

## March 2026

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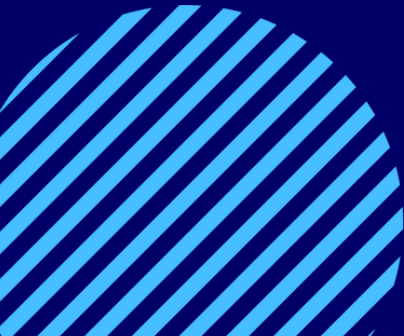
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# MARCH 2026 | JUNIOR CONSULTING

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The session provided an overview of the consulting industry, explained how firms and career paths are structured, highlighted current market and hiring trends, and outlined practical advice for students preparing for consulting recruiting. A strong emphasis was placed on early preparation, strategic networking, specialization by industry or capability, and the importance of understanding how the market is changing under the impact of AI, execution-oriented work, boutique growth, and regional differences.

## SESSION SCOPE & OBJECTIVES

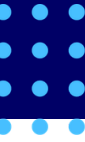
The session was designed as a broad yet practical introduction to the consulting sector for students exploring careers in the field. It combined an industry overview with recruiting advice and concluded with a question-and-answer segment that addressed sector choices, events, interviews, certifications, and how to approach firms more strategically.

- Explain the consulting landscape at a high level, including firm types, capabilities, and industries.
- Share recent sector updates and explain how AI, hiring shifts, and regional dynamics are reshaping consulting.
- Highlight current opportunities, upcoming employer events, and examples of firms actively recruiting.
- Provide students with practical recruiting advice on preparation, networking, and differentiation.
- Leave time for questions so students could connect the general insights to their own goals and profiles.

## CONSULTING INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

A central message from the session was that consulting is a large, resilient, and growing global industry. The presenters described it as an ecosystem rather than a single homogeneous market. Although growth is expected to be moderate rather than explosive, the industry continues to attract talent because it offers intellectual variety, exposure to senior decision-makers, and many career paths across industries and geographies.

Students were reminded that consulting growth is not evenly distributed across the world. Some markets are more mature and stable, while others are expanding more



quickly because of digital transformation, public investment, or structural economic shifts. This matters because a consultant's day-to-day work and long-term career trajectory can be shaped not only by the firm they join, but also by the region in which they work.

**Key framing idea:** Consulting should be understood across three dimensions at the same time: type of firm, type of problem solved, and sector or geography served.

## **TYPES OF CONSULTING FIRMS**

The session distinguished between several categories of consulting firms, each with a different positioning, delivery model, and recruiting logic. This distinction is important because students often treat all consulting employers as if they were interchangeable, when in reality they offer very different experiences.

### **Strategy firms (MBB and similar players)**

These firms are positioned at the high end of strategic advisory. Their work is often associated with growth strategy, market entry, transformation agendas, M&A-related strategic questions, and senior management problem-solving. They are also often the most structured and competitive in recruitment.

### **Big Four firms**

These firms combine consulting with audit, tax, and other professional services. Their consulting practices are usually broader and often stronger in implementation, transformation, and large-scale delivery than pure strategy boutiques.

### **Technology and digital consulting firms**

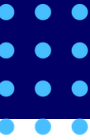
Companies such as Accenture and Capgemini were presented as major players in implementation-heavy work, especially around IT transformation, digital strategy, data, AI, and technology-enabled change.

### **Boutique and specialist consultancies**

These firms tend to be smaller and more focused. They may specialize by capability, such as pricing or analytics, or by industry, such as healthcare or energy. The presenters noted that boutiques are increasingly gaining traction in the market.

### **Public sector and social impact firms**

A further category includes firms focused on government, development, public policy, or



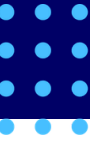
mission-oriented work. This broadens the consulting landscape for students who are not primarily targeting corporate strategy roles.

## **WHAT CONSULTANTS ACTUALLY WORK ON**

The presenters explained consulting as being structured around types of business problems, commonly referred to as capabilities or practices. This framing helps students understand that consulting is not only about firms or industries, but also about the nature of the work performed.

<b>Capability</b>	<b>Typical focus areas mentioned in the session</b>
<b>Strategy</b>	Growth strategy, market entry, portfolio choices, and M&A-related strategic questions.
<b>Management &amp; Transformation</b>	Improving performance, redesigning operating models, and supporting organizational change.
<b>Operations</b>	Process efficiency, supply chain improvement, and cost optimization.
<b>Technology</b>	Digital transformation, AI, cybersecurity, and technology-enabled execution.
<b>Human Capital</b>	People, leadership, organization design, and talent-related transformation
<b>Risk &amp; Sustainability</b>	Compliance, ESG, regulation, risk management, and resilience-related projects.

One of the most important comments was that technology is no longer peripheral to consulting. AI, digital transformation, cybersecurity, and related tools are becoming central to an increasing share of projects, even in firms or practices that are not purely technical.



## **INDUSTRY SPECIALIZATION**

The session clarified that consultants tend to specialize in two ways: by capability and by industry. On the industry side, students were introduced to several broad groups of sectors in which consulting firms operate. The presenters emphasized that many capabilities can be applied across industries, but the context, regulation, and client needs differ significantly from one sector to another.

### **Core industries**

Energy, telecom, healthcare, and financial services.

### **Consumer and services sectors**

Retail, consumer goods, and travel-related businesses.

### **Industrial and infrastructure sectors**

Manufacturing, automotive, and real estate.

### **Public and investor-oriented segments**

Public sector, governments, and private equity or investor-related work.

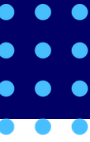
An important teaching point was that consultants often work at the intersection of these two dimensions. For example, a consultant may work on AI projects in healthcare, digital transformation in energy, or sustainability projects in industrial companies. This intersectional logic is essential for understanding both project staffing and career development.

The presenters also used the energy sector as a concrete illustration, showing a mix of generalist firms, specialist firms, implementation-oriented players, and in-house consulting teams. Similar logic was said to apply in other sectors such as telecom, healthcare, and financial services.

