CONSULTING CASE BOOK

ISB Class of 2018

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From the President's Desk, Hyderabad Campus

Dear Consulting Aspirants,

It gives me immense pleasure to share with you the consulting case book prepared by the Consulting Club of the Class of 2018, driven by extremely valuable inputs from its to-be-consultants. As I pen this down, I'm sure you would be extremely excited and geared up for possibly what would turn out to be the most defining year of your lives. Furthermore, a huge chunk of you would be vying to get a premier consulting job. You've come to the right place!

As many of you might have already heard, ISB, in its vast spectrum of diverse roles offered on campus, takes a lot of pride in its consulting placements too. Consulting firms have traditionally accounted for about 20% of the jobs offered on campus, and this year has been no different, in terms of the number of offers, diversity of roles and the vast array of big names and niche players. Also, the core set of fundamental skills that one needs here is pivotal to any business strategy role, as it involves using insights from data to make decisions, design solutions, and deal with uncertainty.

So yes, there is a destination, and to reach it, there is a journey. While each one of you must clearly understand that there is no one "pattern" to do it, and every individual must figure out his/her own best methods, this book will ensure that you tick all the needed boxes during your preparation. The opportunities that a consulting profile offers are paramount. The opportunity to work on a wide variety of problems that businesses, organisations, and governments face, interact with a lot of senior people including Directors, CXOs and other board-level executives, get exposed to a lot of different places, and work with diverse industries and cutting-edge tools in a short period of time. But at the heart of it all, it is very essential that you spend the first few weeks figuring out whether you are a good fit for a career in consulting. From my interactions with a lot of alumni and professionals from the consulting sector, getting into a consulting firm is just the start and has a lot more to it than just solving cases.

The Consulting Core teams at both campuses jointly work to ensure that every consulting aspirant receives all that is needed in terms of workshops, alumni connects, newsletters, resume reviews, industry sessions, etc. At the same time, it is important that some amount of regular preparation from your end is key to building your skills to ace a consulting interview. Reading regularly about business news, practicing case problems, being thorough with the concepts taught in the core terms, group learning, all while not comparing your methods of preparation to that of others can go a long way into giving you the needed push to achieve your dreams. Lastly, a huge shout-out to the contributors of this book and the members of the club for believing in our ability to deliver!

Best regards,

Anand Chandrasekharan

President, Consulting Club – Hyderabad Campus

From the President's Desk, Mohali Campus

Dear Consulting Aspirants,

"Aim for the sky, even if you miss you will land among the stars." This quote is apt during your PGP tenure at ISB, but especially true for aspirants looking at consulting as a career option post ISB – some of the best jobs on campus come in the consulting domain and thus an enormous chunk of your already talented peers compete to bag these dream jobs! On that note, I take immense pleasure in sharing the Co2018 Consulting Casebook with you and wish you all the best as you embark upon this rigorous yet memorable preparation journey.

From a consulting club standpoint, Anand has aptly covered the aspirations and functions of the club in his address above – right from creating awareness about various verticals/functions to personalized resume reviews and case interview preparations, the club will always be available to offer a helping hand throughout your preparation. The club will also facilitate sessions with consulting bigwigs to keep you abreast with latest trends, and more importantly facilitate interactions with ISB Alums from various firms that recruit on campus.

Instead of elaborating on these activities of the consulting club and making this repetitive, I would like to briefly talk about two items based on my experience:

1. The Mohali Campus Angle: While ISB definitely embodies the 1 school 2 campus philosophy, and does a great job at it across the PGP journey, folks studying in Mohali have to accept the locational disadvantage for the campus in having live interactions with Alums / Companies. Thus instead of complaining, I would suggest putting in the extra mile – leverage the time of any ISB Alum or any expert to the fullest while he/she is on campus. The consulting club will do their best to make this happen, and last year we were successful in achieving this. Secondly, make an effort on a personal level to connect with multiple ISB Alums through different communication channels for all the preparatory support you need!
2. Plan B: Cracking your dream consulting job is tough, and thus I would suggest having a plan B in mind as a safety net – this will ensure you at least end up bagging anyone of the plethora of awesome roles that come to campus in addition to consulting. However, I do not intend to say that giving up hopes or working less hard during consulting preparation in lieu of Plan B is the way to go – you will automatically end up preparing well for Plan B if you diligently prepare for consulting, but have a plan B at the back of your mind since it will help you prioritize interviews on Day 1 ☺

Lastly, I would like to thank all my peers for contributing to this casebook with their interview experiences and ideas, and also appreciate every Alumni that helped our batch through the club. Here is wishing you all the best for your preparation, dream job and future endeavours!

Cheers,

Vinayak Poddar

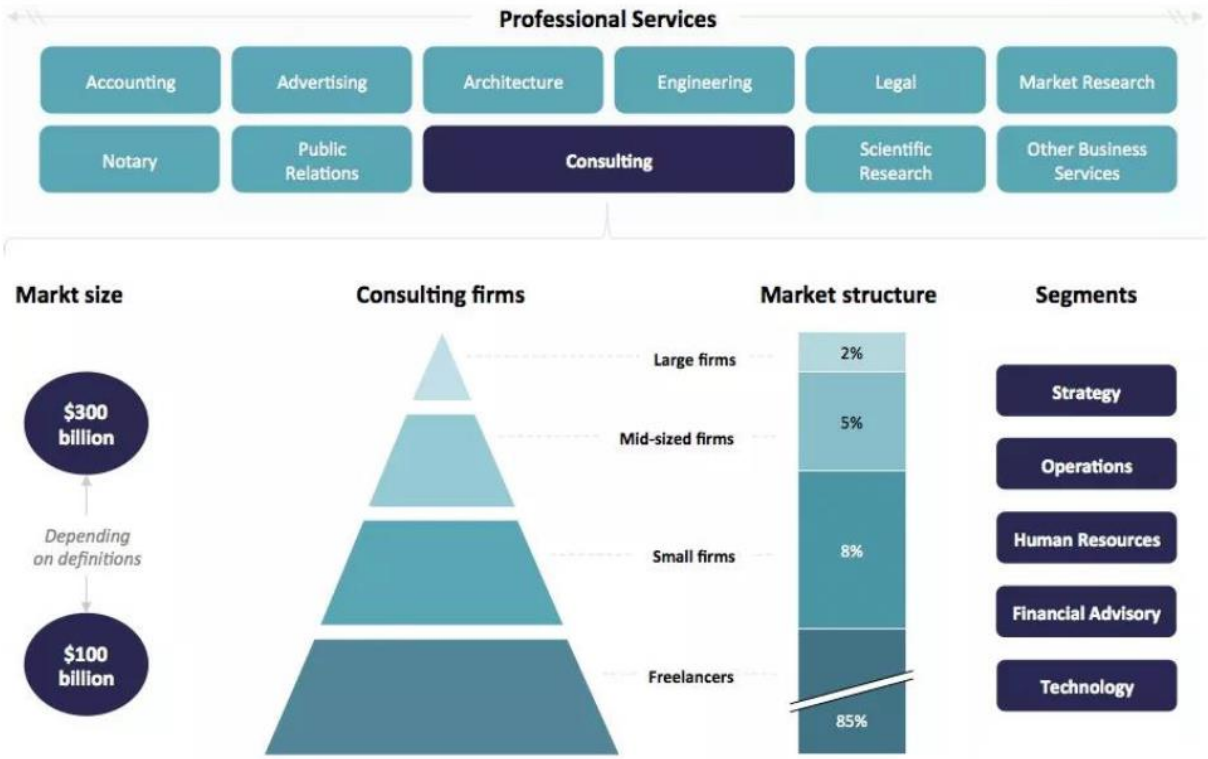
President, Consulting Club, Mohali Campus

Consulting 101

Consultants are problem solvers for hire. They use all the knowledge taught in business schools, as well as frameworks and other specialized skills developed within their firms to advice business leaders on solving business problems. They use a combination of data intensive analyses, thorough primary and secondary research and business intuition from experienced professionals in the industry to understand a business and provide their recommendation. Businesses and government bring them on board when they have a problem that's too complicated or the resources needed would be too great for internal staff to resolve.

Consulting as a profession is glamorous for many reasons. A high paying, high status job with lots of travel and a steep learning curve, consulting is one of the major career aspirations at ISB. It is a very difficult job to land, and even while inside, one needs to prove oneself consistently to reap the rewards that consulting has to offer. A lot of business school graduates aspire to become consultants because of the networking opportunities that it provides, along with the rich and diverse exit options that it creates.

Consulting forms a large niche within the gambit of the professional services industry.



At the heart of the industry stand 5 main segments–Strategy Consulting, Operations Consulting, HR Consulting, Financial Advisory and Technology Consulting. While there are many types of consulting firms, we will focus on the management consulting firms (firms that offer strategy, operations and human resources consulting).

Management Consulting, in a nutshell, is helping CEOs and other business leaders solve large scale strategy business problems. It mainly involves a lot of research on the company and providing a business solution to the CEO in the form of a data-driven, research-backed recommendation. This is where the role of the "management consultant" is over. However, the firm may still be hired for implementation services, where other consulting practices such as Technology Consulting, Financial Advisory among others get involved. Though there is a difference in initial (joining) salary between strategy and non-strategy (other) consultants, in the long run the best of both get similar compensations.

Is Management Consulting the right choice for you and for your career?

As mentioned before, Management Consulting is a glamorous role and a very sure fire way to kick start a phenomenal career in the business world. However, with all the glamour and the money, comes a lot of responsibility and work. Consultants spend a lot of hours working, at times averaging about 12 hours of work a day, depending on the urgency of a client deadline. It is a rigorous life, and one that requires the person to travel away from home 5 days a week. This makes it especially difficult for consultants with spouses or families in their home location. The travel can also take its toll, with client locations being in remote parts at times.

This is the main reason that it is not easy to get into a consulting firm. Consulting firms have a very stringent recruitment system, one that requires candidates to showcase not only their academic and professional prowess, but also their mental capacity and maturity in high pressure situations. Consultants mostly directly interact with company CEOs and business leaders, and as such, a certain command over communication skills is paramount. It is famously known that consultants hardly receive any training once hired, and are usually directly thrown into the deep end of the proverbial consulting pool.

All this being said, consulting as a career is very rewarding. Be it the steep learning curve, the chance to interact with big names in any industry, and very lucrative exit options, consulting provides it all. If you are considering consulting as a career choice, please be aware of the time and effort commitment required from your side not just within the one year at ISB, but also beyond when performing at your job. Consulting is not for everyone, but if you feel it is the career path for you, then work hard and you will reap great rewards!

The Who's Who of consulting

accenture

ATKearney

ALVAREZ & MARSAL

McKinsey&Company

L.E.K.

Deloitte.

BCG

Dalberg

pwc

BAIN & COMPANY

Roland Berger
Strategy Consultants

VECTOR
CONSULTING GROUP

KPMG

gep saving is believing

EY

Broad Categories of Roles Offered:

Roles across most of the consulting firms can be bucketed under the following types:

- Strategy Consulting
- Operations Consulting
- Technology Consulting
- HR Consulting
- IT Consulting
- Analytics / Data Science Driven Consulting

Designation can be Analyst, Junior Associate, Associate, Senior Associate, Consultant, Sr. Consultant, Manager or something totally different based on company policy and structure.

Additional Resources

For the curious cats among you, here's some more information on consulting:

- Want to know how to customize your cover letter for each firm? You'll want to find out what each firm is looking for in the MBAs they hire. Get that information at Poets & Quants' MBA Career Guide. http://poetsandquants.com/mba-career-guide/
- Wondering about the future of the consulting industry? Find our more in the Harvard Business Review (HBR) article - Consulting on the Cusp of Disruption by Clayton Christensen et al. https://hbr.org/2013/10/consulting-on-the-cusp-of-disruption
- Curious about the history of management consulting? The 'Consulting Industry Overview' on STREETOFWALLS is an excellent resource. http://www.streetofwalls.com/finance-training-courses/consulting-interview-training/consulting-industry-overview/

If you want to dig deeper still, the following additional resources are a good starting point:

- CaseInterview.com: What is Management Consulting - Victor Cheng (http://www.caseinterview.com/management-consulting)
- MBA Crystal Ball: How the consulting recruitment cycle works on campus at ISB - Kanav Sharma (http://www.mbacrystalball.com/blog/2016/05/18/consulting-recruitment-cycle-isb/)
- Vault (http://www.vault.com/industries-professions/industries/consulting.aspx)

Note: Several infographics, paragraphs and sentences in this article, have been quoted from Consultancy.uk, The Economist, OpenBusinessCouncil.org & Getajobinconsulting.com and ISB Case Book Co'17

Know your company

McKinsey & Company	

Overview	➢ About – McKinsey and Co. is a global management consulting firm and also forms a part of the elite big-three 'MBB' consulting firms.
	➢ Types of consulting services offered – Management
	➢ Acquisitions of other consulting companies (last two years)
	  ○ Quantum Black (data analytics firm)
	  ○ Lunar (design consulting firm)
	  ○ 4tree (German big data solutions company)
	➢ Strategy vs implementation? – Primarily strategy but increasingly moving towards implementation as well
	➢ Non-hierarchical, strictly merit-based firm with a fantastic training and review process

Typical career path	➢ Junior Associate ➢ Associate ➢ Consultant ➢ Engagement Manager ➢ Associate Partner ➢ Partner
Quick facts	➢ Established - 1926 ➢ Number of employees (worldwide) – 10,000+ ➢ Number of practice areas with few egs. – General Practice, Industrial Operations, McKinsey Digital ➢ Number of offices and countries present in – 110+ global offices across 60+ countries ➢ Global MD – Dominic Barton; India MD – Gautam Kumra
Interview process	➢ Pre shortlist – Resume (the standard ISB format), no cover letter required [the most crucial stage] ➢ Round 1 – Personal + Case interview ➢ Round 2 – Personal + Case interview, post which a shortlist for round 3 is released ➢ Round 3 – Mostly personal interview with a short case

Boston Consulting Group	
Overview	➢ About –One of the Big Three consulting firms globally, with 3 offices in India (Mumbai, Gurgaon, Chennai). Features regularly in top consulting and top workplaces lists ➢ Types of consulting services offered - BCG offers strategy consulting for corporates, public sector and social sectors ➢ Strategy vs implementation? – BCG's major projects are in sync with industry demands and most projects are end to end provision of consulting services, i.e. it includes implementation of solutions. ➢ The firm believes in a bottom- up approach to solving problems. Lookup BCG Henderson Institute for details on research in BCG.
Typical career path	➢ Senior Associate ➢ Consultant ➢ Project Leader ➢ Principal ➢ Partner
Quick facts	➢ Established - 1963 ➢ Number of employees (worldwide) - ~12,000 ➢ Number of practice areas with few egs - Diversified ➢ Number of offices and countries present in – 88 in 48 countries
Interview process	➢ Pre shortlist – PPT -> Resume Shortlist -> Buddy Program -> Dinner/ Lunch -> Interviews ➢ Round 1 – Interview with a team lead, lasting 45 min. ➢ Round 2 – Interview with another Project lead. Case was one that he was working on presently Informed about selection for next round within 5 min post interview ➢ Round 3 – Interview with Project Lead. Live case discussion and conversations around different projects the PL was working on. ➢ Round 4 – Interview with Partner lasting about an hour. Case he had recently completed. ➢ All the interviews were conversational – no pressure situations ➢ Confidence in the interviews is must

Bain and Company	
Overview	➢ About - Bain & Company is an American global management consulting firm headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts. It provides advisory services to businesses, nonprofit organizations, and governments, and is one of the Big Three strategy consulting firms (MBB). ➢ Types of consulting services offered - Strategy ➢ Strategy vs implementation? - Strategy ➢ Great work culture, strong peer group, amazing exit opportunities
Typical career path	➢ Associate Consultant ➢ Senior Associate Consultant ➢ Consultant ➢ Case Team Leader ➢ Manager ➢ Principal ➢ Partner
Quick facts	➢ Established - 1973 ➢ Number of employees (worldwide) - ~6,000 ➢ Number of practice areas with few egs - Private Equity, IT, CPG, Corporate Finance etc. ➢ Number of offices and countries present in - 50+ offices in ~34 countries
Interview process	➢ Pre shortlist – CV ➢ Round 1 – Case interview with a manager, minimal PI (hardly 5 minutes) ➢ Round 2 – Case interview with a manager, minimal PI (hardly 5 minutes) ➢ Round 3 – You may or may not have an additional case interview with another manager. Same format as the above rounds. ➢ Round 4 – Case interview with Partner. Limited PI, focusing broadly on work experience and why consulting.

A.T. Kearney	
Overview	➢ About – A.T. Kearney ➢ Types of consulting services offered – Strategy, Procurement and Analytics ➢ Strategy vs implementation? – Both ➢ The firm has two practices: General Practice (GP) and Procurement & Analytic Solutions (PAS). ➢ GP recruitment is for the India team and these recruits are usually staffed on engagements within India. PAS recruits are a part of the Global Staffing and majorly work on International engagements.
Typical career path	➢ Analyst ➢ Senior Analyst ➢ Associate ➢ Manager ➢ Senior Manager ➢ Director ➢ Vice President ➢ Partner
Quick facts	➢ Established - 1926 ➢ Number of employees (worldwide) - 3600 ➢ Number of practice areas with few egs – GP & PAS ➢ Number of offices and countries present in – Offices in more than 40 countries
Interview process	➢ Pre shortlist – Resume ➢ Round 1 – Case Interview & PI ➢ Round 2 - Case Interview & PI ➢ Round 3 – Case Interview & PI

The Parthenon Group	
Overview	➢ Founded in 1991 by 2 Bain consultants – John Rutherford and William Achtmeyer ➢ Look to hire 'smart', 'nice', 'driven' individuals ➢ Works in multiple sectors such as consumer, education, financial services, healthcare, life sciences, oil and gas, private equity etc ➢ Global leaders in education consulting
Typical career path	➢ Associate ➢ Senior Associate ➢ Principal ➢ Senior Principal ➢ Partner
Quick facts	➢ EY advisory purchased 'The Parthenon Group' in June 2014 ➢ Number of employees (worldwide) – 600+ ➢ Cancelled recruitment at ISB in 2018 after PPT, Cover Letter & Resume Submission due to "*lack of vacancy(need)*" in the firm
Interview process	➢ Pre shortlist – PPT -> Resume Shortlist -> Buddy Program -> Dinner/ Lunch -> Interviews ➢ Round 1/2/3 – Interview – could be personal interview or case based ➢ Round 3/4 – Partner Round – A case presentation to partner for 45 mins. Case to be provided 30 mins prior to interview **Additional info:** ➢ People from firm judge you on how well you will be able to fit in the company fabric ➢ Cases can vary from guestimates to Private Equity or Mergers ➢ Company practices double staffing i.e. employing a consultant on 2 projects in parallel, hence do pursue the interviews only if you are willing to give all your time to work

Incubation of L.E.K. Consulting: L.E.K. is one of the top consulting houses in the world and recently entered India by opening its 1st office in Mumbai in late 2017. News is that one partner from Parthenon along with his team was poached to setup the education consulting practice for L.E.K in India and more importantly setup the 1st office of this consulting firm in India. L.E.K. recruited from ISB in 2018 for the 1st time and hopefully will expand its practice and recruitment for future classes at ISB!

Accenture Strategy	
Overview	➢ Accenture Strategy operates at the intersection of business and technology. Vault ranks it as the 5th best strategy consulting firm. ➢ Consulting services offered - Strategy/Operations/Technology/HR ➢ Acquisitions - SBC, Kurt Salmon, 2nd Road, Javelin Group, Seabury Group, Axia Limited (6 acquisitions in past 2 years). ➢ Accenture Strategy is primarily focused on strategy. Other Accenture divisions focus on implementation. ➢ Industry specializations - 15 different focused industries, including media, energy, life sciences, banking, health, public service etc. ➢ Insights – Prioritizes hiring women (40%+ consultants are women). Futuristic (looks for entrepreneurial disruptor mindset in new hires). Hires for 2 divisions IB (India Business) and CN (Capability Network). IB serves Indian clients while CN serves global clients. Globally ranked # 1 consulting firm for IT, # 3 for Ops. and Energy
Typical career path	➢ Analyst ➢ Consultant (Associate) ➢ Manager (Engagement Manager) ➢ Senior Manager (Principal) ➢ Managing Director (Partner)
Quick facts	➢ Established -1951 (formerly known as Anderson Consulting) ➢ Number of employees at Accenture Strategy - 9,000 (worldwide) ➢ Accenture (ACN) is the world's largest stand-alone consulting firm with ~ 400,000 employees in 200 offices across 120 countries
Interview process	➢ Shortlist - Resume based screening. Unlike other major consulting firms, they do not filter based on GPA. Work exp. is key criteria. ➢ Round 1 - Case interview with some behavioral questions ➢ Round 2 - Case interview (intense). Given a live case (Interviewer was working on it). Look for practically implementable solutions. ➢ Round 3 - Partner round. He already has feedback from the previous interviews. Casual chat to evaluate for cultural fit.

Deloitte USI S&O	
Overview	➢ About - Deloitte is one of the "Big Four" accounting firms and the largest professional services network in the world by revenue and number of professionals. ➢ Types of consulting services offered - Strategy ➢ Acquisitions of other consulting companies - Monitor Strategy Consulting, on-going integration with the Deloitte S&O function ➢ Strategy vs implementation? - Strategy ➢ Notable developments in the past 2 years - Joint Venture between USI and other member firms ➢ Amazing work culture, great mobility options
Typical career path	➢ Consultant ➢ Senior Consultant ➢ Manager ➢ Senior Manager ➢ Director
Quick facts	➢ Established - 1845 ➢ Number of employees (worldwide) - 244,400 ➢ Number of practice areas with few eg: - Strategy & Operations, Technology, Strategy & Architecture, Human Consulting, Technology Consulting
➢ **Interview process**	➢ Pre shortlist – Only CV required ➢ Round 1 – 30 mins PI and guesstimate with a manager ➢ Round 2 – 45 – 60 mins case round with a panel ➢ Round 3 – 30 mins PI with a partner and a manager

Please note that for 2018, Deloitte India Consulting also came to ISB for recruitment with their Strategy & Operations profile. Although Deloitte India Consulting S&O and Deloitte USI S&O function as separate entities with different work culture, projects, clients, service lines among other things, both are part of the umbrella firm Deloitte LLP.

Ernst and Young – Performance Improvement	
Overview	➢ About – EY is one of the big four accounting firms. Its Performance Improvement service (under its advisory division) helps clients solve their management and operational challenges ➢ Types of consulting services offered – strategy, supply chain, finance, customer and people and organization ➢ Strategy vs implementation – high focus on implementation with some strategy projects ➢ Industry – TMT, Industrials, Infrastructure and Consumer Goods, Financial Services, Government Advisory ➢ Lots of opportunities available within the firm to grow quickly and ample travel opportunities within India
Typical career path	➢ Analyst ➢ Associate Consultant ➢ Consultant ➢ Senior Consultant ➢ Manager ➢ Senior Manager ➢ Director ➢ Executive Director ➢ Partner
Quick facts	➢ Established - 1989 ➢ Number of employees (worldwide) – approx. 200,000 including audit, tax and advisory ➢ Number of offices and countries present in – 700 offices in 150 countries
Interview process	➢ Pre shortlist – CV ➢ Round 1 – 30- 45 mins case round with a manager ➢ Round 2 – 30 – 45 mins PI with a partner. May include a case too ➢ Round 3 – 30 mins PI with the HR manager

KPMG	
Overview	➢ About - A professional services company and one of the Big Four auditors, along with Deloitte, EY and PwC. ➢ Types of consulting services offered – KPMG offers operations, strategy, and management consulting services under its Advisory wing. ➢ Strategy vs implementation? – In keeping with industry requirements, most of KPMG's projects are an end-to-end provision of consulting services i.e.: it includes strategy and implementation. ➢ The firm prefers developing industry-level expertise among its consultants, rather than taking the generalist approach.
Typical career path	➢ Analyst/ Associate Consultant ➢ Consultant (Typical hiring position for ISB) ➢ Senior Consultant ➢ Manager ➢ Senior Manager ➢ Partner/ Associate Partner
Quick facts	➢ Established - 1987 ➢ Number of employees (worldwide) – 189,000 ➢ Number of practice areas with few egs – Audit, Tax and Advisory (with Consulting coming under the wing of Advisory services). ➢ Number of offices and countries present in – 152 countries, multiple offices in each country.
Interview process	➢ Pre shortlist – PPT -> Resume Shortlist ➢ Round 1 – Group Discussion lasting ~20 minutes ➢ Round 2 – Personal Interview with a Partner and a Manager, lasting ~1 hour

Roland Berger	
Overview	➢ Global Strategy Consulting firm based in Munich ➢ Strategy, Management & Ops Consulting ➢ Acquired FMC Consultants ➢ Project continuity till strategy implementation ➢ Expanding globally especially in India ➢ A lot of new projects that the company is working on
Quick facts	➢ Established - 1967 ➢ Number of employees (worldwide) - 2400 ➢ Number of offices and countries present in - 50 in 36 countries
Interview process	➢ Pre shortlist – CV required along with optional cover letter ➢ Round 1 – Interaction round where they ask questions to understand you better + case. After successfully finishing the case, the interviewer opened the floor to ask any questions the candidate had regarding the firm or the role ➢ Round 2 – Some of the interviewees had an intermediate round which was along similar lines as detailed in the Round 1 description ➢ Round 3 – This round was with the partner. It was mainly conversational. It started off with personal questions and some current affairs discussion. May include a case. The candidate was asked to ask any questions he/she might have.

Dalberg Global Development Advisors	
Overview	➢ About - consulting for the development space. Typical clients include Governments, NGOs, impact funds, private companies looking to work in the development space. ➢ Types of consulting services offered - mostly strategy ➢ Strategy vs implementation: mix of both. But more strategy than implementation. ➢ You need to be ready to work in this space for some time before getting into it. Typical aspirational exit opportunities include central agencies like World Bank.
Typical career path	➢ Consultant ➢ Senior consultant ➢ Project manager ➢ Senior project manager ➢ Partner
Quick facts	➢ Established - 2001 ➢ Number of employees (worldwide) - 200 ➢ Number of offices and countries present in - 15
Interview process	➢ CV shortlist ➢ 10 minute Skype interview testing reading comprehension, basic quant and the motivation to join Dalberg. ➢ Round 1 – typical case interview in the development space with a consultant ➢ Round 2 - typical case interview in the development space with a project manager ➢ Round 3 – Case interview with Partner ➢ Round 4 - Case interview with Partner

ZS Associates	
Overview	➢ About - ZS Associates is a global management consulting firm specializing in using data driven strategies to provide sales and marketing solutions. ➢ Types of consulting services offered - ZS services include consulting, outsourcing, technology, and software ➢ Strategy vs implementation – Mostly implementation with a bit of strategy ➢ Industry specializations - Pharmaceuticals ➢ Notable developments in the past 2 years – The company has been growing at an accelerated rate with a total strength close to 4K in India itself ➢ The firm believes in partnering with the clients and helping them solve their problems in a collaborative fashion
Typical career path	➢ Consultant ➢ Manager ➢ Associate Principal ➢ Principal
Quick facts	➢ Established - 1983 ➢ Number of employees (worldwide) - 5000 ➢ Number of practice areas with few egs - Sales and Marketing Consulting; Outsourcing; Technology ➢ Number of offices and countries present in – 22 offices across the globe
Interview process	➢ Pre shortlist – PPT CV with cover letter Resume shortlist ➢ Round 1 – Behavioral interview - 45 minutes ➢ Round 2 – Case interview - 45 minutes ➢ Round 3 – Partner round – 30 minutes

Source: ISB Case Book Co'17

There are other consulting firms not captured here that you will notice through placement highlights and case experiences as recent additions in 2018. For example – Alvarez & Marsal, Mercer, Arthur D Little, GEP Consulting and a few other niche but brilliant firms!

Getting Interview Ready

Dream Consulting Job

Landing a dream consulting role requires honing the skills and developing skills through practice and this section will serve as own tentative guideline to prepare for the dream consulting role.

Note: Information in this section has been largely obtained from the experiences of Co'18 batch and of alums.

In order to land that dream consulting job, you need to ensure that you have the following aspects covered:

- Resume(s) / Cover Letter(s)
- Case Interviews including guesstimates
- Personal Interview
- Course material knowledge
- Company specific knowledge

Timelines

- **Resume** – First draft should be ready by mid of 3rd term and the final draft should be ready by mid of 4th term as companies start coming to campus by mid of 4th term.
- **Case Interview** - Case prep should start with start of 4th term (term-breaks can be utilized for early beginning)
- **Personal interview** – Can be done in middle of Case prep, 5th term onwards
- **Company Specific knowledge** – Few weeks before interview

Resume

Resume building should start by mid of 3rd term. Process can take a lot of time at least around a week and then many iterations are there as per review from alums and peers. Also, focus should be there on adhering to the standard ISB format and a deep research required for candidates selected in previous years. KMP portal holds a huge database of resumes and it gives a pretty good idea about the type of resumes required for a particular company.

Care should be taken that a balanced personality comes out in the resume. There should be spikes highlighted in each area mainly academics, leadership and extra-curricular activities. So, evaluate your resume earlier on and see the holes that might be there. Use the first few months to fill out those holes.

Candidates should make sure lot of reviews are done for the resume. Candidates should get it reviewed by alums and peers and this process takes time. So, plan your resume building with the understanding of when companies will start opening their application on the portal.

Expectations of top consulting firms from a good resume

- Analytical Skills
- Problem Solving
- Communication
- Leadership
- Client/Senior Leadership management
- Business/Commercial Knowledge
- People Skills
- Creativity
- Quality of work experience
- Non-Academic activities

'Spike' in Resume

Generally, consulting firms look for spikes in 2 out of 3 sections of the standard ISB format of the resume. Spike can generally mean a significant achievement in the sections and this is how alums will review the resume to figure out the spike.

'Spike' in Academics

ISB grades of core terms is absolutely essential for ensuring a spike in academics. There is no particular cut-off but it is generally looked at very closely. Also, premier undergrad colleges and performance in them also serves as spike in the Academics section. Academic achievements in undergrad can also be used to highlight spikes in Academics.

'Spike' in Work Experience

Spike in work experience is through the pedigree of the previous firm and the kind of work done in the firm. This is considered to be the most crucial section and candidates should spend sufficient time to ensure this section serves as a spike. So, critical achievements in work experience should be highlighted without making the resume too technical and various skills like leadership, people, problem solving etc. should be highlighted in this section.

'Spike' in Extracurricular Activities

Spike in extracurricular can be a position of responsibility or a special achievement in the field of sports, cultural activities. Candidates can also highlight non-academic work like some social work etc. Only thing to be remembered is that the points should be significant enough and should highlight an interest or other aspect of candidate's personality.

Step 1 – First Draft

There are 2 aspects to resume building. One the achievements and how the same have been highlighted and whether they highlight the point thoroughly. Start with noting down achievements and then categorize them in the 3 sections. Also, download multiple resumes from the KMP portal and highlight the ones similar to the candidate's profiles. For ex. Some resume can have the same undergrad college and an achievement which might be common. Then, it helps how the same has been highlighted by the alum. So, this gives a lot of understanding how the achievements are highlighted.

Make sure you try and give equal weight age to all the sections of your resume – academics, work experience and extracurricular while selecting your achievements for the resume. However, not everyone has all the 3 sections as strong. Therefore, it is advised to focus more on the sections that can be your potential spikes, but at the same time the weaker section should not be ignored completely. The weaker section becomes your hygiene section where you should at least have certain things that you have achieved which may not be significant.

SEAL also holds a resume making workshop which details out the template used by ISB and list of catch keywords that can be used on the resume to capture the attention of the recruiter.

A good framework to draft your bullet points in an effective and impactful manner is **context-action impact**. For a good bullet point, make sure all these elements are mentioned. Impact if quantified through numbers or comparison with known **references** leaves a better impression than a qualitative one. Some top firms recommend the **RAC** format (Result-Action-Context) for resumes and it definitely works well with certain work profiles and companies. Thus, **pick what suits you** and get your resume reviewed multiple times till you are satisfied that this is the best 1 pager to pitch you for the job!

Step 2: Quick tests to check your CV's effectiveness

<u>So what Test</u>

For every bullet point you write, you should ask yourself "so what if I did ___". For e.g. if I have led a team of 5 people on xyz assignment resulting in 10% cost saving. Now you should ask yourself "so what if I have done this". Is this a strong enough differentiator for it to come on my CV? Does it suggest a strong skill required for consulting which gets communicated through this point and appears nowhere else on my resume?

<u>Half Page Test</u>

Once the first draft of your resume is done, take a printout and fold it into half along the longer side such that only the first half of every bullet point is visible. See whether the first half of every bullet point gives the reader an idea of the content of the bullet point. If yes, the bullet point is correctly framed or else you have to reframe the point in such a way that the first 4-5 words describe the point. This rationale behind the test is as humans, we tend to focus more on the initial part of sentence while scanning. Details in the middle part or the latter part of the sentence tend to get missed out when we are hurrying through things. Try to put quantitative numbers that you want to highlight in your resume in the left side, i.e. in the first half of each statement.

30 second Test

This should be done when you have almost reached your final version of resume. Give your resume to one of your friends who haven't seen your resume before for exactly thirty seconds. Take back your resume after 30 seconds and ask him/her what he/she remembers about your resume and looking at the page, what he/she can make of you as an individual in one line. This test gives a check of whether the storyline you want to communicate through your resume is actually getting communicated to a third person. If not, you need to focus more on the points which reflect your skills sets and leave an impression on the reviewer.

Step 3: Final Draft

Get the resume reviewed by multiple people like alums, peers. Make sure that you also show your resume to people who don't know you at all to get an unbiased feedback, because in reality this will be the case most likely. Ask them whether your resume communicates the messages you want it to convey or is it just another laundry list of bullets. Reach out to alums and seek their advice on how your resume can be improved. This process is very iterative and takes most of the time in resume building.

Cover Letter

Typically cover letters are not required for consulting firm applications. However, there are lot of companies from other functions and industries that ask for cover letters. Hence, it is essential to be ready with a basic strategy of making cover letters and then change it as per the company's requirement. Do note that the same template should not be used as companies can often understand and find the disconnect in the letter.

Cover letter should focus on the following 3 items:

1. Why you as a candidate is best fit for the job?
2. What is that about the role and the company that you find yourself so connected with and establish the fit with the company.
3. Research has to be done about the company and certain skills should be highlighted through examples to establish the fit with the company.

Following steps serve as guidelines and detail out the above process:

1. Give a personalized reason in your cover letter for why you are the best candidate for the job. Be sure to make a bridge between what you have done, where you want to work and how the particular job posting help you to achieve your career goal
2. You need to exhibit some knowledge about the firm and demonstrate a fit between the company and yourself. Previous years' EOI on KM Portal, alums working in the firm and company's website might come in handy for gathering information about the company
3. Address the EOI to the right person and the firm
4. Do not copy letters or pieces of letters from sample sources. Recruiters do recognize them easily
5. Do not exceed 1 page for the cover letter

6. Do not use any fluffy or generic statements about yourself or your experiences (e.g. excellent interpersonal skills, team player) unless you back them up with tangible example
7. Do not use generic statements about the company you are applying to (e.g. leading firm, excellent reputation, blue-chip Company etc.). For one, this also applies to most of their competitors. For another, this shows that you have not done your homework to identify why you really want to join the company
8. Get your cover letter reviewed by at least two other people to check for spelling mistakes, grammatical errors and ease of reading

Course Knowledge

Primarily for case preparation, core course knowledge comes very handy as most of the cases are also based around concepts taught in core courses. So, candidates should start accumulating material and refine their concepts. The ISB Gyankosh works as a good database for a complete summary of course concepts.

Do ensure that following courses have been understood well and revised before the final interview. During case prep as well, cases should be marked where concepts from courses have been used and those cases should be used to understand as to how to apply the concepts in an interview setting.

Following Concepts should be particularly focused:

- Marketing Frameworks
- Competitive Strategy Frameworks
- Microeconomics
- Macroeconomics
- Operations Management / Strategy
- Accounting & Corporate Finance (Valuation etc.)
- Mergers and Acquisitions

Also, some of the electives are also handy but electives should be chosen considering the workload one can manage as lot of preparation and time goes for resume and case prep process.

Case Interview Preparation

How/When to Use Cases in This Book: ISB case books should serve as the practice material in going through company specific cases, however first get yourself acquainted with the case interview process. For basics of case prep, Videos of Victor Cheng can be used to get a 'feeler'. Even Case in point serves as a good starting point for case prep as candidates get to know how a case interview is conducted. Post this, you can go through frameworks in this book and also glance through frameworks from other books, if needed, to strengthen your framework knowledge (IIM A, IIM B) We would then recommend you to start leveraging case experiences from this casebook. Also try and complete the cases in the various ISB case books over the years and only then move on to other books for case experiences.

We recommend that you start forming case prep groups by end of term 4 and try and limit the size to 4. Case groups should be used for case interviews and diverse topics should be covered for cases. Conduct 20-25 min interview in pairs and then discuss what could have been done better. This process takes time and hence should be started early so as to internalize the basics of case interview and concepts. Also, candidates should try and form 2 case groups one so that candidates are able to practice with different people as each one has a different style of conducting case interviews. This serves as the best simulation of the D-day.

Maintain a comprehensive handbook where case interviews should be practiced, tips from each interview and PI tips can be noted. This becomes very handy for revision and also serves as a good reference material just before Day 0.

Interviewers are necessarily looking to see you show your prowess in solving a case across four broad steps. [**REMEMBER 3S** -> Scope, Structure, Summary leads to 4th S Success]

Define the Problem -> Structure the Problem -> Analyse logically to develop answer -> Synthesize the discussion

Define the Problem

- Listen closely to problem definition
- Take notes and ask questions to improve understanding
- Synthesize the facts to confirm the problem statement (restate if necessary)
- Remember that some information may be less important
- Structure the Problem: Organize your thoughts, structure your ideas, syndicate your approach
- Break the problem into discrete pieces / issues / state / syndicate crisp assumptions (be creative)
- Avoid using frameworks explicitly

Analyse logically to develop answer

- Walk the interviewer through your thinking
- Prioritize issues
- State your assumptions and ask for relevant facts o State findings for your analysis
- Refine your solution
- Probe further if necessary
- Synthesize the discussion
- Develop overall recommendation
- Discuss trade-offs
- Relate back to problem statement
- Suggest next steps

Breadth and Depth of Cases Covered

Candidates should try and cover cases from multiple industries and sectors to get a decent understanding of carious industries. Often, the interviewer can also start discussing about the industry in which the candidate has previously worked and hence it becomes extremely crucial that one's own industry is thoroughly known.

Covering different industries and different types of cases saves the surprise on the interview day and also helps the candidate think of right questions at the start of the interview. Also, it helps bring nuance into the discussion.

Case group can make a sheet with different industries and can keep tracking their development in different sectors and whether cases from every industry has been covered or not.

		Main List of Industries								
		Banking	*Manufacturing*	*Retail / FMCG*	*Pharma*	*Technology / IT*	*Non Profit*	*Logistics*	*Education*	*Telecom*
Main Types of Problems	*Profitability*	Not Done	Weak	Good	Good	Not Done	Not Done	Good	Good	Weak
	- Rev Pb									
	- Cost Pb									
	Pricing									
	Market Sizing									
	Market Entry									
	Growth									
	M&A									
	Competitive Response									

General Tips

1.) *While practicing a case, the interviewer [person who prepared the case] would ask the interviewee. Let it be as formal as possible so that there would not be any jitters on the interview day. Even PI questions can be mixed with the case to be as realistic as possible.*

2.) *After everyone has solved the case, the case can be discussed as a group to see where the improvements can be made. Ask inputs from any person from the same industry [Peers or Alums etc.]*

3.) *Write down the mistakes you have done in the case and where improvements can be made. A note book just for the mistakes & insights will be a great asset before the D – day.*

Buddies*: Many of you would be allotted buddies from different companies. Make sure you leverage that. The cases you do with them are truly invaluable because they are in the industry and can give you accurate feedback. Share those feedbacks and cases with your peers and vice versa.*

Company Specific Knowledge

Candidates should look up the company's website and understand its culture, its growth strategy, its recent performance, challenges for the company and the industry as a whole. Candidates should also talk to alums to better understand the culture of the firm and their fitment with the company. This should be done a few days before the interview.

Personal Interview Preparation

PIs are generally resume based and hence candidate should be thorough with the resume. During resume writing, candidates should note that interviewer can ask on any point or can ask to explain how a particular metric is relevant and how is the number or result obtained.

Case book provides a general set of personal interview questions but candidates should generally be ready with questions like Why Consulting, why a particular firm and then how the candidates is the best fit for a particular company. These cannot be generic and requires a lot of research on the firms. So, candidates should try and talk to alums, get a personalized feel of what the consulting firm does. How it is differentiated from the other and try and incorporate those values in PI answers.

Consulting firms often consider personal interview as an important part of the process in knowing the candidate. There is no separate PI interview round but generally the same is well intertwined with the case interview round. Hence, it's essential that sufficient effort is done to hone this area as it goes a long way in establishing a rapport with the interviewer which can then also help in the case interview.

If you would go through case experiences of people, you will find that this portion of the interview set the tone of the next portion, which is usually a case-interview.

What is it?

- Your consulting interview usually kicks off with a 5 to 7-minute personal interview that is mostly based around the CV
- This is the best time for you to connect with the interviewer. Many alumni will tell you that if you handle the PI well, the case is usually easier to tackle
- Be original in your answers and be truthful. Interviewers are mostly Partners and Principals and they can quickly make out if you are truthful or not
- Try to engage the person – Remember, they are interviewing for as long. Maintain eye contact and sit/talk confidently
- Regardless of which interview in the day it is for you, stay peppy and smile
- Brevity is important

What are the firms looking for?

The idea behind the personal interview is to know the candidate better and to answer a few questions

- *Will the candidate be able to handle the pressure of the consulting world* – this is reflected by assessing the candidate's demeanor, which should be confident and comfortable
- *Is the candidate agile and can he/she take up challenges* – this is reflected in the candidate's ability to portray leadership skills and he/she can take up initiatives
- *Can the candidate work in teams* – this is reflected either in prior experience of the candidate or questions asked in the interview process
- Lastly, it is difficult to survive in the consulting world without showing some *drive, passion, aspiration, energy and of course morals and ethics*

How do I practice?

What is your story? – Every individual is different (just like everyone else) and hence it is important to have a story that is completely yours.

- This must be a continuation of your CV. The story that you wove together in your CV must come to life during the interview. Although you won't have too much time, get every strand of your story in place. The interview could touch any part of your story
- You must know your strengths, weaknesses, your fit as a consultant and more specifically your fit with the firm
- Do not neglect the PI to the very end. Keep working on it from Term 5 – Keep playing your story repeatedly in your mind

Industry Primers

All information is for India and has been compiled from public sources

Healthcare services

Introduction

The healthcare space as a whole broadly consists of healthcare services (hospitals, clinics, etc.), medical device manufacturing & sale (making of medical equipment such as X-Ray machines, scanners, etc., healthcare technology (IT enabled delivery of services, bio-sciences etc.) and healthcare insurance. The focus of our chapter is on Healthcare Services, as that is typically the most relevant space from a case preparation point of view.

Key themes/trends

- Healthcare has become one of India's largest sectors both in terms of revenue & employment. The industry is growing at a tremendous pace owing to its strengthening coverage, services and increasing expenditure by public as well private players
- During 2008-20, the market is expected to record a CAGR of 16.5 per cent
- The total industry size is expected to touch USD160 billion by 2017 & USD280 billion by 2020
- As per the Ministry of Health, development of 50 technologies has been targeted in the FY16, for the treatment of diseases like Cancer & TB
- Government is emphasizing on the eHealth initiatives such as Mother & Child Tracking System (MCTS) & Facilitation Centre (MCTFC)
- Indian companies are entering into merger & acquisitions with domestic & foreign companies to drive growth & gain new markets

Growth drivers

- **Increase in lifestyle diseases –** cardiac 18%, cancer 16% and diabetes 19 % CAGR 2008-18E
- **Digitization –** resulting in widespread access and new services
- **Medical tourism –** Indian cost of surgery is ~10% of cost of similar procedure in US/Europe
- **Government agenda –** plans to increase healthcare spend as a % of GDP to 2.5% by 2025
- **FDI –** 4.83 billion USD in healthcare FDI from April 2000 to September 2017

Competitive Landscape (Private players only)

- Apollo Hospitals- 10,000+ beds across 64 hospitals
- Fortis Healthcare- 12,000+ beds worldwide
- Max Healthcare- 1900+ beds across 12 hospitals

Future trends

- **Rural Healthcare-** Better technology and rising income levels would enable access to the untapped rural consumer base

- **Healthcare Insurance-** The expected increase in health insurance coverage is likely to have cascading effects across the healthcare spectrum- only 15% of the population is currently covered by Health Insurance

Pharmaceuticals

Introduction

Pharmaceutical manufacturers typically make two types of drugs- generics and patented drugs. Generics make drugs that are essentially identical to another brand-named product. They are typically sold under All these companies manufacture drugs to address different therapeutic areas (TAs) such as Neurology, Oncology, Urology etc.

India's pharma industry makes up 10% of the global market in volume terms and up to ~3.6% in value terms. India exports drugs to almost all countries across the globe and primarily the United States.

Key themes/trends

- India's cost of production is nearly 33 per cent lower than that of the US
- Labour costs are 50–55 per cent cheaper than in Western countries. The cost of setting up a production plant in India is 40 per cent lower than in Western countries
- Cost-efficiency continues to create opportunities for Indian companies in emerging markets
- India has a skilled workforce as well as high managerial & technical competence in comparison to its peers in Asia
- India has the 2nd largest number of USFDA-approved manufacturing plants outside the US
- India has 2,633 FDA-approved drug products. India has over 546 USFDA-approved company sites, the highest number outside the US

Growth drivers

- Expected increase in accessibility of drugs
- Increase in health insurance penetration and rising income levels
- Rise in fatal diseases- patient pool expected to rise 20% over the next 10 years
- Increasing awareness about drugs and their benefits

Competitive landscape (Branded generics, which is ~71% of Indian pharma)

- Sun Pharma- largest player with 8.5% market share; merged with Ranbaxy in 2015
- Abott – 6.2% market share
- Cipla- 4.6% market share
- Zydus- 4.3% market share
- Mankind- 3.6% market share

Other key players in the overall market

- Dr. Reddy's Labs
- Wockhardt

Future trends

- The pharma industry is expected to grow to 100 billion USD by 2025
- Government has plans of creating a 640 mn USD VC fund to foster indigenous drug discovery
- Growth in domestic sales would also depend on the ability of companies to align their product portfolio towards chronic therapies

Retail

Introduction

The retail space can be broadly classified into the Organized sector and the Unorganized sector. In India, the unorganized sector makes up around 91% of the total retail market of 667 billion USD.

Key themes/trends

- Organised Retail Penetration (ORP) in India is low (7 per cent) compared with that in other countries, such as the US (85 per cent)
- Increasing participation from foreign and private players to boost retail infrastructure
- Revenue generated from online retail is projected to grow to US$ 60 billion by 2020
- E-commerce has emerged as a key segment in the Indian retail scenario
- Focus on smaller cities for growth
- Scope for consolidation has emerged

Growth drivers

- Increased internet penetration and a growing youth consumer base pushing online sales
- Rising disposable income with a robust economy
- Changing consumer mindset with people becoming more aspirational and brand conscious in their outlook
- Emergence of financing and credit solutions enabling big-ticket purchases

Future trends

- India is expected to become the world's fastest growing e-commerce market, driven by robust investment in the sector and rapid increase in the number of internet users
- Retail industry in India is expected to grow to US$ 1,100 trillion by 2020
- The online retail market is expected to grow from US$ 17.8 billion to US$ 60 billion between 2017 and 2020
- Organised retail penetration is expected to increase from 7 per cent in FY 2016-17 to 10 per cent in 2020
- The Business to Business (B2B) e-commerce market is expected to reach US$ 700 billion by 2020

Telecom

Introduction

The services offered by telecom companies are generally classified into Fixed Line services and Wireless services. In recent times, several telecom firms world-wide have expanded their offering into content such as music, games etc., while others have also gotten into Direct to Home TV services. This is all part of the ongoing convergence trend in the so called TMT sector (Telecom, Media and Technology).

Key themes/trends

- India is currently the 2nd largest telecommunication market and has the 3rd highest number of internet users in the world
- India's telephone subscriber base expanded at a CAGR of 19.16 per cent, reaching 1188.5 million during FY07–1
- Tele-density (defined as the number of telephone connections for every 100 individuals) in India, increased from 17.9 in FY07 to 92.59 in FY17

Growth drivers

- Rising income levels and growth in the overall economy
- Increase in mobile phone penetration in the rural market
- Demand for more mobile content because of the decline in mobile phone prices and an increased smartphone penetration

Future trends

- India will emerge as a leading player in the virtual world by having 700 million internet users of the 4.7 billion global users by 2025 according to Microsoft
- Internet economy expected to touch Rs 10 trillion (US$ 155 billion) by 2018, contributing around 5 per cent to the country's GDP
- The Indian mobile phone industry expects that the Government of India's boost to production of battery chargers will result in setting up of 365 factories, thereby generating 800,000 jobs by 2025
- The Indian Mobile ValueAdded Services (MVAS) industry is expected to grow at a CAGR of 18.3 per cent during the forecast period 2015–2020 and reach US$ 23.8 billion by 2020

Oil & Gas

Introduction

The Oil & Gas industry is made up of three major sub-segments: Upstream, Midstream and Downstream. (In some countries/industry classifications, it is simply split into Upstream and Downstream.) The Upstream segment deals in exploration and production of crude oil and natural gas. Midstream deals in processing, storage, marketing and transportation of the crude oil and natural gas procured at the Upstream level of the value chain. (This is clubbed with Downstream in certain countries/classifications as mentioned earlier) Downstream comprises of companies that create products such as petrochemicals and also the retail outlets and distributors of oil & gas products.

Key themes/trends

- Oil consumption has expanded at a CAGR of 3.3 per cent during FY2008–16F to reach 4.0 mbpd by 2016.
- Due to the expected strong growth in demand, India's dependency on oil imports is likely to increase further
- Rapid economic growth is leading to greater outputs, which in turn is increasing the demand of oil for production and transportation
- With rising income levels, demand for automobile is estimated to increase, in turn leading to augmented demand for oil and gas.

Growth drivers

- The growth in the country's economy will require adequate fuel to support business activity
- An increased demand for natural gas in industries such as paper & pulp players, glass manufacturers, food processing etc.
- Favorable government policy, including 100% FDI in E&P projects
- Large scale long term projects such as Indian Oil's ~11 billion dollar planned investment to improve its refining capacity by 2030

Future trends

- India's oil demand is expected to grow at a CAGR of 3.6 per cent to 458 Million Tonnes of Oil Equivalent (MTOE) by 2040, while demand for energy will more than double by 2040
- Gas production will likely touch 90 Billion Cubic Metres (BCM) by 2040, while demand for natural gas will grow at a CAGR of 4.6 per cent
- After the completion of certain projects which are undertaken by various refineries, the Refining Capacity of India is expected to reach 256.55 MMTPA by 2019-20
- The demand for petroleum products is estimated to reach 244,960 MT by 2021-22, up from 186,209 MT in 2016, and the demand for natural gas is expected to reach 606 MMSCMD by 2021-22

Construction & Infrastructure

Introduction

The construction & infrastructure space can be broken down into three major sub-industries- Residential, Commercial and Infrastructure (Roads, rails, power, etc.). Each of these sub-sectors have different industry dynamics. Overall, the space is highly fragmented in the country. The space is a crucial cog in the Indian economy, making up around 7-8% of the nation's GDP. The largest projects are in the spaces of petroleum followed by power and then roads- hence the industry is highly intertwined with the functioning of the corresponding government authorities.

