

# Careers in Consulting

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FelCom's Career Development Seminar 'Careers in Consulting' offered an opportunity for NIH fellows to learn more about this career choice that lies on the border of science and business. Five panelists represented both big elite and boutique companies and talked about all aspects of consulting.

**Dr. Patrick Rose** was the first of the panelists to share his experience. Dr. Rose is a Senior Analyst at Gryphon Scientific, a boutique consulting company with the focus on global health and homeland security. He specializes in disaster preparedness and national security against biological and chemical warfare. He received his PhD in Microbiology and Immunology from Oregon Health & Science Center. He was a National Research Service award Postdoctoral fellow at University of Pennsylvania. While at University of Pennsylvania joined Penn Biotech group at Wharton School of Business and acted as a consultant for biotech start-ups. Dr. Rose was also involved in UPenn biomedical postdoctoral council and recommended their website [www.med.upenn.edu/bpc/index.shtml](http://www.med.upenn.edu/bpc/index.shtml) for career advice. After UPenn he was associated with UMD's Center for Health and Homeland Security and State Department's Office of Anti-Terrorism Assistance and later joined his current firm. Dr. Rose stressed on the importance of reinventing personal skill sets and distinguishing yourself from the crowd. He emphasized on the multifaceted nature of consulting and reminded that consultants are generalists who bridge gaps between groups.

Next in the panel was **Dr. Jennifer Fortune**, Project Leader with The Boston Consulting Group. She got her PhD in Biological Chemistry from MIT. Dr. Fortune transitioned to consulting directly after her graduate work. As a project leader she is a core member of the Healthcare Practice Area and works on a wide variety of projects like 1) global

operating model transformations with large Pharmaceuticals clients 2) assessment of strategic acquisitions in the med tech space 3) design of innovative collaborative pre-competitive research models with the government and heads of large Pharma and biotech. She explained that firms like hers need PhDs for their analytical critical thinking to segment a complex problem into multiple simple ones. Working in management consulting has given her the opportunity to learn from the experts and build skills useful in management. She encouraged consulting for researchers trying to make a tangible impact on society. She informed that management consulting firms are mostly looking for researchers who have demonstrated their interest outside academia. She encouraged the interested candidates to prepare a business resume and a cover letter that translates their enthusiasm for consulting. For those who are interested in consulting profession but want to get a closer look at the company and the workflow Dr. Fortune suggested considering a “Bridge to BCG” workshop. Find more information on the website: <http://www.bcg.com/careers/adc.aspx>

**Dr. Rosemarie Truman**, founder and CEO for The Center for Advancing Innovation was the next speaker. With more than 20 years of consulting experience in all areas of strategy consulting she gave an overview on types of consulting firms and categorized them in to six segments. Dr. Truman started her career in Goldman & Sachs as an analyst. Prior to launching her own firm she was associated with IBM, Oracle, Ernst & Young, Booz Allen & Hamilton and Marsh & McLennan working on high stakes projects and engaging with senior executives. Her firm has been working for Avon Foundation on Portfolio Strategy and also has partnership intermediary agreements with six institutes in NIH including NCI and NHLBI. According to her a successful consultant has to develop a framework, ask questions and recommend a practical, actionable and measurable approach to the client. For her, consulting is a mix of arts and science with many possible solutions for a problem. True results are created when the client implements consultant’s recommendations. She talked about stages in consultant’s career. One generally starts as analysts/consultants, moves up as business development manager and then senior manager and can eventually become a partner or start an independent firm.

**Dr. Shree Koushik** took the stage next. With an extensive history in academia and as a recent NIH postdoc Dr. Koushik spoke about his path from research to regulatory consulting. He was a postdoctoral researcher at NIH until 2011. He acknowledged that it is tough for postdocs to easily transition to other profession, but reminded that Ivory tower might not be for everyone. He completed FAES Certificate program on Technology Transfer at NIH and got certified for regulatory affairs. He emphasized on getting experience in the field of interest and recommended volunteering for various institutes and incubators. He gave his personal experience to show how persistency can eventually create opportunities. Since 2008 Dr. Koushik was volunteering as an independent business development and regulatory affairs consultant for Maryland based incubators like TEDCO. He underlined the fact that the candidate has to show his/her dedication before consultants and other experts would consider them worthy for the job. Dr. Koushik has started his own consulting firm, BDRA Consulting LLC and consults local start-ups on regulatory affairs.

The final speaker for the panel was **Dr. Matt Healy**. Dr. Healy earned his PhD in biochemistry and molecular biology at Johns Hopkins University and also has an MBA degree from the University of Maryland; additionally he is a certified Project Management Professional. Dr. Healy has more than 13 years of management consulting experience with Booz Allen Hamilton as a project manager, analyst and subject matter expert. His clients are government agencies who he helps in addressing operational and strategic challenges in biotechnology research, drug development and regulatory framework. Dr. Healy asked attendees to understand the needs of consulting firms and tailor a resume accordingly. According to him consultants essentially use the same logical steps for troubleshooting that researchers learn in laboratories. The things that distinguish a consultant are fast analytical ability, clear communication skills and ability to be a team player.

In summary, if you are considering a career in consulting, you have to understand that it would be a significant turn in your career. You should be able to demonstrate your ability to succeed outside of laboratory, should learn to communicate in a clear way and present your skills in result-oriented manner.