**Additional emerging area:** Beyond traditional industry practices, the session highlighted growing demand in leadership, organization, and human capital consulting. Smaller specialist firms are active in this space, and students interested in people and transformation topics should consider them alongside more traditional sector practices.

## **CAREER PROGRESSION IN CONSULTING**

The presenters then moved from the market structure to the consulting career path. In firms such as McKinsey, Bain, and BCG, career progression was described as relatively



structured, with titles varying slightly by firm but following a similar pattern from analyst or associate roles up to partner-level positions.

- **Entry-level roles** focus on research, analysis, problem-solving support, and producing workstreams under supervision.
- **Mid-level roles** begin to own parts of the project, supervise junior team members, and contribute more directly to structuring the solution.
- **Manager-level roles** lead projects, coordinate teams, and manage the client relationship in a more visible way.
- **Senior leadership roles** increasingly revolve around client development, oversight of multiple engagements, and business generation.

The session distilled this evolution into a simple idea: the role changes over time from doing the work to leading the work. This is a useful way for students to understand not only progression but also what firms are evaluating at each stage: analytical strength at the beginning, then ownership, then leadership and commercial judgment.

## **STUDENT OUTCOMES AND EMPLOYER PATTERNS**

To make the discussion more concrete, the session included information about where IE students typically land within consulting. According to the presenters, around two-thirds of students entering consulting join strategy or management consulting firms. A significant share also joins boutique or specialized firms, while a smaller portion enters technology consulting or social-impact-oriented roles.

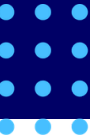
This point was used to challenge the common assumption that consulting careers are limited to a small number of large firms. Students were encouraged to think in terms of multiple entry points into the industry: large firms, strategy firms, tech-oriented firms, specialist boutiques, and even in-house or adjacent roles.

## **CURRENT MARKET AND SECTOR UPDATES**

A major part of the session focused on what is changing in consulting right now. The overall narrative was balanced: the market remains attractive and is benefiting from AI-related demand, but it is also becoming more fragmented, more execution-oriented, and more demanding for candidates.

### **AI as a transformative force**

AI is not just a trend in consulting marketing. The presenters gave examples such as OpenAI partnerships with major consulting firms and firms tracking their own internal



AI usage. The implication is that AI is changing delivery models, workflows, and client expectations.

### **Fragmentation of the competitive landscape**

Boutiques and AI-focused start-ups are gaining ground alongside established global firms. This means students should think beyond the traditional employer hierarchy and consider whether a specialist environment may actually offer better fit or faster exposure.

### **Pressure on pricing and budgets**

The market is growing, but not without tension. References to government spending cuts and competition between boutiques and larger firms illustrated that clients are more cost-conscious and firms face pressure to prove value.

### **Geographic divergence**

Growth patterns differ substantially across markets. Saudi Arabia and DACH were mentioned as examples of how market momentum depends on regional investment cycles, buyer demand, and local conditions.

### **Risk side of AI**

The presenters also raised concerns around AI-related uncertainty, including issues such as data security and reputational risks. This reinforced the idea that AI creates both opportunity and exposure.

## **GLOBAL HIRING TRENDS IN CONSULTING**

The hiring section of the session was particularly practical. The presenters argued that consulting recruitment is changing in ways that students need to anticipate well before application season. The message was clear: stronger preparation is required, and traditional assumptions about hiring volumes and timelines are no longer sufficient.

Firms are introducing digital assessments, AI-enabled case simulations, and more technology-based evaluation tools. Candidates may be expected not only to understand AI conceptually, but to use it effectively.

Consulting work is shifting from pure strategy toward execution and measurable impact. As a result, firms increasingly want candidates who can operate in implementation-heavy, hands-on environments.

Lean teams are becoming more common, supported by AI and automation. This can reduce overall hiring volumes and raise the quality threshold for entry-level candidates. Recruitment cycles are becoming less predictable and more closely tied to project

pipelines. Students therefore need to monitor opportunities continuously rather than waiting for a single standardized season.

Specialized and mid-sized consultancies are expanding quickly. This broadens the hiring landscape but also rewards applicants who can show a clear angle or niche fit.

In-house strategy, data, and transformation roles are becoming more attractive alternatives, partly because they can offer stronger work-life balance and deeper sector exposure.

**Practical implication for students:** Students who prepare late, apply generically, or rely only on a small set of famous firms are likely to be disadvantaged. Preparation must begin earlier and be more targeted than in the past.

## REGIONAL INSIGHTS

The session dedicated a full section to regional differences, underlining that consulting behaves differently depending on market maturity, regulation, client profile, and public investment. This helps students understand why the same firm can offer very different experiences across offices.

### **North America**

Presented as the most mature and most competitive market. Firms are moving from strategy into AI-driven execution, often alongside technology partners. Pricing is becoming more outcome-based and competition is intensifying, especially as boutiques gain share in specialized work.

### **Europe**

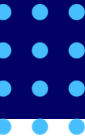
Described as stable but more complex. Regulation around AI, data, ESG, and energy transition is a defining feature. Local expertise and the ability to navigate compliance-heavy environments are increasingly important differentiators.

### **APAC**

Positioned as the fastest-growing region and a structural growth engine for consulting. India was highlighted as both a local market and a global delivery and AI hub, while governments in the region are pushing digital and regulatory agendas

### **Middle East**

Framed as a high-growth region driven by public investment and large-scale



transformation programs, sometimes described as a mega-project economy. Sovereign AI, data infrastructure, and localization requirements are increasingly relevant.

### **Latin America**

resented as a market with real opportunities but also significant volatility. Demand is more sensitive to macroeconomic conditions, making project flow more selective and less predictable.

## **OPPORTUNITIES, EMPLOYER EVENTS, AND ACTIVE HIRING SIGNALS**

Students were repeatedly encouraged to use the IE careers platform and related resources proactively, especially ahead of the career forum. The presenters stressed that opportunities already existed across regions and seniority levels, but that students needed to research employers in advance and prioritize where to invest their time.