Key themes/trends

- Infrastructure related activities witnessed strong growth between April-September 2016.
- The activities that registered the highest growth include export cargo (10 per cent), highway construction/widening (9.8 per cent), power generation (6.6 per cent), import cargo (5.8 per cent) and cargo at major ports (5.3 per cent)

Growth drivers

- **Economic growth-** A healthy economy typically means more investment and consequently, growth for the construction and infrastructure space
- **Government initiatives-** Increased budget allocations towards public infrastructure (eg: allocation for road sector increased to US$ 10.07 billion in 2017-18 from US$ 8.99 billion in 2016-17). The total allocation for the 2017-18 budget to infrastructure was ~$62 billion
- **International funds-** Countries such as Japan are investing in infrastructure projects such as the one detailed on the trends section

Future trends

- India's national highway network is expected to cover 50,000 KM by 2019
- The Government of India is devising a plan to provide WiFi facility to 550,000 villages by March 2019 for an estimated cost of Rs 3,700 crore (US$ 577.88 million)
- Japan is expected to invest in infrastructure development projects in the North-East region of country over the next few years, as part of its pledge to invest 35 billion dollars between 2014 and 2019
- Sweden expressed interest to help the country with technology for developing SmartCities last year. The governments have already met to discuss top level agenda points

The Case Competition Saga!

Dear Consulting Aspirants,

ISB is a competitive environment - the admissions committee and staff ensure that. As a result, anyone who wants to get into consulting has to work really hard to get that 'spike'.

Everyone around you will tell you, the easiest way to get a spike is to go out and win a case competition. That's simply not true.

If my rough calculation is right, there are around 50 odd case competitions that you can apply to while at ISB. And these are just the ones that ISB emails you about - you're always free to go out and find more. Each has at least a campus winner, a national winner, and a bunch of national and campus finalists. All of these positions are resume-worthy.

What am I getting at with this random math? Just this - winning or reaching the finals of a case competition may or may not result in you getting your much coveted dream job. So do case competitions help? The short answer is YES. We have had cases where candidates who have cracked multiple case competitions and got the all-important "shortlist", but there are winners of national level case competitions who did not get an interview shortlist from the top firms.

Should you not do any case competitions then? Are they just a waste of time?

ABSOLUTELY NOT.

As with any activity you undertake at ISB, do case competitions because you *like* them. They're a great platform to learn and to network. Do not expect them to be a mechanism to get you the shortlist/job – if at all it helps your motivation, case competitions might improve your probability because of the signalling effect they have on recruiters!

For example, after trying out a competition in the healthcare sphere, I realized I did not enjoy it. While the business problem was great, the company I worked with was focused very much on the short term and was unwilling to accept or even look at certain recommendations. This experience made me realize that I wasn't a cultural fit for the healthcare industry in India - and come placement day, I did not apply to a single one.

On the other hand, some case competitions help a LOT. One case competition I did regarding agriculture markets in India really helped me understand how certain institutions work. Not only did this help me add to my skill set, but during one of my MBB interviews, the topic of agriculture came up and the partner simply loved the insight I had into the problem.

Long Story Short - Pick your case comps carefully, work hard at them, and remember that while the prize is important, the learning is much more so.

Cheers,

The Case Competition Porcupine

Beyond Consulting

The Indian School of Business is widely regarded as one of the best schools in the country, and even across the world, for getting placed in consulting roles. That being said, the ISB also boasts of a robust and wide array of other lucrative roles across functions and industries. General Management, Strategy and Leadership roles are the staple of the ISB after Consulting jobs and individual contributor roles in the tech industry.

Most of the students at ISB who sit for placements with an ambition to join consulting also have a plan B and plan C in place, because Day 1 is at times unpredictable and can have circumstances that are not always under your control. A natural plan B for most students targeting consulting is roles within General Management and Strategy.

The intensive case prep that goes along with prepping for consulting interviews is very useful for such kind of strategy roles. Starting case prep about 6-8 weeks before Day 1 is a good practice, even if consulting roles are not at the top of your list. Strategy and general management firms at ISB look for candidates who can think from a strategic standpoint.

Most strategy roles will have some case interviews in one form or another. Following the consulting case prep frameworks, along with the MECE (Mutually Exclusive Collectively Exhaustive) ideology will go a long way in helping you crack these cases. Make sure you are thorough with the usual frameworks such as Profitability, Market Entry, Forward/Backward Integration, Mergers and Acquisitions etc. The cases asked are usually strategic in nature, with a long term horizon in place. Rarely, there are cases asked which are very tactical in nature, and the interviewers are looking at how you respond to certain short term challenges thrown at you.

The interviews for strategy and general management roles test students for not just their problem solving and critical thinking skills, but are very keenly also observing students for traits of being great leaders, strong team players and generally good "fit" for the company. There are multiple rounds of very unique interview experiences, where your previous work experience plays a huge role. It goes without saying that you need to be very thorough with every project, every number and every keyword that you put in your resume. You need to have examples from your work experience ready at the top of your mind when interviewing with the HR personnel or leadership of a company; and you need to keep your answers to less than a minute, so that you don't lose their attention.

There are multiple "HR" interviews, where everything from regular questions about your strengths and weaknesses are asked, as well as questions about leadership, honesty, stress in the workplace are thrown at you to gauge your temperament. The key to answering these interview questions is to always have examples that you can link to your answer. The interviewer is not looking for an "ideal" or rehearsed answer. Be as honest as you can, while highlighting certain parts of your work or education that fit the question.

Whenever you are answering an open ended question, always get the discussion back to your resume, to your work experience, to your experience at ISB or your previous educational institute. This way you are the one controlling the flow of the interview, and can continuously talk about things that you are well versed in.

When you give examples while answering vague or open ended questions, it definitely adds to the credibility of your answer. The fact that you have understood certain nuances of the question and can link it to your life shows a certain level of maturity that the interviewers are looking for.

These companies are hiring decision makers for the long term, so it is important for you as a candidate to convey this sentiment across as well. Even if you are not looking to stay at the firm for more than a couple of years, when questions such as where do you see yourself in five years are asked, the interviewers are looking for your commitment towards this job and this particular firm, and it is better to answer imagining yourself in that company, five years down the line. Again, no one really can tell, and maybe you will end up enjoying the role and stay in the company for a long time to come!

For consulting and strategy roles, there are some skillsets which are non-negotiable and will take you a long way if you hone them and can showcase them while interviewing. General management, strategy and even consulting roles are all about business development at the end of the day. These roles will require a heavy focus on people skills, written and verbal communication skills, presentation skills and some level of skills in sales and marketing. These interviews will test your Emotional Quotient and acumen for empathy.

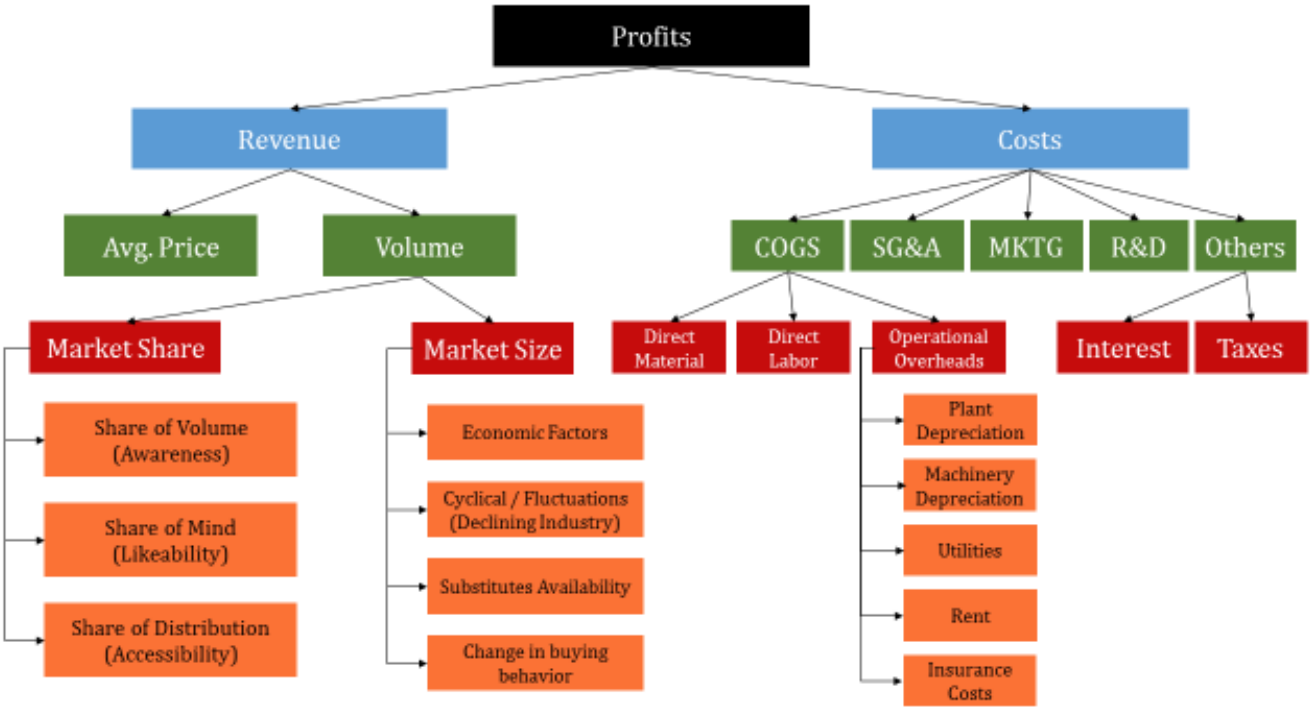
CASE FRAMEWORKS

Case Frameworks

Frameworks can act as useful tools to structure thoughts during a case interview. Moreover, they ensure that you ask the right questions and help you reach the answer fast. By using frameworks, you will seldom miss solutions to 'standardized' cases such as Profitability, Market entry etc. However, interviewers these days (BCG is known for this) enjoy asking abstract cases such as "There's a dinosaur in the room- help" or "Your client is a thief. Tell him how and what to steal". You definitely can't apply standard frameworks to such cases. You are expected to relate the problem to a business situation and create your own framework on the spot.

The frameworks given below cover the classic cases ranging from profitability to M&A. Note that we have provided these in the standardized form in which you'll typically see them in other case books and/or preparation material. We would encourage you to think about using these as guidelines to form your variations of the frameworks for the same case types. This is because not all aspects of a given framework are going to be relevant for the case that you get on D-Day. Use your own judgement to isolate a certain MECE component of a larger framework to quickly get to the root of the issue and solve the case. You should however, demonstrate to the interviewer that you are aware of other aspects that may be relevant to the case, which aren't included in your framework for the sake of efficiency by calling out those aspects verbally.

Profitability Framework



Factors Governing Market Share	Possible Reasons

Share of Voice (Awareness)	• Promotional Spending
	• Promotional Mix
	  • Channels
	  • Content
	• Promotional Efficiency
	  • Ad $ spend into $ Revenue

Share of Mind (Likeability)	• Products
	  • Price
	  • Quality
	  • Usage
	• Service
	  • Sales Force Behavior / Skill
	  • Customer Relationship Processes

Share of Distribution (Accessibility)	• Distribution Partners
	  • Trade Mix
	  • Inventory Management
	  • Transport
	• Does Supply match Demand?

Profitability cases are the most common type of cases that you will see. The importance of the case stems from the fact that profit-making is the final goal of every business problem. It is always recommended to think on first principles when you approach a case-problem. Here we will try to run through the anatomy of a profitability case.

Breaking profitability down to its simplest components is the key in consulting cases. Dividing profitability into components such as revenue and cost can be helpful in discovering the causes of a less than favourable bottom line. It is to be noted that many a time, the interviewer will not specifically mention the type of the case. The candidate is expected to follow a sequence of logical steps by gathering information (by asking relevant questions). **The structure shown above** will be useful in exploring how to go about exploring the case.

Deconstructing the case-problem

The profitability problem is very vast and generally comes in varied dimensions. Thus, scoping of the problem becomes very important in order to make a structured headway in the case. This could be done by asking a sequence of logical questions. The idea behind these questions is two-folds – a) to scope the problem, b) to gather relevant information available with the interviewer.

Defining the problem (Scoping)

Q1) What is the magnitude of loss/profit? Since when has the trend occurred?

Also, it is noteworthy to inquire if profits are declining or profitability has been affected. (These are two different things. **Profits are merely a difference of Revenues and Cost, while Profitability is a measure of profit margin.**

- Gross profit, operating profit and net profit

Blue: Gross profit
Red: Operating profit
Green: Net profit

Q2) Ask if gross margin/operating margin or net margin which is facing the decline?

Now, going ahead with the framework, we first define profits as 'Revenues – Cost'. Thus, it is a function of two drivers. We deep dive into one driver and hold on to the second one for the time being.

Q3) what is the **target** of profit / profitability? Any other constraints or secondary objectives (eg market share)?
Q4) is there a **timeline** that the company wants to solve the problem in?

Q5) Just to get a background of the company, I would want to know the **product mix and revenue streams** for the company.

Q6) Ask for data on trends of each product and ascertain the **product(s) which is leading to the problem**.

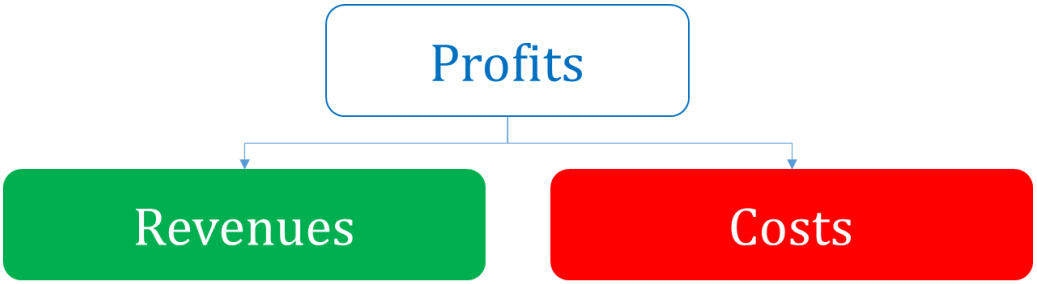
Q7) is the profitability **problem across the industry and trends** for the product? If problem is across the industry, ask for context

- Demand
  - Macroeconomic factors
  - Changing priority of customers – change in demographics
  - Regular market disruptions
- Supply
  - Regulatory – change in policies
  - Increase in fragmentation (high supply, low demand) – leading to commoditizing the product

Q8) **Competitive landscape** – No of competitors, market share and its trend

Define and reiterate the statement: **Improve Profits in X product from A% to B% by n years**.

A brief structure as below would help to landscape the problem –



- The problem may lie in two areas - revenue and costs. What are the trends of revenues (up or down) and costs (up or down)?
- Depending on the response, choose which one to go in first and take buy-in of interviewer

Revenues

Revenues are dependent on two factors:

1. Average Price

Thus, if revenue side has been affected then either Average Price across the product mix has decreased (majorly due to competition or company policy).

Quantitatively, we can see that

Average Price = Price of all the products / Total number of products

Here, the advice is to stick to first principles and be aware of the fact that Price of the products in the product mix and total number of products could also affect the revenues.

- Internal factors: Company tried to reduce price to increase revenues but it backfired
    - Increased price because costs increased
    - Transfer pricing (may be relevant if problem is limited to a division of a company)
- External Factors
    - Price war
    - Other stakeholders demanding more in value chain e.g. – increased distributor margin
    - Government regulation (price cap)
    - Customer preference changed. Had to reduce price

Resolution

Product Differentiation

- Better features
- Better brand
- Better packaging

Innovative Pricing Methods

- Loss Leader Pricing/ Captive Pricing (Razor Blade),
- Bundle Pricing

Different methods of pricing:

- Value based Pricing (Premium Pricing & Price Skimming)
    - Aspirational value of a similar product
    - Opportunity cost of not getting the product/service
    - It is also a function of the size of the target customer segment. As larger size would allow us to charge lesser than the maximum aspirational value in order to penetrate into the new market
- Cost plus Pricing
    - R&D Costs
    - Manufacturing/servicing/construction costs – Fixed and Variable Costs
    - Break-even costs, WACC
- Comparable (Parity) Pricing
    - Existing products with similar features => Marked Price + Mark-up

    - Existing products with superior features => Marked Price of the existing product + Value of additional feature to the customer
    - If no similar product exists, then consider => NPV of substitute product
- Bundling & Cross selling
- Consolidation: Acquire other markets players – Charge premium price, Have more units sold.

In case Product/Service mix – volume has changed….
Identify which product's relative volume increase has led to overall revenue decrease. For that product, following parameters could be assessed –

Product Related Problem
- Poor product quality
- Problematic product mix
- Inadequate breadth of product line
- Depth of product line
- Network effects with other products/complementary products

Service Related Problem
- Poor service quality
- High cost of service
- Training adequacy
- Curriculum
- Frequency of training
- Depth and Breadth

2. Volume
Ascertain changes in number of units sold. The two potential reasons for a volume decline are –
a) Market share decline b) Market size decline

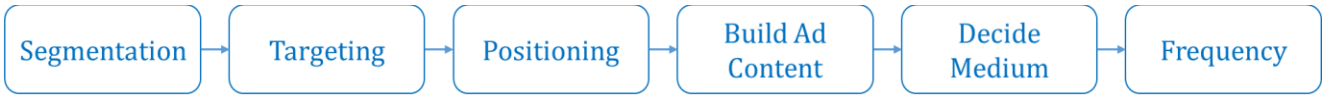
If Market share declines...

Market Share = %Aware X %Preference Buyers X %Available X % Time for adoption X %Repeat Purchase

- **Price**
    - Have these increased? What is the elasticity?
- **Product**
    - **Share of Mind** (Likeability)
        - Poor quality
            - network effect with other products
            - substitutes
            - product mix
            - better product in market
            - quality of service
        - Perception of poor quality but good product
            - check perception and preference map
                - If problem in perceptual map, check for accuracy in positioning

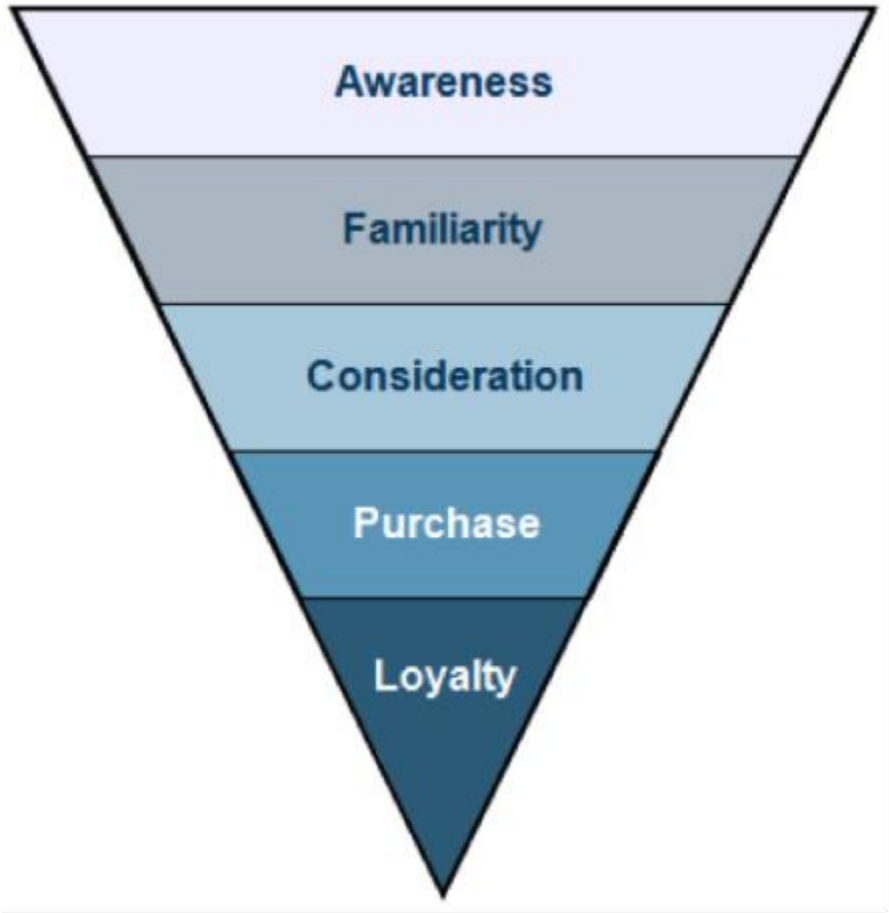
- training adequacy (curriculum or frequency of training)
- Remember – The final consumer might not always be the purchase decision maker. There might me other stakeholders involved, for whom we might need to make the product attractive.

- **Promotion**
  - **Share of Voice** (Awareness) – how to increase awareness. Check for failures in each of the following stages.



  - Promotion schemes for enabling purchase – eg financing options, discount coupons etc.
  - SOV * SOM * SOD = Availability * Product Offering (Likeability) * Accessibility

One must think in terms of the purchase funnel:



- **Place**
  - **Share of Distribution** (Accessibility) – penetration, trade mix, lead time, distributor margin (agency problem), sales force (less or not trained), Skill and will of sales force

If market size decline…

Due to Demand or Supply

- Demand (mature stage in PLC)
  - Check product life cycle
  - Demographics change
  - Product obsolescence
  - Usage rate gone down

Solution – Ansoff Matrix

Same Product - New Market (Geographic expansion) Which geography? Consider risks such as • attractiveness of overseas market • can the firm establish competitive advantage by replicating the strategy • identify the right geographies Price: Play with elasticity (skim vs penetration)	**New Product - New Market (Diversification)** • Related diversification – developed market • Unrelated diversification – developing market • Look at synergies (asset utilization)
Same Product – Same Market (Market penetration) Capture market share: 4P, Product Mix Increasing the pie: New target segment (user), different application (uses), per customer Consumption (usage). This is more applicable in mature/declining phase of industry life cycle	**New Product – Same Market (Product Development)** • Vertical integration • New product development based on attractiveness, capability (asset utilization)

- Supply (still in growth stage of PLC)
  - Are you the only supplier and constrained by supply?
  - Are the SKUs being offered being liked by consumer? Change in consumer preference for another SKU

Solution

- Short term
  - Increase distributor margins
  - Target new segments
- Long term
  - Launch new SKUs

Costs

Break the costs into

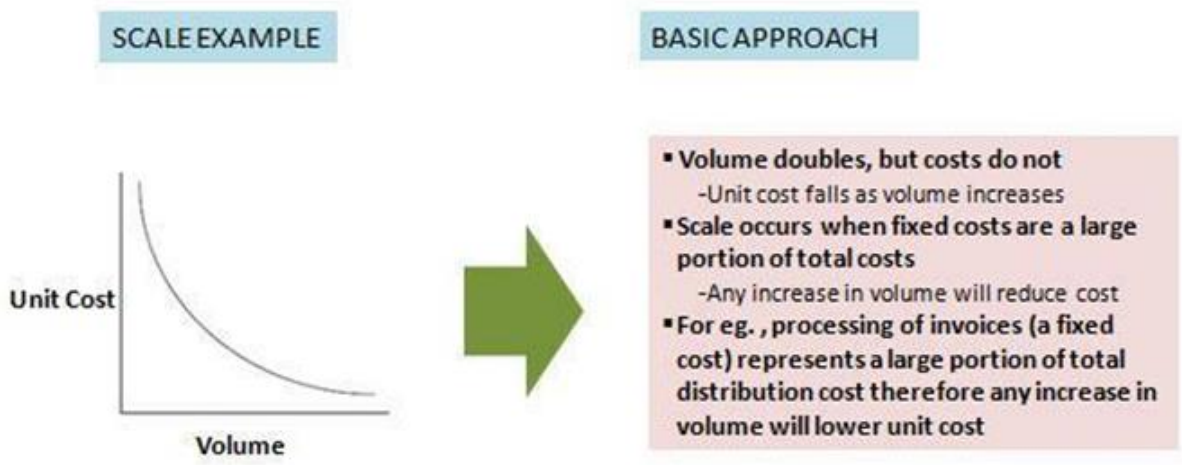
1. <u>Fixed costs and variable costs</u>

In a high fixed cost business there is very high temptation of price wars (**Remember MADM fundas**).

For Fixed Costs, following considerations need be made –

a) Capacity Utilization

b) Increasing the scale of business/manufacturing – What causes it?



c) Complex Product: What causes it?

- Complexity arises from additions to number of different products produced or activities managed
  - Often without increase in overall volume
  - That cannot be added at low marginal cost or minor adjustments in production/staffing
- Complexity can arise in numerous parts of cost structure –
  - Manufacturing: machine change-over and setup; increased inventory
    - Starter runs: Machine changeover and setup
    - Higher inventories: especially if little interchangeability
    - Additional/longer product lines: often at lower volumes
  - Sales/distribution
    - Sales force requires in-depth knowledge of full product line
    - Increased storage facilities, distribution logistics
  - Administration
    - Tracking and coordination issues

Albeit simpler, FC and VC approach is considered limited in considering the entire set of costs related problem. Here Value Chain analysis helps us to consider all the costs in detail.

The value chain depicted above represents a manufacturing setup. However, thinking on first principles one can easily construct a value chain for any business mentioned in the case. For starters, think of Suppliers, Distributors (inbound/outbound), storage/warehouses, end-customers (VERY IMPORTANT)

Costs income statement wise (COGS, SG&A, Interest, Depreciation, Tax)

What is the percentage split of costs across these different processes?

- In case one particular head has highest % say 50% or more then you can ask the interviewer that you would want to look at this head to start with.
- Many a time there might not be one major head and there could be two heads with 30%-30% split. In these cases, you'll need to explore both heads and also see that the profitability decline could be partly because of one and partly because of another.

Exploring each head one by one

- Raw Material Cost
    - Start by asking type of good (Perishable/durable)?
    - Where does Competitor source from – does it get better prices?
    - If says same price, ask about efficiency of utilization – conversion ratio/wastage/efficiency for us. If efficiency is improved => less RM lead to reduced costs
    - If the problem is higher price or higher overall procurement cost, then:
    - Resolutions
        - Specification
            - Substitution (Different Raw Material)
            - Cheaper material - indigenization/rationalization?
        - Quantity
            - Value engineering (Use lesser Raw Material)
        - Per unit price
            - Same Supplier
                - Better Negotiation/Bulk Order – Can you provide something in return for a better price?
                - Time of Sourcing (Opportunistic) – Buying when prices are low
            - Alternate supplier
                - Currency Hedging – Use forwards/futures if prices are expected to rise. Also use call or put options for the variable part of future demand.
                - Standardization of Parts– ordering more of same type of good

        - Backward Integration
        - Cheaper supplier - china etc.?
- Inbound Logistics:
    - Do you and your competitor use the same Mode of Transportation?
    - Do you incur the same rates and same overall cost?
    - Explore Distance Travelled – could be that the rates are same but your factory is further away from the supplier base.
    - Are you ordering at the Economic Order Quantity (EOQ) – Trade of between Set up cost, holding cost and expected demand
- Production/Operations:
    - Explore Labor cost and efficiency vis-a-vis competitor.
    - Inventory Cost (EOQ)
    - Overheads such as Electricity/Rent same or higher?
    - Machine Utilization: % Downtime - High?
        - Machine broken?
        - Maintenance/spare cost Power outage?
        - Labor unavailability?
        - Total availability will be a function of (% of time labor, % time machine available, % Idle time)
    - Resolution – additional dimensions:
        - Outsource
        - Economies of Scale/Learning curve
        - Labor cost arbitrage
- Distribution/Outbound Logistics:
    - Explore same as (Inbound)
- Post Sales Cost:
    - Installation
    - Service or Warranty cost?
- Gross margin is same but Operating margin has reduced:
    - Marketing & Administration – SG&A
    - R&D cost
    - Restructuring cost
    - Licensing and regulatory costs
- If NOPAT is down
    - Depreciation & Amortization
    - Interest Expense
    - Tax rates – which geographies (VAT) does our company operate in?
    - Inventory Write off
    - Gains/losses or external investment
    - Loss due to some catastrophic event

Market Entry Framework

To put it very simply, there are two basic considerations for market entry

a) is it a good idea?
b) How to enter?

We will try to put together a framework which strives to answer these two questions quite exhaustively.

Structuring the problem

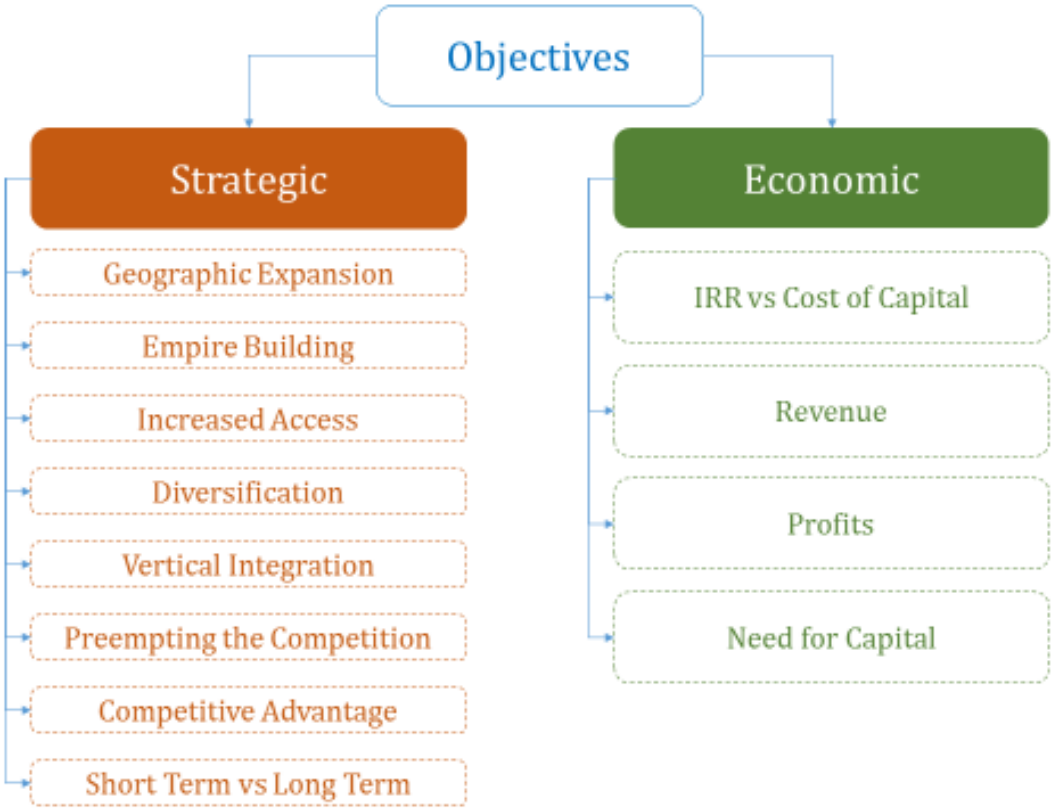
1) Deciding on the Goals/Objectives
   a) Strategic Intentions
   b) Economic Intentions

2) Evaluating whether to enter the industry or not is a function of three parameters
   a) Industry Attractiveness
   b) Financial
   c) Strategic Intentions.

The 3 parameter approach helps one to answer the two fundamental questions associated with market entry

a) Where to invest: Value chain wise, geographically
b) How to Invest: Mode of entry

1. GOALS/OBJECTIVES



Defining the problem

Q1. Motivation behind entry?

a) Why into new industry?

b) Why into this particular industry?

c) Anything other than profits a motivation?

Q2. Target for profitability? Timelines?

a) Cost of capital? Target Rate of Return?

b) Target market share?

c) Target revenues and target profits?

Q3. Any constraints on investment and scope of thinking?

a) Levels of investment

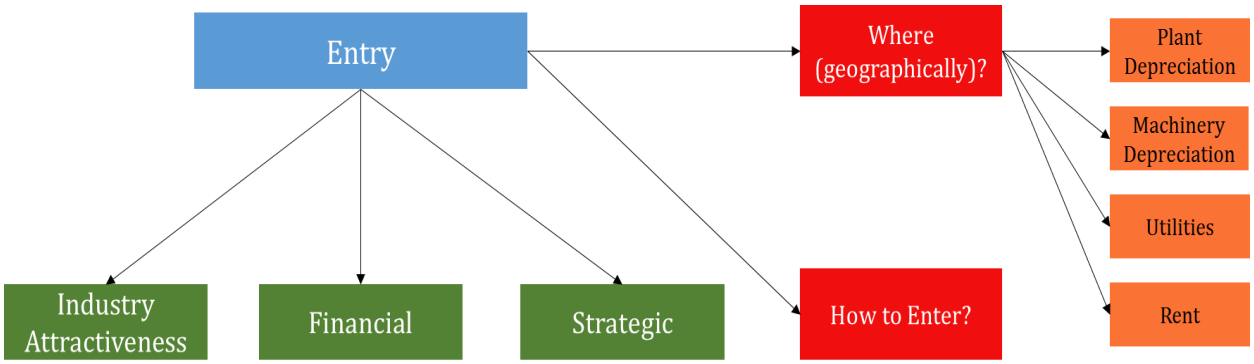
b) Geographies of investment

Q4. Understand the company, line of businesses and the existing business model

a) Will help from the synergies point of view

b) Corporate structure/Organization structure

2. SHOULD WE ENTER?



Evaluation Parameters	Affecting Factors
INDUSTRY ATTRACTIVENESS	- Market Size - Growth/life cycle - Value Cycle: competitors, substitutes, suppliers - Customers – WTP, Demand-Supply, price elasticity, backward integration, switching cost, brand loyalty - Barriers – Regulatory, forward integration, economies of scale - Risks – PESTLE Analysis: External Vs Internal
FINANCIAL GOALS	- Quantitative analysis to evaluate on the Financial Metrics (Mentioned Below)
STRATEGIC GOALS	-Organization Design/structure - Sustained competitive advantage: VRIO framework, Brand Equity, Market share gain, Patent/Proprietary Technologies - Cost-Benefit of entry: Economies of Scale, Supply Chain/Distribution Synergies, Breakeven is aligned with goals, competitive advantage

Industry Attractiveness – Answering The 'Should We Enter?' Question

This part of the structure tries to determine how attractive the industry is? Sometimes one may be asked to evaluate/compare more than one option. At other times, you might be required to generate the options and the case opening can be vague. In such cases, the best option is to draw the value chain (with the help of the interviewer), and identify which part of the value chain the company should enter. A short-listing criterion like top decile of return and bottom decile of risk can be used.

Whenever you have to make a choice, remember you need to develop a choice rule or mathematical metric of evaluation. However, the choice cannot be made entirely based on qualitative analysis and quantitative metrics need to be developed in order to exercise the choice.

The metrics of evaluation could be –

- Investment (Upfront, Change in Working Capital)
- ROI/IRR/Payback Period
- NPV/Profit
- EVA – Economic Value Added: NOPAT – WACC x Invested Capital
- Opportunity Cost of Investment
- Real Option
- Projected Cash flows
- Terminal Value
- Risk

A best case/worst case analysis can be performed if required.

Based on the above analysis, we can move towards evaluating the market entry case by using a **Fundamental Attractiveness Vs Relative Competitive Positioning graph**

Fundamental Attractiveness

- Barriers to Entry
    - Government Regulation
    - High Capital Requirements
    - R&D – IP/Patent
    - High Brand Equity
    - Human Capital – High Costs
    - Economies of scale/scope
    - Switching costs – Network Effects
    - Distribution Network
- Competition
    - Consolidated/Fragmented Market
    - Market Share distribution among competitors
    - Supplier/Distributor Channel – Strength & Weakness
    - Contractual customer lock-ins define market trends

- Buyer
    - Segment Growth
    - WTP – f(demand)
    - Distributor Channel Preference (Outbound Logistics)
    - Demand-Supply Gap (Important)
    - Price Sensitivity – Ascertains whether to go for Premium Pricing or not
    - Threat of forward integration – VERY HIGH SUPPLIER POWER
    - Needs w.r.t current product mix being offered in the market
- Value Chain & Substitute products
    - Switching cost of buyers/suppliers
    - Threat of backward integration – Competition might acquire vendors to control its supplies of RM et al.
    - Manufacturing Resources – Talent/Expertise availability?
    - Availability of substitute products?
    - Consumer Behavior evolutionary trends

Relative Competitive Positioning: **f (Financial Goals, Strategic Goals)**
Also, it is prudent to assess the relative competitive gains for our client on following parameters –

- Brand Equity
- Economies of Scale
- Supply chain/Distribution Synergies
- Market share gains
- Patent/Proprietary Technologies
- Organization Design/structure
- Cost-Benefit Analysis

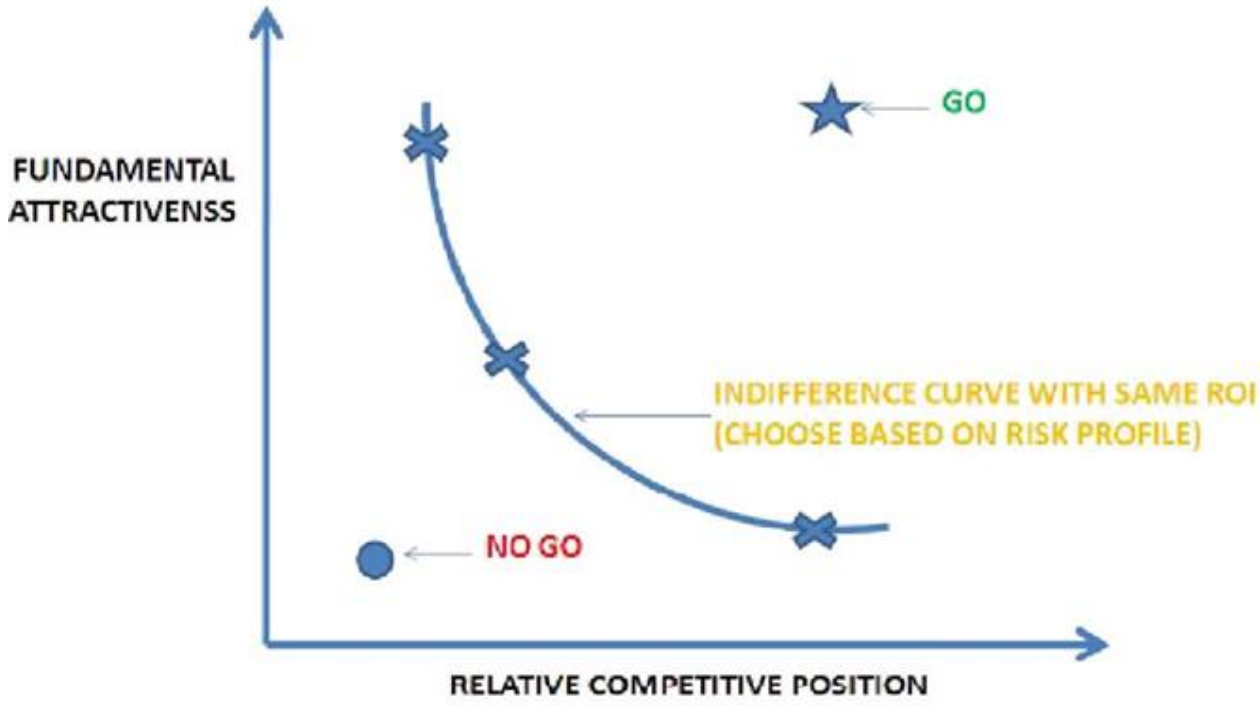
Strategic Goals
Strategically, does it make sense for the company to enter the market?
<u>Short Term (FIT)</u>:

- Prior Experience in moving to new markets
- Synergy with existing operations
- Tactical Decision – 4Ps
- Game Theoretical perspective – Strengths/Weakness of each player
- Competition Response

<u>Long Term</u>:
How to build a sustainable competitive advantage?

- Create Barriers to Entry/Exit
- Create Customer Lock-ins

Now for case solving purposes we might as well plot the graph between **Fundamental Attractiveness Vs Relative competitive positioning** and mark the client's positioning on the graph on the basis of both qualitative and quantitative assessment made above. Graphical presentation of your analysis earns you more points

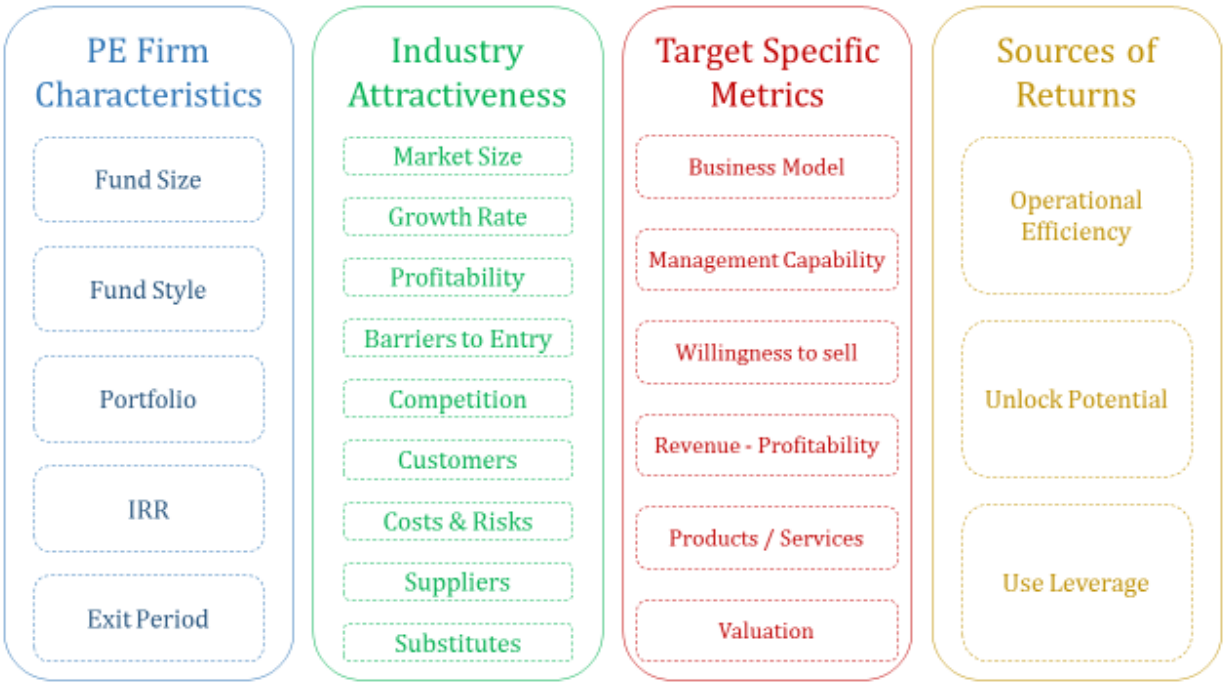


PE Investment Framework

This section discusses investment into a business for financial gain.
Whenever asked to evaluate an investment it is essential to understand the objective first.

- **Why?** – Objective of investment: direct return from investment, incentives in the current business, synergies, etc.
- **What?** – What is the target rate of return from investment
- **When?** – Timeline of investment

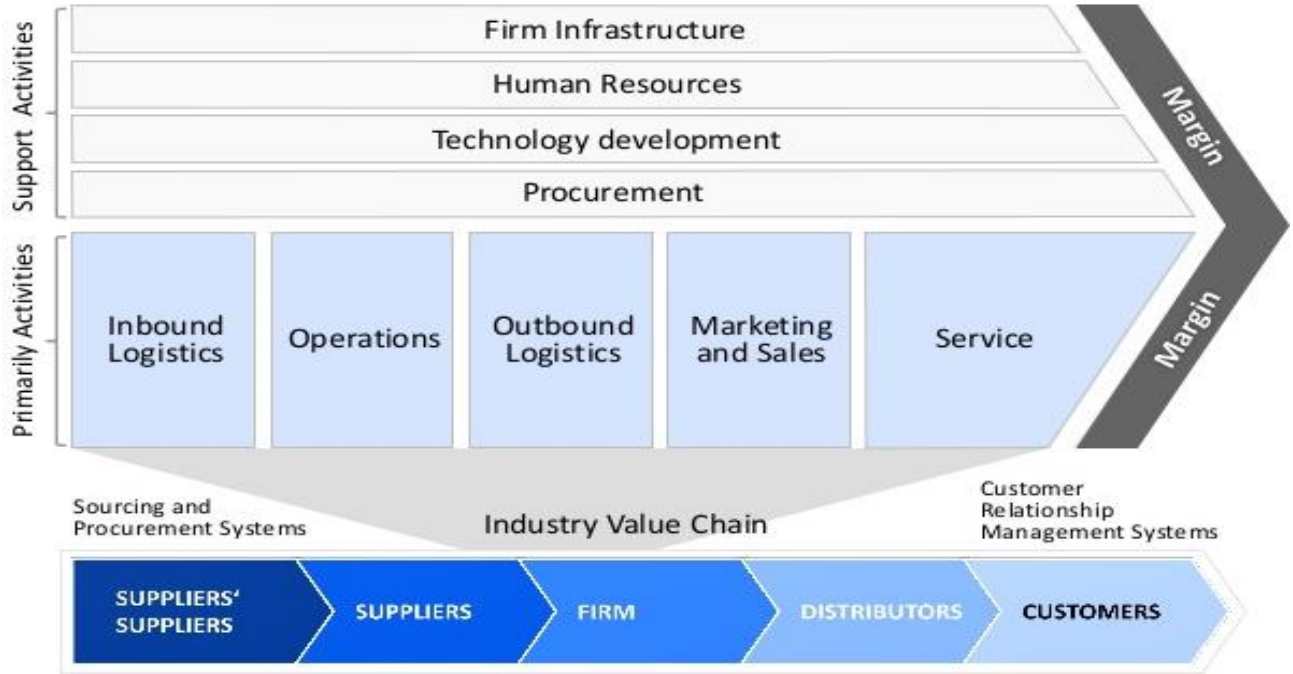
Once the expectation setting is done, rationale to make an investment can be evaluated as follows:



Only if the industry is attractive, target has high potential and expected return from the investment (from all sources) exceed target ROI, investment is justified.

Value Chain Framework

Value chain analysis is an extremely useful tool to solve many business problems. The basic idea here is to understand different parts of the value chain and look for abnormalities/inefficiencies at each leg of the value chain.
A general value chain structure is as follows (some parts may not be relevant for certain industries):



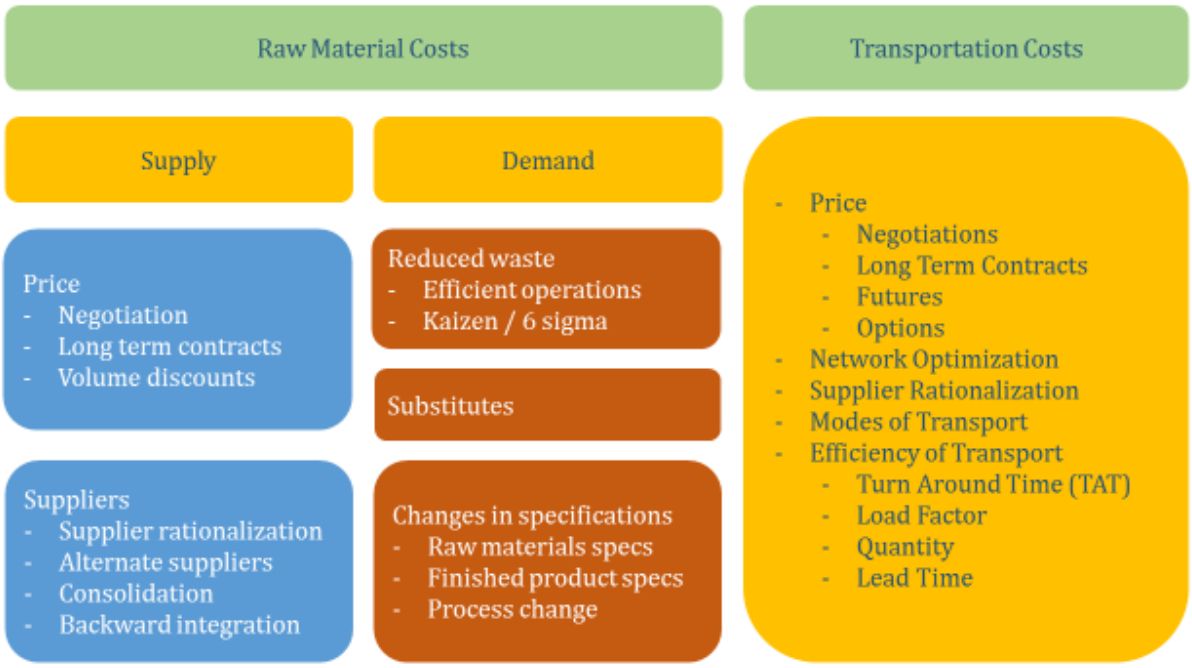
A few important questions to ask under each part of the value chain will result in insights for problem solving:

Demand Forecasting

- How volatile is demand?
    - What is the method used for high demand and high volatility raw materials?
- What are demand forecasting methods used? What is the confidence limit of the forecasts?
- What are costs of understocking vis-à-vis costs of overstocking?

<u>Recommendations</u>: Careful estimation of raw material quantities for high profit margin and high variability products

Sourcing



Warehousing

- Are warehousing costs significantly higher than the industry average?
    - Warehouse capacity sufficient?
    - Is warehouse optimally utilized?
    - Visibility of SKUs?
    - Automated vs Manual operations

<u>Recommendations</u>: Apply EOQ to reduce inventory costs, manpower rationalization, layout modifications etc.

Manufacturing

- Benchmark all costs with industry average
    - Direct Labour
    - Direct Material
    - Overheads
- Reason for higher costs?
    - Process (process parameters, sequence of operations, utilization etc.)
    - People (Incentives, skill, motivation etc.)
    - Technology (obsolete, inefficient etc.)

<u>Recommendations</u>: Make vs buy (outsource?), Consolidate manufacturing capacity (Economies of Scale and Scope), upgrade technology, people management and training, process redesign etc.

Logistics

- Benchmark with industry average
    - Price (Negotiation, LTC/ futures etc.)
    - Network optimization
    - Supplier rationalization (consolidation, alternate suppliers etc.)
    - Mode of transport
- Efficiency of transport (TAT, load factor, quantity transported per trip etc.)

Distribution

- Penetration (no of distributors)
- Shelf space (% of own items vs % of other's items)

Recommendation: Look at distributor commission structure (push), discount schemes (pull), expand distributor network etc.

After Sales Service

- Service time, quality and cost
- Variety of services
- Accessibility/Availability
- Benchmark with industry average

Recommendations: Improve the metric (time, cost and quality) which is most important to the customer, open more service centers, relocate centers, acquire other service centers, outsource etc.

