own prerequisites.

International internships

KPMG also accepts applications for internships, but each country’s routine is different. For offices in Malaysia, students who are available during the peak period—from November to May—have a better chance of getting an internship. In the People’s Republic of China and Hong Kong, the firm welcomes students in their penultimate study year for four-week internship terms during July and August.
internship candidates, according to the firm, are team players who communicate well and know how to work through obstacles.

**Growth is key**

Once consultants join KPMG, they take part in a six-week START program, to help “smooth over the transition from student to professional.” Some offices also allow consultants a chance to participate in the “national mobility program,” which allows staff to jump between KPMG offices in various countries throughout Asia.

KPMG emphasizes that its culture supports learning and development opportunities designed to help consultants progress along a career path. New hires benefit from in-house training programs, including management and leadership skills, technical and industry training, awareness seminars and e-learning programs. The firm also has a formal mentorship program, which assigns mentors to help consultants monitor their progress. For those who excel in their work, KPMG offers the opportunity to transfer or rotate to another office, either domestically or internationally.

**OUR SURVEY SAYS**

**Camaraderie missing**

Insiders suggest that, overall, KPMG has a “good working environment,” although one source notes that the “pressure can be great at times.” A colleague states, “Mostly, I like my firm culture, except for the fact that everyone doesn’t always share information and opinions.” Another insider senses a lack of camaraderie among his co-workers, stating, “Office politics rule when there is a lack of adherence to a commonality in purpose and thought.”

The open-office plan that can be found in many KPMG offices doesn’t add to the atmosphere, either. “I find the open plans to be inefficient. It’s too loud and distracting to complete your work,” an insider claims. A source in Bangkok says his office “is satisfactory to me, except for the loud and noisy environment, especially if there is a long lecture that my colleague makes to her subordinates or a long telephone conversation with clients—since there is no barrier or wall between me and my colleague.”
Find your own way

According to reports, work/life balance is not exactly at the top of KPMG’s priority list. “It’s very difficult, given clients’ expectations and demands,” a source reports. “Management expects more output than there is time and manpower for, which does not allow a lot of time for personal activities,” explains an insider. A colleague moans, “I am not able to balance work and life, because my request for vacation leave is rarely allowed by my supervisor.” But a source suggests that balance is a matter of learning to manage your own time more effectively: “There is time in between projects—I just need to be able to schedule my own time adequately.”

That said, most sources are pleased with their travel requirements. “At the moment, it’s minimal. Being in Kuala Lumpur, the commercial center where most of our clients are, limits long-distance travel,” notes a staffer. For another, travel wouldn’t be such a bad thing: “I’m flexible to travel, and traveling causes no negative effect on my family.” An associate director explains that travel is “entirely project-dependent,” while a principal in Hong Kong says consultants can take control over their own travel demands, stating that travel “varies by individual preference.”

A charitable bunch

The firm’s Asia Pacific offices are reportedly doing a great job of giving back to their local community. Remarks a source, “Yes, my firm always contributes to charities and community in terms of donating computers and doing activities for society.” A colleague claims his office has a “community day once a year with greening activities, charity work and the like.” In the Sydney location, associates participate in “pro bono services, sponsorship to university students under poverty, SIFE and Operation Smile.” Boasts one insider, “We are extremely responsible in society and charitable activities. I’m proud of the firm’s involvement.”
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LOCATIONS (AP)
Melbourne (HQ)
Brisbane
Canberra
Hyderabad
Sydney

PRACTICE AREAS
Assurance & Risk Management Consulting
Enterprise Strategy & Architecture
Financial Management Consulting
Management Consulting

THE STATS
Employer Type: Public Company
Ticker Symbol: OKN (ASX)
Managing Director & CEO: Neil Wilson
2007 Employees: 1,003
2006 Employees: 650
2007 Revenue: $95.6 million
2006 Revenue: $63.9 million
No. of Offices: 5

PLUS
• Company is on a strong growth trajectory

MINUS
• Little name recognition outside of Australia

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
THE SCOOP

Tops Down Under

Founded in 1988, Oakton has become one of Australia’s top technology and business consulting companies, with over 1,000 employees and five offices worldwide. Although many multinational consultancies have set up shop in Australia and New Zealand, Oakton says it’s not competing on their turf—instead of offering as many different services as possible, Oakton emphasizes its focused service expertise within the domains of business systems consulting, delivery and operations services. In addition to its business consulting, financial management and assurance services, the firm provides specialist end-to-end IT services to plan, deliver and operate business systems. There are no products like hardware or network solutions for sale at Oakton; for those needs, the firm turns to its partner network of global and local product companies.

