Strengthening your Profile

Here are some tips and tricks that we found useful for candidates to keep in mind as they go through our recruitment process.

1. Attend the BC Events
   
   **Berkeley Consulting Infosessions**: We hold two of them, so be sure to attend one to learn firsthand what BC really is, our history, our culture, our work, and especially what you can get out of being a member in BC!

   **Berkeley Consulting Case Workshop**: Our recruiting cycle involves case interviews, and the Case Workshop is a great way to understand not only what a case interview is, but also how to approach any type of organizational problem from a more structured lens.

2. Understand what is Consulting?
   
   It is important to understand what consulting is all about so that you can get a better idea of what qualities we are looking for in a candidate.

   **What do you do in consulting?**
   - Essentially, you work with different organizations, whether it is a corporation, nonprofit, startup, government agency, or other, to **assess a problem they are experiencing and develop tailored solutions** that they can implement. I know - it’s very broad.
What types of problems do you solve?

- **The Laundry List**: Entering a new market, developing a new product, spinning off a subsidiary company of a holding company, cutting costs, making an investment, acquiring a company, merging with a competitor, offshoring or outsourcing manufacturing, developing a marketing strategy, identifying target markets and customer segments, creating incentive plans for sales teams, designing a customer experience architecture, creating a value-based pricing strategy, and many more!
- There is no need to memorize the laundry list, because there is a “how do you approach this problem?” mindset that a consultant develops and iteratively improves on that can be applied to each and every one of these examples.

What makes a good consultant?

- A good consultant is not someone who is born and bred for business. Consultants come from a wide variety of backgrounds but have a few common traits. It is important to showcase these traits in the interviews. BC-ers come from all majors and backgrounds and that is exactly what makes our solutions and work unique and top notch.
- A good consultant is (1) creative within the realm of practicality, (2) able to convey their thoughts succinctly and accurately, and (3) able to apply a logical structure to the solution they are providing.

With this in mind, try to demonstrate these qualities and capabilities throughout your application and candidacy.

3. Written Application Tips

A good consultant must be a great communicator. The first metric we like to use to gauge this is the written application.

The first prompt is what we use to understand you as a person better. Challenge yourself to write about something that is not fully covered by your resume. Whether it’d be elaborating on a particular activity on your resume or sharing with us a quirky hobby you enjoy, really just make this essay reflect you. Needless to say, we are also looking for quality of writing in these responses as well.

The second prompt is where the applicant gets to demonstrate their problem-solving skills. In less than 250 words, the challenge is to balance succinctness and including enough detail to explain your idea. Keep in mind that we read hundreds of these responses, so it wouldn’t hurt to write about something that shares a new perspective, concept or idea with us! We value uniqueness of thought so dare to go beyond your typical companies and solutions that first come to mind.

4. Resume Tips

Your resume is our first insight into who you are, what you’ve done, and what you can bring to BC. Though it’s just one of the many pieces of your application, we will look at it first and refer back to it throughout the recruitment process.
Format

• Don’t stress too much about your resume format and template! BC will carefully look at your personal experiences and accomplishments irrespective of your design skills. But, be sure to...
• Divide with sections. Some good ones usually include: Education, Experience (work and/or leadership), Awards, Skills, Interests
• Use deliberate ordering of sections and experiences, and the occasional bolding and italics. We want to know what’s important to you among all the things you’ve done.
• Organize with bullets. A good general rule is 3 bullets per section.
• Select a visible font size! 10-12 point size works for most fonts, but always use your best judgement.

What to include

• Major(s), declared or intended
• Cumulative GPA and, if applicable, major GPA(s)
• Honors and awards (academic or other)
• All current and past work, leadership, and volunteer experiences, whether it be a job, internship, or in another student organization at Cal.
  o Position(s) held
  o Time frames you were in those positions
  o What you did and accomplished there (see section “How to frame your work”)
• Technical and/or computer skills, along with a very brief (1-2 word) description of your proficiency
• Hobbies, interests, random facts—we want to know what makes you, you. Though these are often just a single line at the bottom, BC interviewers might glance and find something in common with you!