M&A Framework

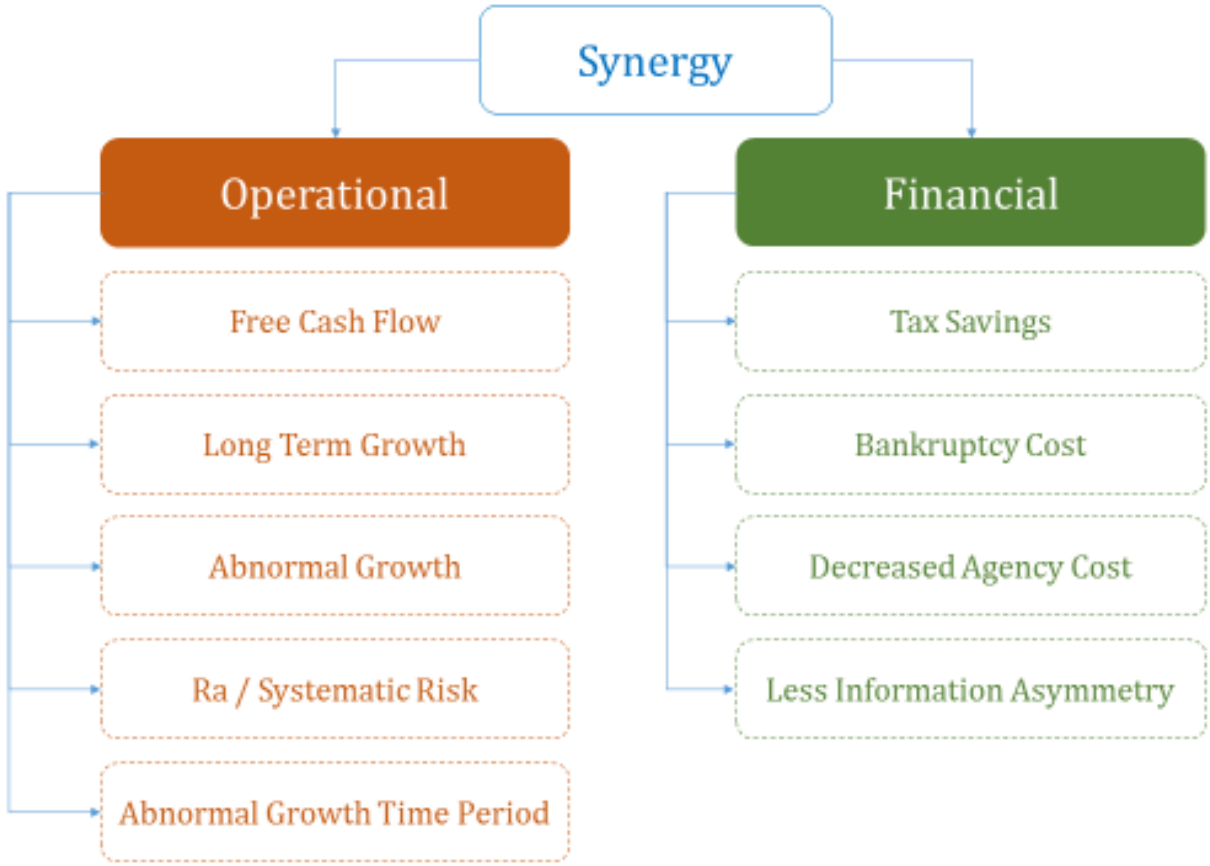
There are two ways any M&A can generate value – 1) Value of Control 2) Value of Synergy. The actual value of how the acquirer benefits will depend upon the premium paid.
There are two types of M&A.

- Strategic:
  - Value Generated = (Vat – Va – Vt) + (Va-Va')
- Non-Strategic:
  - Value Generated = (Vat – Va – Vt)

- Opportunity Cost: (Va – Va')
  - Competition
  - Industry

Note: Va = Value of acquirer, Vt = Value of target, Vat = Value of combined entity, Va' = Value of acquirer if someone else acquires the target company

Types of Synergies



Operational:

- FCF = EBIT (1-Tax) + Depreciation – Change in WC – Capex
    - EBIT = Revenue – Cost
        - Revenue = P * Delta Q + Delta P * Q + Delta P * Delta Q
            - **Delta Q:** Ability to sell more
                - Better Product
                - Combining Strengths: Examples: Distribution network + Sales force, Access to cheap funds, better geographical reach – say more offices, Increased Management Bandwidth, Combining Sourcing capability with Distribution Reach
                - Cross Selling: Doing this is very risky though
                - Bundling
                - Up Selling
            - **Delta P**: Ability to price higher
                - Low Competition
                - New products or better quality
                - Increase pricing power in case of strategic acquisition
        - Cost
            - COGS decrease
                - (Dis) Economies of Scale/Scope: There can be losses as well if there are coordination problems or management bandwidth issue.
                - IT budget streamline
                - Pooling of technology
                - Reduction of overhead
            - SG&A reduction
                - Remove duplication of Sales force
                - Promotion Streamline
            - R&D cost reduction
                - Linking innovative capability
                - Sharing technology
            - Reduction in threat of Hold up cost
                - Future Price Increase
                - Not in time supply
                - Not appropriate quality product
    - Depreciation Tax Shield
        - Asset write up: One time gain as assets are market up to market value on acquisition
    - Change in Working Capital
        - One time gain in case acquirer has better receivable management practice
    - Capex Investment
        - If Asset Turnover (Sales/Assets) increases, then less Capex investment required in future
- Growth
    - Long term Growth doesn't change generally
    - Look for opportunities that enable permanent competitive advantages
- Abnormal Growth
    - Ga = ROC * Reinvestment Rate
        - ROC can increase due to higher EBIT or higher Asset turnover

        - RR can increase due to availability of more positive NPV project
- Abnormal Growth Time Period
    - Can increase due to erecting barriers to entry
- Ra
    - Beta or systematic risk can reduce in case you combine:
        - Cyclical (Corporate Banking) + Counter Cyclical (Bankruptcy Advisory)
        - Cyclical (Luxury Business) + Non-Cyclical (Tobacco)
        - Vertical Integration sometimes reduces risk

Financial:

- Tax Savings
    - Tax loss carry forward from a winding business
    - Ability to take more debt – hence more tax shield
- Bankruptcy Costs
    - As per MM, if Bankruptcy costs exist (that is there is destruction of value) then this adds value
        - Lost Customers
        - Lost Employees
        - Lost Supplier relationships
    - Reasons for default:
        - Cyclical business
        - Cash Flow volatility
        - Competition
        - Technological obsolescence
    - If Bankruptcy costs exist, then savings happen due to merger
- Reduced Agency Costs
    - Debt brings discipline
- Reduced Information Asymmetry
    - Internal capital markets (use of most economical source of funds)
    - Exploit any mis-pricing in the markets

Analysis of FIT

- Cultural Fit
    - Are the cultures of the merging entities coherent? for e.g. both are entrepreneurial orgs
    - Are the cultures complementary? For e.g. an entrepreneurial design org and a highly organized sales org
    - Do we expect significant cultural clashes on merger? For instance formal vs. informal
- Strategic Fit
    - Are the long-term strategies of the merging firms in tune?
    - Will the merged firm evolve a new long-term strategy?
    - Costs associated with percolating new strategies through the merged org.
- Organizational Fit
    - Degree of similarity in org structures. Matrix, functional, divisional etc.
    - Management overlap and talent

Analysis of Risks: Use the **PESTEL** framework

Political, **E**conomic, **S**ocial, **T**echnological, **E**nvironmental, **L**egal

New Product Launch Framework

This is a very basic framework of approaching such questions in a consulting interview. However, if you are preparing for Tech companies you should definitely refer to various other sources for an exhaustive framework.

Step 1: Understand the company, its objectives (Optional, if already provided by the interviewer)

Step 2: Understand more about the product

Step 2.1 Value Proposition, Targeted Customers, Any substitutes, Cannibalization, Any disadvantages

Step 3: Ask about the Market/Product segment where the new product will be launch

Step 3.1 Do a detailed industry analysis (Growth, size, competition, entry barrier, distribution)

Step 4: Do Market Sizing (Apply guesstimates funda) [Rank if multiple segments are present]

Does it make financial sense to launch the product?

Step 5: Delve deeper -> Cost of producing/launching the product (Variable Cost, Fixed Cost etc.)

Step 6: Pricing of the Product (Refer to Pricing Framework in next page)

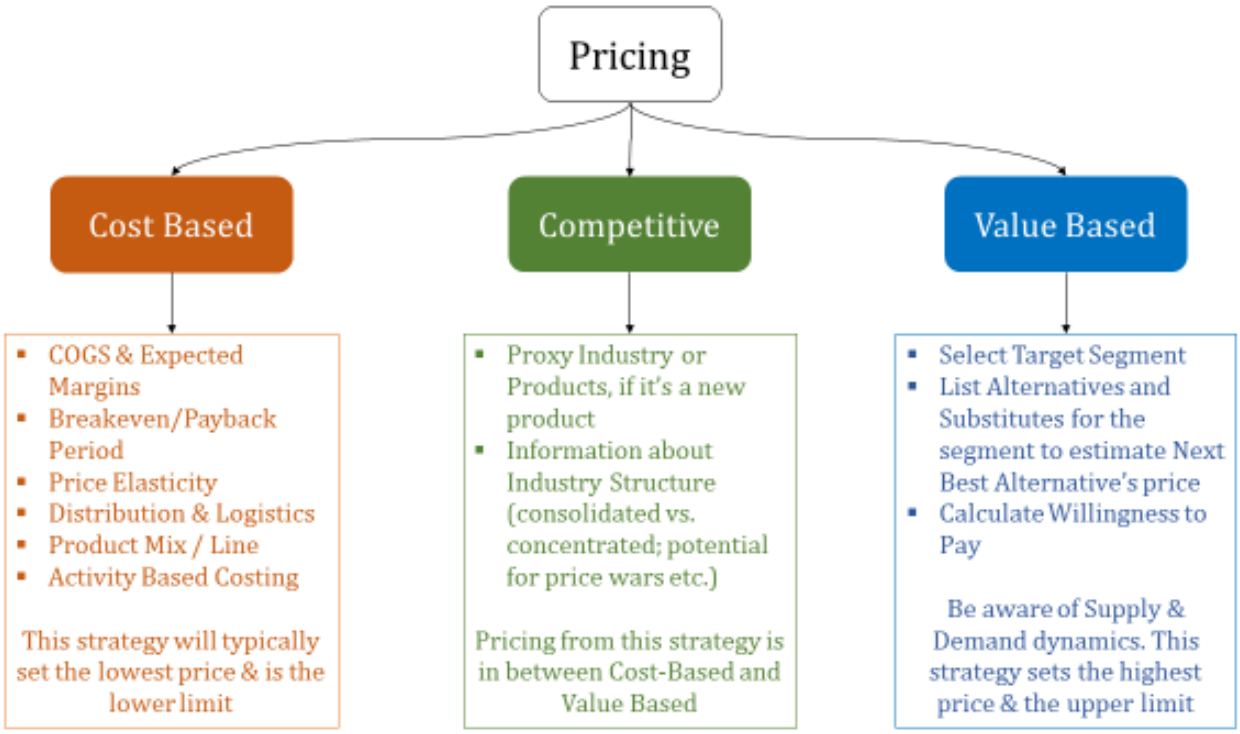
Calculate break-even volume, ROI, break-even period

Now give a brief summary to interviewer whether numbers make sense or not and then move to strategic reasons considering strategic fit, potential risks, competitive response etc.

Step 7: Strategic Fit

- Existing Product line
- Resources/Capabilities
- Distribution
- Risks
    - Competitive Response
    - Implementation related
    - Future economic outlook
    - Technology changes in future

Pricing Framework



Tip: Many Pricing cases also turn out to be masked 'market demand estimation' cases.

Defining the problem

- Identify if it's a bidding, auction or a straightforward pricing problem
- Get a clear picture of the product and the target customer segment
  - Single product or product line?
  - Commodity or differentiated product? Identity what value the client is adding to the customers?
  - Is the product Luxury or Necessity? Is the product patented? Is it imitable easily?
- Get a clear picture of the firm and their objective with this product
  - First time entrant? Does the firm want to grow the market share or Top-line?
  - Does the firm want to push the competitor out? Does the firm want to play price war?

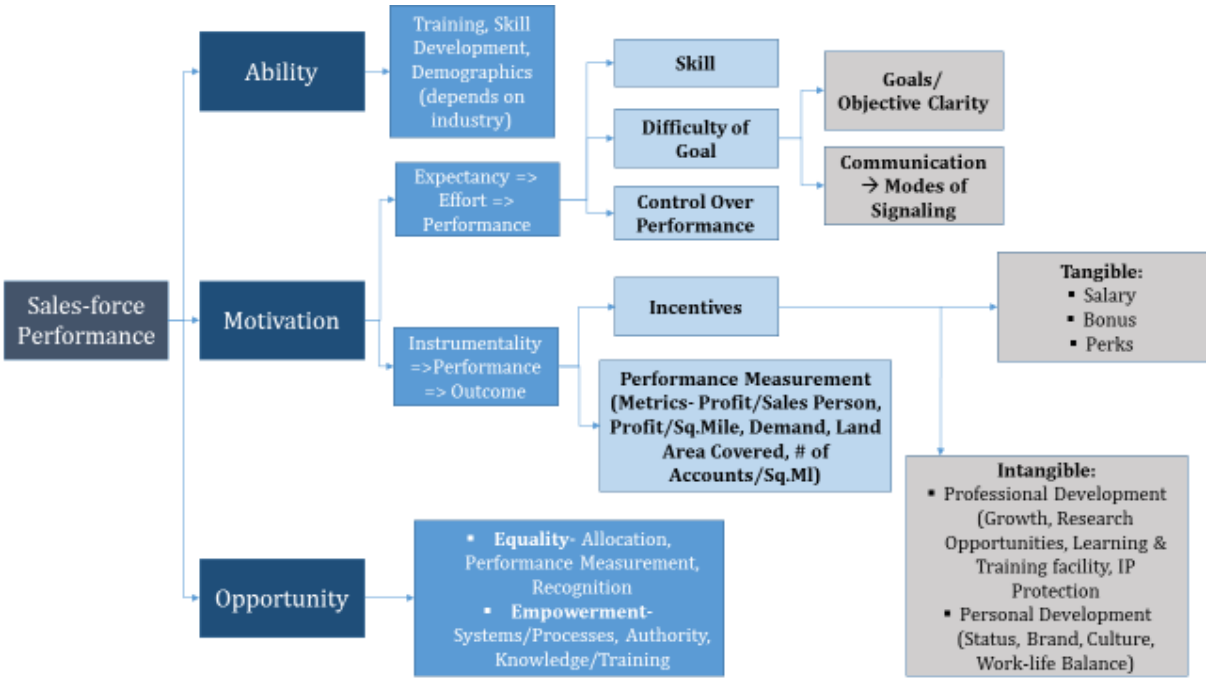
Structuring the Case

- The framework to solve pricing problems is relatively easy one
  - Once the framework is laid, start getting in-depth in each bucket (Cost, Competitive and Value based
  - Establish the border constraints (e.g. policies & regulations etc.)
  - Once you calculate the lower and upper ends of the pricing, offer a rational explanation which price range you would choose
  - Price lower than Value based pricing and above Cost based pricing calculations. Reason: Customer switching costs, fluctuations in WTP etc.

General Tips:

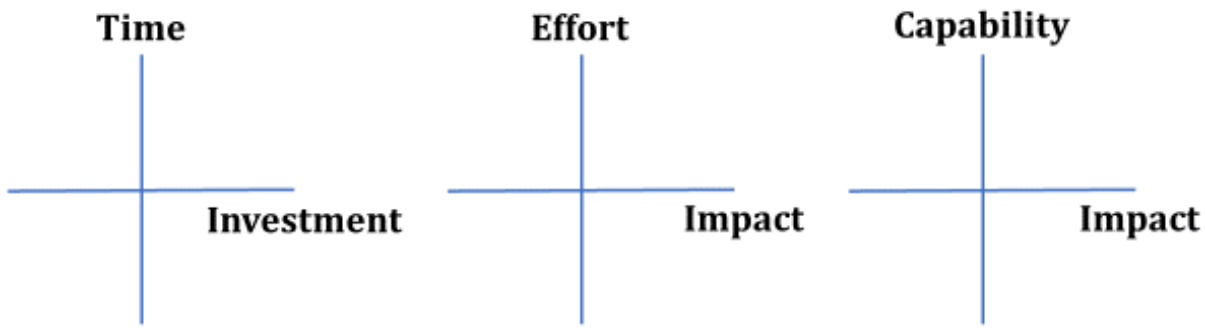
- Many pricing problems are masked 'market size' estimation problems. When the conversation goes in that direction, ensure you specify that you'd calculate the market size before pricing the product
- There's no single price – Always offer a price range. Mentioning the sensitivity metrics in calculations would fetch additional brownie points.
- Think about competitive reaction in the market
- Topics like bundling and other innovative prices (discount scheme etc.) will fetch brownie points

Salesforce Effectiveness Framework



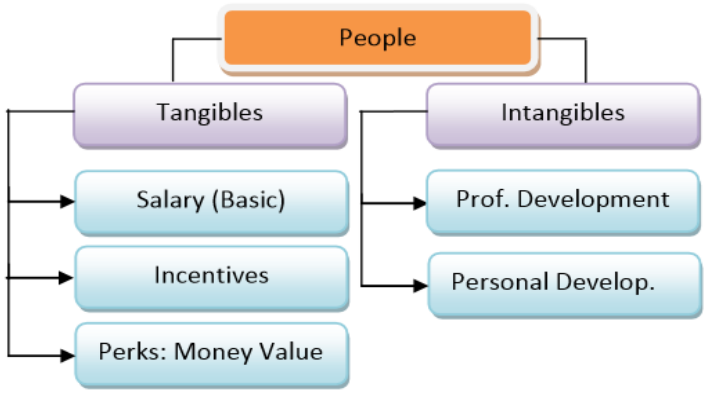
Other Types of Cases

- **Game theory**, auctioning (Revise Economics)
- **Abstract Ones** (Open ended cases such as *'Swatch Bharath'*, Political Campaign etc.)
  - Always Scope, Structure, Summarize
  - Try to create a flow of process and then analyze each piece
  - When providing solution again follow the same structure and flow
  - This will ensure that even in abstract cases the thought process is structure.
- **Prioritization Matrix** (2 by 2's): Can be used to evaluate any project/R&D activity. There are number of ways to do the same a few are outlined below –



People – Process – Technology Framework (Org. Structure)

People:



- **Professional Development**
  - Growth
  - Research opportunities
  - Learning and training facility
  - IP (Doctors, Engineers and IT guys may need this)
- **Personal Development**
  - Status within the company
  - Brand of the workplace
  - Culture
  - Work life balance

Process:

The following are the first few steps:

After identification of the Bottleneck, explore the following for improvement:

- Utilization improvement
  - Reduce idle time - Scheduling *(Trucks to port case)*
  - Batching /De-batching *(Grouping examples from factory examples in operations class)*
  - Setup time/Run Time *(Complete solution will depend on combination of the two)*

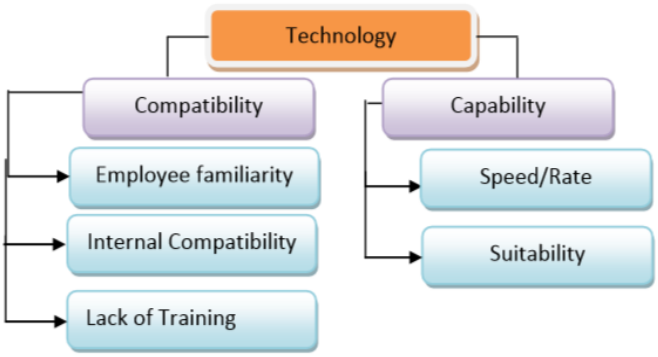
- Re-Design
  - Process improvement
  - Capacity Expansion (units of flow rate)
    - Reduce time
    - Add additional machines

$$\text{Capacity} = \frac{X}{\text{Setup time} + \text{Run time} * X} = \frac{1}{\frac{\text{Setup Time}}{X} + \text{Run Time}}$$

- *As X increases, Flow Time increases (bad) and capacity increases (good)*

- *As X decreases, Flow Time decreases (good) and capacity decreases (bad)*

Technology & Infrastructure:

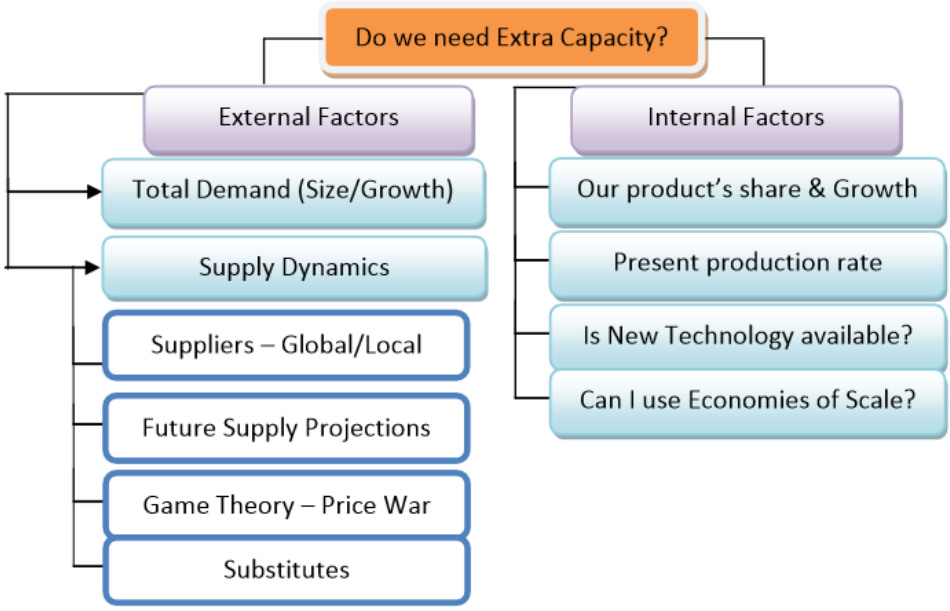


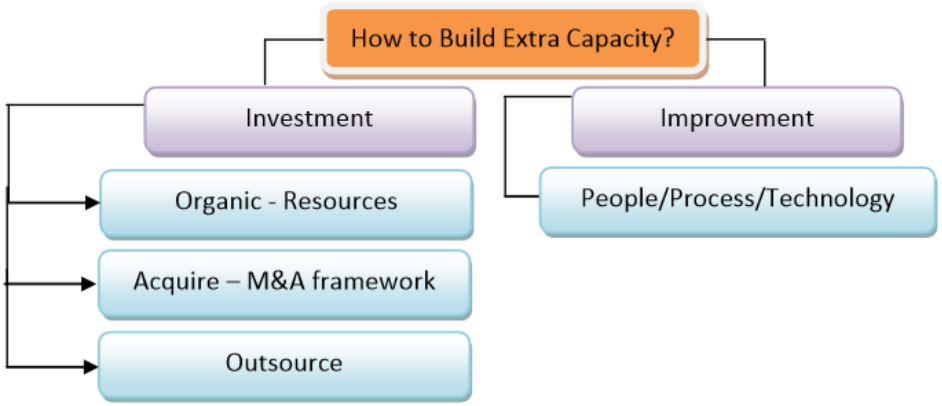
Sometimes it may not be clear where the issue is then use: (this is good from understanding how the business runs)

1) Man
2) Machine
3) Method
4) Materials
5) Measurement
6) Mother Nature (Environment)

Capacity expansion framework

Do we need extra capacity?





Crucial Points:

- Matrix of evaluation is in Market Entry Case – Keep in consideration the Investment/Payback Period evaluation
- Reducing or increasing capacity will affect the market clearing price – thereby the profitability

Growth Strategy Framework

Beginning:

Current Business: What is the context (customer/product/geography segments) in which you are presently operating in and what is the current position of your firm? Lifecycle of the Industry?

Ambition: What level you want to grow?

- If you want to surpass the Market growth rate that means you want to eat away in other people's market share.
- What are the options you are looking for: Think about the ansoff matrix – to understand the growth from – for scoping the problem

Structuring:

To understand growth we need to look at overall demand and supply dynamics of my product. There could be a scope of improvement on either side.

- "Demand side": Market is contracting or demand for my product is falling.
- "Supply side": Demand is there but I am not able to supply enough.
    - This can lead to both lost sales and lost customers

Strategic Options:

- Improving the profitable or promising part of the business.
- If nothing looks promising then you can consider
    - Spin off: Creating part of the business as a separate business
    - Divesture: Reduction or sale of assets
    - Acquisition: Get yourself acquired by a competitor/sister company or potential entrants

Understand how the business works in **each segment of customer**:

- Understand the value chain and decision making process for the customer?
- What part of the value chain am I catering to?
- **Say:** This particular player is the market leader – let's try to understand what is it that he is doing different?
- Comparison with the competitor

- Offering: Complete value prop in terms of
  - EVC, Service, warranty etc.
  - Commodity or Differentiated
  - Has the competitor erected any BTE: Brand/Network effect/Switching costs
- Price: Why has the competition got it lower?
  - Cost Structure
  - Economies of scale
- Promotion: Sales Force or Marketing expenditure - Efficiency and Total Expenditure
- Distribution Network: Also understand who are the stakeholders and any particular reason why they prefer the other product over ours.

Analysis:

As we know it can be of two parts – Volume and Price.

- Volume:
  - **Note:** When we talk about penetration for same product/same market then think from two perspectives:
    - You can increase the market share
    - Increase the market size itself.
  - Also think about can you increase volume by better utilization of existing capacity – hospital
  - Think of 2/2 matrix for volume increase say penetration or market development
- Price you have to go to the profitability framework to understand the customer segment contributions and whether they can sell at a higher price or sell more of the costlier product.
- Penetration: More Users/More Usage
- Product development: Innovate/Improvise
- New channels?
- New Geographies?
- Maintain Customer Loyalty
- Convert customers who are using alternatives or substitutes
- New competitive arenas - vertical integration

Guesstimates

Do not neglect this section and be thoroughly prepared with the same. A guess estimate can be asked in multiple ways, even while solving a normal profitability case. Once you have completed the guess-estimate then try to include the following to make your analysis much richer –

a. Verification of data – Identify a few sources from where you can get the right numbers to further refine your estimate.

b. Sensitivity Analysis – Conduct a basic sensitivity analysis and identify the most critical assumptions you made.

Such an extended analysis shows that you have thought through all the assumptions made and are not arbitrarily using any number to estimate. Although the numbers do not matter here but having a basic sense of the numbers used, knowledge of conversion scales and identifying the potential areas of over/under estimating helps a lot.

Guesstimate problems can be solved through three methods (with certain other variations):

1). Top Down Method

2). Bottom Up Method

3). Employing a proxy

Tips:

1). When you receive a guesstimate question, please make sure you scope it down so that applying a method becomes easy

2). Use simple numbers and round off intelligently so that you don't get stuck on account of calculations

3). Please try to write the guiding formula you are going to use and explain it to the interviewer so that while you are performing the guesstimate, he follows you.

4). whenever you make an assumption, please take a buy in of the interviewer asking "Does that make sense?"

5). Whenever you make and assumption, please make sure that the actual no. can be found out through a public information source, so even if your assumed no. is not correct, it can be correct. Be sure to state the same.

6). Try and be MECE (Mutually Exclusive Collectively Exhaustive), just like in solving cases, at each step

Example 1: Estimate the no. of auto rickshaws in Delhi

Whenever you encounter such problem, please be sure to ask the interviewer whether he wants you to solve the problem from supply side or demand side.

From Demand Side

You actually go about determining the actual demand of auto rickshaws. The steps followed could be as under:

1). Formula: No. of auto rickshaws = (Total No. of Auto Passenger Trips to be travelled per day in Delhi)/ (No. of Trips/Auto/day) * (No. of Passengers/Trip) * Utilization factor

2). Now in order to calculate Auto passenger miles, we would divide the trips into trips into trips made for regular usage (done by professionals) and occasional trips, and use top down method to calculate each

3). We would first figure out trips done for professional usage by figuring out how many people use auto rickshaws for professional usage on a daily basis, using filters such as income.

Top down Method

Population of Delhi = 1.2 Crores

% Working (say 1 per household) = 1.2/4 = 30 lacs

Auto Fare per day =Total kms* km rate = 20*15 = Rs. 300

Total monthly expense = 300*30 = 9000

Assumption (A person can at max spend 10% of his income on auto rickshaw) = 90000 Rs per month should be his income)

% people in urban Delhi in that income bracket (10%) = 3 lacs

% People who shall be travelling by auto = 1-% people who use own vehicle-%people who use metro = 40%

No. people who would use auto on a regular basis for professional usage = 3 lacs*0*40% = 1.2 lacs

Hence no. of passenger trips from professional usage = 1.2*2 trips/day = 2.4 lacs auto passenger trips

Similarly, we can find out for occasional usage (we can also employ 80:20 rule as well, saying majority of trips are for professional usage, lets add 20% to account for remaining trips, but such justifications should be backed well with data)

On no. of trips an auto makes, you can use the following formula

= (Average speed of an auto) * No. of operating hours* (Idle time)/ Average distance per trip

And verify this no. by using your judgment whether it looks practical or not

You can similarly find out, the other terms in the main formula and figure out the number.

From Supply Side

1). In order to verify this, you can employ supply side through following formula

= (Average Total No. of autos sold in Delhi/year) * (Average life of an auto)

2). You can find out the first term by looking up the sales numbers of all the major auto players for past few years (In the interview you would have to assume or ask) and average life of an auto also is a similar information

Similar Problem: Estimate the Airplane Fleet size of Air India

Example 2: Estimate the two wheeler market in India

Please make sure you ask whether the market has to be estimated in no. of units or you can again approach this problem from supply side and demand side. You need to clarify the same with the interviewer.

Demand Side

1). We would divide the demand into: New Demand (new users) and Replacement Demand (Existing Users)

Replacement Demand = (Total No. of Two Wheelers Currently in India)/ (average replacement period)

New Demand = (Population segment Growth Rate) * Total no. of two wheelers currently in the country

2). Two wheelers can be of two kinds: Domestic (owned for personal usage) and Professional (owned by professional agencies such as dominos, police, postman)

3). To estimate for personal usage, we would employ top down method

4). Start with population of India, 1.2 Billion

5). Urban (30%) and Rural (70%), which implies 0.36 Billion Urban and 0.84 Billion Rural

6). No. of Urban Households 0.36/4 = 90 Million and No. of Rural Households = 0.84/6 = 140 Million

7). Now we need to figure out how many can afford a two wheeler and remove the elite population that only owns four wheelers. Hence, we shall have to find out the income level and figure out the number of two wheelers in households hence.

8). Let's say that no. comes out to be 30 Million

Now, based on the current no. we can find out the expected replacement demand

Replacement Demand (Domestic) = 30/4 = 7.5 Million

New Demand = 30*2% (growth rate of eligible population segment)

= 0.6 Million

Hence total domestic market = 7.5+0.6 = 8.1 million/year

9). To calculate Professional Demand, we can use proxy and bottom up combination

So, first assumption is professional usage is primarily urban

Then take a city and categorize various types of uses (This is bottom up approach):

1). Police

2). Dominos

3). Postal Services

4). Others

Estimate each of these and come with a number

Then employ proxy method as under

Total Professional usage = (No. of vehicles in the city) * Urban population in the country/ (Population of the city) * Correction factor

Supply Side: Similar approach as Example 1, please try it yourself

Similar Example: Estimate the pet food market in India

Estimate the luxury home market in Chandigarh

Example 3: Can two dogs have identical no. of hair in the world?

Short Answer is YES!

This one is an application of pigeon hole principle (Such problems have been asked in Oliver Wyman in past)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pigeonhole_principle#Hair-counting

Consulting Interview Experiences

Below is a collection of case interview experiences from Co2018 in alphabetical order of firms. Please note that these case experiences are only for candidates to whom an offer was rolled out by the respective firm – there might be cases where candidates have received multiple offers from firms (finally accepted one) and captured both case experiences ☺

A.T. Kearney

1.

General Information	
Name	Shubika Sardana
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Credit Analyst, Deutsche Bank Group; Zonal Head, Aasaanjobs
Company interviewing for	A.T. Kearney
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Guesstimate
Interviewer Designation / Name	Shipra Biswas, Principal
Case Type	Guesstimate
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Estimate the number of coins in a mall
Scoping Questions	Asked basic scoping questions on the type of mall (location, other malls in vicinity), time and day at which the number of coins had to be calculated.
Approach Used By Candidate	Interviewer: Mall such as Oberoi Mall in Goregaon, Wednesday afternoon, 2pm Interviewee: Coins could be currency coins or tokens given at parking, baggage tags etc. Interviewer: Good point, but focus only on currency coins in the mall Interviewee: Currency coins can be found in customer wallets (30%), cash counters of shops (70%), staff outside the shops (10%). To calculate the number of coins at the cash counters we start with looking at the coins each store has in the morning less how many are consumed in 3 hours (from 11am to 2pm). Once we get this number, we multiply it by the number of stores estimated.

	So, let's assume each store on an average begins with 100 coins in the morning. During 3 hours, the coins used would be a function of number of active customers, # of purchases (1 purchase would imply one 1-rupee coin, 2 purchases could imply two 1 re coins, ignoring the existence of 2 re coins for sake of simplicity). Number of active customers are assumed to be 2 per store in an apparel / retail store, 4 per store in an F&B outlet. Assuming only 20% of the stores will be occupied = 20% of 60 stores (this number is also assumed), there will be 12 stores and 6 customers per store = 72 transactions in an hour. So in three hours, 216 coins will be used up out of the 100*60= 6000 coins. Therefore, nearly 5800 coins will be at the cash counters of the malls. Now, we will find the number of coins in a customer's wallet = f (number of customers, type of customer (male/female), size of wallet, coins per wallet). Number of customers are assumed to be 200 at the lunch hour, equally split between males and females. Males have smaller wallets and have, say, 4 coins = 400 coins. Females will have twice the number of coins = 800 coins. This implies customers will have 1200 coins. So if we add up, 5800+1200=7000 coins account for 90% of all the coins and thus, total coins at 2pm in oberoi mall would be 7000/90%= 7700 coins.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The above conversation was interactive and the principal was very helpful. It is important to always state your assumptions and justify why you are assuming what you are assuming. The Principal was guiding me whenever I was taking a wrong tangent to the problem. In a nutshell, hitting off with a good rapport from the start is extremely important and one must focus on that too during interview preps.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Abhishek, Partner
Case Type	Unstructured (Profitability)

Question / Problem Statement Narration	Interviewer: I was reading the newspaper this morning on my way to ISB and read about the increasing farmer suicides in Telangana. If you are hired as a consultant to the Telangana government, how would you help improve the situation
Scoping Questions	Interviewee: Alright. So if I understand the situation correctly, there has been an increase in the farmer suicides in our state. Can you tell me if that increase has been a recent phenomenon? Interviewer: 3-5 years Interviewee: Alright. So in order to improve the situation the objective would be to reduce the farmer suicides. Right? Is there a target number that we are looking to bring it down by? Interviewer: Let us assume that we are looking to increase the income of the farmers by 2x in 3 years.
Approach Used By Candidate	Interviewee: Okay great. So in order to increase their bottom line income, we can either reduce their costs or increase their top line inflow. The top line can be increased by increasing the income from the - current source which can either be in the existing market or in a new geography. - alternative source which can also be explored in a new market or existing market. Eg: Renting out excess capacity of land, labour or entering into selling water irrigation, manure etc. The various costs here would include the cost of various inputs: land, labour, water, pesticides, fertilizers, interest payments, transportation/middlemen cost Interviewer: Let's focus on increasing income from the current source. They currently produce Rabi which is a winter crop and crop x (some summer crop). Interviewee: Alright so are the margins on these crops high? If not, can they explore using the same resources to make other crops? Interviewer: Talking about margins, where do you think they lose margins? Interviewee: Middlemen eat up a lot of margin. Interviewer: So how can you fix that?

	Interviewee: Two things - one, facilitate them to have direct access to wholesale markets. The problem is of information asymmetry so if the government can set up a computerized system where the farmers can track the price of their produce in the wholesale market, they will be able to get a fair price. Two, regulate the commission rate middlemen will get. Interviewer: The problem with solution one is that it might solve the problem to some extent as the farmers are forced to pay a higher commission as they take loan facilities from the middlemen. The problem with solution two is that it goes against the idea of a laissez faire economy. But fair enough, what else can be done? Interviewee: Apart from this, they can look at: Increasing productivity by improving irrigation facilities and adoption of improved technology Diversification towards high-yield crops and non-farm activities Interviewer: Fair enough.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Post this we had a general discussion about my past work experience and things I have done at ISB

Round 3	
Interview Type	Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner
Case Type	NA
Question / Problem Statement Narration	NA
Scoping Questions	NA
Approach Used By Candidate	This was a generic discussion on my resume but the idea of this round was to gauge my interest in taking up the offer if I was made one
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	So it's good to be thorough with your CV

2.

General Information	
Name	Raghavendra Degala
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Energy sector and start ups
Company interviewing for	A.T. Kearney
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	--
Case Type	Market Entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Market entry of a large US Hospital into India
Scoping Questions	NA
Approach Used By Candidate	My interview lasted for 50 mins (10 mins PI, 20 mins Case and 10 mins Q&A). PI was pretty elaborate and questions included why consulting? (cannot stress enough on the importance of this questions), why ATK? past achievements? why the job change? challenges and how I reacted to it, cross questions on a particular project I did). Then, he moved on to a case on market entry of a large US Hospital into India. It was pretty straight forward- I applied the standard market entry framework. What the interviewer liked was how I went on apply a risk appetite based recommendations with a matrix, how I synthesized the case. He was pretty satisfied with my analysis and then asked me if I had any questions for him? I initially asked him how they did for the case- he said they did exactly as I how I have recommended which he said was pretty good. Then, I asked him a question about ATK's involvement in energy sector.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	First round is one of the most important rounds as the company will try to form a first impression of you. It is also the screening round and usually a manager takes the interview.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	--
Case Type	Open ended strategy case
Question / Problem Statement Narration	How to exploit technology in oil and gas sector to reduce costs
Scoping Questions	NA
Approach Used By Candidate	The 2nd interview was for 20 mins. He introduced himself and said he works in the oil and gas practice. Then, He went on straight to the case which was open ended and also it tested on my knowledge of oil industry given my work ex. The case was to recommend a strategy for a Oil and Gas major on how to exploit technology to improve on the costs. I asked a few questions and set the scope limited to use of technology in drilling and oil extraction. I used my previous experience to come up with a framework in the form of a table. The rows were the various processes involved and the columns being the innovations/technologies applicable for example use of big data, automation etc. As soon as I explained him the framework, he said good and stopped me to move on to the PI. He asked me about my experience at Shell and few questions on my projects.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case and Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	--
Case Type	Growth Strategy / Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Cooperative banks seeing flat growth rate
Scoping Questions	NA
Approach Used By Candidate	The longest interview which lasted for almost 60 mins. 30 mins PI and 30 mins Case. PI was pretty elaborate which included all the standard questions. He went to ask me in detail about a particular project I did at my previous company. I used a sheet of paper to draw and explain which he visibly liked. Then, the case was rather complicated in the structure. It was

	extremely important to identify the key connections between the stakeholders else I would have been lost. The case was about a bank which is lending to the smaller cooperative banks which lends to SMEs at a higher interest rate. The problem was that the smaller cooperative banks are seeing a very flat growth rate. With few questions I arrived at the root cause being the smaller banks failing to identify the demand. Then, the discussion went on to how to help them grow. I used the value chain to identify the key connections and then came up with 4 broad themes of recommendations.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The interviewer really liked the recommendations and he went on to explain the approach they took. The 10 mins I used to ask few questions. In all the interviews the questions you ask at the end of the interview are important and shows them your interest.

3.

General Information	
Name	Krishnanunni Surendranath
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Under-graduation- B.Com (H), Shri Ram College of Commerce Pre-ISB Work Experience- Corporate Treasury and Corporate Banking, Citibank India (2 years and 9 months)
Company interviewing for	AT Kearney Generalist
Number of interview rounds	4

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Principal (Karthik Gurumurthy)
Case Type	Working Capital Improvement/Optimization
Question / Problem Statement Narration	What can be done to improve the working capital position of a typical Indian telecom company?
Scoping Questions	The case was rather open ended. The interviewer was interested in a discussion of what I thought could be possible ways of achieving the end objective. He chose this particular case for me probably given my telecom portfolio experience at Citibank. Very few scoping questions were asked as I got a sense fairly early that he was not looking at the typical case solving methodology. All that he mentioned was that the company was like any other major telecom company in India. I clarified what he meant by working capital to which he replied that I can think from the point of view of current assets over current liabilities or the cash conversion cycle.

Approach Used By Candidate	As mentioned before, though the interviewer was looking at having an open discussion, I ensured that I did not start laundry listing. The easiest way to tackle the problem was by following a balance sheet approach. I started with the asset side and identified items that could have a bearing on the net working capital position. This was followed by a similar discussion for the liabilities side. We spent some time figuring out how the billing system can be modified to improve the receivables position.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Always try to think within the ambit of some relevant structure even when laundry listing might seem like the most obvious thing to do. There were instances during the course of my case discussion wherein the interviewer brought up terms/concepts I was not aware of. Best thing to do in such a scenario would be to be honest and ask for clarifications. Do not end up taking a shot in the dark just because you felt embarrassed during the interview.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Guesstimate + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Principal (Shipra Biswas)
Case Type	Guesstimate
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Estimate the number of coins in a mall at a given point in time
Scoping Questions	Q) What coins, any particular denominations? A) All denominations Q) What time of the day are we talking about? A) Thursday noon Q) Any particular source you are referring to? A) You can identify the possible sources
Approach Used By Candidate	Post asking the clarifying I listed down possible sources- shops in the mall and people in the mall. After this I outlined a broad equation for both these categories. Each category was discussed in detail. Focus was on the approach I would take to estimate the numbers; the interviewer did not want me to do any actual estimation. Once both categories were covered we had a discussion on some of the assumptions I made and how changes in the same would have affected my estimation. She also asked me if I had missed out on any major source, I took some time to think here and came up with parking lots in the mall that collect money from the visitors. She highlighted that the shops would have balances from earlier sales as they necessarily do not deposit money with banks on a daily basis.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	There were quite a few PI and CV questions in this round. Stay completely calm during the process. Remember that you know yourself the best.

	During guesstimates, ensure that you keep the interviewer involved throughout the process.

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner (Abhishek Malhotra)
Case Type	Revenue/Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The Telengana government needs help to double the overall profit accruing of its farmers
Scoping Questions	Size of the community. Relevant details of the location Current income Major crops produced Business model- suppliers, middlemen, market rates and accessibility, current farming practices Consumers- location, access etc Timelines
Approach Used By Candidate	I started the analysis with the profitability framework. While analyzing the revenue side I brought up the middlemen involved in the value chain, especially given low income farmers under consideration. This point interested the partner who struck a conversation on supply chain optimization in the agriculture sector for poor farmers. He asked me to compare the traditional supply chain and the ones being engineered by the likes of Amazon and Uber. A lot of the discussion was around how an Amazon being a middleman in the traditional sense is leveraging technology to increase its relevance in the value chain. The conversation then moved on to the question of who should be funding the value chain. The partner asked me to consider the example of a hostel mess system where raw materials are purchased and food is consumed by the students against payment. My argument was that in a value chain the biggest component catering to maximum number of (different) customers should be funding the value chain. As a lot of time went into these discussions and other PI questions, we did not revert to the initial case.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The partner kept contradicting and challenging my arguments throughout the course of the interview. In times like these do two things- 1. If you believe the interviewer has a valid point, acknowledge it 2. But if you feel your perspective is the right one, politely stick to it. It is very easy to get intimidated and lose confidence. Stay as calm as possible and think through before responding.

4.

General Information	
Name	Abhishek Sahoo
Pre-ISB profile in brief	BE - Industrial & Production Engineering, Manipal Institute of Technology 3.5 Years of Work Exp ; Derivatives Trader at Futures First; Consultant at Antuit
Company interviewing for	AT Kearney PAS
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Sushil Pasricha - Senior Manager
Case Type	PI + Mini Case
Question / Problem Statement Narration	How would you, as a credit card sales rep go about targeting small businesses without much information on their purchase propensity ?
Scoping Questions	Sushil's style is very spontaneous. He probes one's previous work experience in great depth and weaves cases on the fly. It's important to be highly contextual and think on one's feet in such cases. He posed a few situation based questions in addition to the case mentioned above
Approach Used By Candidate	This was an abstract case where frameworks may not help a lot. What definitely helps is having an adequate amount of practice under your belt - it helps ensure that you retain structure and exhaustiveness in your thinking.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	1.Be very well versed with the intimate details of all your work in the past. Expect very specific questions to pop up 2. Please try to be as MECE in your structure as possible. One may not be able to apply frameworks everywhere, yet you can think of other ways to make your analysis MECE 3. It's important to be able to succinctly capture your work experience in a manner that makes it simple for the interviewer to comprehend

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Marco Gutierrez – Director
Case Type	PI + Case
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Case - A distributor of baby strollers and prams, that sources from China and sells to retailers such as Amazon needs your help in forming its supply chain strategy for the next 10 years. How would you go about it?
Scoping Questions	Marco was again deeply specific in understanding the worm level details of what I had done in the past. I increasingly got the feeling that ATK PAS judges you on not just what case solving skills you demonstrate in a 30 min interview but quite significantly on how

	deeply you have thought about the problems you have solved in the past
Approach Used By Candidate	I spent significant time in scoping in a very detailed fashion and identifying the key metrics we would like to optimize when devising a supply chain strategy. To be MECE in my structure, I analyzed every element along the entire value chain. That aside, I also considered the risks involved and how we would mitigate those
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	1. Prioritize and deeply contextualize your solutions. Generic solutions aren't appreciated 2. Please understand the problem and situation really well, before attempting to solve it 3. It's important to strike a meaningful conversation rather than trying to sound fancy. The latter will be found out once the conversation shifts to Level 2/3 details. Also, since this is a global staffing based practice, a great deal of emphasis is placed on communication skills

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Bharat Thota - Vice President
Case Type	Abstract
Question / Problem Statement Narration	1. If XYZ has a bunch of retail stores and 1 central warehouse, is it a good idea to allow replenishment of stock at retail stores facing deficit of inventory from those stores that have excess inventory or should replenishment be done only from the central warehouse
Scoping Questions	This discussion was heavily PI focused with the case taking just 10 min out of the 30-minute discussion. He was trying to understand my style of working, core values and the sort of career trajectory I wanted to chart out at AT Kearney
Approach Used By Candidate	1. Please have very specific reasons as to why you want to join AT Kearney PAS. It should not come across as just one of the many consulting firms you are interviewing with 2. It will be helpful if you have clarity on how the consulting landscape has been evolving over the last few years and how it is expected to evolve. E.g. - evolution of strategy vs implementation mix, demand of functional vs industry expertise etc
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	I remember one of the interviewers (Don't recollect clearly which one) asking me a mini case on how I would interview them if I were the interviewer. This was a very different experience.

5.

General Information	
Name	Akshay Goel
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Thapar University, Exl Services, 2.5 years – Analytics
Company interviewing for	AT Kearney PAS
Number of interview rounds	4

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner
Case Type	Digital Strategy
Question / Problem Statement Narration	How would you help improve revenue of a media firm (say Hotstar)
Scoping Questions	Q1 - Can you please tell me more about the company. Also please tell me if we are focusing on a particular geography. A1 - Similar to Hotstar and say focused on Indian market. Q2 - What are their present revenue streams? A2 - They are just setting up the business. The company wants to understand potential revenue streams. (Part of solution). Q3 - What is the objective of the firm? Any particular revenue figure that company is looking at? A3 - They want to break-even at the earliest. Q4 - Why is company venturing into online space? (Important question) A4 - Increase its presence among the increasing number of online users and the company wants to occupy this space before Netflix and other major competitors.
Approach Used By Candidate	Initially highlighted the metrics that the company should be focusing on: 1) Number of new users/App downloads 2) Number of visits 3) Uniqueness of the content 4) Average duration per session Before moving onto the revenue streams, I drew out the strategy on setting up the business. This included unique differentiation point, target consumers, STP analysis, marketing plan, risks involved (cannibalization). Next moved onto the revenue streams including subscription model, ad model. Further moved onto how to differentiate content for paid subscribers and how would you use analytics to target customers.

Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Keep some questions ready for the interviewer as it gives you a chance to engage the interviewer post the case.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner
Case Type	Supply Chain
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Asked to design a network analytics algorithm for heavy machinery items
Scoping Questions	Had never designed/studied a network analytics algorithm before. Told the partner that I have never worked on it before but I would like to take a shot at it. Asked him basic scoping questions about the company, customers, products. Objective was to improve the supply chain efficiency.
Approach Used By Candidate	The aim was to focus on three aspects - Cost, Reliability and Lead time. Drew a normal chart while connecting different geographical locations.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Recommended to draw charts and figures on the white sheet. Helps you to differentiate yourself. The interviewer would love to see something different on your sheet compared to data in a text format.

Accenture Strategy

1.

General Information	
Name	Kopal Jain
Pre-ISB profile in brief	"B.Com(Hons) - SRCC Work Experience- ~3 years in Deutsche Bank Group in Foreign Exchange Sales, India Business"
Company interviewing for	Accenture Strategy
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + Guesstimate
Interviewer Designation / Name	--
Case Type	Profitability / Market share
Guesstimate	Guesstimate: Estimate the number of baby diapers sold in India every year Approach: This was a standard guesstimate. I started from the total population of India and used the population growth rate to determine the number of new born babies every year. I stated that I assume a kids till 4 years of age wear diapers, to which the interviewer smiled and asked me to assume till 2 years. Then I segregated this baby population on the basis of income into lower class, lower middle class, upper middle class and upper class. Then I placed assumptions of the use of diapers for each class- the lower class can't afford diapers at all. The lower middle class will use them only during functions and events. And the upper middle class and upper class uses them daily around 5 times in a day. Then I just explained the process of how I will add up all these numbers and multiply by 2 for 2-year old kids as well. The interviewer then said I don't need to do the calculations and gave me the next case.
Case	Case: So Nirula's used to be one of the leading ice cream chains in Delhi, but it has lost its charm now. What will you do to revive Nirula's? It wants to target the youngsters of the city.

	Approach: I applied the simple marketing framework of STP + 4P. For the segmentation and targeting part, I just clarified how we can divide the market based on age into 4 broad segments and target the younger chunk of the age group 18-35. For positioning, I said that Nirula's is perceived primarily as a family restaurant and the positioning will have to be completely revamped using advertising. I said that this can be positioned as the "dating" hub in Delhi, synonymous to how coffee places have become. I also gave the example of KitKat and how it was advertised as something that brings two people together by sharing a chocolate (She quite liked these examples) I had covered Promotion already by now and moved to the other 3. For product, I explained how Nirula's has not updated itself very well with time and newer brands have come in and taken over. For product as well, we will have to focus on vibrant flavours that are preferred by the youth. Also, the in-store experience needs to be attractive with some gaming experiences and things like foosball table inside. She mentioned that this is already a part of the plan. I moved to pricing and said that it should also be such that the youth can afford and doesn't go overboard. For place, I mentioned that Nirula's should consider opening stores around college campuses, metro stations, shopping markets etc. She asked me to end the case here

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	--
Case Type	Profitability / Retention
Question / Problem Statement Narration	There is a European bank that has back office operations in India and its retention rate is very low
Scoping Questions	I first clarified whether the retention rate being talked about is the employee retention rate to which the interviewer said yes
Approach Used By Candidate	Me: What operations does the European bank have in India? Interviewer: These are operations like technology support etc. So if there is any technology issue, a

	ticket gets raised here and is resolved by the team here. And other similar operations Me: How many offices does the bank have in India and at what locations? Interviewer: There are three offices- Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore Me: Is the retention rate low in all the offices or one of them? Interviewer: All Me: What is the benchmark for comparison for the retention rate being low? Interviewer: We are comparing these with the retention rate of other technology companies operating in India say Infosys and TCS Me: What is the hierarchy in the office/reporting structure? Do people report directly to the office in Europe or there is local reporting as well? Interviewer: There are team heads locally that people report to, but the heads report to people in Europe Me: Is there any difference between the quality of work between our client and other competitors? Interviewer: Other banks are able to transfer core operations also to the India office, while our client is only able to get basic and routine activities done and is not able to offload the responsibility of any core work Me: Okay. So is it possible that because we are not able to transfer core work which might be good quality work that employees are leaving frequently? Interviewer: Yes Me: Our client is a European Bank and the employee retention rate across all back offices in India is very low as compared to other tech companies in India and the client is unable to transfer any core functions here and we need to find out the reason why. (Here, I summarized the information as of then) Me: Our back office operation in question may be different from other tech companies in three ways:

	People, Process or Technology. Let's evaluate each one of them to understand where we are different. (I wanted to rule out Process and Technology first and asked if there is any difference between the technology and process between us and others. Before I could delve deep into it, the interviewer said that there is no difference in these two and asked me to move on to people) Me: There can be 3 broad things pertaining to People: Ability, Skill and Motivation. Ability- Our employees may not be able enough to take over more responsibilities, which might pertain to a problem in our hiring mechanism. How do we go about hiring? Interviewer: Campus recruitment. Me: Okay. Then, there might be a possibility that students don't want to stick to a back office tag at the immediate start of their career. For Skill- It is possible that in spite of the ability, our employees are not able to acquire the required skills for work because of lack of proper training and development programs Motivation-Employees might be low on motivation because of lack of incentives-monetary or non-monetary. The team leads don't seem to have an incentive to take up additional responsibility in this case. Here, the interviewer did not respond to any of the above and stopped me. I figured that he didn't want me to solve the case and was only looking for approach. Personal Interview Questions: Tell me about yourself? Why do you want to join Accenture? Other questions asked: Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 on your number crunching and data analytics skills. What is the difference between Type I and Type II error?
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	--

Round 3	
Interview Type	Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner
Approach Used By Candidate	This was a partner round. I was asked the same personal interview questions asked in round 2. After that: Interviewer: What is your favorite subject? Me: Macroeconomics Interviewer: Show me the equilibrium using IS-LM curves? (I had studied this in my 1st undergrad briefly, but I did not remember at all. But I knew that this was the final round and I had managed the situation somehow. So I said that this is the Investment Savings and Liquidity Money curve and I said that I wonder why they don't teach these concepts in MBA these days) Interviewer: Oh. They don't teach this in MBA? Me: NO Interviewer: Okay, then tell me two ways in which RBI can regulate interest rates.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	It is very important to be structured while solving a case. All interviewers are testing us only on structure. Think of the answer to the favorite subject question in advance and revise that subject. I was asked this question in 2 different interviews. Prepare PI questions well. They make a difference. And is definitely extremely important to keep your cool throughout the day.