Consulting Thursdays and case-cracking sessions were positioned as key recurring touchpoints with employers.

The career forum was highlighted as a major near-term opportunity, with some firms offering coffee chats and others using on-campus interviews as the first step in a formal process.

Students were encouraged to check company websites and open roles before attending events, rather than asking basic questions that could easily be answered through prior research.

Several employer examples were mentioned, including Interpath, Accenture, Deloitte, Gartner, Roland Berger, FTI, and others, often with comments about geography, profile fit, or current hiring momentum.

A notable point was the positioning of Interpath as a deals and restructuring advisory firm spun out of KPMG, with strong private equity and value creation exposure, a more entrepreneurial culture, and active hiring. This type of employer was presented as attractive for students interested in alternatives to traditional large-firm consulting.

## **RECRUITING ADVICE: WHAT ACTUALLY MOVES THE NEEDLE**

The most actionable part of the session centered on how students should prepare for consulting recruitment. The presenters explicitly distinguished between general interest

in consulting and serious preparation. The latter requires planning, discipline, and strategic positioning.

### **Start early**

Top candidates begin preparing six to eight months before applications open. Waiting until deadlines are near reduces the chance of building strong cases, polished stories, and meaningful connections.

### **Network strategically**

Networking is not about volume. It is about asking good questions, researching the firm beforehand, and showing enough understanding to have a serious conversation with recruiters, alumni, or consultants.

### **Build sector fluency**

When two candidates are equally prepared, the one who can speak the language of a given industry or practice often has an advantage. Students should read firm reports, understand the kinds of projects a target team does, and connect their own background to that work.

### **Use structured case preparation resources**

Case-preparation tools, consulting workshops, interview preparation, and mock interviews were all recommended. The team made it clear that IE offers support, but students still need to do the work themselves.

### **Define a personal consulting story**

Candidates should be able to explain why consulting, why a particular firm, and what angle they bring. For those without direct consulting experience, transferable skills and differentiated background become especially important.

### **Strengthen communication and analytical skills**

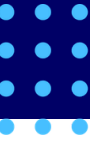
Problem solving alone is not enough. Students must communicate clearly, present their reasoning in a structured way, and perform effectively in client-facing contexts.

### **Develop adjacent skills**

Digital, transformation, AI, sustainability, data, cloud, and other technical or regulatory skills can add value even for non-technical consulting roles.

## **MAIN THEMES FROM THE Q&A**

The final part of the session surfaced several recurring student concerns, and these help identify the areas where students most need guidance.



### **Event access and eligibility**

Students asked about how to register for specific sessions and whether some events were limited to certain programmes, such as the MBA. This showed the need for clearer segmentation of opportunities by target audience.

### **Healthcare and pharmatech consulting**

One student asked about the future of healthcare consulting. The response emphasized that healthcare is a growing sector and suggested that students interested in it should look both at broad consulting firms and at healthcare-specialist boutiques.

### **Career forum interviews**

Students asked how coffee chats and interviews were allocated. The explanation clarified that, for some employers, students needed to apply through the careers portal first, after which firms would select whom they wanted to meet on campus.

### **Certifications for consulting**

A question was raised about whether consulting has an equivalent to finance certifications such as the CFA. The response indicated that there is no universal consulting certification, although AI, sustainability, and technical tools can be useful add-ons depending on the firm and role.

### **Online events and continued engagement**

Students unable to attend in person asked about virtual events. The presenters explained that future events may be promoted through the newsletter, IE Connects, and the employer-event tracker.

## **OVERALL TAKEAWAYS**

Taken together, the session delivered a clear strategic message: consulting remains Students can no longer rely on a generic “I want consulting” narrative. Instead, they need to understand the landscape, choose their targets deliberately, prepare earlier, and show evidence of both analytical strength and informed motivation.

The presenters encouraged students to move from passive interest to active preparation. That means identifying target firms and sectors early, building familiarity with how the industry works, taking advantage of events and preparation resources, and approaching recruiters with better questions and stronger positioning. The ultimate message was practical and empowering: success in consulting recruiting is not only about profile quality, but also about preparation quality.

 **SUGGESTED ACTION  
CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS**

1. Review the IE careers portal regularly
2. Identify three to five target firms before each major event
3. Prepare a tailored question for each employer
4. Begin case and interview preparation well in advance
5. Strengthen one or two differentiating skills such as AI, data, sustainability, or sector expertise
6. Convert general interest in consulting into a credible, specific personal story.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The session confirmed three structural shifts in the consulting industry:

1. The global consulting market continues to grow (3–5% annually), with **Asia-Pacific as the fastest-growing region**.
2. The traditional consulting model is evolving:
  - a. Clients now pay for **impact and measurable outcomes**, not hours.
  - b. AI is no longer optional – it is core to delivery.
  - c. Teams are smaller, hiring is more selective, and profiles are more technical.
3. Boutiques and mid-sized firms are growing faster than large players in several verticals (especially AI, digital, supply chain, cybersecurity).

Additionally, students expressed clear concerns around:

- Sector filtering (e.g., healthcare, financial services).
- English-only markets.
- Visa sponsorship.
- Differences between MBB vs Big4 vs boutiques.
- Clarity on MBB recruiting processes.

## MARKET & SECTOR OVERVIEW

### Market Growth

- Expected global growth: 3–5% annually.
- Asia-Pacific remains the fastest-growing region.

### Firm Categories

- **MBB** (McKinsey, Bain, BCG)
- **Big4 + Strategy arms** (Strategy&, EY-Parthenon, Monitor Deloitte)
- **Technology & Digital Consulting** (Accenture, NTT Data, etc.)
- **Boutiques & Specialists** (Simon-Kucher, Alvarez & Marsal, AlphaSights, etc.)
- **Social Impact & Public Sector**

### Business Model Evolution

- Key industry shifts:
  - Outcome-based pricing.
  - AI embedded in delivery.

