

## 2 The Consultant: A Clear Outsider's Inside View

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### 2.1 The Management Consultant in Germany: A Job Profile

Management consulting has developed remarkably in Germany and throughout Europe over the last decades and is now an indispensable business-related service. Thus the consulting industry is one of the most dynamic economic sectors. Business reengineering processes, company mergers, deregulation and privatization, the globalization of economic activities at large, as well as the short-lived developments in information and communication technologies provide for always new consulting projects.

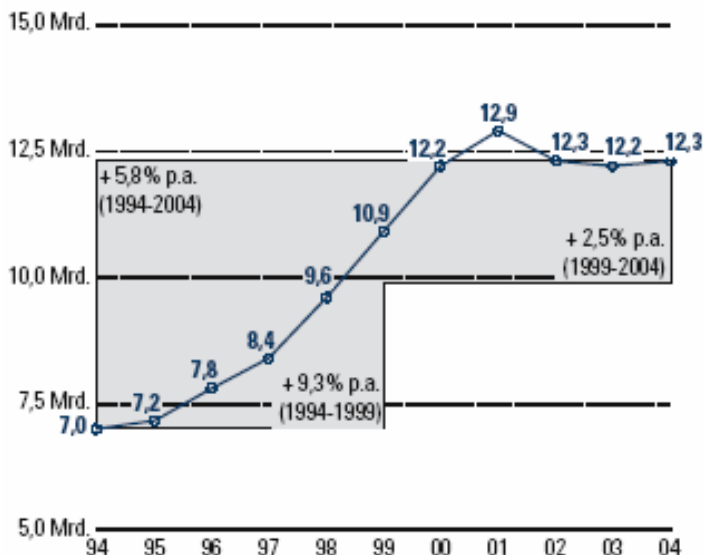


Fig. 2.1. Development of the Consulting Industry in Germany

As is also the case in most other countries the job title “management consultant” [Unternehmensberater] is not protected in Germany. Anybody may – irrespective of his/her vocational aptitude, qualifications and experience – call himself/herself “management consultant”. This means that it is particularly easy for unqualified business consultants to establish themselves on the consulting market, thus damaging the reputation of the whole industry. The Federal Association Bundesverband Deutscher Unternehmensberater, which was founded in 1954, has implemented demanding quality criteria for the industry so as to counter this unsatisfactory situation. BDU members to come have to observe a strict admittance procedure, where they have to prove their ability as well as their job experience and they must submit verifiable customer references and they also undertake to abide by the comprehensive job principles as to which rules have to be observed when working as a management consultant, resp. executive search consultant. Pursuant to these principles professional management consultants are only offering their services if it is to be expected that their work is beneficial for their customers. This also means that they must be qualified and have sufficient staff and time to complete the mission within an adequate period. Moreover, it is being expected that they are basically acting as individually accountable persons and do not accept any limitations to their independence by third parties. Their consulting service is always non-partisan and objective. Expert opinions rendered out of complaisance or the will to please are a no-go. Fees must be proportionate to the type and volume of work to be carried out and should be agreed with the customer before the start of the assignment.

Management consultant’s work in many different areas with varying degrees of complexity and the business community is expecting more and more from them. The challenge is to deal with different projects on the one hand and an enormous range of economic sectors on the other hand. This means that the consultants have to tackle a variety of demands, today they have to be brilliant analysts or cautious strategists, tomorrow they have to be the target-oriented catalysts or trusted coaches. The type of skill and abilities required vary from one assignment to the next, there is no such thing as *the* business consultant who could be described in a nutshell. The variety of management consulting tasks is better understandable when studying the list of traditional consulting tasks below:

- External trade consulting,
- controlling,
- communication consulting,
- marketing,
- information management,
- outplacement consulting,
- human resource management,
- management consulting,
- project management,
- quality management,