2.

General Information	
Name	Simrat Bir
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Worked as Manager-Operations in Mercedes-Benz India. Have 4.9 years of Pre-ISB work experience, having worked across multiple Profiles in Operations including Supplier Quality, Production Planning and Control (PPC) and Technical Change Management. Have handled the responsibility for CKD (Completely Knocked Down) passenger cars produced in 6 countries.
Company interviewing for	Accenture Strategy
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	Abstract + Market Entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	1. Reduce queues in a theme park (innovative ideas) 2. Market entry strategy for a telecom operator
Scoping Questions	--
Approach Used By Candidate	My Interviewer asked me several basic questions about why Accenture, why Strategy, why Consulting (so please prepare crisp answers for these hygiene questions which are commonly asked). Since my background is in operations, he gave me 2 mini-cases: The 1st case was - How would you reduce the Queues in a Theme park (come up with some innovative ideas) I started by giving a brief overview of queueing theory fundamentals and how it's applied currently in theme parks by the likes of Disney etc. He probed me a little more and then I spoke about Virtual queuing, a concept being explored by Universal Studios (he seemed happy, didn't probe any more). The 2nd mini-case was about a market entry strategy for a Telecom Operator currently having operations

	in Dubai and wanting to enter India to take on the likes of JIO. I went about the case by talking about the barriers to entry and generally followed the Market entry framework to come up with a strategy. He seemed alright with the approach and recommended me for Round 2. Total Interview time: 35-40 minutes
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	--

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + Personal Interview
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Earth moving company suffering declining profits and revenues
Approach Used By Candidate	The Interviewer began by again quizzing me on my Resume- I had to give a brief about my work in Mercedes-Benz, where the Automobile Industry is headed in the future, why Accenture, why I would be a fit in Consulting. He then asked me a few theoretical questions about NPV, IRR, Re-order point and then gave me a case. Case: The case was about an earth-moving company, which had been suffering declining profits and revenues in the past 2 years, while competitors were not facing similar issues. I had to come up with possible reasons and solutions. I approached the case using a slightly modified version of the Profitability framework and also took into account several aspects of the Earth-moving business (a fairly standardized, non-innovative product) to come up with several reasons for the firm's problems. I kept talking to the Interviewer through each stage of the Value chain and modifies small things here and there according to his inputs. This was a fairly comprehensive case and involved touching upon end-end aspects of the Company, Business etc. He seemed alright with the approach and recommended me for Round 3. Total Interview time: 50-55 minutes
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	--

Round 3	
Interview Type	Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	2 Senior Partners
Case Type	--
Question / Problem Statement Narration	--
Scoping Questions	--
Approach Used By Candidate	In my case, this was a very short and sweet round. 2 Senior Partners from Accenture asked me about my background, a few questions from my Resume, 1-2 very basic concepts on Operations, why Accenture, why Consulting, what are my Social skills, why I would make a good consultant, any location constraints and all the best :)
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	--

3.

General Information	
Name	Juhi Agrawal
Pre-ISB profile in brief	B.Tech from IIT Kharagpur, 4 years 8 months of experience in Financial Services (Worked with Oracle Financial Services Software and later with Goldman Sachs)
Company interviewing for	Accenture Strategy
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	--
Case Type	Market Entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Go-to-market strategy to increase SME client base in India for DBS. I was part of DBS's Unicorn Challenge at ISB, the interviewer created a case based on my work at DBS and asked me to define the metrics for KPIs (read: how will you measure success?)
Scoping Questions	--

Approach Used By Candidate	PI: Tell me about yourself, Preference of job location. Case: No standard framework was applicable in this case. I followed the approach of segmenting my KPIs under different categories and the interviewer was able to follow through my structure. I used the Pyramid format. As there were several KPIs, I also assigned priority levels to all the KPIs
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	When no standard frameworks apply, follow a MECE structure for better communication of information. It is best when the interview is more of a conversation so that you understand the level of details your interviewer wants you to provide.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	--
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Tell me about yourself, the interviewer was familiar with OFSS solution so there was a quick discussion on it (banking solution called FLEXCUBE, followed by a case on it) A top bank in India uses FLEXCUBE for their retail banking needs. Recently it also started to use another ERP software of Oracle's for their reporting purposes and observed that their write offs have increased drastically. You are OFSS and you have been asked to resolve the issue.
Scoping Questions	1. Since when have these writeoffs increased - Since ERP was installed 2. How do the two systems interact? - Both automated and manual interaction 3. Writeoffs are associated with ledger and balance sheet account entries- are these entries managed similarly in both systems? - No
Approach Used By Candidate	The case was not to be approached from a consulting firm's perspective but rather as OFSS, so I decided to not use any standard frameworks. After scoping the interviewer asked me to come up with a reason why this might be happening- I suggested that their might be a mismatch between the way accounts are mapped in both systems and

	any unmatched entry during reconciliation might be getting incorrectly reported in Bad debt accounts. To this the interviewer nodded yes and said that was the actual problem and asked me that as OFSS what solution might I provide. I asked for few seconds to write down my recommendations. Recommendations: I segmented my recommendations into two categories, organisation and technical. In technical- I said that FLEXCUBE provides the user the capability to create appropriate ledgers and transform them into what is acceptable in the sister system so that all entries are correctly mapped and this should be implemented. I also suggested an audit trail(maker-checker) format to be implemented and a daily/weekly batch process to automate ledger entries and reconciliations in both systems. In organisational - I suggested a training program for bankers so that they are aware of how the technical system works and are able to raise issues immediately as write offs can be detrimental to a bank's performance with the current situation of NPAs in India.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	I believe that when interviewer frame cases based on your resume they try to test your knowledge in that domain as well as how you handle an unstructured case. Prepare your resume well and be able to showcase it if asked

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case + Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner
Case Type	Market Entry
Personal Interview	Tell me about yourself, two subjects I liked the most at ISB, I mentioned the OPFR elective and CSTR. He asked me that what price would a risk averse and risk lover guage for a call option, what is duration and what factors affect price of an option. Later, after the case, I was asked one most important reason for why I would join Accenture.
Question / Problem Statement Narration	An electric car manufacturer wants to enter India. Suggest a go-to-market strategy

Scoping Questions	1. Where is the mfg present currently? - Across the world 2. Why do they want to enter India- They feel it will be profitable 3. Have they recently entered any neighboring countries or India like geographies- No 4. Will they be selling across India- No, just Delhi, they will import the cars.
Approach Used By Candidate	The Partner asked me to focus on 4Ps for the case. At this moment I asked for few seconds to jot down my strategy under 4Ps. Before beginning with my thoughts on 4Ps I mentioned that before 4Ps it is important to understand my customer or else I might not be able to create good value though Product, Place or Promotions. I went on to mention how pollution has become a big issue in Delhi and so given that issue such a proposition would immediately capture customer's attention through advertisement as well as government would be ready to back up the mfg. as well. I also mentioned that despite that, we need to understand that traffic is a big issue in metros such as Delhi and so customers may not look at buying cars if travel time is high and other medium of travel such as metros are available. At this point, the Partner complemented me for thinking about these factors and stopped me and asked if I had any questions for him.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	My interview was very short compared to other candidates before me so I believe if someone else had a similar case with the Partner, they will be able to narrate further details of the case

4.

General Information	
Name	Arushi Garg
Pre-ISB profile in brief	B.A.(H) Economics, Hansraj College CbS Technologies, start-up in waste management solutions
Company interviewing for	Accenture Strategy
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI

Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	Market Entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Your client is a commercial vehicles manufacturer and wants to enter the market for selling pre-owned vehicles (ones that it manufactures)
Scoping Questions	I asked questions about the current business model, as to the geography of operations, mode of selling new vehicles, customers, product details. I was told that client can be assumed to be someone like Tata Motors and vehicles are small and big delivery vehicles, major clients being logistics companies and truck drivers. The main consideration for the market entry approach was to be on the factors to be considered with a focus on the kind of investments that would need to be done.
Approach Used By Candidate	In the scoping itself I had asked if the selling of pre-owned vehicles would be through existing dealers or new ones. Interviewer seemed to be impressed with the question and encouraged me to explore this further. So i parked this question as an additional factor to look into and charted out the cost side of a profitability framework as follows - So the investments/costs to be incurred can be divided into three heads: Operational, Investments, and financing costs. For the operational costs, i drew the value chain and suggested the costs that would have to be made at each step. Starting with the customer who would be selling his vehicle, all the way to the customer who would be buying. For investment costs, i suggested land/ppe costs which brought me to the pros and cons of using existing dealerships vs new ones. I listed down the same. Pros of existing- customer acquisition easier, no investment costs in terms of land/warehouse, better utilization of existing employees and so on. Pros of new - Separate Branding, club with workshops etc.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Stay calm, its a lot about how well you handle yourself than just being about how well you answer the given problem.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Only PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	No Case, but had a long discussion about my past experience.
Question / Problem Statement Narration	'Tell me about yourself, and walk me through your work ex section.' Asked about specific projects and two key outcomes of those.

	Asked me some factual questions about my area of work which was waste management. Asked me about the verticals/industries i would want to align with. 'Any questions?'
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Be prepared with the questions that seem most basic. Structure your answers beforehand.

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner
Case Type	Market Entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	PI - He asked me to tell me about myself, and then asked me my favorite subjects at ISB. I said marketing and strategy, and rural marketing. He then asked me questions on subject matter - 1. Problems with BCG matrix 2. What are the Porters 5 and Problems with Porters 5 3. What is the biggest challenge of marketing white good in rural areas 4. What are the 7S of marketing. I answered the first three in brief and told him that I had never heard of the 7S of marketing. Case - You are Uber and want to enter the Air Taxi market in Delhi and Mumbai. What is the market size and What are the market entry factors to consider.
Scoping Questions	PI - He asked me to tell me about myself, and then asked me my favourite subjects at ISB. I said marketing and strategy, and rural marketing. He then asked me questions on subject matter - 1. Problems with BCG matrix 2. What are the Porters 5 and Problems with Porters 5 3. What is the biggest challenge of marketing white good in rural areas 4. What are the 7S of marketing. I answered the first three in brief and told him that I had never heard of the 7S of marketing. Case - You are Uber and want to enter the Air Taxi market in Delhi and Mumbai. What is the market size and What are the market entry factors to consider.
Approach Used By Candidate	Market Size - Regular guesstimate. Divided the population as per age and income. Listed down factors such as importance of time vs ability to pay, need to travel and frequency of travel. Comparison in terms of convenience, with existing modes of transport in a particular city.

	Was told not to get into the numbers but just the approach. Market Entry Framework- Took a 3 level approach. 1. Macro-economic factors: Legal/Regulatory factors, Environmental Factors. 2. Industry related factors: a. Collaborators like suppliers of jets, fuel etc. b. Need for infrastructure and investment. c. Threat of substitutes. 3. Firm related factors: Listed down Uber's existing capabilities at every step of the value chain from operations to customer acquisition. The partner was looking for me to mention about the fact that people are already used to using the app for cabs and thus will find it easy to switch to air taxis and seemed happy when i said it.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Confidence and likability can make or break it.

5.

General Information	
Name	Alladi Shravya
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) and 3.5 years of work exp with ISRO
Company interviewing for	Accenture Strategy
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Guesstimate + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Don't remember the name
Case Type	Guesstimate
Question / Problem Statement Narration	estimate the number of paper tea cups used at ISB in an year
Scoping Questions	Me: Is there any specific campus I should start with or both the campus should be considered? Interviewer: Initially asked me to include both the campus, but after a while asked me to focus only on Mohali campus. Me: I would like to approach this problem from the demand side. Split the demand from students, faculty and staff. Asked the interviewer if it was clear as she is not very familiar with Mohali Campus. Interviewer: Ok. But she did not look very convinced. Me: Briefly drew the Mohali campus on a piece of paper to explain the structure first Interviewer: Fair explanation. Please proceed and list down the factors you'll consider and estimate the numbers. Me: Calculated all the numbers.

Approach Used By Candidate	Use visualization with some basic drawings which helps connect with the interviewer. Make sure the interviewer is comfortable in understanding your approach
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Interviewer interrupted many times and asked me to change percentages i was calculating and checked how fast I can do recalculate the numbers. So be prepared and change according to the interviewer comments.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Don't remember
Case Type	Abstract and PI
Question / Problem Statement Narration	How to improve retail/ e-commerce penetration in rural India.
Scoping Questions	Questions Asked: What is the objective? Is there any particular state to be targeted? What is the current size? Could you please tell me about the what are the products we would like to reach with? Interviewer: They want to make maximum profits. Current size is small, no exact numbers. Want to target selling fertilizers through e-commerce. Interviewer: Mention two things not to be done when using e-commerce for customers. Me: Took time to figure out. It was cost based analysis visible to customers
Approach Used By Candidate	It was very vague case with more and more questions from the interviewers once you answer a particular question.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Expect questions on random industry for you, which Accenture is working with.

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner and a HR
Case Type	Market Entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	A manufacturing company wants to enter the solar panel manufacturing, evaluate and give recommendations.
Scoping Questions	Questions Asked: What is the objective? Does th firm has enough finances? What are the profits expected? What is the target timeline? Do they have an exist distribution channels if so in which regions? Any major players in the market? Is the market growing? Government regulations? Interviewer: They want to make maximum profits. No limitations on the finances. Target timeline is three years. Market is attractive.
Approach Used By Candidate	The interview lasted for 40mins. Before the start of the case I was asked to choose a subject of interest. In operations was asked to explain EOQ in detail. Started writing the formula to explain. Interviewer

	interrupted me and asked me to explain in layman terms and with no formula. Then asked me to explain BCG matrix in detail. Then started with the case asked me to brief the approach in detail with no interrupting questions. Once this was done asked me to explain same case using BCG matrix. Gave Recommendations from financial side and operations side. Explained the synergies possible ad the new markets to expand and also changes in the product mix. I was asked me to see for alternate sources of revenues from this market entry to solar. Suggested selling of solar geysers and other solar instruments. Provide the distribution channels on rent for other firms. Listed down few more and made it six recommendations where the Partner was satisfied and asked me to stop.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Be prepared with one subject learnt at ISB. Don't stop analyzing the case until the interviewer is completely satisfied.

6.

General Information	
Name	Akshay Kasera
Pre-ISB profile in brief	BE - Manipal, MS - Georgia Tech, Worked with New York's electricity grid operator for about 3.5 years focusing on energy markets
Company interviewing for	Accenture Strategy
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Don't remember
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Client was a solar water heater experiencing decline in profitability
Scoping Questions	Applied 3C framework from Victor Cheng - ask questions about customer, client, company.
Approach Used By Candidate	Broke down into revenue and costs and asked the interviewer what he wanted me to focus on. I started with costs and understanding which aspect of costs were going up. After drawing out the value chain, he wanted me to explore how to reduce the costs for customers. It turned out that scale was really the problem here and the solution was to explore new customer segments to target the solution to. After I drew out potential customers, he asked me to explain my rationale and then stopped me abruptly saying that's all he wanted to see. The case might have went on for just 12-15 minutes.

Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The interviewer was just looking for a structured approach to solving the problem. He had no clear conclusion in mind. He just went with whatever I was saying and questioned my thought process extensively. I think what worked was that I used MECE to explain the next steps and kept him continuously engaged.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + Guesstimate + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Don't remember
Case Type	Abstract
Question / Problem Statement Narration	1. A new cola company is launching in Hyderabad, do you think its profitable? For this, the interviewer had written a detailed cost sheet on the whiteboard for Coca-Cola and wanted me to guess which line item will be lower or higher for the new cola company. 2. Guess the number of electricity meters installed in Delhi
Scoping Questions	1. I asked about the business, number of bottles, customer segments, management structure of the company, distribution channels, marketing means etc.
Approach Used By Candidate	1. I took one-line item at a time and went with it. Some of the items were overheads, SG&A, raw material cost, raw material cost, trade margins etc. So, overheads should ideally be lower for the new company when compared to Coca Cola as it was a small company that was just starting out. 2. Described two ways of approaching the guesstimate - one using the population route and other by estimating residential/commercial buildings in Delhi. For the population route, I used Delhi's population, assumed a family size of four and estimated the number of meters through that for residential and then took a percentage for working population to estimate commercial space. This would provide an upper limit for the meters. For the buildings route, I broke down analysis into residential and commercial, and then residential into single family home and multifamily home.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Be comfortable with basic concepts from FADM and MADM and justify your stance. There were a few items I didn't agree with the interviewer and explained my rationale to him, he seemed convinced with most of them.

Round 3	
Interview Type	Only PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner
Case Type	1. Tell me about yourself 2. Why Accenture Strategy

	3. Favorite Subject - I responded Global Economics 4. What do you think about Japan's debt problem? Got a lot of questions about how aggregate demand isn't changing despite low interest rates. Had to explain the inflation control theory followed by central banks. 5. Do you think Brexit is a good idea?
Question / Problem Statement Narration	
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Be sure about the subject you choose! It's a common Accenture question.

7.

General Information	
Name	Arpita Singh
Pre-ISB profile in brief	CBS; 2.5 years with KPMG Deal Advisory
Company interviewing for	Accenture Strategy
Number of interview rounds	4

Round 1	
Interview Type	Guesstimate + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	PI + Guesstimate
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Estimate the number of tennis balls a company should manufacture in India
Scoping Questions	Existing company or new one - Existing Only for the Indian markets or exports as well - only Indian market Household and institutional customers (retail and bulk sales) - yes Consolidated or fragmented industry - fairly consolidated with a few small players
Approach Used By Candidate	Divided the market into retail customers (individuals), training academies and schools/ colleges. Started with individuals. Segmented into rural and urban, followed by age. Used affordability, interest in sports and interest in tennis in particular as filters. Next assumed only a small percentage of tennis players buy the balls on their own since most go to courts in academies and schools to play. Assumed a regular player required 6 balls per year on an average. Got the retail market size. Similarly estimated the size for institutions. Estimated the number of schools/ colleges and academies in rural and urban areas. Segmented them by size and then estimated the number of players per institution. Again, two players need one ball per game. So on an average, two players need 6 balls per year.

	After arriving at the market size, assumed the company in question holds 20% of the market. Also assumed there is no time lag in production and sale and therefore, estimated sales equal estimated production.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Detail and discuss your approach before diving into the question. Avoid getting bogged down by calculations. Take rounded off numbers. Try to cover all possible filters and segments.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	Pricing
Question / Problem Statement Narration	t was primarily a stress interview, lasted about 50 minutes. The interviewer went over my resume in great detail, grilling me on every small detail. Also asked a few behavioral questions such as "Why should Accenture not hire you?" In the middle of the conversation, we started discussing a Da Vinci painting that was recently sold for $450 million. He then asked me how I would price a painting I randomly find.
Scoping Questions	Artist - not known Single piece - yes Which market - India How do we plan to sell it (auction/ exhibition) - you decide
Approach Used By Candidate	Priced using four approaches - cost plus, value based, elasticity based and competitive. Decided to use competitive pricing after discussing the pros and cons of each approach. He then changed the question and asked how I would price it if it were a Picasso painting instead.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	It was a conversation. The interviewer tried to put some pressure by asking questions such as "are you sure?" and "aren't you missing out on something?". Just stay confident and keep smiling. Be sure of what you say and your approach. Make the interview interesting for the interviewer by asking him questions and keeping him engaged. Treat it like a conversation, not an interview. Be very thorough with your resume and know everything you have written on it. Also be ready to explain in detail all the projects you would have worked on during your workex.

Round 3	
Interview Type	Only PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Principal (Kiran Kumar) and round 4 was a telephonic interview with the Partner (Saurabh Bhatnagar)
Case Type	

Question / Problem Statement Narration	Again a conversation around me, my resume, interests, etc. Asked me why I want to join Accenture and why not other consulting firms. Also discussed my favorite subject at ISB - why was it my favorite, what interested me the most, what were my key takeaways from it. Also discussed my expectations from the role, what my priorities are in terms of job role, work-life balance, etc. The Partner also asked me about companies that lost out because they couldn't keep up with changing consumer behavior (consumer behavior was the subject I mentioned as my favorite).
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Know about the company - understand the type of projects, culture, etc. Be pleasant and positive - they seemed very keen on hiring people who would match the culture. Maintain the stand you take in the previous rounds. They share information with each other and want to see how consistent you are with your answers. Be up to date with knowledge of the industry you have worked on the most and know about the happening around the world in general.

Alvarez & Marsal

1.

General Information	
Name	Rahul Dubey
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Worked as Senior Analyst in Basic Materials division of McKinsey; Worked as Executive Assistant to MD of Bhushan Steel
Company interviewing for	Alvarez & Marsal
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Personal interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Venkatraman Rengathan (Senior Director)
Personal Interview	Q: Asked about my work (what exactly did I do as EA to MD in Bhushan Steel) Tips: Even though its generic question, try to make it intersting by highlighting some impact Q: Asked about my work in McKinsey and what sort of client projects I worked on and where (India/abroad and scope of work) Ans: I talked about my various projects and one articular project caught his eye where the toptal EBITDA improvement was of the order of >USD 50 mn. He asked all the questiosn from how did you start on day one to actual work on the ground on shop floor to bring impact (my suggestion is be prepare of even the smallest point on CV in great detail) Q what do you know about Alvarez and why Alvarez and not McKinsey The interviewer immediately took my CV to have a chat with his colleage in next room and I had a second round back to back
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	--

Round 2	
Interview Type	Personal interview + Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Amith Karan (MD)
Case Type	Abstract
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Supply chain issues for a small manufacturer
Scoping Questions	Q: Asked about my work (similar sort of questions as in 1st round) and we had a detailed discussion around Bhushan Steel (as this company was in limelight due to bankruptcy news) Q Interviewer asked a case regarding supply chain issues for a small manufacturer I spent some time inquiring about company and issues but he said don't follow consulting case approach as it annoys him so I started to evaluate my question before asking I asked him whether the problem is with raw material supply/ finished product supply to distributors (basically inbound/outbound) After some discussions, it looked like the company is having issues with vendors (supplying raw materials) and vendors are increasing prices
Approach Used By Candidate	The interviewer asked what will be my plan on day 1 to solve vendor issue. He asked give me a list in order. My answer was to 1) Estimate how much quantity is required 2) Identify how is the pricing done by vendors 3) Identify new vendors by reaching out to vendors and asking their quote 4) Increase supplier base so that we are not over dependent on one vendor and benefit from their increased competitiveness etc. We problem solved together the case by discussing each point in detail and We ended the meeting on a happy note.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	--

2.

General Information	
Name	Mitali Shekhawat
Pre-ISB profile in brief	An engineering under-grad from IIT-BHU post which I worked for almost 4.5 years as a User Experience

	consultant with Harman International (Harman & Kardon) technology services division.
Company interviewing for	Alvarez & Marsal
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	M.D Amith Karan had a long chat on the resume and about life goals
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	An Indian subsidiary of an MNC (based out of USA) has been seeing reduced profits. How would you help it out? The company is business of producing valves.
Scoping Questions	Q1. M - Is it a recent trend? - Amith - Yes, Q2. M - Has the industry and the economy doing well? - Amith - Yes, Q3.M Could you please walk me through the company works (basically what is the value chain)? - Amith - He explained the entire value chain - from production, distribution, shipping and export to other countries and then again distribution from the respective countries. Q4. M - I asked about the revenues and costs? Amith - Okay, let me break down further focus on the costs.
Approach Used By Candidate	Once I knew that the question was about increasing costs. I narrowed it down to the parts of value chain I needed to focus - It came down to shipyard and inventory (warehousing). I was asked to just focus on the supply chain in India. Shipping was outsourced hence the solutions were around reducing costs, changing partners, looking at alternatives or long term deal so that partners have the incentive to perform. The Inventory solutions were on how to reduce costs there - Improve the Account receivables timeline, just in time, FIFO, innovative approaches and also had a discussion around inventory turnaround. And then since he was running out of time so he ended it. Amith asked me if I had any questions - I asked him how did i do on my case as compared to others. He gave a quite frank and genuine analysis. Then post this he just discussed again a bit about why A&M post ISB? Why not a more comfortable job like Microsoft or Amazon? - I spoke about how I found the work interesting and was keen on learning from my experience.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Stay calm and ask a lot of questions. Try to have a genuine conversation.

3.

General Information	
Name	Pallavi Shukla

Pre-ISB profile in brief	NIT Bhopal, worked on solar and thermal power plants at NTPC for 6 years
Company interviewing for	Alvarez and Marsal
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Only PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Venkatraman Renganathan
Case Type	PI
Question / Problem Statement Narration	What is the most important factor that will impact the cost of solar plant operations?
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	Cost of water to clean solar panels and modules, till now India does not have dry cleaning module systems.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Think for a few seconds before answering, for me the above question seem like make or break as the interviewer was very impressed after I correctly answered the above question.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Amit Karan
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	A private equity fund has hired you to improve the performance and hence profit of a manufacturing asset they own in India. They want to increase the profit and then sell the company.
Scoping Questions	Do they have any other objective apart from increasing profits? no Has the firm been profitable till now or is it facing any decline in profits? ans: Its profitable what do they manufacture? Spares for heavy industries and construction firms So their sales are mainly b2b ? yes that is correct Where are these units located and where are their customers located? Units are located mainly in Gujarat and Maharashtra on near ports and in SEZ, their customers are mainly in US and Europe So they have set up units in India for cheap labour? yes that is correct also the promoter is India and thus he chose India over other Asian economies like China
Approach Used By Candidate	Profit = Revenue- Cost Since the clients wants us to increase profits through performance improvement I would first explore costs and then Revenue? OK Let me list down their major costs After that some standard suggestions were given on how to improve each cost. Major cost was raw material procurement. I suggested them to change tier current procurement only from key suppliers

	involving heavy negotiations to bidding and auction procedure. Second part of the case was to improve working capital. Again he just wanted recommendations on how to reduce cash conversion cycle.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

4.

General Information	
Name	Rishika Bansal
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Pre-ISB, I held the position of a Business Development Manager at my Family-owned business- Bansal Alloys & Metals Pvt. Ltd. (Steel Industry, Punjab). I was mainly responsible for the Sales and Marketing. However, I took a keen interest in operations as well. I improved the operational efficiency by introducing newer production technologies, reducing raw material costs and establishing better vendor management processes. Additionally, through client management and marketing efforts, I improved the top line of the business.
Company interviewing for	Alvarez & Marsal
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The case was chosen from one of the interviewer's past accounts. The case details were as follows- 1. Indian client, exporting to US. 2. Manufactures casting alloys 3. Has a contractual relationship with US clients and prices once fixed could not be modified. Requirement- Improve Profitability for the business within next 4 months
Approach Used By Candidate	Given the above details, I approached the case with detailing my understanding and asking a few questions. Being a commerce student and having the

	relevant industry experience, I kept in mind the income statement and all the relevant costs in the industry above EBITDA. Then I deep dived into every cost, asking questions (controllable or not, changes over time, etc.) and recommended solution to monitor and control them.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	1. Prior to interview, practice a few profitability/ cash flow/ operational efficiency improvement questions and define your approach. The approach should be the one that you are comfortable with and the one that encompasses all components of the defined problem. For me, I always start with the Income or cash flow statement. 2. Be confident with your approach. 3. Do ask the interviewer about the impact time and how they define profitability. In A&M, they mainly focus on EBITDA. 4. In profitability, ask them if prices can be controlled, what are the costs and are those controllable. In my case, I knew that prices and quantities in castings are not controllable and is already defined in contracts. I asked the interviewer, if more contracts are expected to be signed or any will expire. Then, from revenue, I moved to costs, taking each and every costs in detail- labor, electricity, customs, etc. With more detailed information through questions, I laid out the solutions to reduce controllable costs. 5. Listen to the interviewer and do not let his questions intimidate you. After 40 minutes of my interview, I had not yet closed the case. But, the interviewer had indicated his interest in my candidature and asked me to meet his colleague. But before leaving the room, I requested the interviewer to close the case and tell me about a few components I should have looked at and about the solutions they actually implemented

Round 2	
Interview Type	Personal Interview
Personal Interview	In the second Interview, I was asked a few resume based questions (work profile mostly) and it lasted for 10 minutes. Given my entrepreneurial

	experience, the interviewer needed to asses my fit in a corporate environment, working under other people, how long I would work with them or if I plan to head back to my family business. To that extent, I provided him assurances.

Arthur D. Little

1.

General Information	
Name	Ankur Agrawal
Pre-ISB profile in brief	3+ years of Investment Banking at J.P. Morgan in Capital structure advisory and Real Estate, Infra, gaming and lodging M&A across Mumbai, London and HK offices
Company interviewing for	Arthur D. Little
Number of interview rounds	

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	--
Case Type	Market Entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	A European milk producer wants to enter GCC. Suggest whether they should enter or not?
Scoping Questions	How long have they been in Europe? 50-60 years Why do they want to enter Middle East? Diversification, as the growth is flattish in Europe and the new CEO on board is pro-expansion into int'l markets Any other international geography apart from Europe? No What all products in the milk industry? 60% Milk (Gallon containers and small tetra packs), Rest: Cheese, butter, Yogurt, etc.
Approach Used By Candidate	Customers: FMCG biggies (for milk) and retail consumers as well Value chain: Own farms -> Own cows -> Processing > Conversion> partnership with distributors In GCC, own cows are not possible because it's a desert majorly. Milk is imported in the form of powder and converted back

	Middle East market: 30% market share of the largest player (Local big dairy player) 15% x 2 (Nestle, Danone types..) 10% x3 (Part of conglomerates) Rest is fragmented Expected Industry growth in GCC: 5-7% per year Objective: Top 3 in the next 3-5 years in GCC Market size: US$ 85bn Industry analysis: Porter's 5 forces Milk price is decided by the govt. Govt subsidizes milk producers by letting them offer their products on shelves (retail) on discount. Every player is given a certain quota in terms of the number of discount weeks (X player may put their products on discount only for 4 weeks, similar stuff for Y player...Simultaneous discount weeks are not given to two competitors). Commercial (customer) price is contract based. Consumers are price sensitive and do not differentiate on the basis of brand. However, the top player is able to capture north of 30%, because they have come up with the concept of greenhouse farms where they have their own cows. Thus, they have the advantage of selling fresh cow milk and are able to differentiate in terms of the taste offered. They haven't been able to recover their investments in 7 years now
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Do's: Asking relevant questions is important in scoping. One should investigate as to why is the largest player being able to capture 30% market

	share despite no differentiation by consumers on the basis pf brands Don'ts: Don't beat around the bush too much trying to apply everything in the framework. The interviewer is very smart and will immediately understand that you are applying a framework My two cents: My interview ended without me giving recommendations (as I wasn't explicitly asked to), but when the interviewer told me about the recommendations they made to their client (This is one of the cases they worked on), I jumped in at the end to point out certain caveats and what potentially could enhance the solutions already offered to the client. Hence, always be super attentive in the interview. Don't think that you missed the bus because you didn't cover one part of the puzzle (like I didn't make recommendations here). The interviewer will be more than happy if you get out of the Q&A approach and treat it more like a conversation. Take genuine interest in solving the case rather than just thinking about getting your foot in the door. Appreciate the problem and take the interview as an opportunity to learn something new about a new industry. This helped me follow-up on the recommendations that were made to the client

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	--
Case Type	Abstract
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The interviewer asked me to draw a line on a piece of paper and assume that it is a beach. Our client has a small land parcel as part of this beach and trespassing is not allowed on this. What should we do with this land parcel? The interviewer suddenly switched to why consulting despite an investment banking background. The interviewer tried to grill me on this and when I looked a bit uncomfortable, he switched back to the case.

Scoping Questions	Scoping is extremely important in abstract cases because that's the key to solving the case. Me: Are we looking to monetize the land when we recommend solutions to client? Interviewer: Yes Me: Why is the land not utilized till now? How long has it been lying barren? What about the rest of the beach? Gather some info on that... Interviewer: The land parcel is on Marina beach in Dubai and the client inherited this land parcel long back. Nothing has been done on this for 10 years now What does the client do? Why hasn't he felt the need to monetize the land parcel till now? The client is super rich (belongs to a Sheikh family) and this piece of land was just ""a drop"" in the overall portfolio. Why monetize now? Oil prices are dipping and alternative revenue sources are gaining importance
Approach Used By Candidate	Then we discussed various ways of monetizing the land and valuation of each of the options (Hotels, service apartments, Spas etc). There can be other monetization opps as well, but we zeroed down to hotels and service apartments. However, do make it as holistic as possible. The reason for service apartments was because a lot of people in Dubai are inclined towards sea facing apartments. Did market sizing exercise on the population of Dubai that would be interested in this kind of an offering. Used NOI/ cap rate methodology to value the real estate asset. Hotels can be valued on the basis of ARPU, occupancy, etc.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The best way to approach abstract cases is to genuinely get interested in the problem and think in terms of first principles. Dos: Scope the question properly Don'ts: Be mindful of the time. My case was closed mid-way because I over ran my slot

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	--
Case Type	Operational Efficiency Improvement
Question / Problem Statement Narration	A sovereign wealth fund is looking to raise a new fund with focus on tech solutions to drive efficiency in Saudi Real Estate. Recommend how would they go about doing it. The case narration went on for good 5 minutes. It was a live situation that the Partner was handling with one of the SWFs.
Scoping Questions	--
Approach Used By Candidate	Pen and paper wasn't required for this one. Judge by the way the interviewer takes the case forward. Maybe he wants to test how you react in the real world in your conversation with the client. I talked about the industry and the need for this fund. What other alternatives were available? Difficulty or incentive in pooling capital. Synergies with existing portfolio. Stuff that Prof. Ramana Sonti talks about in his INPE class on private equity fund mandates. The conversation went on for 20 minutes where I questioned at every step as to why you did X and why not Y? Also, we could have looked at Z, W, etc (make MECE) The interviewer then asked me to get into each one of the buckets in detail and this is when I picked up my pen and paper and the interview ended right there. We shook hands and he said he was looking forward to working with me :)
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Dos: Can't emphasize on this enough, but be genuinely interested in the problem and take it like a conversation. Wear the consultant hat and engage the partner as you would engage your client. Make sure that you do MECE at every step when you analyze the situation. Always think first principles in non-structured cases or discussions. Don'ts: Don't be bothered if you come across something unfamiliar in an interview. You will shoot yourself in the foot if you become nervous because of this. Understand that this is an opportunity for you to showcase your thinking process to the

	interviewer. While solving cases from the case book, don't bother about the number of cases that you have solved. Make sure you analyze what went wrong in your thinking process while solving a case. The whole idea about case practice is to build / refine your thinking process step by step.

Round 4	
Interview Type	Telephonic round: Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Head of Middle East practice of ADL
Personal Interview	1) Why consulting despite an investment banking ground? 2) Fundamental questions in finance which tested basics from CFIN. Be very clear on your CFIN 1 and 2 fundamentals. A lot of questions do not have a straight forward answer. One needs to think about situations when the answer is valid and point out assumptions applicable to that situation.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Dos: Be confident if you have done your homework well and attended lectures properly. The coursework done in ISB classrooms is really a gem for building a strong foundation in any vertical you choose in management. Don'ts: Don't budge in from your position if you are grilled a lot on an answer in case you are certain that's the answer. Also, a lot of questions do not have a perfect answer. Make yourself comfortable around this uncertainty and acknowledge the same in interviews, if need be. A lot of the times, the interviewer only wants to see how you think in a particular situation.

2.

General Information	
Name	Aashbir Bhatia
Pre-ISB profile in brief	IIT-Delhi, 4.5 years of work ex (3 years at Fin Mechanics Singapore, 1 year of my own start-up)
Company interviewing for	Arthur D. Little
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI

Interviewer Designation / Name	Manager(Tilak Pati)
Case Type	Market Entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Your friend wants to start a business in the Men's Business Formal Wear market. What will be your advice to him
Scoping Questions	This case was meant to test two things: 1. Market sizing (guesstimate) 2. Thought process while thinking about market entry I started with understanding more about "the friend." What are his objectives to start this business, does he have any other business that can have synergies with this one, has he already decided to enter and only wants a strategy on how to enter, where does he want to operate? The other part of scoping here was to understand more about the current competition in the market. The market was highly fragmented. Most important was to understand the value-chain of the industry and understand where in the value chain does the friend want to operate.
Approach Used By Candidate	Market Sizing: The business was only concerned about the Delhi market. Start with the population of Delhi, take a 50:50 split of Male: Female population. Now segregate the population by age group and income. Here, you can rationally make assumptions about the percentage of population in each category that would buy business formal. One mistake that I made was that I assumed that everyone would buy one suit per year. Tilak pointed that out but asked me to continue. The next part was to go through the whole new market entry framework and talk about each aspect.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	If you make a mistake, don't get worried. Interviewers are also interested in knowing how you react when somebody points out a mistake in your approach.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Principal(Adnan Mehraba)
Case Type	Market Entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Case: Client is a dairy product manufacturer in Europe and is thinking of expanding to the Middle East. PI: What are your opinions on the start-up ecosystem in India? How do you you think it will develop?

Scoping Questions	Primary question: Reason for thinking of expanding to middle east. ANS: The client sales in Europe had stagnated and they were looking for growth markets. Secondary Question 1: What does the company do? Where is it in the value-chain? Any other sources of revenue? ANS: The company owns farms where it breeds cattle. They produce milk and use it to manufacture other dairy products. They sell their products through 3rd party distributors. Second Question 2: What is the current market like in the middle east? How does the competitive landscape look like? ANS: 6 major players that control 90% of the market. 2 of them are international players.
Approach Used By Candidate	My first question after scoping was to understand how does the industry in Middle East work, since most of it's dessert and I wasn't even sure if they have cattle there. Adnan replied that most of the firms import milk in powdered form from other countries but one firm had developed their own farms. My next question was why did only one firm do this? The reason was high investment. My next question was what was the benefit from the farm? The answer was improved margins as the imported milk powder was quite expensive. Before I could ask the next question, Adnan asked me to stop the case and said that I'm certain that you will solve the case now. He then asked me to tell him my thoughts about the start-up ecosystem in India.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Tell something interesting when you introduce yourself. This will lead to a 2 min discussion on that which will really put you at ease.

Round 3	
Interview Type	Only PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Managing Director(Thoma Kuruvilla)
Case Type	PI
Question / Problem Statement Narration	A few random stress questions. For example, he asked me a very basic finance question and then twisted it to confuse me. I actually changed my answer to the question thrice. His last question was give me one reason why I should not reject you?
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	Just maintain your calm. My answer to his last question was that in the previous two interactions with you colleagues, I've performed quite well and I

	would like you to take that into account and not look at this interaction in isolation.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	After I got the offer, I got to know that the finance question which I tanked was a trick question and the interviewer wanted to confuse me to see how I perform under stress.

Bain & Company

1.

General Information	
Name	Surabhi Seth
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Corporate Banking Coverage - Asia, Deutsche Bank Group
Company interviewing for	Bain and Company
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI + Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Aditya Shukla (Ringfence Manager, Private Equity Group)
Case Type	PE due dilligence
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Your client is Warburg Pincus and they have asked you to do a due diligence on PVR. Would you invest?
Scoping Questions	Additional information shared by the interviewer - asked to start with the multiplex industry as a whole before looking at PVR + told to focus on revenue coming from ticket sales only
Approach Used By Candidate	Approach: Started by analyzing industry attractiveness; listed down 5 points: 1. General - industry size and growth 2. Buyers 3. Competition 4. Suppliers (movie producers/distributors) 5. Others (PESTLE) I had a general framework in mind for industry attractiveness - start by looking at where the industry is right now i.e. size and growth, and then look at the various players in the industry and how they interact: I'd start by looking at the buyers and how they make their buying decisions, then look at who they are buying from right now (i.e. analyze the competition in the Industry), and as a third step, look at who the players were buying from right now (i.e. suppliers to the industry). Once I've looked at this, I'd look at other factors that may play a role in the industry - largely PESTLE (look at any regulatory/legal/technology factors that may be important. Aditya seemed okay with the framework. We started by discussing the size of the industry and was asked to estimate it. Asked a few clarifying questions to confirm the scope of the 'industry' and was told to focus on the

	market in India + multiplexes only (and ignore single screens) + calculate the revenue of the industry (and not just the number of tickets sold) Started by mentioning that there were three ways we could approach this problem: 1. Demand Side 2. Supply Side 3. Benchmark against a similar market We agreed to pursue the supply side approach. I said that I'd like to look at urban and rural India separately, and start with urban since multiplexes are largely an urban phenomenon. Wrote down the following equation: Number of multiplex sites x number of screens per site x number of seats per hall x number of shows run per day per screen = total tickets available for sale Number of tickets sold = total tickets available for sale x % occupancy Aditya gave me the number of multiples sites (400), but I had to estimate the other numbers in my equation. Number of screens per site: talked about the different big/small multiplexes I had been too, range of screens was somewhere between 2-6, so I took 4 as an average. Number of seats per hall = varies a lot across halls, but I said that I'll try to think of an average: defined the layout of a typical hall and spoke about how many rows are typically there (15) and how many seats per row (I said that in a mid sized hall, there may be 5 seats on either side of the isle and 10 in between = 20 seats overall). Aditya asked me to take any thing between 300-400; I took 400 as it was easier for my calculations. Number of shows per day: I mentioned that I would calculate that by looking at the number of hours a site would operate (12 on average) and divide that by the total time it took to run one movie show (screening time + changing time between shows + any advertising time etc.). Hindi movies are getting shorter ~2hrs and international movies are typically between 90-120 minutes anyway, so each show would take about 2-2.5 hours per show => came to 5 shows per day per screen.

	At each stage, I took a buy-in from the interviewer about the numbers I had estimated. We them moved on to estimating occupancy. I said that the occupancy would be a factor of the day of the week and the time of day in question - drew a grid with the show times as rows and weekday/weekend as columns. Apart from this other factors such as popularity of the movies playing, anything else that might increase the footfall around the multiplex site. I started putting down some numbers in the grid - Aditya looked okay with the approach and asked me to take 30% average occupancy and move on. Started with the calculations and arrived at 960k seat sales. Asked for the average price - Aditya asked me take that as INR 200 and asked me to calculate revenues in USD. Calculated the industry size to be $3.2m. We then moved onto discussing growth of the industry: talked about trends in demand and what factors might impact these, how could we estimate the number of multiplexes growing (the answer Aditya was looking for was that most multiplexes are part of malls and mall plans are laid at least 3 years before the mall is operational - so we should be able to get a forecast for the next 3-5 years); talked about substitutes (did a deep dive into threat from Netflix/Amazon Prime + other experiences that people might be opting for social outings)."
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	NA

2.

General Information	
Name	Aakash Sultania
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Quality Manager, ITD , ITC Ltd. (1.5 yrs), Project Engineer, ITD, ITC Ltd (1.5 yrs)
Company interviewing for	Bain and Company
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Samyukta (Private Equity Practice)
Case Type	PE Due Diligence
Question / Problem Statement Narration	You are a private equity firm looking to invest in a pharmacy chain and want to see the revenue potential of the chain.
Scoping Questions	Me : Revenue streams/ Product Line ? % break up? Interviewer: Medicine + FMCG, distribution irrelevant (but good point) Me: Business model? No. of stores? Size of stores? Geography? Customer profile â€“ retail or hospitals also? Interviewer: Discount retailer, 1000 stores, Pan India focused mostly in South India, only retail customers Me : Competition? Market Growth? Interviewer : organized market forms 6%, firm has 40% share of it, largest player along with B who has 35% share, growth of chain is 20% and growth of market is 10%
Approach Used By Candidate	Me : I will break revenue as No. of products* price, interviewer asked to think of some other way , I told market size * market share, and was asked to think more and then told No. of stores * Revenue /store. Interviewer : How can you further break number of stores? Me : told about geography, sales value split wise, Needed slight hints to get to categorization of Existing (Matured stores) + New Interviewer : Now that we have broken revenue , how do you think can we drive revenue? Me : Focus first on Matured stores and then will explore new stores, Revenue of Pharmacy store is basically dependent on ease of reach, variety and availability of products, services offered (includes trust) and price. Interviewer : How can you improve revenue from stores which have already matured?

	Me : Whenever I hear Revenue, I break it into (No. of customers*No. of products/customer * avg. price). To increase number of customers or no. of products/customer divide into awareness * likability * accessibility * affordability. So basically here awareness levels are there since its a matured market , so we can further improve the likability of services and also think of increasing reach to get more . Affordability does not come here. Ideas like home delivery or online cataloguing of medicines for customers to check availability, in store doctor and may be message reminders for medicines are ways we can improve no. of customers coming to store. To improve price we can try to upsell products, mostly FMCG can be sold this way. Upselling medicines is not possible since most are prescription based. Interviewer: How will you determine where to open new stores? Me: Decision to open new stores depends on market attractiveness + barriers to entry + cost of setup + competitive backlash. Interviewer: I was asked to synthesize the case after this. I had earlier done cases on pharmacy retail chains, plus market entry. So those concepts came into play. Just be confident and things will turn to be smooth. Scoping I personally ask all these company/customer/product/competition/value chain & geography.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	NA

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Abhinav Mukhopadhyay (Private equity practice)
Case Type	Miscellaneous
Question / Problem Statement Narration	You have been hired by board of automobile player in US to evaluate the leasing agreement of a corporate jet the company has.
Scoping Questions	Didn't do much scoping. Just asked if the jet is actually being utilized properly or not? Just to check if there was no frugal spending to which the interviewer said it was completely required. We just need to see the costs involved.
Approach Used By Candidate	The interviewer introduced himself, told was a part of PE practice of Bain along with Samyukta (my first round interviewer) and how he came back to Bain

	after his MBA. He then made some remarks about my CGPA and jumped into case. Case: You have been hired by board of automobile player in US to evaluate the leasing agreement of a corporate jet the company has. I was a little taken back by this case, was not sure how to proceed. Scoping: Me: Didn't do much scoping. Just asked if the jet is actually being utilized properly or not? Just to check if there was no frugal spending to which the interviewer said it was completely required. We just need to see the costs involved. The decision involved are three types, Either discontinue the lease, get an alternative agreement or continue with existing agreement. Interviewer: at this point gave me 5 graphs one after another (I don't exactly remember now the details/numbers), and was asked to take time and evaluate. Me: Went through numbers, got a little confused mid way and asked interviewer that I would need some additional time, I was confused by so many graphs. To which the interviewer was very supportive and helped me to make a kickstart. The graphs mostly contained information about number of trips, break up of number of passengers per trip, distances involved in each trips, cost of lease and cost of operation for different size of planes for different leasing periods. Me : The final decision came to that if we increase leasing period for existing plane we save 300,000$, if we change the plane size (get a smaller plane) then we save 600,000$ but in 20% of the trips not all members of the board can travel and would have to travel separately in commercial airlines and the third option of discontinuing the lease would save 1 million $ but had its own drawbacks of availability of flights and privacy and timing. So the decision is dependent on monetary savings + value of time saved for C-Suite people Interviewer : what will you then recommend? Me : I asked about the size of the company and magnitude of costs involved Interviewer : It is a 20 billion $ company Me : I recommended going with first option because for a 10 billion $ company saving additional

	300,000$ is peanuts. And travelling by commercial airline is out of the question for C-Suite members of such a company. Interviewer was happy with the analysis and asked if I had some question.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	I asked why he didn't leave Bain and go to Bain capital other PE firms. To which he replied he had offers from KKR but the culture of Bain has kept him here. Post this interviewer, I had got the feeling that I have made it through.

Round 3	
Interview Type	PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Anish Gupta - Partner Consumer Goods practice
Case Type	NA
Question / Problem Statement Narration	NA
Scoping Questions	NA
Approach Used By Candidate	The interviewer introduced himself and asked me a few questions about why Bain and why not other consulting companies. I gave very frank answers from my experience with interaction with people at all consulting companies. That my decision was between McKinsey and Bain only. No third firm. He liked the frankness and clarity. This was less of an interview and more of a discussion. I asked him things he liked about Bain, disliked about Bain. I got the offer post this.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	NA

3.