- Increased sector specialization.
- Generalists becoming more technical.
- Leaner teams and more selective hiring.
- Consulting is shifting from “strategy advice” to “implementation + measurable value creation.”

## **HIRING & OPPORTUNITIES UPDATE**

### **MBA Structured Recruiting (MBB)**

- Active structured processes:
  - Bain: Recruiter hour (networking opportunity).
  - McKinsey: Online assessment + structured timeline.
  - BCG: Upcoming structured email communication.
- Key reminders:
  - 3-day deadline to complete online assessments once received.
  - Application deadlines in March.
  - Preparation must be proactive, not reactive.

### **Junior-Level Hiring (Mentioned Firms)**

- Step Change
- Artifact
- Alvarez & Marsal
- AlphaSights
- Accuracy
- Management Solutions
- Accenture

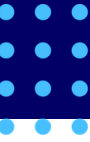
### **Senior-Level Hiring**

- FTI
- Orphoz
- Cornerstone (India)
- Accenture (LATAM)
- Capgemini (Madrid)
- Mastercard
- Grant Thornton

## **REGIONAL INSIGHTS**

**North America**

ROI-driven, outcome-based pricing



<b>Europe</b>	ESG & regulatory-driven demand
<b>Asia-Pacific</b>	Digitalization, smart cities, financial modernization
<b>Middle East</b>	National transformation programs, infrastructure, energy
<b>Latin America</b>	Volatile growth, digital banking, infrastructure

### **English-Friendly Markets (Student Concern)**

- Markets generally more open to English-only profiles:
  - Middle East
  - UK
  - Luxembourg (case-dependent)
  - Netherlands (team-dependent)
- However:
  - Sponsorship + no local language + no prior experience = triple barrier.
  - Home country applications often remain the most viable entry strategy.
- This reflects structural industry reality: consulting firms serve local clients → language matters.

### **DIRECT EMPLOYER FEEDBACK**

Common weaknesses observed in candidates:

- Difficulty structuring ideas.
- Weak prioritization.
- Unstructured calculations.
- Reactive preparation (starting only once interview is scheduled).

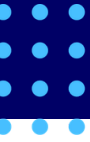
What firms value:

- Authenticity.
- Clear motivation (Why consulting? Why this firm? Why you?).
- Industry knowledge.
- Consistent case practice.
- Strong personal experience interview performance.

### **STUDENT CONCERNS & KEY INSIGHTS**

#### **Top Employers Clarification**

The “Top Employers” slide represented firms hiring the most IE students — not acceptance rates.



Important clarification for future sessions.

### **MBB Recruiting Process**

- Students requested deeper clarity on:
  - Exact interview flow.
  - Coffee chat vs case-first process.
  - Screening mechanics.
- Opportunity identified:
  - Dedicated MBB recruiting deep dive session needed

### **Sector Filtering (High Demand)**

Students want:

- A structured list of consulting firms by sector:
  - Healthcare
  - Financial Services
  - Private Equity
  - Energy
  - Technology
  - etc.
- This represents a clear CRM opportunity:
  - Sector tagging by industry vertical.

### **Visa Sponsorship & Geography Strategy**

Strong student concern about:

- Rejections due to language.
- Sponsorship limitations.
- UK market saturation.

Opportunity:

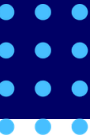
→ “English-Friendly Markets & Sponsorship Reality” briefing session.

### **Healthcare Consulting Interest**

Specific interest from healthcare background student (Pharmacy).

Need identified:

- Mapping firms with strong healthcare practices.
- Distinguishing generalist firms vs healthcare-focused boutiques



## **IE COMPANY DEVELOPMENTS**

Highlighted companies:

- Orphoz (2–7 years experience hiring)
- APCO (Dubai expansion + Asia discussions)
- NTT Data (Spain & LATAM – AI & data focus)
- Simon-Kucher (CV book shared)
- EY Germany (German speakers)
- BTS (Leadership & strategy execution)
- AlphaSights (Visa sponsorship – London & Dubai)
- Step Change (Global expansion)
- BCG – Local hiring in Saudi Arabia
- Saudi public sector digital transformation roles

## **FINAL CONCLUSION**

Consulting remains strong, but it is:

- More technical.
- More specialized.
- More impact-driven.
- More selective.

Success now requires:

- Proactive preparation.
- Sector awareness.
- Technical capabilities.
- Strategic geographic planning

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## INTRODUCTION

- Mariana Medina welcomed participants and introduced herself as Head of the Consulting Sector for Talent and Careers.
- The session focused on providing a market overview, insights on regional consulting trends, in-demand skills, and career opportunities.

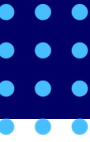
## MARKET OVERVIEW & REGIONAL INSIGHTS

### Global Trends:

- Consulting firms increasingly driven by AI and digital transformation.
- Competition among top firms (McKinsey, BCG, Deloitte) is growing; smaller, agile firms (“boutiques”) gaining relevance.
- Importance of networking and referrals emphasized.

### Regional Insights

- **Middle East:** High demand in strategy consulting, AI, data, digital, and cybersecurity. Boutique firms growing and offer exposure to public sector projects. Key candidate traits: regional experience, Arabic language skills, and sector-specific expertise. Freelance/project-based roles increasing.
- **Singapore:** Hub for strategy and digital transformation; highly competitive for candidates without consulting experience.
- **Australia & New Zealand:** Focused on sustainability, energy, and industrial transition.
- **Southeast Asia:** Opportunities in digital and infrastructure; boutique consulting gaining traction.
- **DACH & Benelux:** Roles in Big Four, strategy units, MBA opportunities, digital, sustainability, financial services, pricing, and operations.
- **India:** Growth in digital transformation and sustainability; internships offered by Tata, Infosys, and others.
- **LATAM:** Key markets: Mexico, Chile, Brazil; opportunities in tech consulting increasing; strategic consulting mainly through boutiques.
- **UK:** Highly competitive; post-study visas advantageous; demand for digital, AI, ESG, and sustainability expertise.