There are three main lines of business at Oakton: consulting, delivery services and operational services. The consulting division provides enterprise strategy and architecture (including business process management, IT strategy and IT management consulting); assurance and risk management (including audits and IT security); financial management consulting (with services for business improvement, corporate government, accounting, reporting and costing); and management consulting (such as strategic sourcing and organizational transformation). The firm serves a wide range of industry sectors, as well as federal, state and territory governments.

Buy ‘em

Since making its debut on the Australian Stock Exchange in June 2000, Oakton has grown steadily through a series of strategic acquisitions. Its first buy was Melbourne-based Frontline Consulting, an Oracle e-business services firm. From 2000 to 2006, Oakton swallowed five more business solutions and information management firms, including Melbourne’s Charter Wilson, Aston IT Group and Clickstream. It also acquired Sydney-based mPower, another Oracle services company, and the Australian arm of U.S.-based Tier Technologies.

In June 2007, Oakton finalized one of its biggest acquisitions yet: the purchase of IT solutions provider Acumen Alliance. One of Australia’s largest privately owned consultancies, Acumen’s network covered New South Wales, Victoria, Canberra and Queensland. Its presence in Canberra was especially strong—the Australian federal government was always its biggest client, contributing approximately 50 percent of
Opera Solutions

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LOCATIONS (AP)
New York (HQ)
Delhi
Shanghai

PRACTICE AREAS
Collaborative Re-Engineering
Customer Loyalty & Product Innovation
Growth Analytics
Investment Governance
Outsourcing & Offshoring
Procurement Optimization

THE STATS
Employer Type: Private Company
Chief Operating Officer: Peter Cummings
2008 Employees: 350
2007 Employees: 250
No. of Offices: 7

PLUSES
• “Multicultural teams (22+ nationalities in 250+ people)”
• International/overseas exposure
• Promotions not based on tenure or seniority
• “Emphasis on individual development”

MINUSES
• “Have to act on very short notice”
• “Long stints away from home”
• Limits and unstructured ways of a startup
• “Lack of exposure to all industries”

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
Maria Pugliese
Human Resources
recruiting@operasolutions.com
Solutions, stat

New York-based Opera Solutions is a consulting firm with a very specific mission: to provide rapid profit improvement to clients in data-rich industries. Founded by some of the same people who launched management consultancy Mitchell Madison Group, Opera’s fast-track solutions involve rigorous analysis, hypothesis development, testing and, finally, implementation of strategic recommendations.

Since the firm was established in late 2003, Opera has grown to include offices in Shanghai, New Delhi, London, Paris and County Clare, Ireland. Its team includes individuals with backgrounds in operating line management, business turnaround, private equity, analytics and consulting at the senior partner level in Fortune 500 firms around the world. Opera’s primary industry sector is financial services, but it also serves clients in retail, consumer products, telecommunications, media and other industries.

How it works

Opera’s focus on rapid profit improvement is unique, but according to the firm, there’s another big difference when compared to the competition. While other consultancies tend to tell clients what to do, at Opera the emphasis is on showing clients how to do it. The firm’s specialty is in operational transformation and growth—but selective growth, with solutions targeted at areas where change can really make a difference. In other words, Opera’s ideas aren’t about growth for the sake of growth.

Apart from the five practice areas, growth analytics is one key focus area for the firm. In this division, Opera consultants (known around the office as Operaites) use specialized approaches and proprietary techniques to derive insights from data provided by clients across customers, regions, businesses and other factors. In sequential order, these techniques are: business problem diagnostics, hypothesis formation, insight generalization, strategy recommendations and management execution. Each phase entails plenty of micro-level analysis—developing analytical approaches, data acquisition, profiling, segmenting and modeling, and validating and simulating.