General Information	
Name	Srishti Singhal
Pre-ISB profile in brief	EXL Inductis (Analytics Consulting)
Company interviewing for	Bain
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Aniruddh Mukhopadhyay
Case Type	Miscellaneous
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The board of a $10 Bn manufacturing company in US has approached you to understand what should be done with the corporate jet, the lease for which is about to expire next week.
Scoping Questions	Who uses the jet? C-suite guys Is there a reason to believe it is being used for any other purpose apart from business? No For what purposes exactly do the C-suite people use the Jet? Visiting factory, attending meetings across the US How large is the jet? 12 seater How long is it leased for generally? 1 year How is the leasing done? Is it a tender offer? No, there are multiple vendors in the market, we have tie-up with one of the best vendor. It is not a tender offer. The lease is renewed annually. What is the objective of the board? Is it to save cost? Maybe yes
Approach Used By Candidate	I then started to lay out the different options associated with the jet and the parameters on which I would evaluate the options Options "Keep the jet (which has 3 options "renew lease as-is, longer term lease, lease a smaller jet), own a jet, let it go entirely. Parameters "Cost, convenience, risks/agency costs Owning a jet is not an option, focus majorly on costs associated with all options He gave me a breakup of current costs, leasing cost was $1.5Mn, Fuel/Maintenance/Crew etc was $0.5 Mn, so total cost currently was $2 Mn. He then asked me to start evaluating each of the options. Option 1: Negotiate better with current vendor (we already have best vendor so looking for a new vendor was not an option). Different options within

	this - Longer term lease, ask for better service at same rate, collaborate with competition. He told me that client is happy with the service currently. He further asked me what problems could be associated with collaboration with competition? I said - agency costs, you would want the jet to be available for you whenever you need it, but when both you and competition need it at the same time, there might be issues. So we decided to only focus on longer term lease. He gave me 2-3 graphs, which had different costs for different lease terms and asked me to calculate maximum savings that we can get. Savings "5% for 2 year lease, 10% for 3 year lease, 20% for 4 year lease. Maximum = 20% * 1.5Mn = $0.3Mn p.a. Option 2: Lease a smaller jet What are the factors to consider here? Capacity, cost of lease, #CXOs per meeting on average, distance (jets can only fly a certain distance). He again gave me about 4 graphs with information on #people traveling / meeting, jet capacity and distance it can travel, actual distance between cities in which meetings are held typically. Upon analyzing, I understood that distance element was irrelevant here as max distance flown by CXOs was 600 miles, whereas the min distance that could be flown by any jet was 1000 miles. So it boiled down to number of people. Smallest jet had a capacity of 4 people, medium 5-8, large 8-12. Out of total 200 trips (based on historical actual data), 20% trips were taken by <4 people, 60% by 4-7 people, 20% by 7+ people. So I suggested leasing a medium jet, the leae cost for which was $1 Mn. This led to cost savings of $0.5 Mn p.a. Option 3: Do away with the jet The only costs now would be the business class tickets of CXOs flying for the meetings (Aniruddh asked me to ignore inland transportation costs by cab/car as they would be negligible). On asking, he gave me data for average ticket cost to all the different places the meetings were held typically (which were Philadelphia, NYC and Cleveland) and

	the number of meetings in each location. I took an average number of 5 people per meeting. Philadelphia - $1200 * 100 trips * 5 people = $600,000 NYC - $600 * 50 trips * 5 people = $150,000 Cleveland - $1400 * 50 trips * 5 people = $350,000 Total cost = $1.1 Mn Savings = $2Mn - $1.1 Mn = $0.9 Mn Recommendation "I recommended doing away with the jet as it led to maximum costs savings of $0.9Mn. I then had a discussion with him whether the cost savings are actually that large (in comparison to the size of the company) to justify doing away with the jet. He then told me that in the real case, they had asked the company to keep the jet since risks associated with doing away with the jet were larger (CXO morale, employees may think company on cost cutting mode and may be worried about their own jobs, signal to the market etc). Do's "make it a conversation. It was a very numerical heavy case, and no standard framework could be applied here. What helped me was constantly discussing my thoughts and approach with the interviewer, taking his help in refining it.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	NA

Round 2	
Interview Type	PI + Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Sambit Patra
Case Type	Guesstimate
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Protected cultivation (agri business) "Client manufactures 5-6 chemicals/components that go into making greenhouse sheds. There are two types of greenhouse sheds "polycarbonate and shade net. The first one is a film, and completely covers the area and can be temperature controlled. Shade net on the other hand is a fibrenet, and cannot be temperature controlled. Polycarbonate is mostly used for flowers, while shade net is used for growing fruits and vegetables. The client manufactures the shade net, and almost all the components that go into making the polycarbonate film but not the film itself. The price of one film is Rs. 30 L, while the price for shade net is Rs. 15 L. Government provides 50% subsidy on both. Currently the market in India is small worth Rs. 300 Cr. Client is currently Rs. 50 Cr. They want to grow

	to Rs. 400 Cr in 5 years. How will you go about helping them?
Scoping Questions	What is the growth rate of market? 15%, so assume it will help client reach Rs. 100 Cr. We need to still find Rs. 300 Cr. Can you help me understand the competitive scenario? Sure, there is one player with the size of almost Rs. 80 Cr, client is number 2. Then there is a long tail. What is the split between the polyfilm and shade net in the market? 25% film, 75% shade net What is the penetration of protected cultivation in India? 0.5%, avg is 1.5% in developed countries Are there any other revenue streams for our client? No Are there any other objectives? No
Approach Used By Candidate	I first started laying down all the different options that can be explored by the client. First cut was organic growth vs inorganic growth (interviewer asked me to focus on organic only) Within organic, I had the following options " new products (expand into manufacturing films), new customers (increase penetration among current segment of farmers, target different segment of farmers, expand to more geographies within India) He took the discussion towards geographies, and said penetration was 1% (higher than average) in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. He asked me to focus on Maharashtra. I started laying down reasons because of which penetration is lower than developed countries. It could be low either because demand among the farmers is low (lower awareness etc) or there might be limited supply of subsidies (as it was essential for the farmers). He told me that out of 1000 farmers that we reached out to, 100 were ready to get into protected cultivation, but only 60 could get the subsidy from the government. So I concluded that demand from farmer is not an issue, farmers are not able to buy protected cultivation since they cannot afford to buy one without subsidy and government has limited budget to be spent on this. Current payback period of farmers was 4-5 years with the subsidy. So I asked if we can get more funds from central government or NGOs or corporates and provide subsidy to more farmers, to which he was not very optimistic. So I concluded

	that the best way to go forward is to start manufacturing lower priced films/fibre nets. And the case ended here! He then asked me how my experience in was solving the case, and whether I thought agri could be that interesting!
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Again not a conventional case. Interviewer gave too much info initially. Listening and grasping important elements was key in this case. Whenever you encounter such an open-ended case in an industry which you have no knowledge about, remember that the interviewer will help you. Just keep asking for guidance!

4.

General Information	
Name	Ronnie Philip
Pre-ISB profile in brief	2 years in PwC Diamond (Analytics Consulting) and 2 years as Category lead in an early stage startup
Company interviewing for	Bain
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI + Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Sambit Patra - Principal
Case Type	Market Expansion
Question / Problem Statement Narration	An agricultural equipment manufacturer had built a specific product for better cultivation of crops using green-house effect. He wants to increase his revenues 20X. He is seeking your advice.
Scoping Questions	How many years? Within 2 years How long the company was in existence? 10 years Geographies? Majorly Maharashtra Competitors ? Few more The interviewer seemed to be in a bit of hurry and asked me to proceed to jump into approaching the problem directly
Approach Used By Candidate	Case Approach: I proceeded with breaking down the problem into 2 parts - Organic growth and Inorganic growth 1. Organic growth - Past trends and find out at what can be done to improve that 1.1 Status quo - 20% y-o-y 1.2 Selling more of our products to same customers - 30% y-o-y 1.3 Geographic expansion - Expansion can help us get to 3X in 2 years

	1.4 Expansion into other products - Not relevant 1.5 International expansion 2. Inorganic growth 2.1 Major competitors - 2 major companies (20% market share each) - acquiring any of these competitors would help it scale up by 3X He was keeping a blank face and I was not able to understand whether the case was going well or not. I just clarified with him if the approach seems fine to him. He mentioned yes and asked me what would be my recommendations to the client. I said I will explore more into if I have missed out anything in the organic and inorganic growth, but he pushed me to work with the current analysis. I thought about for a few seconds and proceeded to say I would advise the client that the maximum growth would be in the range of 8X - 10X and not 20X. He was satisfied and proceeded to ask if I have any questions for him.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	I think the case went decently well, but probably not as good as the principal expected it to go. The case could have been maneuvered faster. Not being allowed to scope explicitly, pushed me out of my comfort zone. After a few minutes, was taken in for Interview no 2.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Anirudh M - Manager
Case Type	Abstract
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The client is the CEO of a 10B$ company based out of US. Bain just did a cost cutting project at the firm helping them streamline their operations. Now the CEO offers an additional project to Bain to decide whether to continue his aircraft charter contract or not
Scoping Questions	Tell me more about the current contract? 2 year deal for a single chopper How much was it valued at? 100M$ for 2 years What is the process? Competitive bidding or simple renewal? Who uses it?
Approach Used By Candidate	I started out with 2 major divisions - should we even have a charter?

	If yes, what should be the best deal for us? The interviewer prompted me to start off with the first division. 1. Value of the aircraft to the client 1.1 No of trips 1.2 Type of trips 1.3 No of passengers On asking these questions, Anirudh hands me a couple of slides which gives me information on the number of trips per month, and common routes and # passengers on each route. Then, to find out the value, we moved to understand how is this charter service different from the other alternatives (business class of passenger aircraft) We found out that the time is being saved (next slide helped me understand how much time is being saved and whose time is that - CEO, top management etc). Post that, we found the total amount of cost (time + value) for the alternative. And now moved to find out the cost for the charter - charter costs, maintenance costs, personnel costs etc. The overall cost came out to around 5M$ lower than the charter plane. So what should we do? Initially I said, if the other psychological considerations aside, solely from a financial perspective, it is better to not use the charter plane. But then he quizzed, "do you really think the CEO of a 10B$ industry will really care about 5M$ savings". I said "Given that you said the company just carried out a cost reduction exercise, this is probably the best way for the CEO to announce that he is spearheading austerity move by pledging away his private charter. It will definitely up the morale of the entire team". He seemed really impressed with the answer and said this was the exact solution provided by Bain to the client.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The interviewer was very happy with the coverage of the case and my working of the numbers of the case. Proceeded to the 3rd round, majorly because the 1st round was not that good

5.

General Information	
Name	Anshul Choubey
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Assistant Manager, Supply Chain (ITC Limited)
Company interviewing for	Bain & Company

Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	NA
Case Type	Growth Strategy
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Client is a PVR and he wants you to develop a revenue growth strategy.
Scoping Questions	PVR is operating out of India and the strategy has to be developed across cities. Are there any constraints on the initial investment or any hurdle rate of return. Since it was an open ended case, the scoping questions are pretty limited and generally to define a working frame for the case.
Approach Used By Candidate	So, I basically treated the case as to come up with strategies to increase revenue. Hence, I tried to write a holistic revenue function. First, I told that revenue would be from ticket sales and secondly from the restaurants, advertisements, Promotions and Partnerships with online partners, distributors and film production houses. At this point the interviewer asked me to focus mainly on the Ticket Sales. Hence, the Revenue function for PVR would be as I remember: Avg. Ticket Price* No. of Seats*Occupancy*No. of shows/Screen*No. of Screens. It then became a guesstimate question and I came up with a number basis the assumptions that I took for each in the above revenue equation. Post that I also talked about challenges in terms of the competitors and the challenge for PVR was mainly from Netflix, Amazon Prime. So, suggested some strategies on the show timings, the type of films that PVR should screen, increasing focus on tier 2 cities and had a good discussion on these aspects with the interviewer.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	While the case seemed simple, it required a basic structure that was MECE considering the revenue from other sources as well as some knowledge of the current challenges that a company like PVR would be facing which will help generate quality recommendations. I think the interviewer asked me this question as I mentioned that I was a big movie bug. We also had a discussion on Cricket as that again came out in my introduction. So, be ready to talk about few things that you like, it helps you to connect with the interviewer and like the above case, the case can also be related to your interest.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	NA
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Cement Manufacturing company facing losses.
Scoping Questions	Location of the manufacturing company. Losses across location or at 1 particular location. Industry problem or Company Specific. How long has the trend been observed. Competitive Scenario.
Approach Used By Candidate	My eyes lit up as soon as I heard the case. Basic approach for this was the value chain approach to identify losses. Scoping questions had given me the information that the losses are localized in MP and its a company specific issue. Analyzing the value chain, it was clear after few discussions with the interviewer that the problem was with respect to distribution as the network for the factory in MP was not optimal and the distribution centers were far off. Thus, the cost of transportation was driving the profits down.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Reducing the distance was not possible and hence changing the network was the solution. Changing network means the factory should supply to some other distribution centers and the distribution centers in MP should get FG from factories that are close by. Basically, run an optimization program considering all the constraints where it will generate a low cost optimization supply-chain network. My experience in Supply Chain helped me come up with recommendations. However, I think because of a bit of excitement, I did not articulate the recommendation well even after I had cracked the problem. So, in case if you get a case which is often done and seems easy, go through the entire rigour. These are trcky situations and skipping any step might be risky. Sent for Round 3.

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	NA
Case Type	Growth Strategy
Question / Problem Statement Narration	This round was with a partner. Case was about growth strategy for a pharmacy chain.
Scoping Questions	Again an open ended case so my scoping questions were limited as to where the company was located and how many stores across India. Split between tier 1 and tier 2 or 3 cities. What kind of medicines and FMCG products did the company sell. Basically trying to understand their business model.
Approach Used By Candidate	So, with the scoping questions I wrote a simple strategy that growth can be organic and Inorganic. We will discuss both the strategies and compare pros and cons. I had the structure clear with the interviewer and she seemed impressed. She asked me to focus upon organic growth strategies. I wrote a revenue function which was similar to that of a retail store and then touched upon improving each aspect. Here, it became more of a discussion and some of the strategies I remember saying was: For improving the footfall, stores can be located closer to Hospitals and Clinics. Partnering with large Hospital chains. Keeping medicine of diseases that are more common in that area. Upgrading the sales channel for example e-commerce mediums. Advertising so that it is reachable by a larger mass. Operation strategies within the store etc.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	It was my 3rd round and was back to back without any break. I was confident of my earlier 2 rounds and this round also went well. I was thinking of the interviews to come for the day when suddenly I was called in and I realized this has to be an offer call. I was made an offer which I gleefully accepted and did not interview with other companies which were eventually happy with my decision. Generally, in my experience, one should be ready to take open ended cases. Diagnostic cases like the one in second round are generally not asked and the seemingly open-ended cases can end up being a diagnostic case depending on the discussion with the interviewer. Try and interact with the interviewer as much as possible and always try and think out loud so that he/she is aware of the way you think to break down a problem.

BTS

General Information	
Name	Uchit Solanki
Pre-ISB profile in brief	PwC - Transfer Pricing (3.5 yrs) + HR (9 months)
Company interviewing for	BTS
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	NA
Case Type	NA
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Video Interview (Not an elimination round), Automated questions, Questions: Why BTS? Why You? and one basic accounts question
Scoping Questions	NA
Approach Used By Candidate	NA
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	NA

Round 2	
Interview Type	PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Mr. Madhusudan Reddy & Mr. Srikanth Nishtala
Case Type	NA
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The interview was approximately 1 to 1.5 hours and consisted of several parts, including: 1. Introduction & Discussion with the interviewers. 2. 30 Minute case study presentation including Q&A. (About BTS, Competitor Analysis, Share Valuation) 3. 30 Minute Role Play Session. (Pitching client on the updates of an existing project and way forward).
Scoping Questions	Understand what or rather who is this small holdings farmer. How are they being categorized or defined. Defn: Farmer with less than 2 hectares of land. Understand their current sources of income. Understand their current expenditures. Standard of living. A bit confusing part here was what is to be doubled. Is it the revenues or the savings. So the farmer gets the revenues, costs are removed, what remains is what needs to be doubled.
Approach Used By Candidate	NA
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	NA

Deloitte India S&O

1.

General Information	
Name	Kumar Utsav
Pre-ISB profile in brief	BPM Consulting
Company interviewing for	Deloitte India – SNO
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	Completely PI. Started with walk me through your resume. Be prepared for a 5 mins and a 2 min pitch for such question. I had rehearsed this question so it went well. Then he asked few questions about the projects I did in my last firm and mostly picked question out of my resume. Be sure that you can justify each and every point mentioned on the resume. Then he went on to ask why I wanted SNO and which industry I would like to specialize in. Since I was interviewing for a Senior Consultant role a lot of questions were asked as to what are my long term goals and why. Also why I think I am equipped for a senior consultant role rather than a consultant.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	PI & mini-case
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	Marketing- product positioning strategy
Question / Problem Statement Narration	I have developed a very simple app which displays a glass with water and when the mobile is tilted the water flows out of the glass. How would I position in to the customer and how would I make revenues from it.
Scoping Questions	

Approach Used By Candidate	**PI:** Started with behavioral question. Strength, weakness, unique things about me , 2 good things my last recruiter will tell about me and why. Most difficult projects I have taken up and why and what is the most important learning from my last job. Then he gave me a product based case about a mobile application. **Case approach:** I used PPI framework. People, Process and Innovation. I started with first figuring out why would a customer use it (eg - To kill time and entertain himself). Then when would he use it(eg- When is waiting for a bus or trying to keep kids engaged). Then I went to how would the customer use it and discussed with compatibility and experience on different platforms. Then I moved on to the revenue making part and discussed all the kind of marketing and advertising that can be done using the app to generate revenue.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 3	
Interview Type	PI & Mini-case
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	Partner Round ; Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	A hospital is facing issues with its operating revenues. Figure out why.
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	**PI:** A small telephonic interview. The partner quickly asked my why Deloitte and why SNO. **Mini-case:** I took a standard approach ad broke down the issue into price, cost and then looked into the value chain. Figured out that the problem is in the payment system. Because of the delays in payments from the insurance providers and the patients the cash inflow was very erratic. Hence suggested some changes in the contract structure and also suggested to create a prepaid wallet to smoothen the process. The partner was satisfied with the way I had de-

	constructed the problem and suggested solutions. At this point he ended the interview and asked if I had any questions.

2.

General Information	
Name	Siddharth Venkatesh
Pre-ISB profile in brief	BSc Statistics, Consultant at Fractal Analytics for 3.5 years
Company interviewing for	Deloitte India S&O
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Guesstimate
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	Guesstimate
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Estimate the number to water bottles sold in Hyderabad
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	Round 1 Partner interviewed me. We started directly with the guesstimate. I scoped it well, but made a mess of the numbers. Asked me about my most challenging project and about my travels. Ended with asking me if I have any questions for him.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	PI- telephonic
Approach Used By Candidate	Phone interview with Head of Analytics. Detailed interview pertaining to my work at Fractal.

	Asked me about each part of my projects and I guess he wanted to understand my drive and knowledge of analytics. Was better than Round 1.

Round 3	
Interview Type	PI- HR round
Approach Used By Candidate	Asked me about 5 adjectives that describe me. Spoke to me about my chess. Gave me a word and asked me for a word that immediately comes to my mind. Interesting round.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

3.

General Information	
Name	Ankit Agrawal
Pre-ISB profile in brief	ZS Associates - Associate Consultant; sales and marketing consulting firm
Company interviewing for	Deloitte - India S&O
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI; mini-case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner – don't remember the name
Case Type	Public policy
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Gave me a mini case on Delhi Pollution - meeting PM Modi to discuss ideas to take care of the problem. Problem should be affordable, should have a good reach, and easily implementable.
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	**PI and Resume -** Interview started with the interviewer asking me about myself. He asked me about other interviews since morning and what's my preference. He was pretty friendly about the whole thing. I told him about others and told him why Deloitte India is my preference. He himself started

	telling me why I should choose India. Very friendly chat - with him speaking more than me. Picked up my hobbies and 1-2 projects of mine and discussed briefly. Again he spoke on how they had also done something similar. **Mini case -** I started with various root causes for pollution (vehicles, Punjab/Haryana land burning, Industrial, Construction) and the ways to mitigate these. E.g. - better and more exhaustive public transport to reduce personal vehicle usage in Delhi, rather than odd-even as it doesn't really help. Similarly, I went about the others but he wanted a short term solution. Told him that govt. should sell subsidized masks that are more durable than the current ones that last for a week or 2. Incentivize pharma cos. to sell such masks more.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Do's - Have a positive attitude and be relaxed in the environment. They are just looking for a calm and sensible person who isn't nervous because a partner is sitting there. In 20 mins interview, he spoke for more than 10 mins. Don't's - Don't panic or try too hard to impress. Be casual self, upbeat and try to be more interested in what he is saying. Ask questions if you feel he is passionately talking about something very enthusiastically.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner- don’t remember the name
Case Type	Profitability, market entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Determine profitability of the mobile handset market. Client wants to enter the market.
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	I started it as a market entry case with some scoping about the client and what businesses they are in and what's the motive of entering the industry etc. Then he himself asked me to just focus on profitability and nothing else.

	Started with saying there are 3 segments of phone - low, middle, high tier. He had price points for those. He then gave me the segment size for each tier and the growth as well. I then asked about the costs. He asked me to list all the possible costs and made modifications as he wanted it. Gave me Cap Ex. and operating cost/unit model for all 3 tiers. Basically I had to just calculate the break-even period. I assumed market share in first year to be jut 1% because fragmented market (he was thinking 5% but was okay with my assumption). Asked me how all can I enter. I said, own plant, JV and M&A. He said we can be retailer as well and I said sure. Then he wrapped up the case there.

4.

General Information	
Name	Nagarjun Devatha
Pre-ISB profile in brief	2 years at Citibank Singapore, followed by a business development role at a boutique financial services firm in Singapore for 2 years
Company interviewing for	Deloitte India S&O
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI; brain teaser
Approach Used By Candidate	First round was a typical PI: walk me through your resume, what I learned from each role, why consulting, why not banking etc. He then asked me about blockchain and a 10 minute discussion about blockchain and its application in finance ensued. I was then asked a brain teaser: "there is a 30 ft deep well, a frog is stuck at the bottom. Every day, it can jump 3 feet up but falls back down 2 feet. How many days does it take the frog to get out of the well".
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	PI; Case; Guesstimate
Approach Used By Candidate	Started off with "tell me about yourself". Then asked a guesstimate related to me prior experience: "what is the size of the asset management industry in India". This was followed by a case: "You are the department of health for India and are looking to get access to all records/details held by telecom operators. How can the department use this data to improve the health and security of the citizens of India?". This was followed by a mini-case: "How can a water bottle manufacturer optimise its costs".

5.

General Information	
Name	Sandeep Srinivas
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Citibank (Business Development and Operations) and KPMG (Statutory Audit)
Company interviewing for	Deloitte India S&O
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Saurabh Mathur, Partner
Approach Used By Candidate	It was predominantly a personal interview. The interviewer was basically probing on my past work-ex, asked me specific questions with respect to a couple of projects. The discussion then moved onto my motivation to get into consulting and not a finance role, given my finance background.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	PI, Guesstimate
Interviewer Designation / Name	Ganesh Awasthi, Partner
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	There was a repeat of personal interview questions - again revolving around my past workex, reasons for moving from KPMG to Citibank etc. He then gave me a guesstimate - Post the guesstimate, he asked me to do some sensitivity around the assumptions that i had made and the rationale for making those assumptions.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

6.

General Information	
Name	Rahil Rai Puri
Pre-ISB profile in brief	After my undergraduate degree, I worked in McKinsey Knowledge Centre, Gurgaon, as a Research Analyst in the Organisation Practice. I spent 2.5 years with McKC before moving to Bombay where I worked as Manager, Business Development at Tata CLiQ. Tata CLiQ is an e-commerce venture of the Tata Group that sells Apparel, Footwear, Accessories, Electronics and Luxury Products. I worked at Tata CLiQ for 1 year and 9 months before joining ISB.
Company interviewing for	Deloitte India S&O
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI, mini-case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner- don't remember the name
Case Type	Market entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Come up with a business proposition for another large family-run conglomerate in India & advise the conglomerate on what their strategy should be should they wish to get into the e-commerce market.
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	My first round interview was with a Partner in the Strategy and Operations team at Deloitte India. The interview itself was not too long in duration. It began with him asking me a few questions regarding my education and work life background in a bid to get to know me better. He also asked me about my career goals and why I was considering Deloitte India as a potential employer. He also asked me to compare a role at Deloitte India with a role at one of the bigger consulting companies that were hiring from ISB. Being an ISB alum, he also asked me why I did not mention my CGPA on the application and what else I had done with my time in ISB. Thereafter, he sought to understand my knowledge of the e-commerce market and how it works in India

	and asked me to come up with a business proposition for another large family-run conglomerate in India. The proposition was to advise the conglomerate on what their strategy should be should they wish to get into the e-commerce market. Specifically, he wanted me to mention the specific sectors that are ideal for them to consider entering the e-commerce market for and the sectors that they should avoid getting into e-commerce for.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	PI, guesstimate
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner- don't remember the name
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	There is a very wealthy man in Hyderabad who is looking to open up a hotel in Hyderabad. He has an unlimited supply of money and you are required to advise him on the best way for him to proceed in this matter.
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	My second round interview was with another Partner from the Strategy and Operations team in Deloitte India. He had already received feedback from my first round interview and therefore his questions about my background were limited. He was another ISB alum and asked me a few questions about my time here and the activities that I had gotten involved in during my time here and then focused his questions on why I wanted to get back to Consulting over considering a future in either e-commerce or Business Development. Thereafter, he gave me a simple guesstimate that he wanted me to solve aloud in front of him. He provided me with a sheet of paper and pencil for any rough work I wanted to do. He only provided me with an overall question. I was then required to keep asking him probing questions to get more and more information out of him regarding the case and its constraints so that I was able to get to as comprehensive an answer as I was able to.

Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	I would keep vocalising my thought process and what all I was thinking towards the question and my interviewer would chime in from time to time about his opinions of my decisions and thought processes, occasionally telling me to think/estimate in a particular way or clearly state what my assumptions were

Round 3	
Interview Type	HR
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	My last round of the interview process was after I was told that I was being made an offer to join the company. It was mostly a formality process wherein the HR representative told me about the team that I was joining, my potential locations, my joining salary and bonuses and then finally asked me to sign an FIF with them.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

7.

General Information	
Name	Shresth Paul
Pre-ISB profile in brief	I was heading operations for an education startup
Company interviewing for	Deloitte India S&O
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI, mini-case, guesstimate
Interviewer Designation / Name	Manager- don't remember the name
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	The first round was with a Manager. He asked general questions around my profile and wanted to check the quality and span of my work at my previous organization. He also asked me 4-5 caselets cum guesstimates which, incidentally, all revolved around technology, media and telecommunication (eg: setting up a cable network in a new city). These weren't full- fledged cases and, from the guesstimate perspective, required more of a critical factor analysis rather than actual number crunching. The round lasted for a good 40-45 minutes at least.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	PI
Approach Used By Candidate	The second round was with a partner. This round was short and felt more like a simple, confirmation round. The partner asked me questions around an example of disruptive technology and wanted me to explain its impact on traditional markets. This round lasted for about 20 mins or so.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Dalberg Advisors

1.

General Information	
Name	Dhruvin Kapasi
Pre-ISB profile in brief	CA, Business Valuations - Deloitte, Investment Banking – PwC
Company interviewing for	Dalberg
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	HR/Personal Interview
Approach Used By Candidate	First round (Skype) was just a test similar to an aptitude test. 15 min interview where all candidates were asked 4-5 questions. 2-3 questions were GMAT level quant 2-3 questions were HR questions to gauge motivation for joining Dalberg and key attributes of the candidate
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	Social sector- sanitation
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The case was about human waste disposal systems in India and the problem it creates for sanitation and health.
Scoping Questions	Tried to understand what are the type of waste disposal systems and how they work? Is there a specific type of system which I should focus on?
Approach Used By Candidate	Standard case interview but in the development area. Similar to projects on their website. Don't remember the details. After the scoping questions she asked me to focus on one particular type of waste disposal system. Was asked to guesstimate the total number of households that may be using this particular type of waste disposal

	system. Had to then brainstorm ways to reduce hazardous impact on health of the cleaners who indulge in manual cleaning of these waste disposal chambers. The interviewer was helpful and assisted whenever she believed I was stuck because of lack of expertise about the sector. Was more interested in logic and breadth of possible solutions I recommended rather than how can those solutions be actually applied.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Try to cover as many angles and effects as possible. Show calculations clearly. Speak your mind and think aloud.

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	Energy- cost-benefit analysis
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The client wants to upgrade a power generation plant in Kenya. What possible factors should you consider before giving the client a Go/ No go?
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	Standard case interview but in the development area. Similar to projects on their website. Approach: Tried to understand why does the client wants to do it? Who is client and the client's background? What is current infrastructure and how would the upgrade align with the current infra? The interviewer was mainly interested in cost-benefit analysis and whether I had asked him all relevant scoping questions to understand the issue in depth. Once he was happy with that he ended the case and asked personal interview questions.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Deloitte USI S&O

1.

General Information	
Name	Dhruva Murari
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Led the Global Private Equity research team at McKinsey
Company interviewing for	Deloitte USI S&O
Number of interview rounds	4

Round 1	
Interview Type	Guesstimate + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Manager
Case Type	Guesstimate
Question / Problem Statement Narration	How many frisbee discs are owned in Hyderabad?
Scoping Questions	NA
Approach Used By Candidate	The interview began with the typical exchange of pleasantries - I was asked to describe my background and my interests. The interviewer interrupted every now and then with questions, mainly to do with the kind of work that I'd done and how I had handled various situations at the workplace. At this point, I mentioned ultimate frisbee as one of my interests and this led to my guesstimate- How many frisbee discs are owned in Hyderabad? To tackle this, I used a bottom-up approach, as I had a fair understanding about the game and about how popular it is in ISB, which I intended to use as basis for extrapolation to the city of Hyderabad. I started with the number of regular frisbee players in ISB and calculated the ratio of the players to the total students on campus. I also calculated the ratio of disc-owners to non-disc owners. (Key assumption here is that non-regulars don't own discs as these discs are expensive and it's unlikely that anyone would buy unless they play often) I then estimated the number of schools, colleges and corporates with frisbee teams in the city (ignoring other individuals as that's unlikely to significantly

	alter the final number). I did this by looking at the land area of the city and making assumptions about the number of colleges/schools etc. per square kilometer. After making further assumptions about the average number of students across these entities, I arrived at the total number of discs using the ratios calculated earlier. The interviewer seemed happy with the approach, but asked me to identify issues with my own assumptions, which I did (Largely around how representative ISB students would be of regular Hyderabad colleges/schools). She also asked me to briefly outline alternative approaches, which I did. (Using demographic data and filtering them based on income, interest in sports etc.). That was the end of the first round.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	NA

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Manager
Case Type	Market Size + Market Entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	My second interview actually didn't go too well. This was the case round and I was asked a market sizing case for a digital wallet provider's entry strategy. The interviewers gave me a data-sheet with information on customer spending patterns for various components that totals up to their disposable income.
Scoping Questions	I got thrown off right at the beginning as the interviewers didn't want me to ask the "typical" scoping questions. They only wanted to be asked questions that were "extremely pertinent" to the question they had posed.
Approach Used By Candidate	A bit taken aback, I wasn't sure how to proceed and my mind drew a blank. As you can imagine, things didn't go too well after that and I walked out thinking that I'll be rejected for sure. However, because my first round had gone really well and (probably) because I got the math right and was quick with it during the second round, they decided to give me another chance at the case round!

Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	A bit of advice here- Whatever happens, try not to let nerves get the better of you. Make sure you're comfortable with being cross questioned even before you've begun the case and be prepared to be challenged even at the very beginning. Stand your ground if you believe you have the right approach, or be ready to admit that you've made a mistake and allow the interviewer to help you get back on track. The interviewer is not going to reject you because of one small mistake as long as you can demonstrate that you know how to find your way back.

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Manager
Case Type	Market Entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Case question had four parts, each with accompanying data: Part 1 - The client is facing issues with its inventory. Tell us why. Pat 2- Our team has identified 3 ways in which we can solve the inventory problem. Using the given data, calculate which one would be the best method to implement and why. Part 3- Now that we've decided to open additional distribution centres, using the data given, identify the most appropriate location for the centre and why. Part 4- Present the findings of the case to the client CEO- consider this a role play exercise and do it as though you're really making that presentation.
Scoping Questions	Refer approach
Approach Used By Candidate	I began with the typical scoping questions and then drew out the value chain of the company to identify the root causes for the inventory pileup (I found that it was a pileup after scoping). I walked the interviewers through possible issues and finally hit upon the problem- the existing warehouses were too small to hold finished goods from the factory and hence the whole process had been slowed down resulting in surplus material waiting to be used in the manufacturing process. This was because of

	rising demand for the company's products. One good solution for this is looking at the packaging and seeing if we can reduce the sizes of containers to store more units in the warehouse. They didn't probe much on solutions as the case was designed that way. Here, they told me that the team has three solutions and want to test the economic feasibility. I was given a data sheet with numbers for each scenario. I had to estimate the profits for all three and pick the most cost effective one. Here, they expect a bit of business judgement- you might want to think about whether the cheapest method makes sense in the broader context. Next, I was given a map of the US with data about a shortlisted set of cities, from which I had to pick the best location for a new distribution centre (the solution that is most feasible from Part 2). The data-points included factors such as taxes, cost of transportation, infrastructure available, etc. and they are looking to see if you understand what trade-offs between these parameters are worth making and when you should make those trade-offs. The final part is largely about synthesis and communication. I made a few "slides" on the rough paper they had given me with a slide title for each one and walked them through the presentation as if it were a real steer-co meeting. They seemed happy with the work and I got to know that I was through to the partner round even as I was walking out to the waiting area!
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 4	
Interview Type	PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner
Approach Used By Candidate	Partner round- this round was largely to assess cultural fit, whether you're likely to stay and whether you truly understand what you're signing up for. The questions were largely PI questions. He asked me

	about myself to begin with and about how the day had been. He then asked me to describe a couple of weaknesses. He also asked me to tell him what I would bring to Deloitte if I were selected. For this round I would recommend being prepared with as many PI questions as possible. The important thing (in my opinion) is to demonstrate self-awareness, an understanding of consulting as an industry and Deloitte as a firm and address any doubts that they may have on your candidature.

2.

General Information	
Name	Vinayak Poddar
Pre-ISB profile in brief	NIT Nagpur (2013) and 4 Years with ZS Associates, Sales & Marketing Consulting using Data Analytics for Pharma companies.
Company interviewing for	Deloitte USI, Strategy & Operations
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Guesstimate + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Sr. Manager (forgot the name)
Case Type	Guesstimate
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Estimate the number of cars purchased in the US in 1 year
Scoping Questions	Me: Is there was a specific type of car that I should consider for this estimation - such as Electric, Gasoline, Hybrid or include all of these types in the calculation Interviewer: Please include all of them. I would also like you to include the multiple purchase aspect i.e. new cars and repurchased cars in the US Me: Great. I would like to approach this problem from the demand side Interviewer: Ok. Any reason you are not looking at the supply side? Me: I think demand side would help us get a ballpark figure of a problem that has a wide scope. I can then look at the supply side to fine-tune this number to get more accuracy. Does that sound like a fair approach? Interviewer: Fair point. Please proceed and list down the factors you'll consider
Approach Used By Candidate	I started off by listing the approach without numbers. Once the interviewer was comfortable

	with the factors I was including in the analysis, I proceeded with assigning numbers at each stage. Started with the US population of 300million, filtered it by age segments % (0-18, 18-55 and 55+) applied logic that US is an ageing population, further filtered it by household income ($ per month) by assuming 4 people in a household. Later I took a % of this sample that would buy a car for travel - gave arguments that US is a consumerist economy with car purchases being not very expensive due to favorable government policies, EMI options, bank loans and public transport less developed in many parts. Post this I asked the interviewer if he/the client had conducted a market research study to determine the % of 2nd hand cars (repeat purchase) since the approach we had until now was only for new cars - he said you can assume 10% of the sample we have purchases 2nd hand cars and told me to stop the calculation from the demand side. I had a number of ~15 million car purchases in 1 year Interviewer then asked me how can I make this number more accurate. I realized that he wanted me to look at the supply side since I had currently assumed infinite supply of cars. I took a moment and came up with the approach for the supply side - We can look at Ford and a particular factory in the US. The # of cars produced by Ford = Bottleneck Capacity (cars/hr.) x Operational Hours x Operational Days In a Year x # of factories across US. This would assume that factories are similar across US due to economies of scale. For estimating the total cars on the supply side, I would divide the number by Ford's market share in the US. The interview looked satisfied with my approach and asked a few PI questions from my resume about Cricket and Dramatics
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Even if you are given a guesstimate, its always good to ask some clarifying questions to ensure the interview seems like a conversation or a role play rather than one-directional. Also, be prepared to have PI questions in the middle of your case i.e. while you are solving the problem

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Sr. Manager + Principal (2 people)
Case Type	PE Investment
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Director of a PE firm has reached out to Deloitte to evaluate the investment of an online gaming company. The PE firm currently holds 100% equity in multiple casinos and luxury resorts in Las Vegas
Scoping Questions	Questions Asked: What is the objective of this investment? Does the PE firm have an exit period in

	mind? What is the current fund size? Do they have an existing portfolio of online gaming investments? Do they have a target IRR or financial parameter in mind? Could you please tell me about the current portfolio in detail and also about the target online gaming company in terms of its products & services? Interviewer: They want to make maximum profits. Current fund size is 'large', don't have exact figures. Their current portfolio has luxury resorts and casino businesses, no online gaming. Don't have any target IRR in mind but they want to make money out of this investment. Explained the current portfolio and the acquisition target - the latter was similar to online games ranging from casino games to sports to arcade.
Approach Used By Candidate	The interview lasted ~40mins, so I don't remember the exact details. I started with what factors I would look at while evaluating this investment. I structured it into 4 major segments - Industry Attractiveness, Financial Viability, Synergies and Risks. In industry attractiveness, I listed factors such as market size, growth, competitor rivalry, customer power, suppliers, barrier to entry. We discussed these factors and then moved on to the financial viability side - I listed profitability determined through size and profit margins and NPV valuations through a DCF approach. We discussed these factors and after a few calculations the interviewer mentioned that let's assume that financially this is a sound decision. In terms of synergies, I said that I would look at operational and financial synergies. The interviewer paused me and said that all the 4 buckets I was evaluating are in favor of the PE firm investing in the deal, but there was an issue with the employee attrition and management capability due to the deal. I was then handed over some data that had # of employees per office of the existing portfolio along with annual cost of operations per office, capacity utilization, hiring/firing costs per employee, severance package, retention rates on transferring employees to a new office (same city, same country or abroad) The interviewer asked me to absorb this data and then recommend that if the PE firm invests in this deal, they would have to close down one office due to synergies, but wanted to retain maximum employees at the minimum costs. After a few minutes, I was able to consider the various factors involved in the decision and recommend how the firm can go about their employee movement from one office to the one with lesser capacity utilization with minimum costs and minimum employee attrition. The interviewer stopped me here and told

	me to wait for my 3rd round with a senior partner immediately after this.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Deloitte USI, Strategy & Operations typically would give you a data sheet to analyze in the midst of the case discussion. Be prepared for it and don't get nervous with this move. Be calm throughout the interview!

Round 3	
Interview Type	Only PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Siva (MD and Partner with Deloitte USI, S&O
Case Type	Only Personal Interview Questions - lasted 15mins
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Why do you want to join Deloitte? What other firms have you interviewed for? We are thinking of a role in M&A for you, will you be ok working long hours in the initial phase? You are the President of the Consulting Club - could you list down top 5 consulting firms based on the campus perception? What work did you personally do as the President? Tell me about your projects at ZS Associates?
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	Round 3 is mainly to understand the fit with Deloitte and understand your interest levels. If your communication skills are strong and you really want to get placed in that firm (if that shows on your face and what you speak), you should be fine with this round
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The most important thing is to engage with the interviewer and treat the interview as a conversation to ensure that the partner/decision likes you and wants you on their team. This was my biggest learning from my interviews with Deloitte, Arthur D Little, A&M and Bain (well actually Bain didn't interview me even after the shortlist – so be prepared for anything!)

3.

General Information	
Name	Subham Mukherjee
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Mechanical Engineering (2014) from Jadavpur University, 2 years and 8 months of experience in Bajaj Auto Ltd. managing operations, supply chain, inventory and customer service (KTM India) in 4 states of India
Company interviewing for	Deloitte USI, Strategy & Operations
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Only PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Don't Remember
Case Type	Only PI
Question / Problem Statement Narration	PI Questions

Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	Interviewer asked me to walk him through my resume. This continued for 3 minutes. Interviewer got interested in KTM and asked about the sales figures and growth rate of KTM. He was interested by knowing that 15% of KTM sales comes from North eastern states and asked about the ways KTM India is promoting the brand in NE states. Subsequently, we discussed about the various stunt shows, long tours we used to organize for KTM customers in order to increase brand visibility. The interviewer also asked about the ways KTM is increasing the distribution channels and about the various types of distributors present in India. The total interview lasted for 10 minutes and I was shifted to Round 2.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	DOs: Be thorough with your resume. The pattern for Round 1 depends on the panel, whether you will get guesstimate or PI. Try to gauge the interest of the interviewer. After discussion for the first 3 minutes, I realized that the interviewer had passion for bikes and hence was able to bring into the conversation the story of KTM. Secondly, be thorough with your speaking skills. Deloitte USI specifically stresses a lot on how you speak and convey your thoughts. Lastly, have a story that joins all the dots of your life. Interviewers are often confused about your trajectory (in my case, interviewer couldn't fit engineering, sales at Bajaj Auto Ltd., CFA, operations as major at ISB with consulting at Deloitte) DONTs: Don't try to fool the interviewer. Be ready with all the stories from all the lines of your resume. Confidence is the only key for cracking such interviews. Be it PI or guesstimate, convey your thoughts confidently and you will sail through

Round 2	
Interview Type	Only Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Senior Manager- Mrs. Carmel (ISB Alum of Co2008)
Case Type	Inventory Stock out
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Beauty.com is a retailer at US who sells beauty products. For the past few months, the retailer is suffering inventory stock-outs for few of its SKUs. Please answer the following questions: 1. What are the factors you will consider for the problem? 2. Any possible suggestion to drive the client out of the situation?
Scoping Questions	Start with the 3C1P1S approach: 1. Customers- Customers are everyone who uses beauty products 2. Company- Beauty.com is just a retailer who has only one outlet in Seattle.

	3. Competitors- Since the products sold be the client are majorly commoditized products, there are a lot of competitors who play in thin profit margins 4. Products- As per the problem statement (Didn't ask this question) 5. Supplier- Distributors of the products transfer it to Beauty.com Deloitte USI cases are generally exhaustive of the 3C1P1S in problem statement itself. Interviewer expects you to start solving the issue at hand and not spend more than 2 minutes in scoping.
Approach Used By Candidate	First I started with a framework for the factors affecting inventory stock outs. I divided the issues into 2 parts: Demand factors and supply factors. Demand factors: 1. Sudden changes in customer preferences 2. Change in demographics 3. Certain brands are promoting few products and hence are in high demand Supply Factors: 1. Wrong forecasting of demand 2. High Lead time for product delivery of stock out SKUs. 3. Beauty.com unable to the economic order quantity (EOQ) After brief discussion on each and every issue, I was asked to concentrate on the supply factors and approach the issue from a value chain perspective. Identified that wrong forecasting was one of the issues at retailer end and is thus getting magnified (mentioned bullwhip effect from LSCM elective) at the supplier end, hence, causing wrong production units for certain SKUs. I was then asked how to forecast correctly. Discussed Winter-Holt model (LSCM elective) that demand can be broke down into level, trend and cyclist. The interviewer confirmed that wrong forecasting was indeed the only reason for stock-outs. Next, I was asked ways to recover the situation: Mentioned that we can start a warehouse to stock parts, automate the process of existing warehouse, expand the old warehouse etc. I was handed a data sheet that containing expenses and revenues for the 3 suggested ways. It contained onetime expense of starting the warehouse, labor charges, overhead expenses and also the additional revenues. From the table I found out the profit margins for all the 3 cases and recommended to go with the alternative that provides best profit margin which in this case was starting a new warehouse. Also mentioned about the risks of starting a new warehouse. Hearing this, I was handed another data sheet of possible locations of starting a new warehouse. The data sheet had

	various parameters against the 5 possible locations for new warehouse such as proximity, modes of transportation available, demand density etc. From a qualitative analysis, I suggested opening a warehouse in one of the 5 locations. The interviewer added that we can both start a new warehouse and then automate the warehouse, thus, increasing efficiency.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	DOs- Try to connect your past experience with the case (if relevant) and also bring in your knowledge acquired at ISB into the discussion. Deloitte takes time for solving the case as a parameter to evaluate the candidates. Hence, come up with the root cause as soon as possible. Cases are fairly simple but contains alt of data. It's time for you to go through the basics of Data Interpretation (Arum Sharma, Tata McGraw-Hill). Take the buddy cases seriously, since they are perfect replica of what you can expect in the actual interview. Lastly, buddy cases for Deloitte are evaluative.

Round 3	
Interview Type	Only PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner Round
Case Type	No cases
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Only PI. Lasted for 15 minutes.
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	The partner round started with me giving a brief intro for 2 minutes. Subsequently partner asked why Deloitte, why consulting. I was asked whether I want to switch to Investment Banking since he saw CFA in my resume. He also asked why I came to ISB and what all I like at ISB. Lastly, I was asked if I have any questions to which I asked about the effects on revenue for Deloitte USI due to US Visa issue to which the partner answered that the firm is expanding in Europe, Middle East and SE Asia. He also guaranteed enough travel in these regions
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	DOs- This round is just a formality since your probability of getting an offer post round 2 is 90%. Partner generally checks your fit in the organization and whether you are ready for the challenges. Since this round is always a PI, go through your resume well and make the stories ready to be delivered. Lastly, ask a question that interests the partner and have a discussion (I got to know from my buddy that Deloitte USI is expanding in Europe and thus asked this question to Partner. He seemed very interested in explaining the revenue growth post 2013 and also the opportunities the firm will provide me). DONTs: Don't fake anything since partner are very smart to find out that immediately thus causing a sure rejection.

4.

General Information	
Name	Dhruv Loshali
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Economics Masters with ~5 years experience in BFSI (payments)
Company interviewing for	Deloitte USI S&O
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Manager
Approach Used By Candidate	It was a short interview - 15-20 mins. I was expecting a guesstimate as is usually the expectation with Deloitte first round. But quite a few people like me did not get asked any guesstimate and the interview was focused largely on PI. Questions I was asked- 1. Tell me about yourself - Have an elevator pitch ready. The crucial time you waste here goes a long way in determining the outcome of the process as this is the first impression 2. Work Ex related questions - what type of work? where? What did you learn etc? 3. Most important contribution in your professional experience? 4. Why Consulting? This question was linked to my work trajectory - so make the answer consistent with your career story. 5. Any questions for us?

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Manager
Case Type	PE
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The case was about a PE firm, which already owns high end gambling casinos and resorts and was now looking to invest in an online gambling website.
Scoping Questions	Refer approach

Approach Used By Candidate	Questions asked - 1. What factors would you look into when deciding whether to go ahead with the investment or not. 2. When I said synergies as one of my factors in the first question, I was then asked to elaborate the possible types of synergies in the question setup 3. I was then handed out a data sheet to explore the math of the decision. I spent some time here and needed a few nudges to get into the right direction. But the moment I said the right answer, they stopped immediately. I sort of knew that I had finally got the right thing and they seemed pleased.

Round 3	
Interview Type	PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner
Approach Used By Candidate	Question themes- 1. Cultural fit into Deloitte 2. About the future of the industry I came from 3. Why Deloitte? 4. Why Consulting over the prior industry

5.

General Information	
Name	Ameya Date
Pre-ISB profile in brief	B. Tech in Mechanical Engineering ~3 years of Tech Operations & Analytics at Google
Company interviewing for	Deloitte USI S&O
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Manager
Case Type	NA
Question / Problem Statement Narration	NA

Scoping Questions	NA
Approach Used By Candidate	Usually the first interview with Deloitte S&O is Personal Interview + Guesstimate, however mine was only Personal Interview. Lot of questions about my resume, went in depth into each main point. Some standard questions like Why Consulting, Why Deloitte S&O, Why did you leave your last job, Why ISB, What was your favorite project in your last role etc. This interview was to gauge fit, interest and temperament more than skill or technical ability. I think I was not asked a guesstimate because we ran out of time. Usually a guesstimate is asked based on your resume, usually from the extra-curricular / hobbies section.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Manager
Case Type	Market Entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Problem Statement: A Messaging + Peer to Peer payments app wants to grow and expand into other markets. Need to evaluate and recommend a strategy.
Scoping Questions	I wasn't allowed to ask scoping questions, instead, my interviewer read a paragraph which had the answers to all the basic scoping questions. Good listening and notes taking was expected here.
Approach Used By Candidate	Once I understood that this was a market entry case, the interviewer asked me to qualitatively lay out a structure that I would follow for market entry. I started drawing out a framework, but the interviewer just asked me to speak instead. It is important to be able to adapt to these changes in your environment that are thrown at you. I spoke about all the various aspects that would need to be evaluated for a market entry, and tried to keep my thoughts as structured as possible. Post this, I was given a data sheet with a lot of data, and was asked to estimate the Total Addressable

	Market (TAM). I didn't know the full form of TAM, so I asked, and was given an explanation by the interviewer. The data sheet was very data heavy, and there were a few sentences as well, which qualified some of the numbers. I was not completely done reading the sheet when the interviewer asked me what I was thinking. I realized I was silent for a couple of minutes, and told the interviewer that I would like to think out loud as I solve the problem. Once I got the buy in, I started using the data to come up with an $ value. My initial answer was wrong, and the interviewer asked me to change a few assumptions. Since this was very data intensive, she allowed me a couple of tries. After this, I was asked another qualitative question: What are the factors which I would consider before entering into a new country? This time I was allowed to use the sheet in front of me, and I used the market entry framework for opportunities and the PESTEL framework for risks. Finally, I was given a sheet with data on 4 countries, and was asked to rank order them in terms of priority. This was again very data intensive, and also 5 qualitative points for each country. I was again short of time, as I was not done reading the whole sheet before being asked to make a decision. When I was asked to do so, I gave my initial thoughts, but said that I am not done reading. The interviewer gave me 2 more minutes and asked me to give a recommendation. I assessed the qualitative aspects and the data about market CAGR in each country, government regulations, technological advancements etc. and made my recommendations.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	It was a standard Deloitte case, which is different than usual consulting cases because there is a lot of data thrown at you. There were 2 interviewers in the room, one was taking the interview, and the other was mostly observing. I personally thought I performed very poorly during this case, but later realized that the interviewers knew that this was a tough case, and were looking at softer aspects of the candidate as well, including composure, structured thought, and the ability to handle pressure. One advice from my side would be to be comfortable with mental math, and be calm and

	composed throughout the interview even if the interview is not at all going as planned.

Round 3	
Interview Type	PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner
Case Type	NA
Question / Problem Statement Narration	NA
Scoping Questions	NA
Approach Used By Candidate	This was the final partner round. This was also completely a Personal Interview. Went in depth on almost every line of my resume. Was asked a question which I was not prepared for: Where do you think is the consulting industry going? I was able to stitch up an answer based on the Pre Placement Talks that I had attended. That helped me build context. Was made an offer after this round.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

6.

General Information	
Name	Charuveena KG
Pre-ISB profile in brief	B.Tech (ECE), 4 years work ex in Analytics (Mu sigma) & IT consulting (IBM)
Company interviewing for	Deloitte USI, Strategy & Operations
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Only PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Senior Manager (Alok Ramgarhia)
Case Type	PI
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Introduce yourself, Tell about your work, Questions about hobbies, interests
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	Be confident, clear and structured in your answers
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Making the interview like a conversation helped a lot. It depends on the interviewer too, but as much as possible, make it a good conversation.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Only Case

Interviewer Designation / Name	Two Senior managers
Case Type	Supply chain
Question / Problem Statement Narration	A Cosmetics company is facing growing demand and is unable to meet it because of stock outs. Analyze the reason for the stock outs & give recommendations.
Scoping Questions	Company - Manufacturing, distribution, products; Customer - reason for the growth in demand, customer profile; Industry - Is the growing demand for the entire industry and how others are tackling it
Approach Used By Candidate	Drew the entire value chain for the company. The client was only a distributor as the manufacturing was outsourced. Value chain: Manufacturing units -> Warehouses -> Stores. Identified that the problem for unmet demand could be at the Store level, Warehouse level or at the Manufacturing unit level and listed down all possible problems under each head. Store level - Bad forecasts, not enough shelf space, not enough stores, high distance from warehouses, etc. (Lot of questions were asked on forecasts at this time - what kind of forecast would you recommend, how do you think forecast is a problem, etc.) Warehouse level - Bad forecasts, not enough Warehouse space, not enough warehouses, unavailability of staff, etc. Manufacturing unit level - not enough capacity, low utilization, raw material shortage, labor shortage, etc. The problem was with the warehouses and at this point they gave a chart for me to analyze. Chart had 4 options - open a new warehouse, expand existing warehouse, automation of warehouse operations, etc. with fixed and variable costs and incremental profits for each option. Had to identify the incremental revenue margin for each option and recommend the best option, considering other qualitative tradeoffs as well. Opening a new warehouse was the right answer, but explained that automation might be a better option for long term considerations. There were few more questions on this and I was able to justify. Then second datasheet was given which had potential locations for new warehouses and current warehouse locations and a corresponding map with sales density of the areas. There was also extra information on transportation options, cost considerations, labor availability for each location. Was asked to identify where to open the next new warehouse. I first highlighted that the question was about stock outs, so it would have helped to have a map with the stock out density rather than sales density and they agreed and asked me to assume

	sales as proxy for stock outs. Then went on to give my rationale for how I would choose the location in terms of various factors in order of priority and justified my choice. They were not happy with the choice and asked me to consider once again. I gave a different rationale and came up with another option and they seemed to agree with it. Summarized the case with recommendations and tradeoffs.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	DOs - State clearly every assumption, the reasoning behind every question you ask and your rationale for anything you put on the paper. For example, clearly stating that I needed Stock out data rather than sales data because high sales do not necessarily mean high stock outs was clearly appreciated. They commented that it was a great point I had noted. They asked me to submit the paper, so make sure your paper is neat and legible. DONTs - Don't try to fit in frameworks. It is more important to be able to think structurally. Don't panic - ask for time if you need it. I was pushed to be fast when I was doing calculations and was going wrong over simple addition due to the pressure. I took a pause and kindly requested them for more time and they gave.