## **SKILLS IN DEMAND**

- **Soft Skills:** Problem-solving, analytical skills, leadership, teamwork, client relationship management, top-down communication, adaptability, learning agility, curiosity, and innovation.
- **Technical Skills:** Data analysis and visualization, AI, automation, digital tools, sustainability, ESG knowledge, project management.
- **Additional Advice:** Alternative paths to consulting include business development, corporate strategy, and project management in non-consulting companies.

## **NETWORKING AND CAREER PREPARATION**

- Short, targeted messages for LinkedIn outreach recommended.
- Connect with people sharing similar backgrounds (same country, program, or company).
- Follow-up messages encouraged if no response received.
- Resources at IE include case practice platforms, group dynamics, advisors, and workshops for skill development.

## **INSIGHTS FROM US & MIDDLE EAST VISITS**

- **US:** Focus on building relationships with MBBs and other firms; referrals critical; sustainability emphasized.
- **Middle East:** Opportunities concentrated in Riyadh; Vision 2030 driving government-related consulting projects; junior roles prioritize nationals and Arabic speakers; boutique firms open to non-nationals. Key consulting services: AI, sustainability, leadership development.

## **SPAIN & EUROPE**

- Spain hiring actively; opportunities for candidates with work permits and relevant experience.
- European market moving steadily; focus on internships and full-time roles.
- Networking and local language knowledge recommended.

## **NEXT STEPS & RESOURCES**

- Monthly sessions planned via IE Connects with updates on opportunities and market insights.

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**Facilitator:** Stefani Sahuquillo (Key Account Manager – Consulting, IE Talent & Careers)

**Team present:**

- Mariana Medina – Head of Consulting
- Stefani Sahuquillo – Key Account Manager (Boutique & Sustainability Consulting)
- Students from various programs

 **PURPOSE OF THE SESSION**

- Share **current trends** in the consulting market.
- Explain what **IE Talent & Careers (Consulting)** is doing with firms globally.
- Highlight **current job opportunities and upcoming events**.
- Answer questions about **Middle East, internships, data/AI roles, and cover letters**.

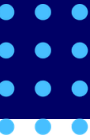
 **MARKET OVERVIEW – KEY TRENDS**

**From “hire a lot” to “hire the right (AI & digital skills)”**

- Consulting firms are moving from volume hiring to **targeted hiring in AI and digital**.
- Recent months have shown:
  - Layoffs in large firms.
  - Strong focus on **upskilling current staff in AI and digital skills** (e.g. internal training initiatives).
- AI, data, and digital capabilities are **no longer “nice to have”** but central to hiring decisions.

**Acquisitions & specialization**

- Large consulting firms are acquiring:
  - **AI startups**.
  - **Specialized boutiques** (e.g. restructuring, sustainability, data/tech).
- This reflects a clear push towards:
  - **Sustainability**
  - **AI / data**
  - **Operations & transformation**
- Company news and corporate websites are very useful to track:
  - What topics each firm is doubling down on.
  - Where they’re investing or acquiring.



## Hiring hotspots (locations)

Firms are increasingly choosing cities based on **cost structure, taxes, and feasibility to deliver global projects remotely**. Examples mentioned:

- **Europe**
  - **Lisbon** and **Poland** are currently very active hubs (e.g. McKinsey hiring more in these offices, especially in Financial Services).
- **North America**
  - **Montreal** highlighted as a growing hub.
- **GCC / Middle East**
  - **Riyadh** remains a key hub.
  - **Cairo (Egypt)** and **Doha (Qatar)** are also becoming very relevant.

**Implication for students:** It's important to look **beyond your “default” city of interest** and understand where firms are actually growing and hiring right now.

## HOW TO RESPOND AS A CANDIDATE

### 1. Specialize – and signal it clearly

Hot specializations mentioned:

- AI for Business / Data / Digital
- **Data governance**
- **Sustainability**
- **Operations & Transformation**

“Operations & Transformation” is especially in demand because:

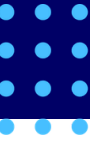
- Companies are constantly adjusting processes and operating models.
- Both consulting firms and large corporates need people who can **manage and implement change**.

**How to signal specialization:**

- Make it visible in your **CV and LinkedIn**:
  - Courses, certifications.
  - Club activities (e.g. Consulting Club, Project Management Club).
  - Projects and events related to your area of interest.

### 2. “Go warmer, not wider”

- Instead of sending **50 generic applications** across Europe, focus on:
  - Mapping **alumni** and professionals in **specific cities / offices**.



## 2. “Go warmer, not wider”

- Asking targeted questions, e.g.:
  - “Which teams or roles are hiring most right now in your office?”
- People inside firms often have **up-to-date insights** that you won’t see in job descriptions or public news.

## 3. Be flexible: geography and firm type

- Be open to:
  - Offices in **hot locations** where growth is stronger, even if it’s not your first choice.
  - **Boutique and specialized firms**, not only MBB and Big Four.
- Strategy:
  - Enter via a **growing office or a niche boutique** where hiring is more active.
  - Build experience → later you can transition to your “dream” location or firm.



## **WHAT TALENT & CAREERS – CONSULTING IS DOING**

### Team setup (Consulting sector):

- **Mariana** – Head of Consulting.
- **Laura** – Key Account Manager for IT consulting and global management consulting firms.
- **Natalia** – Key Account Manager for Big Four (Deloitte, EY, PwC, KPMG).
- **Stefani** – Key Account Manager for boutique consulting firms and sustainability consulting.
- **MBB** (McKinsey, BCG, Bain) – relationships managed directly by Mariana.

### Main lines of work:

#### 1. Expanding the portfolio of recruiting partners

- a. Continue growing relationships with **global strategy & management consultancies** (including MBB).
- b. At the same time, expanding strongly into **specialized and boutique consulting firms**:
  - i. Often **more flexible**, less bureaucratic.
  - ii. Frequently hiring and open to **CV-books and tailored activities**.