For most Opera clients, the analytics approach results in one of three payoffs: customized solutions, modular customer analytics platforms and extended enterprise. Customized solutions are data-based solutions drawn up by Opera’s consultants and
manpower, statistics and computer science, while other, more specialized personnel, are focused on data analytics, using tools like SAS, NeuralWare and MARS. These offices also focus on applying analytical and modeling techniques to direct marketing and risk management functions. Opera follows a global staffing model—consultants of all capabilities and expertise are staffed on a rotating basis around the world to ensure maximum experience and exposure.

Don Yan, managing director and head of Opera’s global growth analytics practice, is also the managing director of Opera Solutions Shanghai. Yan has over a decade of experience advising Fortune 100 clients on growth through the integration of strategy and analytics. Before joining Opera, Yan co-founded boutique strategy consultancy Inductis. He also helped create Mitchell Madison Group’s pricing and product design practice, and earlier in his career worked as a manager at AT&T/Bell Labs.

**Consultant exchange program**

As part of their work at Opera, consultants based in Shanghai are given the opportunity to spend a portion of each year working on site with clients, often in the United States and Europe. While living and working in America, Shanghai-based Operaites work at client locations in Chicago, San Francisco, New York City and elsewhere. The firm says this experience allows its staff to learn more about the art of consulting and client interaction, in addition to the science of its data-heavy analytical approaches. Opera’s on-site projects are intended to help consultants build professional business relationships, develop oral and written presentation skills, and gain direct insights into the inner workings of major corporations.

**GETTING HIRED**

**A numbers game**

Insiders say the hiring process at Opera Solutions tends to start with a phone interview, followed by two rounds of face-to-face interviews. There’s a fair amount of competition for positions—a source estimates the firm receives “4,000-plus resumes, and schedules 500-plus phone interviews and 200-plus in-person interviews.” Interviews cover both “personal questions and business cases,” and may include an “analytical problem-solving test or brainteaser.” A slew of “mathematical problems” are also likely.

Case questions cover the “usual consulting stuff.” For example, a recent hire explains, “The firm has asked case questions about a U.S.-based pharmaceutical company...”
major who wants to enter the Indian market. The firm has its manufacturing units in
the U.S., and there is data provided about the market scenario in India. The
interviewee has to assess if it’s profitable for the company to enter the Indian market,
should it have factories in India or transport products from the U.S., and which
product portfolio should it consider (all based on data provided).” A colleague gives
another example: “One hundred people are waiting to board with their seat number.
Every person should sit in his own seat, but the first person doesn’t know and just sits
randomly. For the rest of the people, if their seat is occupied, they will sit randomly
too. Question: What is the probability that the 100th person will sit in his own seat?”
Yet another might be, “How many people are flying on the plane above China right
now?”

Opera Solutions recruits at the top business and engineering schools in India, and “at
top-10 universities in China.” The firm also participates in the regular recruitment
cycle in U.S. and Europe, and scouts for recruits at Columbia, Tuck, Wharton,
Chicago Business School, Dartmouth, Cornell, INSEAD and others.

OUR SURVEY SAYS

Daring to be different

An analytics specialist notes that Opera Solutions is “very different from traditional
strategic consulting firms” in that it focuses largely on “data analysis and data
mining.” A colleague adds that in this way, the firm can “ensure rapid profit
improvement and often achieve more results than promised on a gain-share basis.”

Insiders praise the firm’s “performance-based” and “extremely entrepreneurial
culture” that offers “lots of opportunities to express our ideas.” The people are
“smart and energetic,” and they bond over company-sponsored social activities, such
as “weekend sports events and birthday parties every month.” While the firm is
“small and informal,” it still “offers good international travel and consulting
engagements” and has “huge potential to grow.” In addition, Opera makes an effort
“to recruit different people.” In fact, many staffers say one of the biggest pluses at
the firm is that it is a “very global company” with a “multicultural environment.”
The firm also emphasizes cultural diversity, and “promotes a healthy atmosphere for
gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals, although there is no formal club
or society for the same.”
Patni Computer Systems Ltd.