Round 3	
Interview Type	Only PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner (Siva)
Case Type	PI
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Work specific questions, what is strategy according to you, what do you aim to learn at Deloitte in the first year, how do you handle clients, some sales related questions, one project explanation in detail, learnings at ISB
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	Try to identify something common with your interviewer that you can talk about in detail. In my case, the Partner was working with Japanese clients, which was exactly what I had done before ISB and that was a great conversation starter. Another interesting thing I did was bring up the previous interview round references (citing names of the interviewers, what they said about Deloitte, their experiences) in the further rounds, thereby establishing what I learnt from the previous rounds as well, that immediately connected with the current interviewer.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	DOs - Prepare general PI questions like Strengths, Weaknesses, relate it to your past experiences and future goals very clearly. Be cheerful and show your enthusiasm.

GEP Consulting

1.

General Information	
Name	Nishchint Satam
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Assistant Project Manager at Bharat Petroleum for 3.8 years
Company interviewing for	GEP Consulting
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Director
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Refer approach
Scoping Questions	Refer approach
Approach Used By Candidate	He explained in the beginning that they were looking only for structure and not the right answers. Started with a PI. Briefly asked me about my workex at Bharat Petroleum. Then he went onto ask me about some specific points I had put in my resume about my activities at ISB and Bharat Petroleum. Concluded the discussion with asking me about why Supply Chain consulting and what would I bring to the table. Then we started with a case about a transformer manufacturer based in the US who was making a loss for some time now. I started with the generic scoping questions about company, products, customers, competition. There were 3 types of transformers: small, medium, large. Utility companies were main customers. Scored a brownie point by discussing about how EPCs could play an influencer role in the utility company's decision making. He also revealed that there were mainly 3 players initially but, 2 new players had entered the market recently. This data and his

	expressions gave away that competition had a role in declining profits. I continued to jot down and then asked for half a minute to gather my thoughts. Made a generic profitability framework. Went on to understand that there was a fall in revenue due to fall in market share. Thereafter went ahead with the funnel model of product awareness, likability and availability. Explained all of this in the context of the transformer industry. Ended up finding out that price was a pain point (found out in likability) and that new players were selling at lower prices. At this point I asked him if the client was aware whether competition was selling transformers at a loss. He said he doesn't know. That seemed like he wanted me to look into the cost structure of the company. So, I explicitly then asked him if he wanted me to explore cost side as well. To this he said yes. So did the typical COGS, SG&A, Others structure. Couldn't catch anything in this. So, I said that we could explore the value chain. He nodded. I drew the chain starting from suppliers and asked him if it was correct. He said it was ok. Then I went on with doing the exhaustive PPI framework (people, process, infra) for value chain analysis. Still couldn't get anything. Then suddenly it struck me that, since its a tendered process of ordering, there is estimation involved before suppliers in the value chain. Explored the estimation section and found out that, the estimation team was slow and incompetent with new technology. Interviewer ended the interview without a recommendation. That actually scared me but, got a call for round 2 in ten minutes.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Sr. Manager
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Refer approach
Scoping Questions	Refer approach
Approach Used By Candidate	Round 2 was an open ended and relatively chilled out case session. He asked me what my interests were. I said Table tennis. He then said let us do a case about this Indian sports goods manufacturer who is facing a loss these days. I started with the generic scoping questions about company, products, customers, competition. It was a racket sports company selling to general sports enthusiasts. Recently international companies had entered the market and were causing trouble for the company. I drew the profitability framework and explored the funnel model (awareness, likability and availability) under market share fall. He asked me to list various factors to improve awareness. I talked about social media, retail stores, brand ambassadors. Then he jumped to the cost section and asked me to explore each of the costs involved in the manufacturing and asked for recommendations to reduce labor, material, overhead costs. He delved deeper into what is depreciation and its purpose on the P&L. The interview was fairly open ended and it seemed like the interviewer had made a case on the spot. He just wanted to see the thought structure and was not searching for answers.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

2.

General Information	
Name	Krishna Chaitanya Tummapudi
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Bits Pilani, Goa (Undergrad); Social sector (2 years); Family Business (Construction, 3 years)
Company interviewing for	GEP Worldwide Consulting
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Manager (Bhaskar and one other)
Case Type	Pricing
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Price a bus ticket from my hometown in South Andhra to the capital city
Scoping Questions	I asked about the lifetime of the bus, who's operating it (govt or private), tyre depreciation, type of bus (A/C), mileage, fuel prices, toll gates, driver expenses, no. of trips per day and other relevant questions. I knew the distance, but checked nonetheless. Whatever I asked, they told me to assume an approximate number and move on
Approach Used By Candidate	Outline all the factors that should be incorporated into the price. Segment them into broad buckets to appear structured - variable costs, salary/depreciation costs and other admin costs. Mention what pricing strategy is applicable here and why (compare the prices with alternative modes of transport - train & self-travel) Measure the attractiveness in terms of payback period as government entities' preferred metric is payback period
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Stick to basics and outline all the factors you would look at. Also, if you have knowledge about the problem, then mention it to score brownie points (I knew about the bus depots and their profitability fortunately)

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Senior Manager (Kartik Yeleswaram)
Case Type	Abstract (valuation)
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Formula to value a cricket team/player in IPL
Scoping Questions	Whatever I asked, I was told to assume and move on (budget the team has, no. of players and the break up between bowlers/batsmen & foreign/domestic). I began to value the team but then was asked to focus on a single player (batsman) later
Approach Used By Candidate	Two broad buckets - Cricket statistics & Merchandise pull. Later, I was asked to focus on cricket stats. Factors I considered - Average, strike rate, batting order, do we have a similar player already, captaincy

	material or not, recent performance, age, injury-prone or not, foreign/domestic: if foreign then does he have a clashing series during the time and other relevant factors. I adopted a bottom-up approach (something like DCF) I attached weights to each and every factor and rated the player in each of those factors. For example, I would give 10% weight to batting average and if the batsman has a strike rate of 130 or above, then I give him 10/10. Similarly, assume weights (there are negative weights too) to other factors and came up with a cumulative weight. Then I looked at the past bid prices of similar players and the average price I can go for (total budget divided by number of players) like comparable methods in valuation to incorporate the weighted figure into the benchmark figure
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Eventually, I couldn't come up with an exact formula but the interviewer was impressed at the attempt. I outlined all the factors and an approach that convinced him. He mentioned that I could have come up with a comparable valuation instead of going into all the details and make it complicated to which I agreed as I had the same feeling throughout. When I heard the problem initially, I didn't exactly know what to do - he gave me 10 minutes and left the room. Even if it doesn't strike immediately, go on about the usual scoping and factors involved and it will flash sometime.

Round 3	
Interview Type	Only PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Director (Abhinav)
Case Type	PI
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Extracurricular; ISB experience; behavioral
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	Behavioral questions: Resolving team conflict; how does my personality fit consulting; family business to consulting transition Other PI : Extracurricular interests (Resume); ISB experience and what I gained till now; majors and why them; CGPA discussion (cropped up unknowingly as it wasn't mentioned on the resume I gave them and he even mentioned I don't have to talk about it)
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	What worked was the first impression I made and I was fortunate that he opened the interview with extracurricular which made me comfortable. My Amazon interview helped me refine my behavioral questions (have answers to behavioral questions in stock!)

	Later, it was a freewheeling conversation about ISB experience (he's an Alum himself) and we shared a laugh here and there about the balancing act and networking at ISB. Be guarded though throughout and always follow a structure whenever answering any question

3.

General Information	
Name	Rohit Gupta
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Was working with EXL Analytics in their Business Analytics domain. I had close to 3 years of experience and have had done multiple projects with EXL during my tenure.
Company interviewing for	GEP Consulting
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	First round was with a senior ISB alum who has been with GEP since 12 years.
Case Type	Market Entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Propose a brick and mortal giant whether or not to enter the online space.
Scoping Questions	Refer approach
Approach Used By Candidate	It started with introduce yourself and then he asked about the journey of ISB and immediately jumped on a case. The case went on for 15-20 minutes and we discussed it in detail. Immediately after the case he told that the interview was done and if I had an question. The complete process was for around 40 minutes and was more conversational. The last 15 minutes was specially all conversational where we discussed the culture, job type and alums journey with GEP etc. I was told by him in the end to wait for the next interview.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Second interview was by an IIM C alum who was working with GEP for 4 years.
Case Type	Abstract
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Choose between being a drummer for life or choosing GEP.
Scoping Questions	Refer approach
Approach Used By Candidate	He also started with introduce yourself question. The next question was to introduce again but not tell anything from the resume and tell him something interesting. We discussed about my hobbies and he stuck with my drumming hobby. He set a case on those lines. He had set up 10-year period for evaluation and we discussed the pros and cons from different prospects. The core of discussion was to measure how will I evaluate both the prospects financially. We discussed financial methodology in details. Another 35-40-minute discussion, a lot more grilling this time. The interviewer did cut and pin point issues more frequently. I got through in the end.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

4.

General Information	
Name	Priya Gupta
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Bachelor of Business and Commerce, 4.5 years work ex - 2 in Corporate Banking, 2.5 in Pharmaceuticals in Operations (Procurement) and Finance
Company interviewing for	GEP Worldwide Consulting
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Vasanth
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	A fruit juice manufacturing company, major product – mixed fruit juice 200 ml SKU. Doing great. New entrants 2 L jar. 1 year ago. So we introduced 2L jar

	as well. Sales increasing. However, bottom line in red. Why?
Scoping Questions	Scoping – company, competition, industry, product, costs individual. 200ml doing exactly the same and profitable. 2L additional SKu increasing the pie. Customer segments: Kids (5-18-year-old) – majorly 200 ml Old people (above 50 year olds) – majorly 2 L jar Middle segment has grown buying 2L jars All jars and packaging outsourced. B2C Packaging 200 ml $0.10 2L $2.10 Concentrates 200 ml $1.20 Direct Labor $20/hour 200 ml – 1 person on line 2L – 4 people on line Manufacturing 200 ml Calculate for 2L - $4 + $1 (depreciation) Sell price – 200 ml - $2 2L - $18 Cause – packaging costs much higher. 5% for 200ml, more than 10%
Approach Used By Candidate	Value chain analysis
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Don't be nervous. The interviewer helped me every step of the way - and there were multiple A-ha! moments for him due to our interaction. This was only possible with the confidence that I could muster. It is a chill interview - not a stress interview.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Karthik
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	client is a adventure sports equipment manufacturing company. Pan-India, some south Asian countries. Not been making a lot of money lately in the past 6 quarters. Investigated internally,

	not found anything. Hired externally – to find root cause.
Scoping Questions	The question was completely generic and scoping was very essential. Scoping – company, product, competitors, industry
Approach Used By Candidate	B2C, one B2b Thrillofobia The key was to find the star performer – winter clothing owing to the fact that hiking has increased. But in the casual section, not the pros. Further, our competitors were not directly the other adventure equipment manufacturing company; rather winter clothing companies for casual who offer at lower costs. Both segments have grown. Demand has increased. Market share has reduced. Minor issue in stock building, warehousing costs. Issue was in distribution. Partnerships with fancy outlets, costs in rental space, etc.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Build a rapport with the interviewer, more like a conversation. Whilst scoping itself, my interviewer was extremely helpful - not particularly chatty, but helped me get to the answers myself - even for certain scoping questions. What they are checking is your basic problem solving skills and how you'd be interacting with the clients as you'll be the face of GEP.

5.

General Information	
Name	Venkat Sundar
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Analytics based consulting
Company interviewing for	GEP consulting
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI + Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	-
Case Type	Abstract
Question / Problem Statement Narration	NA
Scoping Questions	Refer approach

Approach Used By Candidate	Started with PI basics, run me through your resume, why consulting, how would you bring in value. Then an open ended case - he asked me if I wanted to open my own B school what are the factors I would consider and how I would go about it Scoping - Start with scoping out the plans of the b-school, any major goals and various external factors This could be viewed as a market entry case, based on what the goal is think of various approaches that you could take and important factors to consider Think of all the costs that would be incurred - value chain based or peoples, process and infrastructure or P and L statement or fixed and variable - any of these frameworks - I did it using the P and L statement, think of long term and short term goals Evaluate the pros and cons of each of the options of market entry - from scratch, JV or acquisition Then comes growth strategies - think of awareness, likability and availability - online courses
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	PI + Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	-
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Another PI round and then he asked me which Football club I support, he asked me to assume the client was the owner of the football club, how would you advise the client to increase profitability or/and growth.
Scoping Questions	Scoping questions were not relevant because we already knew everything about the club
Approach Used By Candidate	Start by saying profitability is a function of Revenue and costs - and both of these are affected by external/macroeconomic factors Break down revenue into various streams, football clubs are heavy in brand licensing model, identify

	various strategies to increase revenue from these brands and prioritize the methods Then costs, l made a three by three matrix of Peoples, Process, Infrastructure vs functions (Marketing, operations and Finance), identified important costs that can be reduced both short and long term, identify main costs . Summarize and give top 3 recommendations in less than 40 seconds in the end
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Don'ts - keep checking your thoughts with the interviewer and think out loud through the process, try to justify all assumptions, use external factors

Round 3	
Interview Type	PI + Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	-
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	PI - something not on your resume, about yourself Live case - our client is a graphite electrode manufacturer, has been experiencing losses for three consecutive quarters, why and give recommendations
Scoping Questions	Scoping - start with info about the client, product portfolio, revenue trends - revenue was increasing, competition - 7 players, market - global, main clients, has the competition been facing similar problems
Approach Used By Candidate	Start with trying to understand whats happening in the market, now the main customers for our client are the steel plants and that market is actually shrinking, so how exactly have we increased revenues? Break up profitability into Revenue and costs Understand the revenue model - identify in to a B@B model, contract based and see how revenue could have increase - more customers, longer contracts

	and increase in price, turned out the client had decreased the price by 30% to gain more market share and was on an average 40% cheaper than all competitors, penetration strategy - competition actually increased price by 10% Identity costs, best captured through a value chain here from the supplier and strategic procurement part and across the line, costs have been constant more or less, utilization of the manufacturing plants could be changed, increase in sales team spend Summarize and quick main three recommendations
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

FTI Consulting

General Information	
Name	Raunak Chamaria
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Pre-MBA : Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, UAE | PwC, India Pre-MBA function : Financial Control & Planning | Risk Advisory Services Pre-MBA industry : Sovereign Wealth Fund | Consulting
Company interviewing for	FTI Consulting
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Written test
Interviewer Designation / Name	NA
Case Type	NA
Question / Problem Statement Narration	NA
Scoping Questions	NA
Approach Used By Candidate	As the first step, 37 of a total of 100+ applicants were shortlisted for a written test. The test consisted of 2 parts. 1) Verbal, Quantitative, Analytical reasoning (GMAT style) test - the difficulty level was not as high as GMAT. A 1.5 hour test with relatively easy questions but a somewhat longish paper. This was the easiest part of the whole process. 2) Case study - this was a written analysis on a 3 page case in a one hour slot. It involved a case based on an arbitration between two firms, where FTI was required to aid in resolving the arbitration by way of a company valuation of the client firm. Was required to discuss my approach to the case, state requirements for conducting the valuation, any preliminary findings in the financial information provided and a brief valuation using the information available.

	Given the limited amount of time available to read, assess and write the analysis out, I used a simple structure. - Described my understanding of the case, taking care to consider all the facts provided and relevant to the valuation. - Stated the major valuation techniques and why the DCF analysis would be the most appropriate in the case provided. - Next, I mentioned the major requirements and steps in a DCF valuation. - Utilising the limited financial information provided, I prepared a preliminary valuation and mentioned major caveats. - I ended with mentioning any remaining concerns in the arbitration.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Montek Mayal – Managing Director
Case Type	NA
Question / Problem Statement Narration	NA
Scoping Questions	NA
Approach Used By Candidate	Of the 37, 10 were shortlisted for the one-on-one personal interview (while some of us had 1 round, others had 2) The main questions were: - 2 small guesstimates (eg. if 2 people are running around a circular track at x & y kmph, how long before one leads the other by one round). - 3 basic questions on accounting (eg. how do you record a depreciation expense in the books, how does it impact each of the BS, P&L and CFS) - Your operate an exporting business in India, if a loan was available in India and the USA at the same

	interest rate, where would it be considered more expensive? Why? - 2-part case study First part: At the end of 2007, Company X in the UAE agrees to take over Company Y in India at an agreed sum. The sale was to be completed in a year's time. At the end of 2008, Company X disagrees to complete the transaction at the agreed price claiming that the value of Company Y has reduced and recommends completion of transaction at half the valuation. Company Y challenges it. Can Company X defend the claim? I answered in the affirmative, reasoning that the transaction was still incomplete and could be negotiated at the behest of the two parties. The interviewer gave me a hint here. He asked me to think from a macro-economic perspective. I then realised that this was due to the sub-primal crisis of 2008 and pointed this out. The interviewer was satisfied and moved on to the next part. Second part: Company X approached FTI Consulting to defend their case and conduct a valuation of Company Y. Discuss your approach. I suggested that we go ahead with a valuation using the DCF analysis since the FCFs of Company Y were ascertainable. At this point, I was asked to mention the other available valuation methods. I mentioned the other 2 techniques (Comparable transactions, Multiples method) and described them briefly. I was then asked to describe the DCF valuation method briefly.

	Provided a step-wise description of the process (eg. start with identifying the free cash flows to the firm, deriving the cost of capital, etc). I was asked questions at each step. Some of them are - - do you consider FCFFs or FCFEs. Why? - how do you ascertain the WACC? - how do you identify the Re & Rf? - what is beta and how is it measured? - what are the issues that you may face while identifying the FCFs? - where would you obtain the cost of debt from? - what are the methods of calculating Terminal Value (Perpetuity method, Capitalisation method, Multiples method)? I was able to answer these satisfactorily with the understanding gained through the Finance courses (especially CCMA & Corp Fin II). My work experience enabled me to explain how these were ascertained practically apart from the theoretical outlook. Some research into how this is done in the real world is helpful.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Infosys Management Consulting

General Information	
Name	Alpika Juhi
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Electrical Engineer with 5 years of work ex in IT company as a software developer in healthcare Vertical
Company interviewing for	Infosys Management Consulting
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI
Approach Used By Candidate	Telephonic interview-questions about basics of US healthcare - payers, providers, US healthcare policies, major players in US healthcare industry, questions about my work experience
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	PI + Role Play
Approach Used By Candidate	Asked to make a 1 minute pitch for a potential investor, how will one setup an insurance registration portal - process flow, what are the steps involved in capitation process(related to my work experience), why healthcare etc.

Round 3	
Interview Type	PI
Approach Used By Candidate	Telephonic interview, questions about US healthcare industry, questions about my presentation skills, what are the steps involved in designing an insurance portal for a client - talked about each step - from team making, requirement gathering to final implementation

KPMG

1.

General Information	
Name	Sowmya Dasika
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Worked in Deloitte Consulting (Human Capital Vertical) as a Consultant in ERP Technology called Workday. Experience : 3.4 years
Company interviewing for	KPMG
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	group case study
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	What are the factors to consider while deciding on building Logistics park near Port Description : Each of the candidate was asked to make analysis of the case and come up with individual presentation.
Scoping Questions	Approach : Considered Internal and External factors Internal : What are different kinds of material that are transported via that given port. For instance - Goods like perishable eatables or other materials so as to understand what kind of logistics park has to be built. What is the available land area versus the business potential to estimate the size of building the logistics park. What infrastructure aspects should be included. External : What are the near by organizations/companies that can leverage this logistics park as an outsourcing centre for warehousing Some of the components from PESTEL factors were helpful. Costs of building the park are mentioned (Capital expenses and operating expenses).

	Availability of human capital, changing trends to envision the risks involved for logistics park are also discussed. Recommendations: Scoping the problem and bucketing the factors into different segments helped to present the case clearly to the evaluators. The Value chain concept also very helpful in describing the factor and maintaining structure. "
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	personal interview
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The interview started with initial round of introduction (more of ice-breaking conversation) and resume discussion. Following questions were asked. 1. Why have you chosen strategy as a major and what does strategy mean to you? 2.Previous work experience at Deloitte, what are the projects done and how was the client exposure? 3. What are my strengths and what do I bring to the table and how will i mange to work in industry specific projects given that I come from industry agnostic background? 4. What is your understanding of government and infrastructures segment of KPMG 5. Role of technology in different industries and what are my favorite industries if I were to choose one

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	A case on NPV calculation was given.
Scoping Questions	

Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	1. As much as possible attending the PPT (pre placement talk) by the companies you are interviewing for would really help. I carried notes of KPMG PPT that I attended and mentioned those data points (including the impact created by KPMG's projects in Crores.) Being aware of role /company's projects will help take the discussion forward during the interview. 2. For case - Primarily the approach and what are the factors that are mentioned were considered. Adding points from the current trends will certainly help. 3.Resume Preparation - Questions can be asked on any particular segment/ topic. "

2.

General Information	
Name	Rohit Mohan
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Process Engineer at Royal Dutch Shell
Company interviewing for	KPMG
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Case: What factors would you consider while advising a client who wants to setup a logistics park? No Scoping questions allowed
Scoping Questions	Approach: Restate Scoping Elements as factors eg: Objective - ROI? Strategic Rationale? Case Tree: Strategic - Financial - Organizational - Miscellaneous Buckets Strategic: Demand Projections? Competition? Other Stakeholders - Trucking Companies, Govt. etc.?

	Financial: ROI/Payback period ; Investment Reqd; Industry costs and Margins? Organizational: Talent Availability ; Automation as a Competitive advantage? Miscellaneous: Regulatory approvals etc.. Risk Assessment : Project Risks - Over budget, Schedule overrun ; Regulation Changes ; New Entry etc..
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Question / Problem Statement Narration	What would you do as a decision maker in an Oil and Gas Major now (low oil price scenario) ?
Scoping Questions	Approach: Objectives + Current Industry Standpoint (Supply- Demand -Peak Oil/ Alternate Energy ; Pricing ; Portfolio Decisions etc..) + Future Projections + Recommendations Answers interjected and challenged several times Other questions to test industry awareness in-between

Round 3	
Interview Type	Personal Interview
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	1. Leadership Examples 2. Expectations from Consulting career 3. Personal Experience of handling conflict 4. Flexibility to work across sectors / Travel etc??"

3.

General Information	
Name	Anusha Rajagopalan
Pre-ISB profile in brief	3.8 years as Consultant in the chemicals industry (Company: TZMI Inc.,) MS (Industrial Engg), B.Tech (Chemical Engg)
Company interviewing for	KPMG (IGH practice)
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Only Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Uday Alamuru, Associate Director
Case Type	Group case (3 per group)
Question / Problem Statement Narration	1. GoaI is investing 100 crores to build electric vehicle infrastructure in the country. Our client wants to invest in this EV infrastructure project. Draw a blueprint for the client's investment 2. If the Delhi govt. wants to invest in electric vehicles, how will you go about recommending an implementation plan
Scoping Questions	None. The case was given to a group of 3 and we were asked to come up our own approach. Each of us had to present the approach to the panel.
Approach Used By Candidate	Built a big picture, step-wise approach. 1. Understand where in the EV infra value chain can the client have most impact; I mentioned the potential areas of participation and mentioned that an impact by feasibility matrix could be used to judge where the client creates most impact given their capabilities. 2. Identify collaborators - suppliers, demand side and technology collaborators 3. Select which geography to first enter in - pan- India or regional. 4. Analyze regulatory environment and develop an implementation plan
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The objective here was to look at the big picture approach to handling a large scale problem. It is not required to get into the details of EV infrastructure. Always remember that a consulting interview is about testing your problem solving approach and not your knowledge.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner (Santosh Kamath)
Case Type	PI + General M&A case
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Tell me about yourself, what did you like the most about your prior job, what interests you the most about this role at KPMG. PI questions were followed by a simple discussion on a M&A case. Two airlines are merging, what do you think the synergies would be
Scoping Questions	The case was just intended to trigger a discussion on synergies in M&A. I went through the traditional M&A framework to guide through the discussion
Approach Used By Candidate	PI questions were centered around understanding if I knew what the role was about. Santosh asked me a lot of questions to see if I really knew what KPMG was into and if I was genuinely interested in the role.

Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Know the role in detail. Understand both the pros and cons the role offers and what you bring to the table. Be prepared to defend your candidature for the role quite intensely. KPMG conducted a case prep session where they discussed a few sample cases they worked on and it helped in understanding the role better. Attend the pre-placement talks and other prep sessions.

L.E.K. Consulting

1.

General Information	
Name	Ankit Dhingra
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Mechanical Engineer (DCE, Michigan), 4.9 years at Schlumberger, co-op at Apple
Company interviewing for	L.E.K. Consulting
Number of interview rounds	5

Round 1	
Interview Type	Only Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Consultant
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Profitability dropping in a elite school in Mumbai
Scoping Questions	Focus more on the cost side and ask about market/competition facing the same problem
Approach Used By Candidate	Structured approach with Profitability framework. Branch out into fixed and variable costs
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Do a lot of practice of profitability framework (most common). First and second round is on phone so maintain calm and take your time.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + Guesstimate
Interviewer Designation / Name	Consultant/Manager
Case Type	Market Sizing
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Market size for a high end jewelry manufacturer in Mumbai
Scoping Questions	More information about current operations in Delhi and current target market
Approach Used By Candidate	This case was driven by me but good amount of assistance provided by the interviewer specifically on doing a sanity check on the numbers. This case has some quant and logic needs to be given for every number. I segmented the population according to age group, then found out how many are middle/high class. Target customer was mostly women because they buy jewelry. I also included housewives whose husbands are wealthy and can afford high end jewelry. Service class women were the biggest target market.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Talk out loud while thinking. Interviewer is more interested in your logic and thought process

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Manager (3rd round). Principal/Manager (4th round), Partner (5th round)
Case Type	Abstract
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Round 3: 2-page case study with financials of a mining company in South America were given. Mining company was facing issues regarding

	government regulations limiting its exports. 45 minutes were given to prepare a deck of slides. Slides had to be presented to the interviewer. Round 4 &5: Questions on my past experience, GPA, ISB experience. I was also asked to teach the partner a management concept.
Scoping Questions	No scoping questions.
Approach Used By Candidate	Round 3: Standard solutions were presented (vertical integration). I also talked about economics of the industry and commodity (copper) prices. Be ready to deal with lot of cross-questioning. We did a NPV calculation of various alternatives and came to an answer together Round 4 and 5: They are checking cultural fit and if you would really join the company. All your life decisions will be questioned.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Round 3: Since time is limited, start preparing your deck from the start. Deck needs to be neat and legible as if you are presenting to a client Round 4&5: Be very well prepared with the PI questions. This is probably the toughest round to crack.

McKinsey & Company

1.

General Information	
Name	Chinmay Deo
Pre-ISB profile in brief	3 years running Operations for Avanti - an EdTech social enterprise, 6 months at ITC
Company interviewing for	McKinsey
Number of interview rounds	1

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case & Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Reny Thomas
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	You are the CEO of an Indian steel company that is performing at industry average. Recently, about 4-5 steel companies that have defaulted on their loans have been put up for auction by their lenders. Should you buy these companies?
Scoping Questions	Scoping phase: Asked about 1. The steel companies up for auction: These were located throughout India, some were small, some were large. Because of India"™s new tight bankruptcy regulations, these companies had been put up for auction by their lenders to recover the loans. The only constraint was that we would have to buy the entire company, and could not cherry pick assets. This was an opportunity to get some assets on the cheap. 2. Other companies who were bidding: 8-9 domestic and some foreign players 3. My objective: Maximize shareholder value 4. Bidding process: Outside the scope of the case I realized that there was not too much useful information Reny had shared during the scoping. It was clear that he was much more interested in the analysis, and this was not a case where there was a

	particular point I had to catch during the scoping that would narrow the case. Analysis phase: Began by structuring the case as follows: I said we should compare payoffs from both options " participate and not participate in the bidding. I began to outline some factors inside both these areas. Within "participate", I drew a matrix with the columns as the different companies for sale (example: 1,2,3,4,5 and their combinations " 1+2, 1+2+3 etc.), and the rows being the: 1. Assets such as property, plant & equipment, inventory, distribution and customer base, people/managerial talent 2. Liabilities such as: Debt, accounts payable. I said that I would evaluate the +ve/-ve synergies available in these areas for each company. Since we were acquiring entire companies only, we would have to pick up both assets and liabilities. I further said that at a company level, we should estimate the potential acquisition price and the opportunity costs. (Study the basics of the Term 5 course CCMA even if you haven't taken it " it will help in consulting interviews.) Reny gave no reaction to my gyaan and asked me to proceed to the not participate side. On the "not participate" side I told Reny I would investigate changes in industry structure in this situation. Reny asked me to list 3 factors, and I said I would look at the level of competition and the level of available supply/capacity in the market (post-consolidation), the cost curves for each company, and the potential changes in customer base. I mentioned the supply side because steel is a

	commodity, and the market supply and marginal cost of production will be critical in such industries (link to micro-economics and MADM). Reny asked me how would I capture the overall problem. I took a few moments and told him I would look at it as a game, construct a payoff matrix, and determine our dominant strategy. He asked me if I would prefer that a foreign competitor acquire assets for sale or a domestic one: I told Reny that frankly I do not know enough about the steel industry but I can take a guess. He asked me to go ahead and I said I would prefer a foreign company acquire assets because a domestic competitor may be more likely to trigger a direct price war if they have access to enhanced capacity and a lower marginal cost of production. A foreign competitor may want to use these Indian plants to supply to the international market, especially China given it has a huge steel demand. (I have no clue whether this was the right or wrong answer. I think he was testing my ability to pick an option and back it up with some logic or the other.) Reny closed the case at this point. I was not asked to synthesize. I thought I had completely bombed the case because it was so open-ended. McKinsey cases tend to be in this format, so do ensure you prepare for such cases by looking at older casebooks. In hindsight, I feel it was better that I received such an open-ended case because interviewer expectations are also proportionately lower. As long as you put some structure to the problem, retain a calm demeanor, and say 2-3 sensible things, you"ll be ok. " "McKinsey Round 1, Interview 2 "Sasi Personal Interview: I had a 25min discussion with Sasi about various aspects of the education sector. I felt very comfortable as this was familiar territory.

	Sasi said we would do a 10 min case as we were running out of time. Case interview: Your client is a micro-finance institution(MFI) that has been severely hit because of demonetisation, even though we are in Nov 2017. Help them chart out a plan. (I thought demonetisation was "so 2016", and had avoided reading about it in my prep. Oh well"¦) Scoping: I began by asking about: 1. Objective? Chart out a short-term and short-term strategy. He narrowed it to growth 2. Company? Micro-finance lender with largely urban client base 3. How has demonetization affected the company? 2 ways: One, their urban clients cannot repay loans since they receive salaries mostly in cash. Two, some industries such as construction have been massively affected because of which the MFI cannot hope to give new loans to workers in these segments. This long-term risk of being unable to give out new loans across the sector was the larger problem that had begun to surface about a year post demonetisation. Before this event the MFI was performing very well. 4. How has it affected industry? Everyone has been affected, and quite a few as badly as us Analysis: I laid out two options for Sasi " stay in the business or exit the business. Beyond this the case was a guided discussion on various options rather than me "solving" the case.

	Within “exit the business”, Sasi asked me which financial institutions I would sell the MFI to? I mentioned that within financial institutions we can sell to another MFI or a retail bank. I said that it was more likely that retail banks would buy us since other MFI”™s were themselves affected. Retail banks could see this as an opportunity to a) Enter a new segment that is strategically important in the long run - disposable incomes rise more people will enter the formal retail banking sector b) Buy a fundamentally good company for cheap. I added a caveat that banking is a regulated space, and that I am was not sure if such a transaction would be allowed, but it was worth exploring if it was legal. Within “stay in business” I laid out some short-term and long-term options for Sasi. Within “short-term”, Sasi asked me what I would do with the bad loans on our books and I noted down 3 options 1. Keep the loans: Either by re-financing them or by changing the existing payment schedules 2. Write-off the loans if there is no hope of recovery 3. Appeal to the government for financial support since demonetization was a govt. created problem for the industry, and therefore the government should step in to help. Sasi seemed happy, especially with the 3rd option. Within “stay in the business”, Sasi told me to ignore demonetization and asked me to think about how an MFI could grow in the long run. In long-term I said the bank could look at moving into new geographies (which were less affected), new products, and could maybe think about moving into the small bank category (like Bandhan bank).

	Sasi said that these seem like good options, but will take ~2-3 years to materialize. He asked me what I would do in the interim period when these new revenue streams have not kicked in, but the bank is still seeing the effects of demonetization. I answered that the main problem for the bank in this period would be a) working capital b) Need to maintain reserve requirements as per RBI mandates. I said this was similar to the situation a startup is in and the company would need to do 2 things 1. Reduce their "burn" by implementing cost cutting initiatives 2. Raise additional capital through a combination of debt and equity financing Sasi asked me to summarize
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Personal Interview: Reny began by introducing himself briefly. I got most of the standard questions "tell me about yourself, why consulting, why did you work in education, what do you like and dislike about ISB. He looked at his phone during one of my answers, so I quickly ended the answer in the next line. Please watch out for such cues " I was probably boring the interviewer

2.

General Information	
Name	Ankita Jain
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Bachelor of Business Studies, 2 years, BlackRock
Company interviewing for	McKinsey and Company
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Abhijeet Kulkarni
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	An integrated mining company wants to maximize its EBITDA
Scoping Questions	Clarification of the problem statements - "integrated", "mining company". Operations of the

	company, geographical presence, value chain of the company, any demand restriction, current profitability level (not relevant)
Approach Used By Candidate	Ask questions to understand the problem. The problem at hand was an optimization problem. On asking about the operations and value chain of the company, the interviewer told me about the processes of the company - excavation, processing and smelting. The excavation took place at 4 plants, processing at 3 plants and smelting at 2. On asking, the interviewer mentioned about the costs of operations and capacity at each plant and step from which I figured out the bottleneck to know the total capacity. Next, I asked about the transportation costs. Since there was no demand restriction, I had all the inputs required and mentioned that it can be solved through a liner optimization. The interviewer appreciated the idea but wanted to focus on an easier answer. Thus, we created different combinations and found out the cost for each. Then we tried to fill out the total capacity required based on minimum costs.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Make the interview a conversation and be confident at all times. The interviewer will help you with the solution but is looking more for a discussion and not a Q&A.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Puneet Chandok
Case Type	Abstract
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The interview was more PI-focussed (questions about why McKinsey, my background and behavioral questions) and we did a small case towards the end. The case was about a small entrepreneur who now wants to scale up.
Scoping Questions	Operations of the business (small ethnic women wear store in Delhi), what do we mean by scale up - revenue growth, what is the current revenue level and growth level, is there any target for the growth rate or time frame for such growth? - the interviewer mentioned the entrepreneur does not have any idea and is looking for help from us, price range - 10k-15k
Approach Used By Candidate	Don't remember the structure much. But it was about looking for growth in the current market and current product range or looking for opportunities in a different market and product range. We then started with discussing the opportunities in the current product range and market. We discussed ideas like product range expansion, price variations, promotions etc.

	Then we talked about the distribution formats. I inquired if the business is currently into online sales and the interviewer mentioned it wasn't. We then explored the online channel routes she can take. The interviewer mentioned that the entrepreneur is afraid that the designs might get stolen online. We then explored collaboration with malls which he stated had already been explored and the malls were ready to give 50% profits but wanted to sell under their own brand name. Also, the entrepreneur does not have enough financing to open own stores. At this point we explored how the online channel might be the way to go for the future. Among other ideas, we discussed how he can collaborate with retail stores like FabIndia that might give him the brand name and maintain the quality reputation. The case seemed more like a test of how many ideas can you come up with confidently in 10 minutes.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Have a conversation with the interviewer and be cognizant of the client's mental framework. Here, as the client seemed more stubborn about not going into the online channel, we need to mold our approach and convince him accordingly.

3.

General Information	
Name	Vivek Jha
Pre-ISB profile in brief	B.E. (Hons.) Computer Science from BITS Pilani - K.K. Birla Goa Campus. Just under 3 years of Product Management experience in technology MNC (Sabre) and Sequoia funded startups (Zoomcar and CREO). Just over a year of entrepreneurship in food.
Company interviewing for	McKinsey and Company
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Sr. Partner (Somnath Chatterjee)
Case Type	PI -> New Product Strategy Case -> PI
Question / Problem Statement Narration	1/3 of the interview - Straight away he asked about my startup, where we were on that, my views on its industry in India and where it is headed.
Scoping Questions	Almost none. He gave me all the information and it was very conversational. He wanted me to get into solution finding immediately. 1. Client is a 20-year-old company and enjoys a strong reputation in Core Banking.

	2. Core Banking products market is saturated and customers are not very inclined towards new products here.
Approach Used By Candidate	I informed him about my approach that I will examine 1. Banking landscape in terms of "services" 2. Identify potential gaps in product offering 3. Evaluate the clients' strengths 4. Arrive at a decision on area of product and mode of launch He seemed to be satisfied and said go ahead I broke Banking into Core Banking and Peripheral services. He said let's add mobile there. (I was going to ask him that I want to evaluate Mobile and whether he'd prefer that I look at it from Core Banking or Peripheral but he pre-empted it!) Ruled out core banking due to saturation and no perceived gap. He said let's focus on Mobile because peripherals seem fragmented while Mobile is growing significantly. I agreed and did 30 second detour on how open banking and startups in fintech space are coming up with exciting products so this should be interesting. He seemed interested and said the client is sitting on a pile of cash. (I thought this was a hint to move onto entry mode and that area of product was settled. Also, after this the pace of questions increased significantly.) I talked to him about building in-house and acquisitions as more relevant to the client. He asked me to evaluate these options. I was able to speak specifically for the IT industry and said this depends on a few factors that differentiate services companies and product companies 1. Skills - advanced technology stack and expensive talent for product firms 2. Culture - fast paced and iterative culture at product firms with a customer focus (not project based as in services) In addition, if there is management intent to pursue a particular strategic path in terms of company culture, etc. He said if we were to acquire, should it be independent or housed within the client. I linked back to the factors just above and said since the target is almost 25% revenue in 5 years, it should be housed within so that the culture seeps across the org but allowed to operate independently. Finally asked me that, based on my gut, which would be more profitable - products or services. I said that products typically require upfront investment but

	technically the consumer landscape could be huge so you can make as many "sales". Services on the other hand runs project to project with costs racking up at a project level as well.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	1. Among all the interviews on campus, McKinsey was one of the most organized. They were extremely helpful and pleasant. It helped ease nerves. If you are hustled or need a bite/drink or ran over from another interview, just talk to them. 2. Take a moment to think whenever you need to. In my case, I was kind of stumped for a bit and there were 2 moments almost back to back where I asked for time. There was another time when he asked me about in-house vs acquisition where I realized I was rambling so I checked myself and asked for a moment to take a step back. 3. Establishing a rapport with the interviewer was the absolute key. After that PI, case or guesstimate will just fall through. I felt my 1/3 interview and halfway through the case, the Partner was ok but not into the conversation. That changed when I talked about open banking and fintech startups in between the case. Everything changed after that. We were having a really good conversation. The 3/3 bit of my interview was not going to happen initially but did so because of this change.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Sr. Partner (Sasi Sunkara)
Case Type	PI -> Grow Digital Payments Adoption at a City Level
Question / Problem Statement Narration	1/2 of the interview - Fairly detailed conversation around why startups, why technology industry and now why Consulting and specifically McKinsey. Touched a bit on my college activities since I lead a couple of clubs/organizations. Finally, about my family background and what my parents and sister pursue. 2/2 of the interview - Let's discuss how you can drive digital payment adoption at a city level
Scoping Questions	1. What sort of city? A. Pick any city. I picked Mumbai. 2. Any particular client for who we are running this exercise? A. No, we're just discussing at work. 3. Any other objectives? A. No.

Approach Used By Candidate	I informed him about my approach 1. I'll evaluate the payments industry - the various stakeholders 2. I'll look at the drivers of each of these stakeholders 3. I'll evaluate each of these drivers and see which ones can be pulled for maximum impact He seemed satisfied and asked me to proceed. The next few paragraphs were basically a lot of conversation more than Q&A. On the paper, I screwed up big time. I wrote payments and my first branch in the tree wrote probably 4 different words and kept scratching them out. Anyway, proceeded with breaking the payments type to B2C, B2B, C2G, B2G. Given that Mumbai is a large metropolitan city and a state capital there would be significant government transactions apart from municipal services there would be passport, driving license, etc. The stakeholders were banks who either gave direct digital tools like debit/credit cards, NEFT/IMPS/RTGS transfers to consumers (business or consumer) OR operated that cash digitally through third parties like wallets. There was a regulator that controlled banks and third parties. Demographics of Mumbai would be very diverse but wanted to approach from 2 categories - banked & unbanked. For banked, there would be those who are already using digital payments whose repeat rate will be taken care of by banks. For those who were banked and did not use digital payments, we could look at and try to address the 2 reasons why they do not - knowledge and trust. (He then said, based on your gut what is the one big thing you could do) I proposed that we use Government services as an endpoint to transact only digitally. The Government is a trusted entity and once people make transactions on a particular platform with the Government, they would likely transact more. If there are unbanked people who turn up, this interface could use JAM (Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile) and eKYC options to quickly get them fired up with a bank account.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Few aspects of prep that I thought was critical 1. Having a consistent case group initially that works with your schedule and is disciplined in terms of just getting cases done 2. Quickly graduating to alum/buddy cases - their feedback is the one that brings the maximum improvement in your case prep and the cases are also extremely interesting

	3. Focusing on PI! This tends to get ignored among the case prep but this is absolutely key.

4.

General Information	
Name	Aditya Dembla
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Worked for Flipkart as Product Manager in supply chain domain for four and a half years
Company interviewing for	McKinsey
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI + Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Malcolm Gomes
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	: A brain research company is entering into India and wants to estimate the number of neurosurgeons entering into Indian market per year
Scoping Questions	I started with basic scoping but realized that it is a guesstimate (got cues from interviewer that we need to do it quickly so avoided detailed scoping). I clarified that we can approach this both from demand and supply side but I would like to start with demand side. I started breaking down Indian population w.r.t income groups and then deciding what is the level of education people pursue across each of these groups. Malcolm stopped me in between and told me to try something else. I started again by breaking the population w.r.t age groups and identified a small age bracket (25-28) in which neurologists would start working (clarified some basic assumptions here). Broke down this age bracket in kinds of professions (medical, non-medical white collar, blue collar, businessmen and doing nothing). I finally came to a number and re-iterated that we can do a sanity check from supply

	side. Malcolm hinted that you don't have any supply side data so leave it. At each and every step Malcolm questioned me if I am sure about the calculations. Also at one point he simply asked why cant I do these calculations without a pen (the numbers were quite simplified). Experience: This was my first interview and I did not have any baggage.The advice here would be: Be thorough with calculations and don't get stressed. The interviewer at times just wants to check your confidence. Even if you make a mistake, the interviewer hints you (mostly). Also do not leave PI prep for last week. Be thorough with your CV and basic behavioral questions."
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Surprisingly PI lasted for 20 out of 30 minutes. It was a stress interview. It started with my resume. Malcolm was thorough with my resume before I reached. He asked me basic questions like most challenging project, most technically complex project and then touched upon behavioral questions like conflict in teams (which I was prepared for but was not expecting in McKinsey interview). He asked about the downside of a consulting job and pushed me to list more and more. I stopped after discussing a few subtle points and then he shared his views about the same which I was able to turn into a discussion by relating it with my previous role. After 20 minutes, he said that we need to solve a case in no more than 5 minutes.

Round 2	
Interview Type	
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	What would your recommend Flipkart's CEO to make it profitable

Scoping Questions	As I knew both about the company and the ecosystem, I cut down the scoping to just one or two questions. I took some time to think and started with the basics of breaking down profits into revenue and cost. The key here was to use my experience in analyzing the situation and not putting in the framework. There could be multiple recommendations but I was asked to come up with top three. I came up with these after a detailed analysis: 1) Concentrating more on Private labels 2) Bench-marking salaries against industry and similar companies abroad (Flipkart's salaries are on higher side) 3) Increasing utilization of supply chain and avoiding rapid scale up for sale periods. The interviewer asked why did I never touch upon increasing the penetration in rural India. I told him that it is very costly to serve Tier-3 cities and as of now Flipkart's is concentrating Tier 2 cities (also told him some numbers around the last Big Billion Day in this context). The interviewer was quite satisfied with the analysis, however, I think I should have either put this point forward in advance or mentioned it as an assumption. I was given an opportunity to ask questions where I asked the role of JA in Digital Practice of McKinsey. He shared the kind of projects McKinsey Digital was involved in and what a JA typically does. I questioned some of the practices he highlighted which made the discussion very healthy and helped me to build a good connect during this time. Experience: This interview was very relaxed as compared to the first one.All three parts i.e. the initial PI, the case and the post case discussion were quite interactive. My advice would be to be thorough about your industry. I with one of my friend discussed e-commerce industry in detail and built a structure around the same (major revenue streams, business models, payments, advertising, reverse

	supply chain, etc.) which helped me to state most of the assumptions upfront. After two rounds it was a long wait of four hours till all the candidates were interviewed. Finally I was called and given a verbal confirmation from the Partner. Also alums told me to eat, sleep or attend any other process I want to. At the risk of repeating myself, I would say just be calm on the placement day. If you have multiple shortlists, please call your friend or family to assist you on this day. Your priorities will keep changing with the interviews you give but it is still better to have an idea in your mind before it all starts. All the best!!
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The interviewer introduced himself and asked me for an introduction of my profile. He questioned me on one or two of my projects and then asked what would my recommendation be to Kalyan Krishnamurthy (Flipkart's CEO) to make Flipkart profitable (It was a sudden switch from PI to case).

5.

General Information	
Name	Anand Gadiya
Pre-ISB profile in brief	JP Morgan Investment Bank - Mergers and Acquisitions Schlumberger - WIreline Field Engineer Family Business - Pharmaceutical domain
Company interviewing for	McKinsey
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI + Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	A bank has approached you with an issue that their profits have been declining.
Scoping Questions	What type of bank? Target Segment? Geography of operations? Time period for the profit decline? Competitive Market? Any Macroeconomic factors? It was a retail bank spread across the world. Profit has been declining for last 2 years. No major changes in macro or competitive environment. The key was to quickly jump into cost structure as major issue was there. The partner gave a breakup of the cost structure which read as follows (made up numbers, but idea is clear) : Admin and Salary cost ~ 40%, Infrastructure ~ 20%, Customer center (Call center and some marketing dept) ~ 15%, Technology maintenance ~ 20%, Misc ~ 5% The case was originally 27 pages long, but partner had mentioned we will go as far as time allows us. He wanted to see the flow of the case. He asked me to select one branch of cost structure that seems most curious and delve into it. Without any hesitation, I delved into Technology Maintenance as the number seemed very high ~ equal to total profits of the bank. The partner seemed to have liked the jump and asked me how can you save that. I suggested

	outsourcing or shifting the office to a place with cheaper cost structure. He then gave me add on info. The bank had two options from here - outsource maintenance to Philippines and fire 25% of employees. The second option was to shift the center to India and fire 50% of employees. The average salary of a person was ~ $1000 per week in US, $600 per week in Philippines and ~$200 per week in India. The cost of firing was 3 months of salary (US salary). He asked me to calculate the expected savings from moving to Philippines and India. Upon completion of this basic maths, the interview was over (It was cost effective to shift to India).
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	PI - It was the first interview of the day (8am) and the partner was in a very good mood. The questions revolved around the previous work experience, why so many shifts in industry and the take away from each role. The partner delved into extra - curricular activities and we had a good 10 min long discussion on cricket.

Round 2	
Interview Type	
Interviewer Designation / Name	Rajat Gupta
Question / Problem Statement Narration	India has to win 50 medals in Olympic games. How should we do it?
Approach Used By Candidate	To understand the flow, first I will talk about PI and then we will move to case. The interview started with the partner asking tell me something about you that is not present on your resume. I started off with all the extra-curricular and adventure activities I had done. From world's fastest roller coaster to yak safari. He then asked about my family and what each member does. He seemed to be particularly interested in the sports background. The conversation went into why players like me drop out from career in sports and venture into other fields. He went on to say that his daughter is under-14 national ranked squash player and he wants to see her make good progress in that. It was here that the partner said say we want to win 50 medals in Olympics, how should we do it?

	(I did not follow any direct structure) We started off from identifying the two kinds of sports: 1. Where India can do really well? eg. Cricket and Kabaddi and I suggested that the sports federation should try and introduce these sports into Olympics. 2. There is scope of winning more number of medals, eg. swimming and athletics, where multiple variation of same game exists (this required some hints by the partner about why Phelps has so many medals). Next, we moved onto why are not winning medals. The focus was around Infrastructure, Motivation and Money. We discussed each one of these things in detail. Infra - investment required by the government into developing academies and arenas, starting from school level. Motivation - Creation of a group of top sports personalities and making sure the young students and aspiring sports person get an opportunity to meet them (inspired by my own story of how meeting Ravi Shashtri and Kapil Dev inspired me to take up a career). Also, organizing regular tournaments at school, district, state level to expose players to big stage was an important point. Money - Apart from paying the people well, the major point raise was creation of a insurance scheme for aspiring sport person, fully funded by government that in case someone is not able to make it to the big stage, the family gets enough financial aid for their living and that money is not a deterrent in family's mind while allowing their children to take up sports as a career. The partner seemed to be impressed with the ideas and was about to close the interview. Just before leaving the room, interviewer said that the case was a real one and he had met Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, the current sports minister about 2 months back, for the exact same discussion. He casually mentioned that a few more topics remained but roughly 70% of that discussion was covered in the case today. This, according to him, was a good discussion.

6.

General Information	
Name	Gautham Ravindar
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Lead Process Planner - Manufacturing
Company interviewing for	McKinsey
Number of interview rounds	1

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	You are the owner of a small chain of hotels trying to enter India. How would you go about doing this?
Scoping Questions	Expected size Expected growth/IRR Financing Options Target Cities in mind Competition in India Framework: Market Entry Dissection of Income Statement
Approach Used By Candidate	Recommendation: Buy and develop properties in tier 2 cities
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

7.