#### 2. Connecting with more offices and locations

- a. Large firms often have **separate HR structures by country**.
- b. Opening a relationship with another country is almost like starting from scratch.
- c. Goal: build direct connections with **multiple offices globally** (not only Spain).

#### 3. Positioning IE talent as a priority

- a. IE shares vacancies, supports pipeline, and sends shortlists of candidates.

- b. Over time, the performance of IE students in interviews and roles **shapes the perception of IE inside each firm**.
- c. This is a long-term relationship-building process.

### Recent “wins” highlighted:

- **Deloitte Day – 19 November**
  - The **largest on-campus event** Deloitte has done with any university.
  - 4–5 business units coming to IE Tower.
  - Aimed at **Spanish-speaking students** (Spain office).
- **Workshops with PwC**
  - Online workshops in **different languages** (German, Spanish).
- **Strategic Gears (Saudi Arabia)**
  - Near finalization of an agreement to create more structured channels with students.
  - Strategic Gears is growing significantly, opening new offices beyond Middle East.
  - Key leaders are **IE alumni**, which strengthens the partnership.
- **More on-campus interviews**
  - With **AlphaSights** and BPI / AlphaSights.
- **CV-books to selected companies**
  - For certain firms (e.g. Global Regulatory Management in Switzerland, PTS and others), IE sends **curated CV-books** directly.
  - When you see a vacancy on the IE portal where you only upload your CV (no external company link), it often means IE will **forward those CVs directly** to the firm.

## ? MAIN Q&A HIGHLIGHTS

### 5.1. Middle East – Saudi Arabia & junior profile

**Question:** How open is Saudi Arabia for junior profiles? Is it worth applying?

#### Key points:

- Saudi is **more open to mid-senior profiles** than juniors.
- Priority often goes to:
  - Candidates with prior experience.
  - **Saudi nationals**, due to nationalization policies.
- Recommendation:
  - You can still apply if you find suitable openings, but **be realistic** about the difficulty.
- Look also at **global firms** with significant presence in the region, e.g.:
  - Accenture, Kearney, etc., especially in **Dubai**, as many consultants are based there and fly to Saudi for projects.

- Consider **Doha** and **Abu Dhabi** in addition to Riyadh.

For a profile with ~3 years' experience in HR / people ops / transformation:

- Explore **leadership development** and **organizational change** boutiques in the region.
- Stefani will follow up with **specific firm names** after the session.

## 2. Summer internships & first-year students

**Question:** Do summer internships often accept **first-year** students?

Answer (Mariana):

- In general, firms tend to focus on **final years**, as they hope to convert interns into full-time hires.
- However, some companies are open to earlier profiles on a **case-by-case** basis.
- Advice:
  - Apply if the role seems open to younger students, but manage expectations.

### Boutiques & internships:

- Many boutique firms **do not have a structured “summer internship” program**.
- They tend to hire **on a project basis**, whenever they need extra support.
- Recommendations:
  - Look at least **6 months in advance** of when you'd like to do an internship.
  - Understand the exact window for **curricular internships** in your program (e.g. from January, March, etc.).
  - Work with your **Career Advisor** to identify firms that may be open to internships **outside the standard summer scheme**.

## 3. Cover letters (motivation letters)

**Question:** How important are cover letters? How much effort should I invest?

Answer (Mariana):

- When a company **asks** for a cover letter, it can be a **real differentiator**.
- It doesn't have to take hours, but it should be:
  - **Authentic, personal, and max. 1 page**.
  - Clear on:
    - **Why this company** (mentioning concrete aspects: values, practice areas, recent news or initiatives).
    - **Why you**, and how your background adds value.

**Strategy:**

- You don't need 100 unique cover letters.

- Instead, identify the **10–15 companies** where you really feel:
  - “*This job is made for me*”
  - For those, invest in a **tailored cover letter**.
- Some content (e.g. “why consulting”) can be similar across firms.
- But try to include at least one **specific element per company** (e.g. a publication, an office initiative, a focus area that resonates with your experience).

**When the role is generic (e.g. “Business Analyst” without specifying team):**

- Focus the cover letter on:
  - The firm’s **overall strategy, culture, and positioning**.
  - Your experience and how it can contribute across teams.
- No need to “invent” a specific team if the posting doesn’t define it.

#### **4. Data Science & Digital Transformation in Consulting**

**Student case:** MBDS student wanting to work as a data scientist in consulting.

**Recommendations (Stefani & Mariana):**

- Look into **IT / Digital consulting firms**, for example:
  - **Artifact**
  - **Accenture** (Technology / Digital)
  - **NTT Data**
  - **Capgemini, Infosys, Tata**, etc.
- Distinguish between:
  - Firms/divisions that do **only strategy**, and
  - Those that do **strategy + implementation**.

→ For a data science profile, focus on firms that are strong in **implementation** of AI, analytics, and digital solutions.

- Within bigger firms (e.g. Deloitte):
  - Explore the **Digital & Data / AI / IT** divisions.
  - Deloitte has a **solid IT & digital practice**, and IE is already working with them (events, contacts, etc.).
  - For MBDS students, this can be a strong target.
- On outreach:
  - If previous events (e.g. McKinsey Consulting Thursday) did not include speakers from QuantumBlack or Digital, it doesn’t mean those divisions don’t exist or aren’t active.
  - Continue researching and:
    - Ask your **Career Advisor** to help identify **alumni or professionals** specifically in digital / data divisions.

- Check **LinkedIn** for alumni in those teams.
- Next steps from IE side:
  - Stefani will inform the team (e.g. Claudia, Belén) about the **interest in IT & data consulting**.
  - The goal is to **organize more activities** specifically for SI/tech students who want to move into consulting.

## 5. Events at the Tower & online access

**Question:** Can students in Segovia join Tower events online?

- For most **Talent & Careers in-person events**, there is **no streaming** currently.
- However, the team is actively discussing with the **Consulting Club** how to:
  - Adapt some formats or create **hybrid/online-friendly** options, especially for Segovia-based students.