**THE STATS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer Type: Public Company</th>
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<td><strong>Ticker Symbol:</strong> PATNI COMPUT</td>
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<td>(BSE), PATNI (NSE), PTI (NYSE)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Chairman &amp; CEO:</strong> Narendra K. Patni</td>
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<td><strong>2007 Employees:</strong> 14,945</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2006 Employees:</strong> 12,804</td>
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<td><strong>2007 Revenue:</strong> $663 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2006 Revenue:</strong> $579 million</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No. of Offices:</strong> 22 sales offices across the Americas, Europe and Asia Pacific, and 20 global delivery centers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LOCATIONS (AP)**

- Mumbai (HQ)
- Bangalore
- Dubai
- Melbourne
- Shanghai
- Sydney
- Tokyo

Global delivery centers in Bangalore, Chennai, Gandhinagar, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Noida and Pune

**PRACTICE AREAS**

- Application Development & Maintenance
- CIS & BPO
- Customer Dynamics & Intelligence
- Engineering Design & Embedded Services
- Enterprise Application Solutions
- Infrastructure Management Services
- Production Support
- V&V Testing & Process Consulting Services

**PLUSES**

- Focus on performance management and employee development
- Strong, team-based culture

**MINUSES**

- Highly competitive environment
- Consultants must be constantly proactive

**EMPLOYMENT CONTACT**

THE SCOOP

New leaders, bigger numbers

The second half of 2006 saw changes afoot at Mumbai-based Patni Computer Systems Ltd. Most significantly, the firm appointed its first chief operating officer, opening the door for Mrinal Sattawala, a 20-year Patni veteran. Sattawala, who had previously served on the firm’s management team, was handed a slew of oversight responsibilities, including global sales and marketing, sales and regional operations in Europe and Asia, and all business unit operations. Patni’s CFO, Deepack Sogani, also announced his departure in 2006. Appointed to succeed him was Surjeet Singh, the head of mergers and acquisitions at Patni. Prior to joining Patni, he was the CFO and co-founder of Cymbal Corporation—which has since merged with Patni.

Despite these transitions, Patni—India’s sixth-largest software services exporter—headed into 2007 on a high note. Patni’s revenue for 2007 was up 14.5 percent to $662.9 million; with 77.9 percent of that total generated in the U.S. Europe is the company’s second-largest geographic segment, accounting for 14.7 percent of annual revenue in 2007. Japan and Asia Pacific bring up the rear with 3 percent and 2.7 percent, respectively. The remaining revenue is generated by the company’s activity elsewhere in the world. One hundred nineteen new clients were added in 2007, bringing the total client roster to 318, and the number of million-dollar accounts hit 84. Repeat business accounted for just over 92 percent of total engagements.

Business starts at home

After graduating from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and spending a few years working for Forrester Consulting Group, Narendra Patni decided to go into business for himself. His eponymous firm opened in 1972 in his third-floor apartment in Cambridge, Massachusetts. At the time, the company consisted of two employees, Patni and his wife, Poonam. The couple had conceived of one of the earliest offshore business models, and they began testing their ideas at home; they used their living room to represent the United States, where they wrote out instructions to convert data from paper documents to computer files. A group of MIT students worked in the Patni’s bedroom (“India”), entering data into a Flexowriter paper tape machine. This rudimentary data-conversion process was the beginning of a global business, and eventually the Patnis returned to India to establish a real headquarters—separate from their living space—in Mumbai. There, they were joined by Narendra’s brothers, Gajendra and Ashok, who today own significant stakes in the firm.
LOCATIONS (AP)
New York (HQ)
Extensive network of member firms in Asia Pacific, including Australia, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Jakarta, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tahiti, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam

PRACTICE AREAS
Advisory
Assurance
Tax

THE STATS
Employer Type: Private Company
2007 Employees: 146,000 +
2006 Employees: 142,162
2007 Revenue: $25.2 billion
2006 Revenue: $22 billion
No. of Offices: 766 offices in 150 countries worldwide

PLUSES
• “Good training”
• “Outstanding peers, great culture”

MINUSES
• “Performance is fitted to a bell curve”
• Consultants are always in the field

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
Follow the careers link at www.pwc.com for country-by-country contacts

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING
• “Very strong reputation”
• “Fragmented”
• “Very professional and good methodology”
• “Needs to catch up”
THE SCOOP

Big bang

In 1998, accounting giants Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand merged, creating the world’s largest accounting network and a mouthful of a name—PricewaterhouseCoopers International Limited. Just four years later, PricewaterhouseCoopers sold its successful IT consulting division to IBM, but the move did not hurt its business or revenue.