General Information	
Name	Samarth Shah
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Investment Analyst at Kalaari Capital (1.75 years) + Engineer at Qualcomm (2 years)
Company interviewing for	McKinsey & Co
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Mirnalini Mirchandani, Partner at McKinsey
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Client is a hospital chain which has one hospital in Delhi and one in Mumbai. While the EBITDA margin is 18% in Delhi, it is only 1% in Mumbai. What might be the issue and what recommendation would you offer to the client ?
Approach Used By Candidate	I started the scoping using the standard 3C 1P (Victor Cheng) framework Customers: What's the socio-economic background of the patients that came for treatment. How do they pay for the treatment? (While Delhi had more urban clientele with higher willingness to pay, Mumbai had patients from lower income groups coming in) Product/Services: Specialties offered at each center; What are the different streams of revenues (Got a breakup of in-patient's vs out-patients revenue) Competition: Asked if we have any data to benchmark each of the centers with their competitors in the same geography and across geographies in the same specialties (This was important as the EBITDA was low for most of the hospitals in Mumbai across specialties) Company: Asked for ALOS (Avg length of stay) for each of the center and their competitors in the respective geographies. This helped me analyzed the utilization of resources (doctors, beds, nurses etc). Both centers had similar capacities but the Mumbai center was poorly utilized with people staying for 5 days as compared to 3 days in Delhi. (The partner looked happy at this point)

	The scoping itself helped me identify some key issues but then I took permission from the interviewer and divided EBITDA as Revenue per patient - Cost per patient, and listed all the items and asked for data for each of the items. I was given some revenue and cost numbers and asked to check if that corroborates the 18% and 1% EBITDA margins for the 2 centers. It did! After completing that I was asked to come up with recommendations and synthesize the case. This was followed by some more questions on where all I have a shortlist from and what is my priority order. The partner was very upfront with her feedback and said that she felt I will make a good consultant. By then we got a knock on the door indicating us that we need to wrap up.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Mirnalini introduced herself and talked about her journey in, out and then back in at McKinsey. The interview started with standard PI questions like Tell me about yourself and very quickly moved to a free flowing conversation. Some of the questions that I was asked during the conversation were: - What have been the factors that have motivated me in personal and professional life? - What are the qualities that I appreciate in others? - Long term goal and short term goals? - Where does consulting and McKinsey fit in the overall scheme of things for you? Was asked a few technical questions based on my work experience: - How did you use Convertible note to value companies? - Which industries do you feel have strong potential in India and give some key insights? (Talked about FinTech and Healthcare) - At early stage of a startup what is more important, the idea, the founder or the market size? The PI discussion went really well and really helped in establishing a strong connect with the interviewer. Also knowing ex-McKinsey folks and having worked with them was helpful in building the rapport.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Arjun Balaji, Partner at McKinsey
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Client is an enterprise software company that is looking to increase its revenue per employee from $2000 to $4000 (industry benchmark).
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	I started my scoping trying by asking 3 questions - Who are the Customers? Where are they based out of? - What kind of products are sold by the company? - What pricing model is used? (asked this to understand key revenue driver and come up with some sort of equation) - Where does the company operate from? What's the org structure? The company was selling a suite of KYC and accounting software to SMEs and financial institutions and was operating out of India while the competitors operated from US. I then put down an equation Revenue/Employee = Revenue/Product * Product/Employee (I got an afterthought to include Product/Employee Hrs * Employee Hrs/Employee but got confused in the process and kept staring at the sheet for some time and was then told to just use the 2 fractions to solve the problem) So I could now either improve the average revenue generated per product or increase the efficiency of the employees ensuring more products are released per employee. I was then asked how will I identify the right set of products to prioritize, to answer which I drew a 2x2

	matrix of Revenue vs Time to development (i.e. employee hrs used) I then moved to how can we improve efficiency of employees *and* listed different ways of doing it using the Salesforce efficiency framework (Ability, Motivation and Opportunity). Some points discussed were: - Improve hiring process, - Provide better tools, resources and expert support - Outsourcing (US resources might be expensive but more productive) - Reduce non-productive hours (meetings, training, breaks) - Tailor the incentive structure etc After this I was told to stop and was asked some more PI questions around my leadership experiences. We got into discussing ISL and how the bidding process works, followed by what was happening in the Gujarat elections. These were not testing questions but more of a casual dinner table conversation
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Interview started with the partner asking me about some of the interesting startups or entrepreneurs that I have looked at or worked with. Some questions on my work at Qualcomm and why I made the switch to Kalaari.

8.

General Information	
Name	Aashna Khanna
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Graduated in 2015 from HBTI, Kanpur. Worked for 9 months at Nucleus Software as a software engineer. Then moved to EXL Analytics, working there for a year as a business analyst
Company interviewing for	McKinsey & Co
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Evaluate the size of sales force needed by a bank setting up a new division.
Scoping Questions	I started by asking how many people were currently in the sales force for the existing divisions, but Prashanth indicated that I should move ahead and look into the requirements of the new division. I was given some numbers about the loan that the bank wanted the new division to give out and how much each person was expected to give out. This allowed me to calculate the number of people needed in the sales force. Then Prashanth asked me if for the first 6 months the hired people are not fully efficient, how many would be needed. I made a graph showing how the performance of a member of the sales force changes in a year. Then taking the area under the graph, I was able to come up with the number. Since this was a completely quant-based case round, initially I was struggling with doing the numbers fast. But Prashanth was very helpful and the interview ended on a good note. Since the round was on VC, the connection broke down in between and I had to find IT people in between the interview. Key was to not panic and just carry on.
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Interview was scheduled at 8 am and was conducted via VC. Interviewer was Prashanth Vasu, Partner at McKinsey and part of ISB Founding Class. The interview started with 5 minutes of PI where Prashanth just tried to make me comfortable.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Your client is a car maker is experiencing long lead times as compared to its competitors. Help the client figure out why that is happening.
Scoping Questions	After the scoping questions I figured out that the client offers cars in 80 colors, most of which are non-standard colors like neon colors, turquoise etc. The competitors were only offering the cars in standard colors. On further probing, I also discovered that the client had a limited size factory and no scope for expansion. They manufactured cars as and when they received the order from the dealers. Currently, they had no intermediate storage facility. Thus, the final recommendation was to build an intermediate storage facility keeping the most purchased cars in storage to bring down lead time. My interview ended at about 10:15 am. At about 2 pm I received a call telling me I had received an offer from McKinsey, after which I had a meeting with another Partner welcoming me to 'The Firm'. "
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

9.

General Information	
Name	Dhiraj Kumar Singh
Pre-ISB profile in brief	B Tech from IIT Dhanbad Co'11, 6 years of work ex as Software Engineer and Product Management at Tally
Company interviewing for	McKinsey and Company (Junior Practice Specialist)
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + Guesstimate + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner (Rajat Gupta) and Associate Partner(Malcolm Gomes)
Case Type	McKinsey conducts two interviews in round 1. Both the interviews had fair amount of PI questions. I was asked a guesstimate in one and a short Market Entry case in the second.

Question / Problem Statement Narration	1. Estimate the number of neurosurgeons produced every year in India 2. A company is planning to launch a hovercraft service in Mumbai. One craft can carry 200 passengers and will take 15mins to ferry from North end to South. Do you think they'll get enough business? How will you price the service?
Scoping Questions	For the guesstimate, I clarified that it is only the number of surgeons passing the qualification for neurosurgery in India, not much scoping was required here. For the hovercraft service, adequate amount of information was provided by the partner himself such as alternate travel options and customer pain-points. I asked a few questions about the company, history and objective of company.
Approach Used By Candidate	For the guesstimate, I kept coming with approaches such as estimating number of medical colleges or number of hospitals etc. and the interviewer kept asking me to think of new approaches. He agreed on starting with the population and estimating a proportion from there. For the market entry case, the interviewer wanted me to focus on pricing first. I explained why value based pricing makes sense here and gave an equation as (time saved*value of time) with caveats such as a) Time spent traveling through other alternatives is not completely wasted e.g. people take calls while traveling by car and that should be factored in b) Hovercraft is a new service and it has its own risks associated with it, we should keep that in mind and maybe introduce insurance which will affect pricing.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Do not try to force-fit any framework, you may not be required to cover everything depending upon the situation. Try to understand what the interviewer is most interested in and spend time working on that. PI is as important as cases, prepare well for that.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner (Somnath Chatterjee)
Case Type	Abstract
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Re-imagine India's primary health care using technology
Scoping Questions	Discussed the current situation and major problems/challenges
Approach Used By Candidate	There is no one right approach. Major points in my answers were: 1. Creating a database of health records of all citizens based on Aadhar database and develop a mechanism to collect data and keep updating it. 2. Designing a diagnostic and recommendation kiosk to be installed at primary health care centers. The kiosk should be connected to cloud for database and

	computation and should work as a proxy for a doctor for preliminary checks. Important to distinguish between critical and non-critical symptoms. This machine eliminates the need of human expertise at the last mile. 3. Approach the problem in two ways: Prevention and Cure. Explained how the database can be used to come up with smart and effective preventive measures. Explained how the kiosk can be used in a primary healthcare center.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The interviewer will challenge your solution, be flexible in responding. Defend your solution with logical arguments and not your beliefs. Entertain the cross questioning very sincerely.

10.

General Information	
Name	Aakash Sultania
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Quality Manager, ITD, ITC Ltd. (1.5 Yrs), Project Engineer, ITD, ITC Ltd. (1.5 yrs)
Company interviewing for	Mckinsey & Co.
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case;Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Shirish Shanke (Industrial goods- senior most partner of the panel that day)
Question / Problem Statement Narration	You have to increase profits of a cement manufacturer using sales and marketing levers
Scoping Questions	Me : Objectives? Any target or time frame? Company value chain? Manufacturing units and geography? Supply capacity? Distribution network? Interviewer: Company manufactures and then distributes through retails stores as well as direct channels. Supply capacity of 8mn metric tonnes and is constrained, located in eastern markets. Me : Competition? Market Growth? Product line? Interviewer : Two types of products, value added : sold at avg. 1200/ ton and ordinary sold at avg. 700/ton. Current sales mix is 1:4. Competition : company has 30% share of eastern markets. Market fairly stagnant.

	How do you think prices of cement will vary from state to state? Me : it will depend on location of our manufacturing plants, state taxes (assume no GST) and transportation costs. Interviewer : Correct, In some states we have higher prices and are thus loosing to competition. What can we do? Me : We can do two things, either improve our awareness and brand image or set up factory In the state if the market Is big enough. Interviewer : What else can we do to improve the company's revenues? Me : The thought of inorganic growth came to my mind, but we have to restrict only through marketing and sales levers. So I asked lets first focus on marketing levers to differentiate and told that continuing from previous discussion we should think of improving the brand image. Interviewer : How do you measure brand image? Me : Brand recall. He asked for more. I couldn't think of anything else. He said NPS is a proxy. Interviewer : What else in sales route? Me : We can think of upselling, i.e., sell more of value added products which again will be possible through branding activities. Think of selling more in states having higher prices/higher margins, since cement is more of a regional industry and thus exploit this to advantage and also may be look into channels of distribution. Interviewer : Which do you think will be cheaper for the company? Direct channel or through retail? Me: In direct stores there would be a margin that we need to pay, but since cement is mostly used by large developers and governments, sales volume would be lower through these channels and it would be mostly direct. I then asked the ratio of break up. Interviewer : Smiled and said 70% through direct Me : Since cement is mostly a commodity product, there would be a lot of buyer power if market has

	excess supply and thus direct channel will be less profit making for the company. Interviewer agreed to the analysis and then to test numbers asked me to see how much would profits change if sales mix changed from 1:4 to 1:1. Assuming profit margin on both cements is 20%.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The interview didn't start on a good note, this was my first interview of the morning and his room was locked. Campus security made us wait for 20mins before the room was opened and interview started. I got a little nervous about this. PI : Asked me questions about each section of my resume, biggest academic achievement, biggest achievement at ITC, what activities did I do at ISB, Why do I dance and if I play any sport. Generally in Mckinsey interviews PI is quite long and the interviewer takes a lot of interest. I didn't feel that way after this interview,

11.

General Information	
Name	Mayank Mangal
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Sales Development Manager at Britannia Industries Limited
Company interviewing for	Mckinsey & Co.
Number of interview rounds	1

Round 1-Case 1	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Rajat Gupta
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Suppose your father called you for advice on whether he should shift / move out of his business, what would you have said?
Scoping Questions	Me: I will firstly ask him why are we discussing this. What is the objective? Interviewer: The business is making negative operating profits. Me: I will divide the profits into revenue and costs. I will write Revenue = Market Potential * Market

	Share * Price/Unit and Cost = CoGS + Sales & Marketing + Admin + Misc. I will now look into all these elements. Then I will figure out whether it's an internal factor or an external factor. Where do you want me to start : Revenue? or Cost? Interviewer: Ok. I understand where you are going. Consider there is a player like Jio that has entered this market. What will you do? Me: We know that Jio completely changed the game in the telecom market. So, I will look at all the areas where it can impact. On the revenue front, I see that this can have impact on all elements : Market Potential, Market Share & Price. On the Cost front, this should mainly impact the Sales & Marketing cost. Interviewer: Assuming a competitor like Jio will be extremely huge in terms of their investment potential, what will your recommendation be? Also, you and your father are now standing in a lift and he only has 30 seconds for your recommendation. So please be quick. Me: In this scenario, there are mainly two options possible : 1) fight on price or 2) find a niche/different product line. Considering Jio has deep pockets, I would recommend we should look for a niche or a different product line.
Approach Used By Candidate	My interview started with PI. The first question that was asked to me was pretty standard - ""Tell me about yourself"". Then he asked me multiple questions on my work. We also went through the different points of my resume. Post that, he asked me a few questions about my family. During that discussion, I explained him my father's business in detail. This entire discussion went on for 20 mins. When I was talking about my father's business, he interrupted me in between and asked me - ""If your father had asked you for advice on whether to shift the business, what would you have said?"". I got the cue that he wants to me solve this like a case. I, then, asked him about what all information is available about the business. He said it's your father's business, assume everything. Moreover, he added that he didn't want me to solve this like a case (using pen and paper), he just wants to have a conversation. So he stopped me from writing.

	So the entire interview was mostly a conversation with around 5-10 mins of case solving.

Round 1- Case 2	
Interview Type	Case based
Interviewer Designation / Name	Rajat Gupta
Question / Problem Statement Narration	You friend is the CEO of the conglomerate ABC. ABC has three different supermarket chains : X, Y, & Z : based out of California, Nevada & Alaska. All three chains have multiple stores but are restricted to the specific state. Your friend wants to know can these three chains somehow collaborate?
Approach Used By Candidate	This interview for me was ~15 mins of PI and 10-15 mins of case solving. After the initial introduction, the interviewer asked me a few specific HR questions. He had a form with him on which he had these questions printed and he was writing something / rating me on these. Some of the questions he asked were: 1) 1 example from work and 1 from school or college when you led a team to successfully achieve something 2) tell you about your extra-curricular experience in theatre 3) What do you consider as your strengths. We discussed a lot about theatres. Post that, he stopped and said let's do a small case. Me: What do you mean by collaborate? What is the objective here? Interviewer: The prime objective is to see if there are any profit opportunities. Me (starting some scoping questions): Why do you have three chains? Is there any difference? Interviewer: There's no major difference. We acquired these different chains and that's why we have three chains. Me: In terms of collaboration, I see that we can do it in two ways : 1) building some synergies across value chain but stay separate and 2) merge and look for more synergies.

	Interviewer: For now, let's stay with the first option. Me: To me, the value chain of such a firm is: Procurement > Warehousing > Store Operations > Sales & Marketing > Customers Interviewer: Great. Let's look at Procurement. Me: In procurement, we can look at following elements: 1) Product Cost (Price per unit) and 2) Inbound Logistics Cost. Interviewer: Ok. This looks great. Now your client has told you to find the best price at which ABC can procure Coke. By best price I mean the price for the volume of (X + Y + Z) as opposed to the prices offered for their individual orders. Me: I will talk to Coke and get the new quote Interviewer: The problem in that is that they know that you are calling from a consulting firm and that's why they are sure that you will hurt their profits. Hence, they won't give it to you. Is there any other way? Me: I can talk to other supermarket chains and try and assess the price and quantity relation. Interviewer: Good. Any other way to find out this thing? Me: I think we can also talk to Pepsi and try and extract price for the same quantity from them. Interviewer: Great. Thank You.

12.

General Information	
Name	Mahikaansh Reddy
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Relationship Associate, Citi - Corporate Bank
Company interviewing for	McKinsey & Company
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Guesstimate;Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Brian Rolfes, Partner - Global Recruitment

Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Your client is a grocery retailer who has 3 different retail chains under its umbrella. The CEO wants us to see whether any cost optimization is possible.
Scoping Questions	I asked him a few scoping questions and got the following information. The three retail chains D, E, F (say) are in California, Nevada and Alaska respectively. Each one has 100 stores in each state. The client wants to see whether they can optimize and realize savings of more than $10 Million. I asked him about the procurement process and was told that they had about 20,000 items and that they were ordered from all parts of the country but was told to focus on only 1 product (Coca Cola). I broke down the costs into Costs of Procurement (included logistics and products under this), Salary & Wages, Overheads (Rent+Utilities+Insurance), Promotion etc. He told me to focus on procurement (ignoring logistics) and asked me about the ideas that came to my mind. I told him that we could look at having a centralized procurement centre for all the three chains which could help us achieve massive cost savings in terms of expertise, economies of scale and contract renegotiation (increase in buyer power). I also mentioned that it could be easier to cut costs between Nevada and California since they are relatively closer in terms of distance and the whole area could be covered with fewer stores. Then I asked for the demand pattern of coca cola across the three stores and the price at which we procure the same. He shared the information with me and told me to analyse the pattern in the data. I realized that for every 50,000 units purchased, the price per bottle fell by 2 cents so if all the units were combined together the price of a bottle on average could fall from 32 cents to 18 cents. However, I said that it is highly unlikely that Coke would settle for this price to which he smiled and told me to assume the average price to be 25 cents. From there on we went into calculations and realized that the company could save 720,000 per year on Coca Cola itself. I went on to say that if we have 15 such products then the CEO should go ahead with the project and mentioned that since we had 20,000 items, the above scenario was highly likely.

Approach Used By Candidate	Scoping is extremely important and can dictate the flow of the case. The fact that I asked about the location, number of stores and the targeted savings helped.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Don't blindly follow what the numbers tell you and try to bring in practical insights and solutions. Keep your calm and engage the interviewer. Personal Interview really helps calm the nerves early on.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Kunwar Singh - Partner
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Your client is an IT firm looking at reducing their expenses on salary. What should the firm do and how much would they save.
Scoping Questions	I asked him a few scoping questions and got the following information. The client wanted to achieve the savings without affecting the service levels. Assume all employees to be paid the same salary. I asked him about the location of the employees, clients and whether we had any limitations in terms of geography. He told me that the company was considering moving some employees off-shore but would have to pay them a 3-month severance package. After some discussion on the possible countries and considerations, he gave me information on 3 different options. At first glance it seemed a bit tricky as there was no data at the unitary level (number of employees, monthly salary for severance package), however remembering that I had to assume the same salary for every one and that percentage splits were given, I was able to calculate the overall cost savings. After checking the effect on service levels for each option, I gave my recommendations.
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Personal Interview: Tell me about yourself. Which other firms are you interviewing with & why us? Why not pursue a career in banking? Why McKinsey and how can it help you achieve your long term goal in life. Give examples of instances where you displayed your leadership skills. Examples of conflict resolution.

Round 3	
Interview Type	
Interviewer Designation / Name	Shirish Sankhe : Senior Partner
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Estimate the increase in Government revenues if the tax on luxury cars is increased by 8%.
Scoping Questions	This was essentially a guesstimate case, as first I needed to estimate the number of luxury cars sold in the market and then look at an 8% increase in their price. The difficult part was that Shirish told me to do the entire case without a pen & paper. I first looked at the number of people that would be able to either get a loan of INR 50L (assumed average price of a luxury car) or would have disposable income of that much. Then I went on to calculate the annual income one would need for buying the car based on the loan / disposable income (10% of total income) and arrived at the number of people that would be able to afford the car. Post that I looked at the 8% increment on the overall market size and arrived at an answer. Given the magnitude of the numbers (and no pen & paper), the case was quite taxing and Shirish kept throwing questions at me throughout.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	In this case, the main thing was to keep your calm as I figured that was what Shirish was trying to test. Also, do not hesitate to take a 30sec break if you feel that you are getting overwhelmed.

13.

General Information	
Name	Tanvi Garg
Pre-ISB profile in brief	~ 5 years of engineering experience with Intel (California, USA)
Company interviewing for	McKinsey & Company
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case;Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Arjun Balaji
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The case was about an IT firm whose employee productivity (revenue/employee) was lower by 15x from its nearest competitor. The firm had recently moved from a service level to a product level firm
Scoping Questions	After general scoping questions, I tried to address where the 15x difference was coming from. I realized I was blanking out a little bit but because my PI went well, Arjun guided me and that really helped me. I was able to quickly gather myself and look at the problem with a fresh mind again. 10-12 mins into the case, I was only able to account for 5x of the difference (pricing, number of modules implemented, employee costs, geography, etc) and I was not able to figure out where the major chunk of this difference was coming from. A knock on the door at the same time made me more nervous. Arjun saw me not giving up and asked to just concentrate on the case and solve it. I then listed down factors of employee effectiveness and realized I had hit the main point when I spoke of org structure (move from service to product). Arjun smiled and told me I took a longer route to solve the problem but I didnt give up and he
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	No matter what try to be well rested before day1, train your body clock to be up and about and in a position to solve cases at 8 am

Round 2	
Interview Type	PI+case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Suyog Kotecha
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	This case was a market entry case- a Malaysia based cooking oil company wanted to enter India
Scoping Questions	Following the regular market entry framework, I first questioned the objective of the firm to which Suyog replied that they are looking to increase their revenues. I then drew the Ansoff matrix and asked him if the firm has considered other options of increasing revenue- mkt penetration, product dvpt, diversification. Suyog was happy that I brought this up and said product dvpt is something that can also be looked at. He then asked me to solve some numbers and I went about that step by step walking him through my calculations. The maths wasn't hard but doing it quickly and correctly was important. After this he closed the case and asked me some more PI questions around why consulting. This round went extremely well- all my nervousness was now gone and I knew I had established a good connect overall. "

Round 3	
Interview Type	PI+case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Somnath Chatterjee
Question / Problem Statement Narration	This case was about a European IT firm facing competition from an Indian IT firm in Europe (lower costs and competitive bids) and losing mkt share
Scoping Questions	I broke down the approach as : 1) Do nothing 2) Internal actions 3) External actions. Under internal actions- I listed down ways to reduce costs and differentiate services, etc Under external actions- I mentioned lobbying with EU to block entry of Indian firm, partnering with the Indian firm(JV or M&A), partnering with another European firm etc.

	He then ended the case and I didnt know if I had solved it correctly or not. I left the room and I was called back after 5 mins again. I met another partner who then congratulated me and welcomed me to the firm :)"

14.

General Information	
Name	Vivek Tiwari
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Rivigo – Analytics
Company interviewing for	McKinsey & Company
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case;Guesstimate;Personal Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The mayor of Pune has called us and he is worried about the decreasing average speed. He thinks this will affect the economy of the city. What should we recommend. The average speed is expected to come from 18kmp to 12kmp in 2030.
Scoping Questions	V: What speed are we talking about here? Average road speed of vehicles. I: yes V: Are we talking about the speed in the city or outside the city? I: What I understand that the average speed of vehicles in the city is going to come 18 kmp to 12 kmp. Is that the correct understanding of the problem? V: Give me a minute. I: Let's try to first figure out the cause of the problem and then we can think of the solution. I can broadly put the reasons for decrease in the speed in 3 categories

	1) Increase in traffics because of increase in disposable income of the people in the city or because of migration in the city, or increase in number of trucks in the city or the duration 2) Infrastructure : Development of the city did not meet the growing need of the country. Things like potholes, bad roads might have added to the traffic 3) Culture : Culture of the city to follow traffic rules, number of accidents happening and response time to clear those mess I: Fine, lets assume that the disposable income has increased, people have started buying more cars. The mayor has decided to build public transport. What factors should we keep in mind? V: Give me a minute to think about it. What I want to do here is to incentivize people to leave their cars and travel in public transport. Let me think of the factors that might be important here 1) Firstly I need to give them point to point service Figure out the residential areas and office areas and build transport between them because office hours are the highest. 2) Next I have to give them incentive of time. Mumbai locals is a great example 3) Comfort : People would be willing to leave their cars only if public transport is comfortable 4) Cost : It should not be very costly I: You can stop here. Can you estimate the number of cars in Pune? V: Given the population of Mumbai is 2 Cr, can I assume the population of Pune to be 1 Cr. I: Take it 80 laks V: Diving the poluation as 30% BPL, 40% Middle class, 30% Upper middle class and 10% rich. Assuming 2 cars per family in rich, 1 in upper and .5 in middle class (I estimated number of cars in Pune)
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	"I: Where were you working before this?

	V: I was in Rivigo before joining ISB I: Tell me more about your work V: I worked in Rivigo for 1.5 years and my tenure at Rivigo can be broadly divided into two parts. In the 1st half I was leading the sales and operations planning. My key metric was to increase the assets utilization which I was able to increase by 20%. I undertook several projects to do that. In the second half, I was leading the network design for part truck load and its implementation. It helped us to decrease the customer promise breach from 45% to 15%. I: How is Deepak (founder of Rivigo). Does he work. V: (smiling) Whenever we used to start any new business vertical, he was totally involved in it. In fact, during the beginning phase of part truck load launch he was at warehouse working with the manager of the warehouse. But then slowly he used to start working on other things but regularly took review of every parameter like mileage, customer promise breach, SLA.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Due to increase in NPA and new bankruptcy law, a bank is selling a steel manufacturing company. Should our client bid for it? There are other domestic and international player who might bid for it.
Scoping Questions	V: Okay. May I know the objective of our client. Is it for profit? I: Yes V: Anything else? I: No V: What does our client do? I: He is steel manufacture? V: Who are its customers? I: Automobiles and builders? V: Geographical presence?

	I: In north India V: What about the competitor's landscape? I: There 4 major players with 20% market share each and our client has 10% market share. V: Give me a minute V: How I would go about this is by trying to figure out, 1) Weather the market has enough demand for steel. So that if we win the bid we are not above the market capacity. 2) Do we have enough capacity to make steel? 3) Can we make the steel profitable? What was wrong with the previous owner or plant that they went bankrupt 4) How will the competitors react? 5) Any risk or challenges? (I started asking for numbers for determining the capacity) The interviewer asked me to focus on competitions reaction. V: If our competitor bids and wins, then he might become a player with large market share and might enjoy economies of scale and might drive us out and other smaller player. If the international player wins, new technology might be depoyed which might hamper our revenue. I: Tell me how the prices be affected. V: If there are more players and one more player comes, then it will lead to more competiotio and prices will decrease. People will get in a price wars as it a standardized product. I: So what should our client do? V: Since profit is our objective, we should bid so that the capacity remains among the 4 existing players so they can enjoy the high prices. I: Thank you
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	I: Thank you." "I: Tell me about yourself

	V: I explained about myself. Right from growing up in an army background to my work experience. Kept it around a minute. I: Tell me more about your work at Rivigo V: I worked in Rivigo for 1.5 years and my tenure at Rivigo can be broadly divided into two parts. In the 1st half I was leading the sales and operations planning. My key metric was to increase the assets utilization which I was able to increase by 20%. I undertook several projects to do that. In the second half, I was leading the network design for part truck load and its implementation. It helped us to decrease the customer promise breach from 45% to 15%.

15.

General Information	
Name	Abhishek Gupta
Pre-ISB profile in brief	SRCC (2011-2014), S&P Capital IQ (2014), McKinsey Knowledge Center (2015-2017)
Company interviewing for	McKinsey and Company
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Senior Partner (Shirish Sankhe)
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Tell me about yourself. What's the key to having a strong GPA at ISB? What's your biggest academic achievement? A cement manufacturer has been facing lower profitability vs. its competitors. How can we help?
Scoping Questions	I asked about the company, its location, product mix, other businesses and channels used. The interviewer informed me that the company was India-based with plants across the country. They were making two types of cement (premium and standard) with different profit margins on each. Sold the products through retailers and distributors. (Don't remember other details)
Approach Used By Candidate	Went about the case with the standard profitability framework splitting up profits into revenues and costs. There was no problem there. The revenues were increasing and costs were increasing proportionately. After a little push from the

	interviewer, I enquired about the product mix. I was told that the lower margin cement was being sold more than the higher margin cement. The issue was to fix this problem. The interviewer gave me some numbers to crunch quickly to determine how much of the higher margin cement we would have to sell to reach a certain profit level. We also had a discussion about how retailers can better help us sell more of the premium cement. There was also a brief discussion around customer satisfaction metrics (NPS, etc.) (Don't remember the exact details here). Shirish really pushed me throughout the interview. He was constantly asking me "what's the next step". Almost felt like a stress interview
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	DO - Focused and Calm. That's the whole game on placement day. You need to approach each interview with the same level of energy as your first. Move on from one interview to another without thinking about the previous one. Listen to the feedback you get from the alums present there. They played a key role in keeping my morale and confidence up. Make sure to have your priorities sorted out before you start interviewing. DON'T - Draw conclusions about how the interviewers are going without any input from the firms. Succumb to pressure. Stay calm even when faced by an interviewer who is pushing you and not giving you time to think.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Guesstimate + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Senior Partner (Renny Thomas)
Case Type	Market Sizing
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Tell me about yourself. What do you see yourself doing in 5 years? Estimate the total market size of the life insurance premiums in India 5 years down the line.
Scoping Questions	Clarified about the insurance products being referred to.
Approach Used By Candidate	Took a top down approach to determine the number of households which will be purchasing life insurance policies. Then took a sample household and calculated the typical life insurance cover which would be needed for a family of 5. This was based on the income level of the household and the time period of the policy. Then went on to determine the premiums which would be paid for that sort of cover (took a rough percentage based on real-life comparables).
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	I honestly thought that this case did not go very well for me. I was slightly under confident about estimating the market size. I made sure to keep

	talking the interviewer through what I was thinking so that every step makes sense to him. He gave me zero reactions and I thought I had bombed the case for sure. I think what worked for me was that I was able to maintain my composure and speak confidently at all stages and even in the places I was not confident, I told the interviewer upfront that I was not sure of certain assumptions I was taking.

16.

General Information	
Name	Siddharth Gupta
Pre-ISB profile in brief	VP Sales and Marketing at Aasaanjobs.com
Company interviewing for	McKinsey & Company
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI + Case + Guesstimate
Interviewer Designation / Name	Puneet Chandok, Partner
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Build a strategy for Flipkart to beat Amazon; What is Flipkart's annual GMV
Scoping Questions	NA
Approach Used By Candidate	My interview started with a very warm welcome from Puneet. He started with a self-introduction, his journey to McKinsey and his work done in IBM. Post that he went on to explain the rise of Digital McKinsey, and McKinsey's next 5-year plan. He explained how Digital McKinsey could become the highest grossing business for McKinsey in the coming future. Post his interaction, he asked me about my journey. I narrated my startup experience across multiple domains and then went on to describe various aspects of technology that interest me. He quickly asked me "why consulting" and we discussed my inclination for the next couple of minutes. He then glanced over to my resume and popped the case out of nowhere. This was a very open ended and difficult case to solve and I realized that it would rather be a dialogue between Puneet and me, and not just scribbling on the paper. So, I went on to scope the case so that I could simplify it.

	Me: I'd like to further narrow our objective and I have a few questions in mind. What metrics are we looking in the case? Puneet: Lets focus on Growth and Profitability as the success metrics on how could Flipkart beat Amazon. Me: What is the timeline for this project, does it matter? Puneet: As soon as possible. Let's try to look at your strategy and construct a viable timeline. Me: Are they specific numbers for the metrics that we just discussed ? Puneet: Not as of now. Recommended Approach: This was a highly unconventional case and did not necessarily fit the usual profitability frameworks. I broke the case to into – Growth and Profitability and started tackling Growth first. Growth: Started with basics by drawing the 2x2 matric of product versus market. Naturally, I divided the market between – Urban and Rural. Urban Market: I suggested that the market was highly penetrated and therefore saturated. The incremental gain for adding new users is already dropping, because of the incremental acquisition cost. I suggested Flipkart must look into a different metric – Customer Lifetime Value in the urban market and create strategies to improve that metric in order to beat amazon. CLV = Function of retention rate, average order value and acquisition cost We discussed ways of improving retention of the customer. I said we need to look at more reasons for customers to come back to Flipkart Retention = function of experience and avenues

	Avenues = • Ecommerce – expand product selection and product categories • Groceries • Digital media – Movies, TV shows o I suggested that we must look at content differently from Amazon Prime Video o We must include TV, Movies of all languages in order to hook all family members on the Flipkart platforms for digital content consumption o We must include textual content that could be crowd sourced like blogs, poetry etc. of all languages • Private label products • And so on Experience = ecommerce – product, pricing, UI/UX, supply chain, delivery, return We discussed bits of ecommerce experience and Puneet seemed to be very satisfied with the approach. Rural Areas: This was the game changer and can contribute immensely to the race between Flipkart and Amazon. I quickly created a table of how to approach the rural market: Product Supply Chain Branding Internet Penetration We discussed on product changes, need for developing internet infrastructure and brand Partnerships that could quickly hook the rural customers to Flipkart. Puneet seemed to be satisfied with our growth discussion and suggested we move on to profitability. Profitability: I had done a profitability project in Flipkart and that experience came in very handy. Broke profits to Revenues and Costs. Revenues: Objective – increase average order value Price = function of basket size = function of product mix and discount mix Product mix = Discovery, product assortment

	Discount mix = function of pricing strategy and vendor margins Volume = fn of # customers and frequency of purchase Cost: I said I will break this down to 3 metrics in order to create specific strategies Product Margins – function of discounts and vendor margins Gross Margins – function of logistics, warehouse, packaging, Net Margins – Marketing, HR He then asked me what is Flipkart's annual GMV: I thought about for a while, but said I didn't know what it is currently, but can quickly calculate. After about a couple of minutes I came to an answer of ~$10 B. We discussed the sanity of this number for a while before ending the case. He seemed to be pretty happy at the end of the entire case and wished me luck for the 2nd round.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	NA

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + Guesstimate
Interviewer Designation / Name	Somnath Chatterjee, Partner
Case Type	Marketing Sizing
Question / Problem Statement Narration	How can technology help in primary healthcare. What is the market size of primary healthcare market in India?
Scoping Questions	What are the various objectives that we are looking to drive via technology? Some of the trivial ones that come to my mind are – save cost, store data, improve operational efficiency, information dissemination, marketing etc.
Approach Used By Candidate	Again, the first part of the case was very open ended and therefore I realized that I would have to think from multiple angles to solve the case. I went to ask a few scoping questions (above). Me: What are the various objectives that we are looking to drive via technology? Some of the trivial ones that come to my mind are – save cost, store data, improve operational efficiency, information dissemination, marketing etc.

	Somnath: All those sound very relevant. Let's stick to these first. Me: My definition of primary healthcare is 1st time consultation with a doctor and nothing beyond the same. Is this a fair assumption? Somnath: Yes, sounds fair. Me: I wanted to build a framework to take this forward and asked for a couple of minutes. Recommended Approach: I broke the primary healthcare from a patient's journey perspective into 3 parts: pre-consulting, during doctor consultation and post consultation. I suggested that I would look to solve this problem considering Urban area and will circle back on rural areas later. Somnath seemed ok with the approach. Pre-consultation: I discussed what generally happens at the onset of a symptom for any individual. We either visit to the nearest clinic, or self-administer a drug, or ask someone (family, friends etc.). I divided this into – information products and User acquisition avenues (for any primary healthcare clinic). I went on to discuss specific technology applications: Information based products: - First Aid App: users can have the best information regarding how to administer first aid - Disease repository App: Indian medical association endorsed information-based app that could suggest simple actions based on symptoms input by the user User Acquisition: - Real-time location-based advertisement for user acquisition - App: to book clinic appointments and chat with doctors During consultation: this was an important aspect and therefore I divided this into – operations and I drew a small value chain of the patient journey in a clinic/hospital

	Patient registration waiting area patient file consultation with doctor prescription I had read a case in SDEC course regarding what IBM is doing with its product called Watson, and that immensely helped me in this case. We started discussing how technology can benefit at each stage. - Registration could be moved online and synced with online appointments - Patient files must be digitized and connected with Aadhar so that patient history is easily available to all doctors - Doctor's portal: o Each new doctor interaction must be added into the patient file o Blockchain technology could be immensely used here this point impressed Somnath and we discussed this further - Prescriptions must be digitized and connected with all pharmacies o This will lead to pharmacies easily administering the right drug to a patient o The transactions must be connected with the pharmacies ERP system in order to verify the drug administration and prevention of any false drugs o Again, blockchain technology can be used to track all patient drug transactions across pharmacies through Aadhaar Post Consultation: Prescriptions and future consultations fall in this category. However, Somnath understood and suggested that we can move forward with the case. Hence, we did not go too deep in this part. Somnath: If you were an entrepreneur looking to enter the primary healthcare market, what would you do ? Me: There are various ways to enter – chain of clinics, enterprise software provider, doctor aggregator and so on. Somnath: How will you choose ?

	Me: My core competency, market size, growth rate and will try to understand the competition. Somnath: Good. Let's take the clinic option. Can determine the market size ? Me: Sure. (I started breaking this into various population segments and that's when hit me to ask a crucial scoping questions). Before proceeding further I'd like to understand how to position the clinic ? Somnath: What are the possible options ? Me: low + middle income or High Income Somnath: How will you choose ? Me: Market size and growth. However, here's my hypothesis: Primary healthcare is for simple diseases. With the advent of technology and infrastructure the upper middle class and high-income consumers are increasingly becoming aware of diseases and their symptoms and ways to cure them. Also, this segment is highly becoming health conscious in that the consumption of fitness and healthcare apps is increasing. Hence, the need and incidence of primary healthcare requirement for this segment will diminish at a faster rate than it will for the other segment. Hence, I would position the clinic for the low + lower middle-class income group. Somnath: That's a fair argument. You don't need to calculate the market size. We are good here. Thank you and good luck.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	NA

17.

General Information	
Name	Venkata Aditya S
Pre-ISB profile in brief	IIT Madras, EXL Service(Inductis) - Sr. Consultant - 4 yrs.
Company interviewing for	McKinsey and Company
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + Guesstimate + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner(Suveer Sinha)
Case Type	Abstract.
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Case - Solve the problem of mobility in Pune Guesstimate - Estimate total new cars in Pune by 2020
Scoping Questions	Me: How do we define mobility? Avg. Speed in the city Me: During any particular time? Yes. Evening 7pm - 8pm. Me: How has it changed? Dropped from 30 Kmph to 18 Kmph
Approach Used By Candidate	Split the time during movement and stoppage. Factors for time during movement - traffic on road, road quality, driving skills etc. Factors for time during stoppage - Signaling systems, traffic jams, accidents etc. Utilization of public transportation(bus) is low. Identify all the possible reasons. Classified them under two heads - Core features of public transportation (price, timeliness, bus routes etc.) and non-core (perception, safety) Was told to be more specific and identify all the reasons - Plotted the entire customer experience and identified all the interaction points and hypothesized what could go wrong at each stage.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Look for cues from the interviewers and get their buy-in at each stage.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Only Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner (Amit Khera)
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Agro chemical company is facing stock outs in their warehouses
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	Draw the entire value chain and see what might be going wrong at each stage.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The interviewer will challenge your solution, be flexible in responding. Defend your solution with logical arguments and not your beliefs. Entertain the cross questioning very sincerely.

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case + Guesstimate + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner (Sasi Sunkara)
Case Type	Abstract
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Case - Make Vizag (my hometown) less cash Guesstimate - Estimate the cash usage in Vizag

Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	Identify all the places where cash is used --> Under control of government --> How to make it cashless
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	For McKinsey - PI is very important. Every interview has at least 10-15 mins of PI

Mercer HR Consulting

1.

General Information	
Name	Deeksha Kochhar
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Undergrad - Business Admin (HR focus), 2 years with Deloitte Human Capital Consulting, 2 years with Shelf Drilling (Dubai) as internal consultant
Company interviewing for	Mercer
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Only Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Engagement Manager (Karim Adham)
Case Type	New Product Entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Your client is a tattoo parlor chain in the US and they wish to introduce a new technology that combines tattoo removal and new tattoo application in one sitting. What are the factors you will consider to advise them?
Scoping Questions	Questions about the business and customers - how many parlors, locations, any particular niche/segment, present profitability and revenue streams Questions about competition and technology - does anyone else have access to technology, what is the competition like, is it only offered as a combined offering (removal and re-application), what is the existing process for removal and application, any side effects vs value prop, cost to business (fixed, variable, setup), price to customer
Approach Used By Candidate	Karim, the interviewer, provided the following information in response to the scoping questions - there are 45 stores spread evenly across the US with no particular niche or segment. The price is $750 regardless of tattoo size or complexity and the existing price is comparable or more - there are no side effects, in fact this simplifies the process a lot for customers as regular tattoo removal is very painful and time consuming - this eliminates both issues. Knowing this information (and only this information) what will you recommend to the client? DK - I noted that that the technology seems to be quite attractive to potential clients – I would do a break-even and profitability analysis to determine if they should go ahead with the release. Since there are 45 chains across the US, I would also review the potential demand across larger/popular stores and identify stores where the potential for success is highest.

	Karim – ok, so it will cost the client $500,000 to set-up the machine which will last 5 years, annual maintenance cost is $30,000 and per unit profitability is not a concern – do you think this is a good idea to launch? (he was not willing to share more information at this point so I went ahead with the break-even) DK – based on this, we see the annual break-even number of sessions is 174 (assuming straight-line depreciation for the machine for 5 years and add-in maintenance: $130,000/year) and we need approximately one session every two days. I would expect that tattoo parlors in the US have a roughly even demand daily – conservatively 4-5 clients (this is a guess, I asked if that's acceptable and he said its fair). We need 10% of this demand to be removal and reapplication clients for the technology to break-even – I provided justification for why this seemed feasible including increasing popularity of tattoos across age groups, new customers (increasing the pie) with the simplified and pain-free technology and price etc. I started to tell him I would also look at locations to see customer profiles and do a more detailed analysis of demand, as well as to determine if machine set-up might be a concern due to space or employee (training, time etc.) constraints and he said that was fine. Karim – the client took into account your analysis and has launched the technology in 5 stores. While some stores are doing well, others are not. You have a client meeting in one hour – what are your recommendations. Note – here Karim confirmed that the problem was with demand and costs are the same across stores. He said that since the meeting is in an hour you don't have the time to collect more information – you must make a recommendation. DK: Since we see that some stores are doing well, I expect that one of the main reasons for others to not do well is related almost entirely to demand. I would take the following steps: 1. Short-term/stop-gap solutions a. Try to increase revenue by partaking in small marketing and awareness building campaigns at the local-level b. Try to reduce annual costs by moving the machine to more popular stores (if economically viable) 2. Long-term solutions – review why demand is low and address pain points:

	a. Awareness/likeability of stores and technology, b. Customer footfall, segments, willingness to pay, basic demand for removal/reapplication etc. c. Capability at local stores, variability in service etc. This was easily solved through the new product entry framework, with a few points from profitability and market share also incorporated. Fairly straightforward case.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Comments: Do stick to the framework, but read the interviewer - we learn to do extensive scoping but in this case, the interviewer wanted to see the entire case-solving approach and in order to finish in half an hour we had move quickly through the case. There were often points at which I made assumptions about the tattoo business and customers - and just asked if they were acceptable instead of asking for every single data point. While Mercer was hiring for People Strategy, this case had nothing to do with Human Capital/Employees etc. The role was for the Multinational Client Group, which is presently staffed with many ex-strategy consultants (BCG, Accenture etc.) and Karim is ex-AT Kearney so keep in mind the interviewers background while doing case prep.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Senior Associate (Dr. Avantika Tomar)
Case Type	Market Share/Product revenue growth
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Client is a retail bank with the objective to have wealth products as 25% of total product portfolio by 2020. These are the present stats – the interviewer shared two charts: 1. Chart 1: line chart of wealth products as a percentage of total product portfolio for client and competitors from 2010-2015. While the client had started with a greater percentage of wealth products in its portfolios as compared to competitors, it had now stagnated and was falling behind. 2. Chart 2: client's revenue split between wealth products and other products over from 2010 to 2015 (revenue in $ million): 2010: Other 7.3; Wealth 1.7 2011: Other 7.5; Wealth 1.7 2012: Other 7.6; Wealth 1.8 2013: Other 7.8; Wealth 1.8 2014: Other 7.9; Wealth 1.9 2015: Other 8.1; Wealth 1.9

Scoping Questions	Noted in approach
Approach Used By Candidate	Interviewer/Avantika: What trends do you observe? DK: We see that the client has approximately 20% of the product portfolio as Wealth products (as %age of users), and at the present growth rate will not be able to hit 25% by 2020 without intervention. To calculate the growth rate, I looked at the total user growth (0.2 million per year) and the growth of wealth products (0.1 million every two years) – this gave an estimate of 11 million total users and 2.2 million Wealth product users by 2020, i.e. 20%. Avantika: Good. We need to help the client improve its standing in wealth products. How would you do this? DK: I asked scoping questions about the wealth products and learned that the products are mainly insurance products, many of which are mandated for customers to have (e.g.: medical, auto insurance). Because of the regulatory requirements, nearly everyone over the age of 16 (in Australia) has one or more form of wealth products. Since the metric was number of users, and percentage of the client's customers who also signed up for wealth products, the problem appeared to be market share. I asked about our client's offerings, competitive landscape, how we sell to clients etc. Avantika: Providers include retail banks and other specialized providers – but the products are virtually identical in terms of value proposition, cost, availability. We sell through normal channels – walk-ins, online, telephone and door-to-door. Case approach: Since everyone in Australia is required to have insurance, it appears that most of our customers (for other banking products) go to other providers for insurance – but with an indistinguishable product, we need to look at other reasons for this. I continued with the market share framework – Awareness – I mentioned awareness of product as a factor and asked about advertising, sales efforts etc. Avantika confirmed that most of the promotional spend was for other products and that the sale of products largely relied on customers asking for the products. While this seemed to be the solution, I wanted to quickly cover other factors to avoid missing something out. Likeability – I already knew the products were identical across providers so I asked about bundling of products. Avantika was interested in the idea and said that presently there is no bundling that the client used – either amongst wealth products or between wealth and other products. Accessibility – already covered in scoping and not an issue

	I then returned to awareness and asked about promotional spend and sales force effectiveness. While promotional spend was an easy issue to uncover, Avantika wanted to delve further into the sales force. I went through sales force capability (training and familiarity with products), opportunities and incentives. The sales force was common for all product types and was well trained in all product types. They had the same opportunities as competition and there was no hindrance to them with regards to access to customers. I decided to focus on sales bandwidth and incentives and proposed that the issue might then lie here- Avantika confirmed that the sales force was incentivized higher for the sale of a wealth product than for other products – about double the rate. When I asked about bandwidth, she further clarified that while the incentive was higher, so was the effort and risk involved. I.e. it would take much longer for a sales team to get a customer to invest in a wealth product and there was significant paperwork to be done, which also led to higher risk in case an important point was missed out. Therefore, the sales team was not keen on investing additional effort towards wealth products. The interviewer was happy that I had got to the crux of the problem and asked for final recommendations. Recommendations – 1. Improve promotional spend 2. Update the incentive structure so that the sales force is adequately incentivized to focus on wealth products – consider a minimum threshold of wealth product sales for a salesperson to be eligible for total incentives etc. 3. Since many customers enter the bank for loans/complementary products, the bank may consider bundling products (e.g.: home insurance with home loan) 4. Since nearly everyone in the country has multiple insurance products, consider further bundling different wealth products Avantika also asked PI questions focusing on my cover letter and resume - we talked about the projects I had done in Dubai and for our Africa offices, as well as about my hobbies (travel).
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 3	
Interview Type	Only PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner (Sunil Rana)
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	

Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	Background: I had been briefed about the role and team by my buddies and in the two interviews - the multinational client group was focused solely on People Strategy projects, partnering with existing Mercer verticals (Career, Health, Wealth) for implementation. While the existing verticals are critical for the firm, they also focus on product offerings and this was an opportunity to consolidate and focus on strategy projects from a people perspective. The MCG group would serve multinational clients across the IMETA region (India, Middle East, Turkey and Africa) and take Mercer forward as a consolidated group. Sunil asked standard PI questions about my background, other firms I'm interviewing with, why Mercer, why this role etc. He then asked what questions I had for the firm - I had a similar conversation with Avantika and I believe that this part helped a lot with closing the interview. Key question - How do you resolve the tensions of revenue-sharing between the different verticals and the MCG - if MCG has to take on a project with an existing Mercer client, does that mean that other verticals need to give that client up? (The answer was no - it is a very collaborative firm, as already seen by the collaboration between different Marsh McLennan companies - Mercer, Oliver Wyman etc.) I asked other questions as well but I felt a bit unprepared for this as I was expecting to be grilled on Human capital, the Middle East - since both were very relevant to my background and to the role. Ultimately, we talked very little about my resume and instead focused on the role and where I might fit in.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

PWC DIAC

1.

General Information	
Name	Akshat Agarwal
Pre-ISB profile in brief	-Dual Degree (MSc Economics + BE Computer Science) from BITS Goa -Worked as a Business Analyst for 20 months at ZS Associates in the Business Consulting Group -Advised a leading multibillion-dollar US biopharmaceutical client on marketing, pricing and pro
Company interviewing for	PwC DIAC - Healthcare Consulting Profile
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case;Personal Interview;Data Crunching
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	It was a pharmaceutical case. A drug was in the clinical trial phase. It was being tested on animals and the company wanted to convince the formal organisation that the drug was safe and ready to be launched in the market. How will you go about it?
Scoping Questions	Case 1 Approach: Touched concepts of clinical trials, research and basic drug related concepts. Explained the drug development process and was able to bring in similarities between the animal on which the drug was tested and humans. Recommended to use the test results to convince the formal organisation that the drug was safe and ready to launch.
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	1)Tell me about your major 2-3 projects at ZS. 2)Why do you want to join PwC DIAC? 3)Why consulting? 4)Why does data interest you?

Round 1 Case-2	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	: It was a general FMCG revenue-cost based case. The interviewer gave some information about the FMCG company and asked about ways to improve performance.
Scoping Questions	Case 2 Approach: Asked some scoping questions related to the industry and the firm. Then began with the Profit equation. Talked about revenue and cost streams one by one. The interviewer gave some information while I did so and touched upon the right factors. " "Round 2 (Eliminator)
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	Case and Data Crunching
Question / Problem Statement Narration	It was an airline based very long case. Related to operations and strategy. The interviewer gave around 10-12 factors which were related to the airline company. I discussed about each factor one by one and discovered which ones were causing issues. Then based on those factors, recommended ways to improve.
Scoping Questions	It was a confusing and slightly difficult data crunching session. The discussion was around a graph the interviewer drew and then asked me some questions. The questions were a little confusing and it took the interviewer time to explain. Some quick calculations were being tested. Also checked on whether I was getting frustrated or was calm. The interviewer was very friendly and helped me along the data-crunching case. No special knowledge of any formula was required. "
Approach Used By Candidate	

2.

General Information	
Name	Rohit Gupta
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Was working with EXL Analytics in their Business Analytics domain. I had close to 3 years of experience and have had done multiple projects with EXL
Company interviewing for	PwC DIAC (Healthcare Consulting)
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case;Guesstimate;Personal Interview;Puzzles
Case Type	PI+Puzzle
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	"The first question was a standard introduction question and from there it went on to puzzles and guesstimate question. It was a fairly simple and basic guesstimate question and the interview didn't last more than 25 minute. They just wanted to check the fitment and attitude towards things. A lot of queries on previous work experience and how it all tied up in the healthcare domain. The interviewer spent a lot of time trying to understand my previous role and projects I did. I got through. This interview lasted for nearly 40 minute and was a roller coaster fast paced interview. There were questions one after the another with no time to wait.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case;Guesstimate;Personal Interview;Puzzles
Case Type	PI+Puzzle
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	It started with introduce yourself and from there He straight went into my resume and extracted the maximum he could. Again the work experience questions were more pertinent to healthcare sector. In between he threw 3 different puzzles (tricky but not too tough) and also threw in some maths aptitude question.

Round 3	
Interview Type	PI
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	I got through this one as well. Final interview was with the head of Consulting division. This was a very conversational style interview where she started about what she did and how her life has been and slowly she started understanding my previous work experience and my previous role. Again she spent a lot of time on my previous work experience and projects (only healthcare projects).

PWC India

1.

General Information	
Name	Chandrika Karumanchi
Pre-ISB profile in brief	2 years 7 months, Program Manager at DHL Supply Chain
Company interviewing for	PwC India
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Group Discussion
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	We discussed the types of employment that would become obsolete because of the rapid advancement in technology (AI, robotics etc)

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Question / Problem Statement Narration	if you were made in charge of procurement at ISB, what would you do
Approach Used By Candidate	Approach: Asked about the current scenario - Process Map, stakeholders, procurement costs as % of total budget, vendor selection process, Quality etc. Then I clarified my objective - improve quality/ reduce costs/ bring in new technology Once the problems with the current procurement system were identified. I listed different improvements and their corresponding impact

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Develop a supply chain strategy for a FMCG company for 2020. The main goal of the form were: 1. Achieve high growth 2. Cost optimization 3. Increased visibility across the supply chain The client has plants in rudrapur and 35 warehouses and sales in 600 cities with their own sales force

Approach Used By Candidate	Approach: evaluated the value chain of the form in detail. Provided recommendations for reach of the goals. Final recommendations: import vs make, transportation network redesign, WH consolidation, Demand volatility and accuracy, Manufacturing capacity evaluation, downstream EDI with retailers, inventory levels/ safety stock/ reordering mechanism, Revisit contracts with retailers- revenue sharing, buyback etc The partner was happy as I evaluated all possible solutions and scenarios. The case was very interactive, he tested my knowledge on all the concepts that I was mentioning and my overall approach.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Know your work experience very thoroughly, the entire interview will be customized according to your background

2.