**“Women Leading the Way” (McKinsey) event:**

- This specific event is **organized directly by McKinsey**, not by Talent & Careers.
- All details (format, online access, selection process) depend on McKinsey.
- Students must:
  - Apply via the **McKinsey link**, respecting the deadline (in this case, the deadline was the same day).
  - Carefully read the description to understand:
    - Format (online / in-person)
    - Requirements and selection criteria.

**General advice:**

- For any company you like:
  - Follow **their own event calendar** as well (not only IE-hosted events).
  - Their events are also a channel to:
    - Get your **CV in front of them**.
    - Start building a relationship.

## **TOOLS & RESOURCES MENTIONED**

- **Consulting Tracker (shared via QR during the session):**
  - Central document where students can find:
    - **Internships & summer internships**
      - Both from the IE job portal and external company websites.
    - **Upcoming consulting events**
      - Deloitte Day, Consulting Thursdays, company workshops, etc.

- The document is **updated regularly** so students can track:
  - What's available **right now** in the market.
- **Session check-in:**
  - Emails were collected in the chat for attendance (QR was not working).

## ✓ **NEXT STEPS & ACTION POINTS**

### **For Talent & Careers – Consulting:**

1. **Share boutique names** in leadership development / organizational change in Middle East with the student who asked.
2. Inform Advisors about:
  - a. The increasing interest in **IT & Data Consulting**.
  - b. The need for more **targeted events and contacts** in this area.
3. Keep the **Consulting Tracker** up to date and continue:
  - a. Developing **CV-book pipelines** with selected firms.
  - b. Strengthening relationships with both **large firms and boutiques**.
4. Continue exploring ways to:
  - a. Make certain activities more **accessible for Segovia students** (hybrid/online formats, where possible).

### **For students:**

1. **Join and use the Consulting Tracker** regularly.
2. Start checking **summer internship deadlines now**, especially in larger firms.
3. Build a strategy based on:
  - a. A **clear specialization** (and making it visible in your CV).
  - b. **Targeted networking** (“warmer, not wider”).
  - c. **Flexibility** in geography and firm type.
4. Prepare **strong cover letters** for your top-priority applications.
5. Apply to **company-organized events** (McKinsey, Deloitte, etc.) whenever possible—these are great entry points.

[CLICK HERE FOR SESSION RECORDING](#)

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## OBJECTIVE OF THE SESSION

Provide students with practical tools and strategies to prepare for the upcoming **Career Forum (October 21)** – IE’s flagship event – where **118 companies** (including **28 consulting firms**) will participate.

[CAREER FORUM DETAILS & LINK](#)

## KEY THEMES

### 1. Preparation Before the Career Forum

**Goal:** *Arrive informed, strategic, and ready to connect meaningfully.*

- **Select your target companies (5–10 max):** Be realistic with time and prioritize.
- **Research each firm:**
  - Geography, size, services, clients, recent projects, and focus areas (AI, sustainability, digital transformation, etc.).
  - Identify competitive positioning and market value.
- **Review open roles:** Check the **Career Forum page**, company websites, and LinkedIn for job postings.
- **Craft your 30-second pitch:**
  - “Hi, I’m [name], currently studying [program] at IE. I’m interested in [area]. I saw a position for [role] and would love to learn more.”
- Prepare insightful questions:
  - Expectations for new joiners
  - Typical projects or development opportunities
  - Promotion timelines
  - Definition of success in early months

### 2. During the Career Forum

**Goal:** *Maximize each conversation and leave a positive impression.*

- **Manage your time:** 3–5 minutes per stand; focus on quality, not quantity.
- **Adapt to your audience:**
  - HR → background, program, and role fit.
  - Consultants → daily work, team structure, and professional growth.

- **Demonstrate preparation:** Reference firm-specific details.
  - *Example:* “I saw your expansion in the Middle East; what kind of profiles are you hiring for there?”
- **Collect contacts:** Name + LinkedIn or email.
- **Take quick notes** after each talk (company, recruiter, key takeaway).

### 3. After the Career Forum

**Goal:** *Convert short interactions into long-term connections.*

- **Follow up (within 24–48h):** Send personalized LinkedIn messages.
  - *Example:* “Hi [Name], it was great meeting you at the IE Careers Forum. I really enjoyed our chat about [topic]. I’d love to stay in touch.”
- **Track your networking:**
  - Name | Company | Role | Key takeaway | Follow-up sent (Y/N)
- **Reflect & refine:**
  - Identify which firms resonated most and update your career plan accordingly.
- **Stay visible:**
  - Engage on LinkedIn, follow company pages, and comment meaningfully.

### 4. For September 2025 Students (Graduating Dec 2026 or later)

**Goal:** *Networking & exploration rather than active recruitment.*

- Focus on **learning** about culture, values, and recruitment processes.
- Gather insights and refine your **career goals** for next year.
- Post a short LinkedIn reflection after the event, e.g.:
  - “During the IE Careers Forum, I learned how firms are integrating AI into strategy consulting — fascinating to see how this is reshaping the industry.”

## **INTERVIEW PREPARATION TIPS**

If invited to interviews on campus:

- **Craft 15–20 STAR stories** (Situation, Task, Action, Result) that reflect key competencies.
- **Understand the job offer:** tailor your responses to the employer’s expectations.
- **Research the company** deeply before interviews.
- **Work on body language & communication:**
  - Recommended resource: TED Talk – “Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are” by Amy Cuddy.

 **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- **Preparation drives connection:** “The better you research, the better you connect.”
- **Be strategic:** Prioritize quality conversations over quantity.
- **Follow up and stay visible:** Consistent networking builds long-term opportunities.