PricewaterhouseCoopers is structured as a network of member firms, connected under the PricewaterhouseCoopers International Limited umbrella. Each member firm operates locally in its home country and region, but there’s plenty of inter-network collaboration and cooperation, which strengthens each individual firm. The menu of services offered at each firm varies from country to country, but the typical PricewaterhouseCoopers member’s business lines include industry-focused assurance, tax and advisory services. The global network of firms’ independent-but-connected structure has helped it build a robust accounting practice that is recognized internationally (in most countries, the right to practice accountancy is only granted to national firms owned or controlled by local professional staff). Advisory and consulting services have been increasingly important to PricewaterhouseCoopers, whose member firms provide crisis management, performance improvement consulting, human resources solutions, business recovery, capital markets support and sustainable business solutions.

Everywhere you are

In Asia Pacific, PricewaterhouseCoopers has member firms based in Australia, India, Jakarta, Japan, Korea, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Laos, Tahiti, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines. The global network of firms also has a presence in Melanesia, with member firms in New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea, and in the central Asian states of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Major Asia-based clients have included Sony, Samsung, Nippon Telegraph & Telephone Corporation, Toyota, Nokia and China Life Insurance.

Worldwide, the PricewaterhouseCoopers network employs over 146,000 people—about 16 percent of whom are based in Asia, with an additional 5 percent in Australasia and the Pacific Islands. In 2007, PwC’s Asia firms saw their revenue rise almost 19 percent over the previous year, posting $2.49 billion. Business in Australasia and the Pacific jumped 10 percent, bringing in $1 billion. Geographically
GETTING HIRED

Exams at the workplace

Hopeful candidates should be prepared for a “rigorous” and “demanding” hiring process at any of the PricewaterhouseCoopers global network firms. Insiders say “HR conducts the necessary preliminary interviews,” as well as some additional “examinations.” One recent hire describes that the first interview “is very critical,” with questions covering “leadership, time management and prolonged hours of work.” Follow-up interviews are generally with “a manager or a partner.”

Job openings are posted on the firm’s web site, although the application process varies by location, and interested candidates must select from the 150 countries in which the PricewaterhouseCoopers network operates to view specific details. PricewaterhouseCoopers China also recruits at “prestigious schools” across the Asia Pacific region.

OUR SURVEY SAYS

Flexibility means more fun

Opinions are mixed regarding quality of life at PricewaterhouseCoopers. On the positive side, one partner declares in no uncertain terms that the best part of being with the firm is “working for the undisputed marketplace leader.” Others say the firm is “open and fun” with lots of “camaraderie among outstanding peers.” There is “challenging and important work” to be done, and consultants are given a framework of “flexible work arrangements.” Happier staffers tend to report 45- to 50-hour workweeks and just a handful of weekends spent in the office per year, and claim the firm straddles a positive line between being “relaxed” and also being “high performance.” A longtimer in New Zealand describes the culture as “both performance-oriented as well as supportive.” Another comments, “The management in our firm endeavors to give us a working environment with a balance of work and family life.” And a staffer in Sydney explains that, in an effort to achieve that balance, “PwC has a specific work/life program called Equilibrium.”

Others, finding their workloads to be heavier, feel that work/life balance is difficult to achieve. A new hire in the Philippines notes that, “compared to the other auditing firms here ... the culture in PwC is better,” but adds, “that does not mean that the culture here is very pleasant.” Working 20 weekends a year means that, for this consultant, “As much as we want to have a work/life balance, it’s just not possible!”

Visit the Vault Asia Career Channel at www.vault.com/asia – with insider firm profiles, message boards, the Vault Asia Job Board and more.
Others report similarly heavy schedules, with weeks of over 60 hours making balance difficult to achieve.