What not to include

• High school education, work / leadership experiences, awards, etc. (Note: This does not apply to freshmen who graduated high school directly prior to matriculating at Cal.)
• Objective.
• General skills and aptitudes. Common examples include: leadership, teamwork, public speaking, etc.

How to frame your work

• Tell us your role, day-to day. We want to know what your main duties were in that organization, how they fit in with everyone else’s work, and what final products or deliverables you were responsible for producing.
• Explain what skills you used. These can be general or technical skills, or ones that are specific to that particular organization and/or role. If we’re confused, we’ll be sure to ask in the interview.
- **Outline what you have accomplished.** If you help reach a certain goal at a company you have worked for, or you aided in launching a product – highlight that!
- **Name major, concrete results and accomplishments.** We want to know the impact you made on the organization and its work during your time there:
  - Your projects, products, or presentations
  - The direct impact or change they made, whether it be by accomplishing a goal or target, changing a data point, hitting a milestone, or anything else
  - If possible, include statistics, figures, data points, etc.
  - What happened after the results of your work—where did your work leave the organization today?

5. **Case Interview Preparation**

BC’s case interview isn’t meant to test for business experience or trivia. Its purpose is to gauge a candidate’s general approach towards big picture problems and understand how they think. For this reason, we don’t recommend reading through all of Case In Point and memorizing frameworks, but instead we suggest looking through some of the book’s sample cases to gain familiarity with typical case formats. More example cases can also be found on McKinsey’s website.

**Components of the BC case interview**

- **Behavioral:** Our interviews will contain a behavioral portion where we really want to understand what you are passionate about (it could be really anything: base jumping, interior design, game development, etc.) and how you have developed and applied your leadership skills.
- **Prompt:** To begin the case, the BC interviewers will read the case prompt out loud *only once*. You won’t be handed a written copy, but feel free to take notes and ask clarifying questions after. Consider repeating portions of the prompt back to the interviewers to (1) show your understanding, and (2) distill the facts and required analyses within the case.
- **Quantitative:** We want to make sure that you are comfortable with numbers and can do quick and easy math (i.e. percentages, adding, multiplying, dividing, subtraction).
  - Make the numbers easy by rounding them and using scientific notation.
  - Make your numerical assumptions with logical reasoning—if you wanted to estimate what percentage of care owners in the U.S. owned Ferrari’s, 25% is probably too high of a number.
- **Qualitative:** We want to see your creative mind in action! There will be ideation portions within the interview that require you to brainstorm reasons for or potential solutions to a problem.
  - Critically think about your suggestions given all of the information you have collected. For example, if you know that the client manufactures beer bottles and wants to enter the water bottle market, it may be useful for them to launch a premium glass water bottle product since they can reuse the same manufacturing process for beer bottles that they already operate.
- Analyze the pros and cons of your suggestions and be your own devil’s advocate so you can paint a fuller picture.
- Prioritize your suggestions so that the interviewer can see what is most important and what should be acted on first by the client.

**Synthesis**: This is where structure matters the most! The interviewers will offer you a few minutes to gather your thoughts and develop a presentation—free to utilize the full time given. Make sure you take all of the insights you have collected so far, organize them in a logical flow, and succinctly present the most useful information that helps answer the original stated problem. Always state your recommendation first to set the stage for the rest of your synthesis.

**Practicing**

- **Practice with friends**: Everyone says it, but most don’t do it enough. By walking through a few cases with your friends, you will begin to see an improvement in your case interviewing ability—guaranteed. Many people are not used to hearing themselves speak and think out loud so getting comfortable with that is the first step to nailing that case interview!
- **Practice your organization**: If you have great ideas, they won’t stand out unless you organize your thoughts well. This includes framing suggestions in a stepwise structure when you are speaking, having a different paper for each portion of the case so it is easy to unify all the components in the end, and writing legibly.

Thank you for your interest in BC and we hope to see you soon!