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Presented by Natalia Galavís & team (Mariana Medina & Laura Martínez Sánchez)

## **SECTOR OVERVIEW (SNAPSHOT)**

- Expected consulting market growth ~22% (2025–2029) — growth understood as **revenue/market share** more than headcount.
- Sub-sectors (approx.): **Ops 38%, Strategy 33%, Tech 29%**.
- Current dominance: **Big Four**; gaining share: **mid-sized** (Accenture, Alvarez & Marsal, Simon-Kucher) and specialized **boutiques** (ESG, AI, Ops).

## **MARKET TRENDS (NOW)**

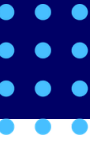
- **AI & Digital Transformation:** consultants who combine **AI + critical judgment** are most in demand.
- **Sustainability/ESG:** support with footprint, reporting, and strategy.
- **Cybersecurity & Risk Advisory** on the rise.
- **Agile and hybrid delivery:** more on-site time with clients.
- **Outcome-based pricing:** clients pay for results, not hours.

### **WHAT'S NEXT?**

- **AI at scale:** in-house initiatives (e.g., internal AI platforms and units).
- **Specialization > generalism:** “business + tech/ESG/finance” hybrids.
- **Mid-sized firms on the upswing** (agility, time-to-value).
- **Salary stabilization:** compensation more “normalized” versus prior peaks.

## **DEMAND MAP — ROLES & SKILLS**

- **Highest-demand roles:** Tech & Digital, Corporate Strategy, Cybersecurity, Data Science, Change Management, ESG, Supply Chain.
- **What they seek: execution** (not just big-picture), **hybrid profiles** (business + technical/ESG/finance).
- **More varied interviews:** mini strategy notes, quick tests (e.g., simple modeling), etc.



## WHO'S HIRING (BRANDS MENTIONED)

- **MBB:** McKinsey, BCG, Bain.
- **Big Four:** Deloitte, EY, PwC, KPMG.
- **“Low multi-verse” / mid-sized:** Accenture, Roland Berger, Oliver Wyman, Kearney.
- **Boutiques / specialized:** Simon-Kucher, OC&C, AlixPartners; social impact: Dalberg; leadership/people: Wolves Leadership (examples).

[Click here for a spreadsheet of job opportunities in consulting.](#)

## REGIONAL HIRING INSIGHTS

- **APAC** (China, India, Singapore, Australia): **fastest growth**, but **prioritizes nationals**.
- **Middle East (GCC):** strong growth (smart cities, large programs); **Saudi/GCC nationals** prioritized due to nationalization policies.
- **U.S.:** largest market, but **uncertain** due to visas/regulation.
- **Europe:** **slower growth**; UK, DE, FR somewhat better.
- **LatAm:** growth in **Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia**.

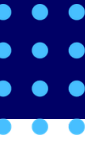
## LOCAL HIRING — KEY RULE

- Firms hire **locally**: they require the **language + work permit + “cultural exposure”** to the target office.
- Even with passport/language, **without local cultural/professional evidence** it's hard to reach interview stage.
- **Partial exception:** some **boutiques** may be more flexible, but **the general rule** remains local.

**Advice:** Your home country is usually the best entry point (also for summer internships, which typically convert to full-time in the same office).

## HIDDEN JOB MARKET & NETWORKING

- ~60% of openings are **not posted** (referrals matter).
- Applying online = competing for the visible **40%**.
- **Recommended strategy:**
  - Activate **IE alumni** and **do coffee chats** (virtual/in-person).
  - Ask for **referrals** intentionally (after providing context and fit).
  - Attend **IE/Firm events** (register via centralized events QR).



## **SELECTION PROCESS (HIGH-LEVEL)**

1. **Application** (portal/link).
2. **Online assessments** (proprietary at MBB; numerical/logical at others).
3. **Case interviews and fit interviews** (both weighted heavily).
4. **Partner round** (often emphasizes fit + case).
5. **Offer.**

**Recommended prep: start 1–2 months before applications open**

### ***IE RESOURCES***

- **Online assessments:** JobTestPrep.
- **Cases:** CaseCoach + **mock interviews with experts** + **Consulting Thursdays** (MBB).
- **Fit/Storytelling:** with your CDA (Career Discovery Advisor).
- **Logistics:** ask your CDA for access to **CaseCoach** and **JobTestPrep** if applicable.

## **RECAP (KEY MESSAGES)**

- The sector is being redefined by **AI, ESG, and specialization**.
- **Hybrid** profiles (business + technical/ESG/finance) > generalists.
- Growth is also coming from **mid-sized and boutiques**, not only MBB/Big Four.
- **Networking/referrals** are critical for the hidden **60%**.
- **Holistic preparation** (cases, online tests, fit, firm knowledge, geography/language) is **non-negotiable**.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS (MENTIONED)**

- **Careers Forum: October 21.**
- **Consulting Thursdays:** with McKinsey, BCG, Bain.
- Others: **Data Consulting (online)**, PwC Germany (DE speakers), **Strategy (ES speakers)**, **Deloitte Day**.
- **Registration:** IE platform (iPad / events QR).

**NEXT STEPS ON FOLLOWING PAGE →**

## ? Q&A — HIGHLIGHTS

- “Growing” = revenue or headcount? → Explained as **market/revenue growth**, not necessarily staff.
- **Summer internship outside home country: not recommended** (pipeline designed for conversion **in the same office**; require culture/language/work permit).
- **Exceptions at boutiques?** → Possible, but **minority**; the **rule** remains local.
- **Visa sponsorship:** occasional cases in certain firms/offices; not the norm in generalist strategy.
- **How to stand out:** add specific, **relevant value to the firm’s scope** in interactions and follow-ups.

## ✓ NEXT STEPS

1. Complete check-in (if pending) to receive materials/links (incl. “Who’s hiring”).
2. **Block weekly prep time** (cases + fit + online tests).
3. Schedule a session with your **CDA** for **geography/office strategy** and **fit**.
4. Activate purposeful **coffee chats** (alumni/consultants) and request **referrals** where there’s fit.
5. Register for **Careers Forum (10/21)** and **Consulting Thursdays (MBB)**.