**Travel perspectives**

The mixed reviews continue when it comes to both travel and salaries. A senior manager happily reports that travel is kept to a minimum: “We normally stay at the office to work. Travels are for training only.” Colleagues add that “travel is reasonable” and “no problem,” with no more than two days spent on the road per week. But some face heavier travel demands: An associate states, “We are always in the field, even on weekends,” and others claim that their “personal life is impacted” by journeys away from home.

There’s also some disagreement when it comes to compensation. A number of consultants are satisfied with their salary, with one source in Auckland claiming that compensation is “by far the highest in the market.” A cohort in the Philippines, however, feels that salary “is way too far from the salaries of competitor firms.” Perks come in the form of profit sharing, a “car loan” and “gasoline allowance.”

**Coming to a consensus**

PricewaterhouseCoopers employees throughout the network of firms agree that their firm is on top of training, and feel it’s a good thing that “we are required to attend a lot of trainings.” In 2007, the mainland China/Hong Kong firm invested over one million hours in staff training, and the firm notes that its investment in training grows each year. Each consultant averages around 100 hours of training per year.

PricewaterhouseCoopers also gets high marks for diversity and for being “active” in the community through “a formal community foundation that provides community support in educational and philanthropic activities.” In fiscal 2007, the network firms contributed an estimated 217,600 hours of volunteer work globally, and donated more than $33 million to the not-for-profit sector. That same year, the network firms provided 150,000 hours of free or heavily discounted professional services.
SMS Management & Technology Limited

LOCATIONS (AP)
Melbourne (HQ)
Brisbane
Canberra
Mackay
Mawson Lakes
Singapore
Sydney

THE STATS
Employer Type: Public Company
Ticker Symbol: SMX (ASX)
CEO & Executive Director: Thomas Stianos
2008 Employees: 1,300+
2007 Employees: 1,180
2007 Revenue: $144.8 million
2006 Revenue: $105.3 million
No. of Offices: 8

PLUS
• Consultants are given a great deal of responsibility

MINUS
• Little opportunity for recent grads

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
smsmt.com/Join-SMS.aspx

THE BUZZ
WHAT CONSULTANTS AT OTHER FIRMS ARE SAYING

• “Good, competent”
• “IT shop”
• “Evolving”
• “Small, limited”
THE SCOOP

Four units, three rules

Australia’s largest publicly traded management services company, SMS Management & Technology Limited provides consulting, resourcing and technology services to Australian and international governments and corporations. It’s staffed by about 1,300 employees, with domestic offices in Canberra, Brisbane, Mawson Lakes, Melbourne and Sydney, and two international offices in London and in Singapore.

SMS, which was founded in 1986, is divided into three business units. SMS Consulting provides business performance improvement, technology alignment, project delivery and organizational mobilization. The technology services division offers custom software development and systems integration services, including data conversion, data warehousing and reporting, data quality and client server solutions. Finally, the M&T resources group provides permanent and contract recruitment services for the information and communication technology industry. Founded in 1994 as SMS Contracting, M&T has become one of the ICT sector’s leading recruiters. According to the firm, it has built its business over the years by following three core rules: add value, maintain unity and enhance reputation. The firm created a new enterprise solutions unit when it acquired ERP firms REALtech Australia and Forward Media in 2006 and 2007, respectively.

Big names

In its 20-plus years of doing business, SMS has worked with a lengthy list of well-known companies. Its client roster includes ANZ Bank, Telstra, Australia Post, Queensland Rail, the Royal Bank of Scotland, EDS Australia, Satyam and the Shell Company of Australia. Among its government clients are Australia’s Departments of Natural Resources, Defense, Primary Industries, Veterans’ Affairs and Transportation.

Industry coverage at SMS is divided among seven key sectors: defense, financial services, information technology, government, energy and utilities, mining and resources, and health and human services.

