

Everyone wants to be a consultant

This was the impression at a meeting held last week at the IDC Herzliya by international consultants McKinsey.

By IDC Magazine

So what do people want to be when they grow up? Doctors? Lawyers? To judge by the capacity crowd at the recruitment meeting for international consultants McKinsey, organized by the career development center a week ago at IDC Herzliya, the career for today is consultant. Jonathan Kolodny, manager of McKinsey's Israel branch, came to the IDC Herzliya with a team of consultants to present the company and persuade the large audience filling the hall that despite the hard work and the long hours, it is worth working for McKinsey.

Graduates of IDC Herzliya are employed in a number of McKinsey branches around the world, and there are currently five graduates working in the Israeli branch: Shai Albaranes (graduate of the Efi Arazi School of Computer Sciences), Yair Erez (Now studying for MBA), Eyal Malinger (a graduate of the Efi Arazi School of Computer Sciences), Yaron Savorai (a graduate in Law and Business), and Matan Parnes (a graduate of the RRIS in computer sciences and of the Zell Entrepreneurship Program), who also participated in the meeting.

McKinsey & Co. prepares strategic plans for its clients. The company, which is made up of experts in every field, carries out research and analysis for the client and focuses on the business opportunities the market offers. McKinsey has 89 offices in 51 different countries around the world,

and employs over 8,000 people. Its international deployment means that it can offer Israeli companies advice about remote markets and business opportunities overseas, consulting with any one of the 8,000 experts when a problem arises that is unfamiliar to the Israeli team.



McKinsey works with the largest companies in the world, including IBM and AT&T. The company also advises non-for-profit organizations, government bodies (McKinsey works with 40 different governments around the world), and investment houses.

Consulting work is carried out in teams. There is no hierarchy within the team, and everyone is encouraged to express his or her opinion. The deciding opinion is the one that convinces the greatest number of team members. According to Kolodny, "we tell our consultants the only thing that is absolutely necessary is that they should have an opinion".

The work includes many meetings with the client, in order to become very familiar with the environment in which the client operates. McKinsey



consultants work with the highest ranks in the organization – the CEOs and VPs. At the same time, routine work is carried out with a work team provided by the client. Jonathan Kolodny tells how as a consultant, he used to work with the client's junior team, and a few years later the same people with whom he used to work had already become senior managers in leading companies in the market.

McKinsey offers training and investment in its employees' know-how. "We make sure we study all fields in which our customers are involved, this means that we must have an understanding of a very wide range of fields. We also insist our consultants will receive international training, and send them to work for different periods of time at other branches of the company."

Graduates of McKinsey in Israel have taken up senior positions in the leading companies in the Israeli economy: Bank Hapoalim, First International Bank, Amdocs, Netvision, Pitango, Machteshim, Bank Leumi, and others. It should be noted that it is only in recent years that Google has overtaken McKinsey in surveys of employee satisfaction. Until then, it was ranked first in the world in this respect.

According to Kolodny, "It must be remembered that in order to be a good consultant, one needs to be able to enjoy other people's success. If it is important you want to be in the spotlight, you can't do this job, because one of the most important things is to do the hard work and let the client take the credit. You can't get upset by this, you have to understand that it is actually something positive - it makes the client more committed to the solution you have offered. The really special aspect of this work is the

opportunity to be influential. We try to make sure that the plans we build for our clients are also practicable, and if necessary we accompany the client during the process of implementation. Partners at McKinsey are not measured by the income they contribute to the company, but by how many of the plans they propose are actually put into practice."

"In order to work at McKinsey, you have to be a person who enjoys solving other people's problems, someone who really gets excited and can't sleep at night until the problem is solved. We are looking for people who know how to lead, even if they have not formally been given leadership. We are looking for people who know how to work in a team, people with inspiration. We are looking for excellence – in any sphere, anything that will indicate a desire to shine and to stand out.

"Our rule about working for the company is that either you move forward or you leave. There is a structured promotion ladder within McKinsey, and we don't undertake to promote everyone, but we also don't force anyone to stay. The first two years are a trial period, and after that we finance MBA studies at one of the prestigious institutions – Wharton, Harvard and so on, and progress up the ladder continues from there: junior partner, intermediate partner, and senior partner."

The company recruits twice a year, fall and spring. 15 new employees joined the Israel branch in the last recruitment process.

Applications can be submitted on the company's website:

<http://www.mckinsey.com/> by April 30th. The first stage is a multiple choice test focusing on quantitative questions and solving case studies. This is the stage at which the company



checks how the applicant copes with these subjects – does he enjoy them, and how comfortable he feels with them? So you might want to refresh your mathematic background. This is followed by two rounds of interviews: the first round between June 10 – 12, and a second round that includes two to four interviews and group dynamics, and will be held June 15 – 16. The positions open up in August 2008. The tests and interviews are held in Hebrew and English, and employees of the Israeli branch are expected to be fluent in both these languages.

Since registration is done over the Internet, in practice it is possible to register an application from Israel to any branch around the world. It is also possible to submit an application to a number of branches at the same time, and to start the recruitment process for overseas branches in Israel. “We recruit candidates from all the leading academic institutions in Israel: the Technion, Tel Aviv University, and, of course, IDC Herzliya.

Those who are interested in employment in the company and/or in occupational issues in general are invited to contact the career development center:
www.idc.ac.il/CDC