The Sausage tangle

In 1986, SMS Consulting hung out its shingle in Melbourne, offering IT project management and IT architecture services. The fledgling firm landed its first big client a year later, when it took an assignment for ANZ, Australia’s largest bank. The years that followed saw rapid growth for SMS: It expanded its industry coverage and opened several additional offices across Australia and in London in 1998. The following year, SMS transitioned from a private to a public company.
Tech Mahindra Limited

THE STATS
Employer Type: Public Company
Ticker Symbol: TECHM (NSE)
CEO & Managing Director: Vineet Nayyar
2008 Employees: 23,000
2007 Employees: 19,749
2007 Revenue: $718.5 million
2006 Revenue: $304.8 million
No. of Offices: 24

PLUSES
- Organized social events promote firm culture
- Opportunities for job rotation

MINUSES
- Brand not as well known outside of India
- Formal dress code Monday through Thursday

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT
www.techmahindra.com/content/career/careers.shtml
THE SCOOP

British influence

Part of India’s $4.5 billion Mahindra & Mahindra group, Tech Mahindra’s story began in 1986 when British Telecom and Mahindra established a joint venture called Mahindra-British Telecom, which quickly grew beyond its original mission of providing IT services to British Telecom. Today, Tech Mahindra is an international leader in IT services and solutions for the global telecommunications industry. It has offices in India, Singapore, Australia, Thailand, Taiwan, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Egypt, the United States and the United Arab Emirates, as well as development centers in India, the U.S. and the U.K.

The Mahindra & Mahindra group is made up of seven sectors: automotive, farm equipment, trade and financial services, infrastructure development, information technology, systech and specialty business (which includes defense and logistics units). Tech Mahindra is one of four companies in the IT sector. Its siblings include Bristlecone, a provider of global business process and technology consulting specializing in enterprise applications and collaborative solutions for the extended supply chain; Mahindra Logisoft, which focuses on software products, especially the dealership business segment apart from systems integration, design and development; and Mahindra Special Services Group, which provides information security and focuses on protecting organizational innovations.

Tech Mahindra employs over 23,000 people in 24 offices worldwide. It is now India’s eighth-largest software exporter, serving telecom service providers, equipment manufacturers, software vendors and systems integrators. Among its clients are Alltel, AT&T, BT, Ericsson, O2, Oman Tel, Vodafone, Qatar Telecom, Fastlink and StarHub. British Telecom is still a key client and a shareholder in Tech Mahindra, controlling about one-third of the company’s stock.

From Jeeps to IT

The Mahindra empire began with one man’s inspiration. K.C. Mahindra, chairman of the India Supply Mission, traveled to the United States during World War II. There, he met Barney Roos—the man who invented the Jeep. When Mahindra saw Roos’ handiwork, he realized the rugged vehicle would be a perfect method of transportation in India’s rural towns where roads were rudimentary (or nonexistent). Mahindra asked his brother, J.C., to help him bring Jeeps to India; they were joined by a partner, Ghulam Mohammed. Mahindra & Mohammad was established in 1945
GETTING HIRED

A flexible path

Graduates interested in joining Tech Mahindra should head to the web site, since the firm doesn’t hold campus recruiting. On the careers page there are job postings in IT services, BPO and R&D services for all of its Asia Pacific locations. To be considered for openings, candidates should register online and submit a resume. One helpful page in the careers section is called “Employee speak,” where real consultants give an account of their experience joining and working for the firm.

Tech Mahindra emphasizes that training and development are a big part of the employee experience. Consultants typically join the firm on either a management or specialist track, but they don’t have to be committed to those roles from the start—the firm allows employees to switch at any time. Those who want to enroll in graduate school or other courses at a university can get 40 to 50 percent of the cost of tuition sponsored. And for high achievers who make top grades in those courses, scholarships for up to 100 percent are available. As part of employee development, Tech Mahindra also offers a job rotation program, allowing consultants to explore different roles within the company.

You only live once

The firm unabashedly claims that “life rocks” within its walls—and states that there are plenty of fun social activities planned to allow “freedom of expression and an air of informality.” An in-house committee called JOSH organizes programs like Friday movies, salsa classes, yoga and concerts to help everyone get to know each other outside of work hours. Within JOSH, there are also a number of special interest clubs focused on themes such as culture, sports, movies, coaching and adventure.