General Information	
Name	Rupali Walia
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Risk and development consulting at EY for about 2.5 years followed by handling customer management and operations at an e-commerce start-up for about a year
Company interviewing for	PwC Pvt Ltd
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Group Discussion
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Group size of about 10 with enough time for everyone to speak up and be involved in the discussion. Discussion topics were either related to economics such as the impact of GST or were generic such as whether increasing technology in our lives is quelling human creativity. The notes made by each candidate prior to the discussion were asked to be submitted in the end so would suggest that one made clear, coherent notes and jot down all the points thought of or discussed. "

Round 2	
Interview Type	Technical-Mostly CV-based + Unstructured case discussion
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The interviewers were extremely warm, made you feel very comfortable and the interviews were very conversational. The interviewer started off with a typical ""Walk me through your resume"" and somewhere along the line spun a case related to one of the projects I had worked on as a part of my work. The problem statement was to diagnose the reasons for malpractices among doctors in public hospitals and to suggest recommendations to address the same. The discussion was fairly unstructured and nothing was put down on paper. Would suggest that paying attention to the cues given by the interviewer might at times be a better approach to follow than be pre-occupied trying to build and navigate a case structure. "

Round 3	
Interview Type	CV + PI + Detailed case
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The partner round started off with a ""Tell me about yourself"" followed by an extensive case discussion. I was then asked to describe my biggest achievement. There was some cross-questioning regarding the method and end result. This was followed by a short discussion around why I wished to join PwC and my long-term career plans. I was then asked to pick an industry I did not know anything about for a case discussion. The problem statement was linked to a global spice manufacturer who had entered the Indian rice market through a JV with an Indian player a year ago. The venture had been unsuccessful and the aim was to ascertain the root cause for the firm's troubles and give recommendations to improve the situation. Even if one is not familiar with the industry in question, there was scope to incorporate learnings from past projects which, when done, was received well by the interviewer."

3.

General Information	
Name	Hemashree S
Pre-ISB profile in brief	B Tech, Mechanical Engg, 3+years of Work Ex, Purchase & Supply Chain, Tata Motors Limited.
Company interviewing for	PwC Consulting
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Only PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner (Supply Chain and Operations Vertical)
Case Type	PI- Organizational and profile fit (45-50 mins)
Question / Problem Statement Narration	1. Tell me about yourself 2. Questions on functional skill(costing, negotiation, people management: based on my profile), toughest part of work, and a lot of stories! A lot of follow-up questions based on what I answered, specific to skill sets I developed. 3. Why did I leave TML when I was doing do well there and the company did provide me with opportunities? 4. Why consulting? Why PwC? 5. Something that is not on CV 6. Questions on funding of my education, family and their dependency on me 7. How do people perceive you? (a. Boss, colleagues, ISB classmates. b. He asked whether we can take my boss in TML on phone and talk, will he match my answer, can he call a couple of my classmates inside and ask the same) 8. Questions on willingness to travel, working with people with different culture and going to remote places for data gathering You want to say anything?
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	1. STAR format is the guiding principle.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	1. Have a story for every point on your resume. This helped me in giving specific examples for most of the questions. Ex 1: Toughest part of my work: I told A and B. Let me give a specific example, project X which I have mentioned on CV... this is how I went about it. Ex 2: Question on travelling to remote locations and working with people: I connected stories from Other interests (Yes, even for points in this session have a story) and Professional Experience and presented the case. 2. Be confident while you are answering. Take it up as a conversation/discuss rather than as an interview. Be honest. 3. It is ok to repeat the question and clarify what the interviewer wants. (This also buys some time).

	4. Sit in you most comfortable(professional) position. Keeps you calm.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner
Case Type	Profit and Loss, Brand Perception
Question / Problem Statement Narration	PI 1. What are the lessons you have learned from your previous work ex? How will you apply it here? 2. What drives you? Case: I am the President of TML's PV segment. I have come to you for a turnaround strategy. Basically improve profits and brand perception Technical: 1. Why do you think e commerce firms are valued more than manufacturing firms? 2. Why are e commerce firms still in business though they are bleeding money?
Scoping Questions	Honestly speaking I messed this part. Recommended scoping questions are a mix from both Profit and Loss, Business situation framework
Approach Used By Candidate	Case: The recommendation I made was accepted, but I did not have a structured approach. Technical : Class discussions in OPMG and RMKT helped me answer a couple of questions.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Please do practice cases!

Red Seer Consulting

General Information	
Name	Vasu Sharma
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Analyst at A.T. Kearney
Company interviewing for	RedSeer Management Consulting
Number of interview rounds	4

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case; Personal Interview; We were presented a case couple of days before the interviews and had two days to work on it.
Case Type	Before the interviews, the shortlisted candidates were asked to work on case.
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The problem statement was - "A European drug manufacturer wants to launch an anti-anxiety drug in India. The drug is already selling in some European countries. The client needs to be advised whether it will be feasible for them to launch. We need high level strategy for the same."
Approach Used By Candidate	For this case, I created a few slides and used the standard market entry framework approach. I broke down the key aspects of the problem statement by examining 4Cs & 1P, looked at the factors to consider while entering the Indian Market, risks, factors affecting market growth (market share, market size), options for mode of entry and pricing strategy (though it was not needed as per the problem statement, still decided to add it). The first two rounds were telephonic. The first round was with a Nidhi from HR. She asked me standard questions about my past work experience and why I wanted to join RedSeer. All the rounds focused on assessing whether I would be a good fit in the company. Since RedSeer is a growing startup whose clients are mostly startups, I was asked whether I would be comfortable working in startup environment where processes might not be as streamlined as an established consulting firm.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Telephonic PI + Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Anshika Khaitan, HR
Approach Used By Candidate	I was asked basic HR questions such as Why RedSeer, kind of projects RedSeer does, about achievements in the last firm, types of projects I worked on and so on. She then asked me questions on the case solution that I had submitted. The questions were primarily around the approach and thinking I had used for assessing the market attractiveness, risks and factors affecting market growth.

Round 3	
Interview Type	PI + Case (Skype interview)
Interviewer Designation / Name	Shubham Anand, Head of Retail and CPG practice
Question / Problem Statement Narration	"How would you devise the Market Entry Strategy for a Furniture Retailer in Dubai."
Approach Used By Candidate	The third round was with. This round was approximately 35-40 minutes long and for the most part was an easy friendly conversation. He did throw a case in the middle - I deployed the standard market entry framework and on seeing my approach, he told me to stop and that he was convinced with the answer. This round too, primarily focused on assessing if I would be a good fit in the company. Shubham was very open about mentioning the challenges and opportunities that one would face while working at RedSeer.

Round 4	
Interview Type	Partner Round: PI (Skype)
Interviewer Designation / Name	CEO Anil Kumar
Approach Used By Candidate	The round was roughly 30 minutes long. Anil asked about my past and explained a lot about the company - the types of projects, current clients, expansions plans into other countries and so on. This round was

	interesting as Anil listed out the main challenges that employees face at RedSeer. After stating the challenges, he asked me if I was okay to face them and how I'd go about taking them on. I had convincing answers and he seemed to be happy with them. Overall, it was a friendly conversation.

The Boston Consulting Group

1.

General Information	
Name	Kshitij Agarwal
Pre-ISB profile in brief	IIT Delhi '14, ~ 3 years work ex with Rivigo, Housing.com
Company Interviewing for	BCG
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Principal
Case Type	Growth, strategy + Questions
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Your client is in the Energy sector. He has the following businesses (names like 8 businesses starting from methane marketing, petrochemicals, power generation for cities etc.). The client wants to grow both revenues and profits. Interviewer: We first want to see how we can fuel growth. Then there are 2 situations that I want your thoughts on.
Scoping Questions	INITIALSCOPING - Understood about the businesses first - Clarified the objective etc. - Understood where the client is in the value chain (upstream, midstream and downstream for all the businesses). - Learnt about competition in all the three segments (upstream, midstream and downstream) [here he told me that the client had a 95% monopoly in the mid-stream segment and that the competition in other two segments used the client's midstream facilities] - Asked about the different product segments and their split post the upstream operations [here we learnt that 80% of the revenues come from I think petrochemicals or something which was the least profitable segment. SCOPING AFTER THE SITUATIONS: Situation 1: The government has mandated the client to form a different company for its midstream

	operations. - First understood why the government is doing so [learnt: as an anti-monopoly regulation] - Timelines Situation 2: With this new move towards electric vehicles and development in batteries client is concerned about sustainability of his business, what would you recommend? - Understood the timelines and the major ways in which the client will be affected
Approach Used By Candidate	This was a fairly open ended question at first. The framework I used: I laid out that the firm cares about three things: - Revenues (increasing), Costs (decreasing) and Growth (capabilities etc.) across 3 segments (upstream, midstream and downstream) Discussed about each of the factors briefly and the ways we can do it in. Discussion revolved around mainly growing revenues in all 3 stages - Key things that stuck: Reduce costs in the upstream segment, increase prices in the midstream segment, increase revenues by expanding reach, changing mix and selling any byproducts etc. (There was some discussion here on various options) For situation 1: There are two ways - Resist the move or comply. Quick touched upon on resisting the move. Then since the compliance would only affect the pricing mainly, discussed pricing options - key things that stuck: Differential pricing strategies for different clients with different services and transfer pricing. For situation 2: Diversification was the main thing. There are two main buckets 1. What we can do with the current business? 2. How we can diversify into the new business? Current business: expand to new geographies, new uses in the current markets New business: What will the value chain look like when electric batteries become mainstream and what parts of value chain can our client become a part of. After the case, I asked about the oil industry. We had a chat about oil prices, what OPEC was doing (I had read somethings here and there). I asked him what his energy clients were doing for the electric boom that was expected.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	1. Be familiar with different industries - it helps (familiarity defined as: value chain, key concerns that are affecting the industry, major costs and

	revenues) 2. Scoping may take longer as well. Don't be very strict with your 4-5 min rule. It's okay

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner
Case Type	Diversification, strategy
Question / Problem Statement Narration	First up - PI. Spoke about my experience. We spoke about my travel experiences and SCUBA diving. We spoke briefly about my work at housing.com. Question: Our client is a men's apparel manufacturer. With the emergence of e-commerce, our client is concerned about sustainability and wants your help to figure out if they should go ahead and get involved in this.
Scoping Questions	- Scoped initially about the client and the business [learnt that the client is mainly in the men's formal clothing space. They have brands like Louis Phillipe, Van huesen etc] - Major customer segments [Slightly premium, corporate, middle to old aged.] - Competition - what are they doing about it [Mixed opinions in the market, everybody is trying to figure out]
Approach Used By Candidate	There can be stages of involvement. Starting from just 1.listing their products on an existing e-commerce player (like amazon etc.), 2. going for a platform like myntra and jabong (focused only on apparel), 3. going for a men's formal wear platform (creating a new platform or explore an existing one), 4. going for a brand website (like a parkavenue.com) Evaluate the approaches by analyzing effect on Revenues, Costs and growth. Revenue Analysis: (key pointers - don't remember the exact discussion) - Price and Quantity Quantity = Acquisition and Retention (# of customers) - will we get the right kind of customers? (can be checked from data on the website regarding device, impressions data etc.) - Switching cost becomes very low Price = ability to charge a premium etc. - Pricing and margins (margins will increase from options 1 to 4) Cost Analysis: - Management of tech platform cost (increases from

	1 to 4) - Acquisition Cost (major) - (increased from 1 to 4) - most important. (4 is nearly impossible) - logistics cost (increases from 1 to 4) Growth: Brief discussion about future shopping behavior of customers Concerns: - Majorly about changing product offering. Experience of going in a store to get a formal apparel is very different from buying it online. How will we need to transform our focus in that case?
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Normal case. Simple and straightforward. It would help to go through the industries that you've been part of. Again have a couple of points that you want to talk about. Building a connect with the interviewer helps. ** Note: Please don't read this account or a lot of others in case books as comprehensive and accurate. Few caveats: - Everything is contextual. I was asked this case because there was a brief discussion about my work at housing.com. The expectations were little different and so was my approach. - I may have missed a lot of good points here which you may realize. A lot is driven by how the interviewer led it. - Memory is a little hazy given the number of interviews each person gives. It is difficult to recall all details.

2.

General Information	
Name	Pratik Killa
Pre-ISB profile in brief	CA, Tata Steel Investment Management Division
Company interviewing for	BCG
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1: Interview 1	
Interview Type	Case Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Jitesh Shah

Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Our client is a tractor manufacturing company in the United States of America. They have recently entered the Indian market and are experiencing very low profitability. They seek your suggestions to improve margins.
Scoping Questions	Being the first interview of the day, I was really nervous which really impacted my performance. The scoping was way below expectations. I asked about the product portfolio of our client, and the customer segment that our client caters. The biggest cardinal mistake that I did was to not ask about the competitor's product portfolio.
Approach Used By Candidate	Post scoping, I struggled with the structuring of the problem, as all attempts at fitting a structure into the problem failed. He kept asking me to think about the basics. That's where I realized that although the product might not have any issues in general but the specifications might not be suited to the Indian market. That was the basic issue in the case. The company manufactured tractors of same horsepower as it was done in the US. Given the different climatic conditions and soil structure, the HP of the tractors were not suited in the Indian context, leading to lower acceptability. That's where the case ended. Post which he told me about the solution that they suggested to the client (Purchasing stake in the US Parent company, which allowed them to alter the strategy of manufacturing tractors of the same horsepower and designing product better suited to the Indian market). Overall, I did terribly in the case and I started contemplating the other options that I had on Day 1.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Listen to the interviewer very carefully. Jitesh kept on giving me hints that I was going haywire on my structuring and that I can't look at the product portfolio of the company in isolation. Also, try and not get bogged down if one of your interviews don't go well. It is highly unlikely that you will crack all your rounds with the same level of precision. The process is designed as such that they don't judge you on the basis of just one interview.

Round 1: Interview 2

Interview Type	Case Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Mr. Sumit Gupta
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	You have a meeting with Mr. Narendra Modi in next ten minutes. He wants to double farmer's income by next year. What are the suggestions that you would give to him?
Scoping Questions	This was by far the best interview I had ever given. I asked all the right question and Sumit was visibly impressed right from the beginning of the interview. I started with the two basic questions: What is the current level of income for Indian farmers and what are the sources of their income? I saw a smile coming on his face followed by a remark of Excellent questions. He than replied assume Income to be Rs. 50,000 and sources of Income are Agriculture (contributing about 60%) and Dairy (contributing about 40%).
Approach Used By Candidate	I broke the income into two parts, one for agriculture and the other for dairy. In the agriculture segment, the income of farmers was calculated as a function of the area of land under cultivation, yield per hectare of land, and the price. In the dairy segment, I defined the income as number of cattle, yield per cattle and average price per dairy product. Than we went on to discuss each point in great details. In the middle of the discussion, he tested on my quant skills and asked me to calculate the potential increase in income using the methods that we discussed, which I did fairly quickly and correctly. Upon conclusion of the interview, he asked me how do you think you performed in the interview? I was fairly prepared for this question and I mentioned him all the high points of the interview, to which he nodded in agreement. He ended the interview with the statement that "You have performed exceptionally well in the interview and I wish we had more time to carry forward the discussion." He than asked me to wait for a while and to not go anywhere else.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Be prepared to invent your structure on the spot. Only in rare situations will a framework fully fit in the interview. Thinking from scratch really helps.

Round 2: Interview 1	
Interview Type	Case Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Mr. Abhishek Bhatia
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Your client is a steel manufacturing firm in India, They are experiencing a decline in profitability over the last two quarters. Help them figure out why.
Scoping Questions	The interview started on a very positive note. He remembered the fact that we had interacted extensively in the dinner hosted by BCG. He also mentioned that he has already received positive feedback from the previous panelists and hence it will be a very small interview, and given that I was working in the Steel industry prior to ISB, he would just check on my understanding of the sector. It was a standard profitability scoping exercise.
Approach Used By Candidate	It was a very simple case, with declining profitability on account of overcapacity in the Chinese Steel industry, leading to cheap exports to other South Asian countries. This resulted in a decline in overall prices of Steel for our client (who had 50% revenues coming in from exports). The interview lasted for about 15-20 minutes, post which I heard the golden words coming in "Welcome to the Firm Pratik!!!"
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

3.

General Information	
Name	Arpita Maheshwari
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Digital Marketing
Company interviewing for	BCG
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1: Interview 1	
Interview Type	Case Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Aditya Navada (Project Leader
Case Type	Sales Force Management

Question / Problem Statement Narration	The case is set in 1990. The client is largest beverage player in India. A global brand has entered India and arm-twisted clients' bottlers and acquired most of their brands. The client is left with just 2 brands now and rest are with the foreign player who is now the market leader. The client wants to increase their revenue from the existing 2 brands by 4X, and they have hired you to help them.
Scoping Questions	Customer segments of clients? Mix of kids and teens More about the product? Fruit flavored soft drink Reach of the client? Primarily tier 1 and tier 2 cities Do existing bottlers have enough capacity to provide the revenue growth needed? Yes Present market shares of client and market leader? ~20% and 45% respectively
Approach Used By Candidate	After few more scoping questions, I moved to the analysis. Figured that the client needed to increase their market share. Navigating further into the problem, found out that client had very good products and their marketing was also up to the mark in all aspects. However, their distribution was the problem. My initial reaction was that they could increase their reach by expanding into more cities and villages before market leader does that, but the interviewer said that won't help us increase revenue by 4X. From their I understood that their sales force needs to be improved. Understood the sales process and found out that they have feet on street people who go to retailers to push the product. After spending some time on this, figured that their motivation was the problem as they did not take pride in selling the products of our clients. I suggested that they should have a comprehensive training for their staff, focusing on building motivation and loyalty towards the company. At this point he smiled and said that they have suggested the same solution to client.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Overall, I feel the case went decently well and he was smiling throughout. The initial PI helped a lot in building my confidence and take the interview more like a discussion.

Round 1: Interview 2	
Interview Type	Case Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Abhishek Bhatia (Principal)
Case Type	Profitability (Exploratory type of Case)
Question / Problem Statement Narration	A large Indian steel manufacturer in India is facing declining profits, the client has hired BCG and wants to understand what best can be done.
Scoping Questions	How long has the client been in operations? Decade How long have they been facing declining profits? 3 years What were their profits before 3 years and what are they currently? Around 20% earlier and now around 12% What is the target and how many years? 20+% and within a year
Approach Used By Candidate	took a few seconds off to build the profitability framework and then discussed with the interviewer. Major 2 streams. 1.. Revenue = Price / ton * No of tons There was problem with both the aspects. The price / ton was lower than the industry levels and even the number of tons were reducing. On quizzing further, got to understand that the price/ton was significantly less to gain more market share. Also, the number of tons was further broken down as # customers * # tons/customer. Got to know that # tons/ customer were reducing, for which I found out that it was happening either because their general consumption itself is decreasing or they are buying for competition as well. He answered in affirmative about the first inference. Happy with the approach till now, he made it into a "Find out all what can go wrong" type of case and made me lead the case. Post this, made a few recommendations to the client regarding how to solve the revenue side 2. Cost side = Cost/ton * No of tons Cost/ton also was comparatively high for the client, with respect to competitors. I remarked that this was like a recipe for disaster - minimum price and maximum cost. We looked into the entire supply

	chain of the manufacturer, right from the suppliers, production and then distribution. It was found that the suppliers were charging them a higher price, production was being done using archaic methods and distribution could have been leaner - ineffective salesforce. The interviewer seemed visibly satisfied with the approach and the recommendations. Even my confidence went up after this round and I was almost sure that I will proceed to the next round
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Overall: Forming a personal connect in the initial few minutes is crucial as the interviewer also willingly helps you during the case. During the case, try to break each of the components down properly and do not rush through or make false assumptions. Also, be ready to be led by the interviewer at times and at others, be ready to take the lead. Through to the next round!

Round 2: Interview 1	
Interview Type	Case Interview
Interviewer Designation / Name	Jitesh Shah (Principal)
Case Type	Diagnosis (Profit/Loss)
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The client is Indian tractor manufacturer. Their tractors are not that great, yet they had very high revenue as they were the only player in market. A foreign tractor player has recently entered India and their tractors are much better than clients' tractors. The client does not want to lose its position as number 1 player in market. What should they do?
Scoping Questions	Customers segments? Majorly farmers Reach of client? Very strong penetration in all cities and villages How does the price of a tractor compare with that of competitors? Same price How much better is the quality of competitors' tractors? Clients tractors last for 5 years, competitors for 10 years. Why is there so much difference in performance? The engines used are of inferior quality

	Any other issues with client's tractors? Yes, they often stop working in middle of the field. And then it takes couple of days to get servicing person there. The competitor's tractors on the other hand work very efficiently and don't have the same issue.
Approach Used By Candidate	After this, I started analyzing the case further. I came up with a lot of solutions to this and he disagreed with everything because of time/money/feasibility reasons. My last solution was importing tractors from a foreign player (who is not present in India), putting clients brand on them and selling them. At this point, he said that this is exactly what they implemented and this technique is called white-labelling. I was happy that I finally reached the solution and had a small discussion with him around legal issues in white-labelling.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Was made an offer immediately after this :)

4.

General Information	
Name	Devika Puri
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Bachelor of Financial & Investment Analysis 21 months (~2 years), Analyst, BlackRock
Company interviewing for	The Boston Consulting Group
Number of interview rounds	4

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Principal (Jitesh Shah)
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	A tractor manufacturer is facing declining profits.
Scoping Questions	Location? - India Product mix? - There were 3 types of tractors, classified by size (also price increased with increase in size). Say the 3 tractors are 1, 2, 3 (in increasing size). The client's volumes were driven by sale of tractor 3 (the largest & most expensive tractor). Product mix of competitors? - Majority sales of competitors came from tractor 1 (the smallest & least expensive). On the face of it, it seemed that since the client is selling more of the expensive tractor, they should be better off. To clarify this, I asked for the prices and volume sales of each tractor type for the client and competitors. I did the revenue calculations and it in fact turned out that since the competitors were able to sell greater volumes of tractor 1 at a lower prices,

	total revenues were higher for them than for our client. Once I discovered this, the interviewer asked how we can increase the sales of tractor 1. I suggested that since we are predominantly selling to big farmers currently, we can incentivize them to spread word-of-mouth about the quality of our tractors to the smaller farmers, who would easily be influenced by the former. I then learned that we have been facing decreasing sales in the large tractor segment as well. Now I needed to find out why that was happening.
Approach Used By Candidate	We discussed the various considerations in purchase of a tractor - I talked about the stakeholders and mentioned that the land owner would be the one making the purchase decision. To him the total cost of ownership would be important - this would include purchase related costs (price, financing, insurance, delivery charges etc) and usage costs (fuel, servicing, depreciation, maintenance etc) {the interviewer made me write down the different costs involved}. He then asked me what other reasons could exist behind the declining volumes (other than various costs). I mentioned the following: product awareness, product preference, willingness to pay (already covered in costs of ownership), and product availability {this is an application of the SOV x SOM x SOD framework}. He specifically wanted to look at product preference. After some discussion on this, I came to know that farmers who purchased tractors from our client had to often get their tractors repaired, which in turn drove them to the competitors' product. I found that this happened because the tractors were not suited for the Indian roads. As it turned out, the tractor company was a subsidiary of an American parent company and our client simply made their tractors based on the specifications followed by their parent company. As the parent made tractors suitable for American roads, the same design specifications did not work on Indian roads. The interviewer then asked for recommendations to increase profitability in the next 1 year. R&D and new product development were ruled out because these were longer term solutions. For the interim, there were some solutions such as free maintenance services, provision of warranty & value added services. The interviewer also ruled out the option of selling the tractors in other developed markets. The main solution was to gain a controlling stake in an

	existing manufacturer of tractors that suited the Indian roads.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	My interview was among the last few and the interviewer looked visibly bored - in fact he even mentioned to me right at the beginning that he was bored of taking so many similar interviews. At one point, when I was answering his question "tell me about yourself", I felt he was sleeping with his eyes open. Even in such a situation, remain upbeat and interesting - involve the interviewer in the conversation and catch hints about what intrigues him. I did this and, thankfully, by the end of the interview he was well engaged and was animatedly telling me about what happened in the case in reality.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + Guesstimate + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Principal (Abhishek Bhatia)
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Input equipment supplier to home appliance product manufacturers is facing declining profits.
Scoping Questions	The main question to ask here was about the segmentation of revenues. I was told that the best way to segment would be: revenues from parent company (70%) and revenues from outside (30%). As it turns out, the parent company was an air conditioner manufacturer which sourced their input from the client (their subsidiary). I asked for trends and learned that revenues from the parent company were declining. This led me to ask about the transfer pricing policy of the firm - they subsidiary sold the inputs to the parent at cost. Costs had been rising and the parent company had started procuring the inputs from outside. First, I needed to find out why costs were rising.
Approach Used By Candidate	I understood the manufacturing value chain and saw that labor costs were increasing. I learned that our labor was unionized and of late there had been labor unrest due to a demand to increase salaries. This problem was not an industry-wide issue. I gave some recommendations for this, including disbandment of unions, long-term labor contracts, incentive based payments. We had reached this point fairly quick and the interviewer said, "Now let's look at how we can reduce dependency on our parent company by increasing the revenues from outside." With this he asked me how I would estimate the size of the air conditioner market in India. When I applied the income filter, he asked me how I would specifically determine the threshold of annual income beyond which people would be buying air conditioners. I told

	him I would split the income into consumption spending and savings (70-30 for India) and would look at the ratio of a small air conditioner's price to the annual savings. I would then rationalize this number using data from other developing countries.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Explain your thought process to the interviewer and treat the case interview more like a discussion.

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner (Rachit Mathur)
Case Type	Market Entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The largest agri-commodity trader in the world (think: cereals, grains, fruits, pulp, wood) wants to enter the India market. They are considering to acquire a Basmati rice brand in India. We need to help them in figuring out a route to enter.
Scoping Questions	I asked about the trading activities and how the client earned their revenues. The commodities market is demand supply driven and the client typically earns their revenues through global arbitrage (with risks such as FX risk fully hedged). They earn 1-2% margin on trades and revenue growth comes from scaling up trading activities. These trading activities typically do not include product differentiation as the product is commoditized. I asked why the client was looking at India as a potential market and what their objective was. I was told that food/capita in India was growing and thus they saw potential. Profit margin was important for the client. I could not understand why a commodity trader wanted to enter via the branded product route, so I asked this question. I was told that they believed that branding and packaging could earn them greater margins and moreover, it would be a more stable source of revenues. I then asked if the client had any expertise in branded products and was told that in some countries they have started selling branded products (for example, using tomatoes to make and sell ketchup). The discussion led to the interviewer asking me to look at which of the following was the best route for our client to enter the Indian market: Basmati (branded), Basmati (non-branded), maize/ rice.
Approach Used By Candidate	He asked me to list down the metrics I would use to analyze the three choices. I wrote: growth, profit margin, market size, market share. He asked me to come up with a proxy for market share, as we did not have estimates of the share we would potentially be able to gain, and finally gave me the number of

	suppliers in each segment (and we assumed that currently all suppliers had equal share). Once I had all the data, he asked me, "Are you still unsure about the branded Basmati rice?" I asked for a minute to analyze the data, and then it became evident that branded Basmati was the best option for the client, as this market was the most concentrated and the current players enjoyed high revenues per player. The attractiveness was exacerbated by the high profit margin and growth rate of the market.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Do not get thrown away when you are given numbers. Work your way through them calmly. Even if you feel panicky, do not let it show and put on a relaxed face. Be specific and clear in the questions you want to ask. I was unsure of how I wanted to gauge the market structure when the interviewer clearly expected me to ask him for information on the number of suppliers currently in the market.

5.

General Information	
Name	Aniruddha Dey
Pre-ISB profile in brief	B.Tech in Metallurgy from IIT KGP + 2.75 yrs as Manager Ops at Tata Steel
Company interviewing for	BCG
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI + Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Akshit Shah (HR Director and Former Principal) The interview introduced himself and talked about why he joined the HR department even though he was a consultant. The interview started with a brief discussion about my role at Tata Steel. The interviewer had worked in the Industrial Goods domain and thus was very aware about the process that I managed. To my surprise, the interviewer wanted to test me with a case from the steel industry itself.

	Disclaimer: This case required prior understanding of the global steel market
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	A Indian manufacturer of cold rolled steel product wants to increase its profitability (in terms of profit margin) and market share.
Scoping Questions	Major findings from scoping questions: (1) The company had three types of products - Steel for domestic OEMs (mainly major car manufacturers), Roofing material and Exports. (2) The share of revenue across the three segments were (approximately) 40%,35% and 25% (3) The profit margins across the segments were 15%,10% and 25% (4) Exports largely restricted to small African nations like Uganda. The reason for restricted exports is the fact that the company exports to only those countries where Chinese steel manufacturer have not flooded the market with steel at low prices.
Approach Used By Candidate	Suggested Approach and Structure: (1) Prioritize those product segments with low revenue share but high margin (2) Maximize the revenue from prioritized segments (3) Increase volume of prioritized segments by exploring organic and in-organic growth mechanisms (current and new markets) (4) Create distribution push and customer pull by analyzing the value chain Suggested Recommendations: (1) Provide additional value by collaborating with the customer on future R&D (customer pull) and thus lock in existing customers and acquire new ones (2) Provide increased margins to distributors in competitive export geographies The above recommendations are not very water tight. I was hitting dead ends with the other recommendations which were quickly shot down by

	the interviewer. Overall, the interviewer did not seem very happy with the final recommendations.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Do's: Keep smiling and keep any open mind when the interviewer questions your assumptions and recommendations Don't's: Don't panic if things do not go well.

Round 2	
Interview Type	PI + Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Rachit Mathur (Partner & Director) I shared my alma mater with the interviewer and that helped make the interview more like a friendly conversation. The interviewer then asked me why I wanted to become a consultant and what sort of research did I do to understand the pros and cons of a consulting lifestyle. The interviewer then proceeded with a case.
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	One of India's largest cement manufacturer has been showing below industry profits over the last decade. They would like to know why and what should they do to reverse this trend. The interviewer also wanted me to infer whether this was a real case or a made up case.
Scoping Questions	Major findings from scoping questions: (1) The Market Share of the client has been shrinking (2) The company engaged in both B2C and B2B sales (3) EBIT of the company was 5-6%
Approach Used By Candidate	Suggested Approach and Structure: (1) Start with the profitability framework (2) Identify reasons for shrinking market based on the Awareness, Likability and Availability framework (3) During the application of the above framework, the following facts were discovered: (a) The proportion of B2B and B2C sale in the

	industry/competition (on average) was 60% and 40% respectively while for the client it was 30% and 70% respectively (4) The client lost most of the public B2B tenders for which it applied. The reason for losing the tenders was primarily the price they quoted which was usually 5% above their competitors (5) On further discussion and benchmarking with the competition, it was established that the variable cost of production was high for the client and therefore they had quite higher prices in the tenders (6) Analyzed the value chain of the client and discovered that outbound logistics cost was unusually high for the client (7) Discovered that the client was located far away from the customer centers (usually up and coming cities like Hyderabad where a lot of construction work took place) while newer players in the market set up their plant close to these customer centers and thus quoted lower prices. Suggested Recommendations: (1) Look for alternative mediums of transportation (maybe rail) to reduce logistics cost (2) Relocate the manufacturing plant (3) Acquire the competition (4) Optimize logistics routes The above recommendations were quickly shot down by the interviews citing various genuine issues. The solution the interviewer was looking for was : make the manufacturing process modular and set up some of these modular units closer to the customer centers. Not very certain how this is different from â€œrelocating the manufacturing plantâ€•. There might have been some more nuances to the recommendation which I probably did not catch at that moment. Even though, this was not my best performance, I was given an offer which I gladly accepted.

Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Do's: Keep the interviewer engaged at all times and drive a conversation. Ask the interviewer on whether he has a preferred portion of the framework that he would like you to delve deeper into.

6.

General Information	
Name	Akash Govil
Pre-ISB profile in brief	IIT Delhi, 4 yrs., Honeywell UOP, Oil and Gas
Company interviewing for	The Boston Consulting Group
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Kaustubh Verma – Principal
Case Type	PI + Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Profitability of a carbon black (CB) manufacturing company is lower than that of competition
Scoping Questions	Geography of client, uses of CB - mfg. of tyre and newspaper ink, Customers - corporate and retail, competitor profitability - 3-4% above ours, historic trend of our low profitability - always been lower. the interview progressed very quickly so the interviewer was only interested in the approach and didn't allow me to follow one structured approach throughout.
Approach Used By Candidate	I started with Rev-cost model. He quickly told me to draw value chain. I drew value chain to include raw material, IB logistics, manufacturing, OB logistics, warehousing, distribution etc. He quickly told me to focus on manufacturing. I listed factors such as labor, equipment, raw materials and utilities. He told me to focus on raw material. I split it in price-consumption (BCG procurement way). Was told nothing possible on price. Focused on consumption. connected consumption to equipment performance and then explored equipment performance. factorized equipment performance as Productivity (capacity)* availability (hours available/maintenance) *Quality (acceptable product ratio). Was told there might be an issue with the product quality with high wastage thus lower profits. The case ended here.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	I missed on the quality part initially and forgot to draw that in the value chain. But on slight prodding, I was able to figure the QC. While walking to the interview room with the interviewer, since I knew he was from Oil and Gas, I started a casual conversation with him. for the first

	10-15 mins of the interview we were talking 'about myself', my resume, work, Chinese economy etc. we had a good casual conversation which left us with only 10-15 mins for the case.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Only Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Rahul Guha – Partner
Case Type	Pricing
Question / Problem Statement Narration	I was asked to Price a 'bladeless fan' for Indian market.
Scoping Questions	I was shown a picture of the bladeless fan. I had seen such a fan earlier, so didn't ask a lot of questions regarding the product. I asked basic questions about the client, geography etc. and jumped into the case.
Approach Used By Candidate	Drew cost based, value and comparable structure. Was told to focus on value based approach. Listed factors to consider for value (as premium over the current fans). 1. Safety 2. aesthetics/decorative item 3. maintenance/cleaning (was prodded on this one by the interviewer.) Life of Fan given as 5 years. on safety, it's the kids who might get hurt. I was given 2% kids get hurt every year from fan and the medication costs about INR 5000. Since each family would buy a fan, thus estimating population or anything was not needed. I used the 2% number as probability that an incidence might happen in a household. so the premium would be 2%*5000. Additional point was the time cost to kids. Interviewer hinted at studies missed at school. I came up with the consideration that tuition will be needed to cover up for missed studies. 1-hour tuition needed for 1 subject for 1 week. 5 subjects. did numbers accordingly. asked to postpone aesthetics for now because not easy to put a number. on maintenance, used a proxy of Maid's time and salary. 1 hour per month to clean existing fans. 9000Rs per month salary. did math for 5 years. from both methods, price came out to be around 5-6k per fan. Was told that 10k was cost. thus not feasible. Now came back to aesthetics. assumed this to be a show piece. after some discussion I was given some rough numbers as to how much rich and middle class income people spend on show piece items. can't remember the numbers but some straightforward math. and we could price the fan at around 1L with some profit maximizing analysis. tentative data: out of 1000 people 25 - earn 1 cr - spend 3% on deco - assume only 1 deco item for simplicity

	75 - 50L - spend 2% 300 - 10L - 1% 600 - 5L - 0.5% on deco. last two total amount on deco comes out to 10000, 2500. Thus not feasible because of cost. Did profit max analysis and the price came out to 1L instead of 3L.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The interview went pretty smooth. it was mostly as if two of us were trying to solve the case together. once during the interview, I was asked why was I overdressed (because I was also wearing a waist coat). I was able to pull that off well.

Round 3	
Interview Type	Only PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Shantanu Upadhyay – Principal
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	General discussion, Why consulting, questions for interviewer etc.

7.

General Information	
Name	Harshad Rane
Pre-ISB profile in brief	BE (Production Engineering, Mumbai University); 4.9 years' work-ex in Manufacturing Operations (Mahindra and Mahindra)
Company interviewing for	The Boston Consulting Group
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Jitesh Shah
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The client is a tractor manufacturer and wants to increase profits 2x
Scoping Questions	What is the time frame we are looking at? - 9 to 12 months Are there other objectives? - No What exactly does the client do? - They get R&D from a US company, tweak it, manufacture and sell to distributors Who is Competition? - We're 3rd largest. Market share for others and us was given. Who are Customers? - Mostly farmers. What about tractors for other uses, like gathering hauling garbage in cities? - They exist, but their needs are same as farmers. So you can bundle them
Approach Used By Candidate	Firstly, recognize that 2x in 9-12 months seems to be crazy high. I stated this - asking why 2x. Interviewer

	said we want to catch up to next biggest market share. I pointed out that they were different objectives - unless we wanted to assume that everyone's profits per unit were the same. He agreed, but felt that in our case, reaching that market share would get us 2x profits. Profits = Revenues - cost. Important to recognise that in such a short term, no drastic cost cutting measures are possible. Interviewer agreed. So revenues can come from existing products or new products. Difficult to drive revenues to 2x from existing products in such short term. Asked if we should look at expanding to other markets. Was told to focus on India. Basically explored what segments we serve and how much market share we have in each. Turned out that we were heavily invested in the lower segments and had ignored the growing segment. Still, market share was low in that segment as well. Looked at improving existing products. Do we have capability to do: R&D, Mfg, Marketing (followed the Awareness/Likability/ Availability framework) Interviewer at this time was trying to guide me towards R&D. Explored what might be wrong with our R&D. He pushed towards differences in US and Indian tractors. I pointed out that we discussed that the R&D firm also exports designs to Latin America and Africa. Briefly discussed what the differences in markets are. Was pointed to the fact that landholding patterns are the underlying difference. The interviewer led me to the fact that since this firm designed for markets with high segment dominance, their low segment products were usually older. Led to higher total cost of ownership. We discussed what could be done. Recommended improving internal R&D, and service functions in the short term. Said since R&D is contracted out, not much can be done there. Interviewer disagreed with me and told me what they had actually done. I missed out on some major recommendations based on my previous experience in the industry. I explained my context, and he said that this was a possibility they considered within the parameters of the firm's internal R&D. Concluded.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Biggest takeaway - you will have NO idea how the interview went. Do not depend on your 'read' of the interviewer. I felt I had done really poorly because I missed two or three major points, in hindsight. The interviewer was more interested in how I handled something going wrong.

	DOs - Engage the interviewer. Make sure you explain your thought process and ask for his inputs. Try to understand the business and its constraints. DONTs - Rely too much on frameworks. Don't get too attached to logic. Don't be afraid to ask for help if needed. It is better to look a little stupid by asking than very stupid by going off down the wrong path.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + Guesstimate + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Sumit Gupta - Sr. Partner
Case Type	Market Entry
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Our client is the in the Agriculture business and he wants to move into Animal Feeds.
Scoping Questions	There was significant time spent on PI before we got to the case. The interviewer mentioned his background. I asked him about a couple of initiatives in that space - and we ended up discussing the pros and cons of implementing these in India. Took about 20 mins or so there. What is the decision criteria? Revenues of 5000 Cr How much and would he also like to look at profits? No, just look at revenues. The client is confident of being able to keep costs under control. Why does the client want to enter this particular industry? It's a growing and profitable industry. He thinks he can manage it. What is the client's current business (we could look at the skills he has and needs to get)? The client currently sells seeds and fertilizers. He thinks he can get higher revenue by also selling animal feed. Competitors? Godrej Agrovet, Amul, Other regional players. Substitutes - I presume many farmers just feed their cattle with their own agricultural byproducts and hay? Yes, that seems to be a big chunk. Industry size? Hard to estimate
Approach Used By Candidate	First part was market sizing. We could take a top down approach - and guesstimate market size. Or we could look at competitor's sales. He said both approaches made sense. I said second would be easier to estimate. He agreed and asked how I'd do it. I said these are publicly listed companies - I'd just download their annual reports. He told me that from the annual reports it seems that for the last 7-8 years the total revenue for all these companies is about 10000 cr. This seems very small. So I proceeded to the guesstimate. He gave me the number of cattle in India. I clarified if this was domesticated, milch cattle

	or if I should take a haircut on this number. He liked that I'd thought of it and said to assume it was all milch cattle. I asked if we could estimate the amount of feed required based on a proxy like average weight/ water consumed? He said milk produced is a good proxy and that 0.5 kg of feed produced 1 litre of milk. This was a clear indication - but I pushed back a little by pointing out that this would actually vary a lot across different feeds. I elaborated on the idea of 'feed conversion ratio (FCR)' - something I had studied for a previous case competition. He was very impressed, but told me that it wasn't necessary to look at that level of detail here. The why would become obvious in a few minutes. Based on this metric, the market turned out to be around 500,000 crores. It turned out that agricultural feed had only 2% market penetration and most of the feed was low quality, supplied by the farmer himself. Hence, we didn't need to worry about FCR. I pointed out that the way to get 5000 cr would be to get 50% of the existing market or improve penetration by 1%. After this it was the standard market entry framework. Had to wrap up because we had spent close to 40 minutes total and the interviewer wanted to get back to discussing PI.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	DOs - Read. A LOT. Knowing the idea of FCR and that competitor revenue could be estimated from annual reports helped convey sound business knowledge. When asked to estimate market share - I said I wouldn't estimate it, just look at the ministry of agriculture reports. In many cases, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Aside from this, having a discussion is important. If you disagree with what the interviewer is saying, point out what your logic is. Ask him whether it makes sense in this situation. The conversation is as important as your logic. DONTs - Focus too much on reaching the solution. A case in the field can take a 6-month study. Reaching the solution also depends on how complicated the interviewer has decided to make the case. Don't get stressed about that.

8.

General Information	
Name	Harsh Shah
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Product Management in startups
Company interviewing for	The Boston Consulting Group
Number of interview rounds	4

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Vipin Gupta (Principal) - TMT practice area.
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	It was about an IT services firm. Had to bring its costs down. Its similar competitor had lower costs.
Scoping Questions	I had to figure out what does the firm do, the processes involved. Who are the key stakeholders? What are the major costs? Are we looking at any specific sort of cost reduction?
Approach Used By Candidate	It was a testing process. 3 stages - Planning, Designing and Execution. Ask the salary or per hour rate of each guy. Are people working in silos? One person works for only one particular department or others as well? You had to ask all these details. How many employees are there at each level? How does the whole testing process work. Work flows from where to where, whom to whom? You have 3 kinds of people. Senior, medium and lower with proportionate salaries. Conclusion: It was basically an assembly line model vs waterfall model. So either one project is handled by one type of a person entirely or planning is done by Senior guys, Medium guys do Designing and Lower guys do execution. You were to suggest the latter since it will bring the costs down significantly.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Ankush Vadhera (Principal) (ISB Alum)
Case Type	Miscellaneous
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Question was that Government wants to double the income of the small holdings farmer. What are the 3 steps that the government needs to take.
Scoping Questions	Understand what or rather who is this small holdings farmer. How are they being categorized or defined. Defn: Farmer with less than 2 hectares of land. Understand their current sources of income. Understand their current expenditures. Standard of living. A bit confusing part here was what is to be doubled. Is it the revenues or the savings. So the farmer gets the revenues, costs are removed, what remains is what needs to be doubled.
Approach Used By Candidate	2 sources of income. On land - Kharif and Rabi. Animal husbandry was the other one - Sells milk.

	Get the revenues from each of the source. And then ask for costs in each head. He will throw numbers at you - seed costs, insurance costs, fodder costs, etc. Note everything down. Discuss the scope of reducing those costs. In some it will be marginal, in some it will be impossible. In Animal Husbandry, improvements can be around the type of cows, type of fodder etc as well. Keep that in mind. Here, you also need to ask the whole process of how is the farm produce sold. Because unless you ask those questions, you wont get the details around the middlemen and the commission they are charging. So key here is to apply some common sense (we know farmers face this issue) and just ask him. Some discussion on Exports is also recommended. Again the idea of exports comes from common sense that we know people make good money when they export. So government can help them in exporting or encourage people to cultivate those exotic varieties which can be easily exported and charged a premium. Conclusion: In Revenues, Price side you can cut the middlemen by setting up some portal etc. This will give you 20% upside. In Volumes side, you can increase the yield by doing some fertilizer etc etc and get 50% upside. Remaining 30% will come somewhere from the cost side.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	NA

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Ranga (Principal) – Industrial Goods practice area
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Question was about a mining firm. CEO owns multiple mines. Wants to increase profitability of a mine in South Africa to raise enough capital to fund his acquisitions.
Scoping Questions	What is the mine about? Some financials on the company? Any targets? Life of this mine etc. How are the global market performing?
Approach Used By Candidate	I started with basic Profitability framework. Understood that the demand is not a constraint and since it is a commoditized market, there is minimal intervention in price as well. So the key lever was supply. So I quickly moved to PPI framework.

	People Process and Infra. Also, along with this, I asked him to explain me the whole process of how it is working. He will throw lots of details but the key is not to be intimidated by them. This is a process related problem, so start discussing around capacity utilization, idle time of machines, where is the bottle neck in the machines exactly?, wastage, etc. I asked a lot of questions around these and he was really impressed - "These are exactly the questions I wanted you to ask me." All this just gives you a boost up in a tensed situation and also signals that you are in the right direction.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	On further probing and getting lots of numbers, I figured out the bottlenecks. We discussed some of them. One key issue I missed addressing was 'Route optimization' of trucks. They had to wait for longer times and there were many trucks operating for no reason causing inefficiencies. Hence practice each kind of case for each industry. Once you see the industry in a case, you know the basic issues and concerns in that particular industry.

9.

General Information	
Name	Vishu Gupta
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Associate Consultant, ZS Associates
Company interviewing for	The Boston Consulting Group
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI + Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Vipin Gupta
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	A competitive IT firm is losing business and low on profitability
Scoping Questions	NA
Approach Used By Candidate	It was an early morning interview and partner had taken a 5 am flight to be at ISB. Started with a conversation around traveling, asked me about my past experience and how has ISB been so far. He then brushed through my resume and asked me how do I compare BCG to my previous consulting firms and why I would choose BCG over them. He probed a little but then we moved on to the case. Started with normal scoping thinking this will be similar to many profitability cases I had practiced.

	Upon asking a couple of scoping questions, he started explaining the problem in detail. There was honestly nothing left to scope further. The company was leading on the Revenue side and the problem was with the cost. As with many IT firms the problem had to do with People cost. There were 3 tiers of people engaged in different ways across an IT project's value chain viz RFP -> Requirement ->Design->Implementation->Testing-> Bug Fixes. The company was efficient on all steps in the value chain but still the costs were high. The problem was with the staffing and task allocation. This case then turned into a number crunching case, He gave me Efficiencies per resource across the chain, Bill rates, Average project timelines, Full time and part time status. The calculations were pretty intense, after which we figured out that the company was staffing based on the utility maximization, i.e churning out most projects based on given resources. This was as per the industry standards. I then advised to relax the client timelines (Based on client needs) and use cheaper resources to finish task that will now take longer but will be cheaper keeping our company competitive. He was happy with the discussion, and then asked me if I had any questions. I asked a couple of questions and we walked out together.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	NA

Round 2	
Interview Type	PI + Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Saurabh Bakliwal
Case Type	Miscellanous
Question / Problem Statement Narration	A retail chain wants to design an assortment strategy
Scoping Questions	NA
Approach Used By Candidate	Name of Interviewer = Saurabh Bakliwal Case Narration = A retail chain wants to design an assortment strategy His first question to me was about my thoughts on consulting. He then quickly jumped on to the case. It was very discussion heavy and no real frameworks were used. He started by asking that if had a to setup a new retail chain how would I go about it.

	I spoke about Financial, Strategy and Operational factors that would be at play to decide on an appropriate concept. He then asked me to assume a particular retail chain and list the type of products it stocks. How do these products differ and what are the core difference that the business needs to account for? Now as a supply manager, how will I decide what to stock and when to replenish? The discussion then moved on to deciding between established brands and private labels. He also asked me how would I allocate shelf space to these products. How much product will be on the shelves and how much in storage? After this I mentioned that some numbers will be helpful to decide the ideal combination. He gave me a lot of numbers (I was literally writing for 5 minutes). I then took 30 secs and made sense out of the data and told him how I would maximize the revenue for the store per sq ft. (binding constraint). I also stated all the variables that he did not supply and that I would require for this analysis. The discussion then moved on the consumer behavior, experience goods and impulse purchases. There was too much verbal discussion that I don't remember. He was happy with the discussion, and then asked me if I had any questions. I asked a couple of questions and we walked out together. Sometime later I was directed to another room, thinking this will be another interview. Upon entering I was greeted saying "Welcome to BCG". #MUSIC
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	NA

10.

General Information	
Name	Yash Dabriwal
Pre-ISB profile in brief	3 years of supply chain experience with Dell in the US
Company interviewing for	The Boston Consulting Group
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Rahul Guha – Partner
Case Type	Pricing

Question / Problem Statement Narration	Price a bladeless table fan vs one with a blade.
Scoping Questions	Mentioned the 3 approaches to price the product but Rahul asked me to focus on value based pricing.
Approach Used By Candidate	Started by narrowing down differences between both and benefits of a bladeless fan vs its counterpart - maintenance (easier to clean), safety, visual appeal and power consumption. Rahul gave me numbers around each one. Maintenance - 1 hr to clean per month (for a blade fan) - 0 for bladeless Safety - 2% of children get hurt due to a table fan each year - (cost of hospital + cost to parents to cover up lessons from school) Was asked a way to price aesthetics - which I did by recommending the cost of decorating the table had it not been for the table fan. Got numbers based on household expenses on art per year and asked to pick the price based on that.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Overall, connecting with the interviewer is key to a good interview. The cases are usually a lot simpler than those practised with buddies, so make sure to keep your calm and have fun as you problem solve.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Ranga - Principal
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The case given was on a mining company with revenue of 200M and EBITDA of 50M trying to raise EBITDA to 70M.
Scoping Questions	Used the 3C+P framework to scope and gain insights into the market scenario.
Approach Used By Candidate	Then used the profitability framework and started with revenue as the company was already profitable and could increase EBITDA by increasing revenue. Ranga agreed and we look at pricing - given that it was a commodity not much could be done so we moved to quantity. From a quantity perspective, there was enough demand so we looked at the supply side. Drawing the value chain, I was informed there were 4 processes - tunneling, blasting, scooping, smelting and transportation.

	Going through each one, I realized the issue was with scooping where 2/9 machines were frequently under maintenance and were not in use. Recommended buying more machines but was told it takes 3 years to make each to which I recommended buying used machines apart from improving the maintenance process. He was happy with the answer and we discussed about life at BCG.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	NA

11.

General Information	
Name	Samiksha Shrawgi
Pre-ISB profile in brief	B.Tech from IIT Kharagpur, ~3.7 years of experience in finance domain at JP Morgan and IFC - World Bank Group
Company interviewing for	The Boston Consulting Group
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Principal (Rangarajan)
Case Type	Public policy
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Textile Industry federation (don't remember exact name) has to present its case to the government of India, help them with the same.
Scoping Questions	General questions about the federation, what was to be presented, what was expected from me as a consultant, etc I was told that the federation is basically a body representing textile companies in the country. They want to reach out the government with policy support from Govt to boost the industry.
Approach Used By Candidate	There is no standard framework to help with such problem statements. It was all about asking right question in a natural flow of trying to understand the situation. I understood that I basically need to first understand the industry better. So that was my starting point. - Key Products - cotton and synthetic (India is stronger in cotton) - Key players globally (asking the right question here was imp, you are looking a govt policy so you need to understand where India stands in global market) - Export vs. Import (mainly export) There was lot of discussion on the industry which I don't remember. What helped was that I figured that I basically need to find why Textile should be

	supported by govt over anything else. And I got good overview of the current status of the industry. India is doing well in cotton business however not so much in the synthetic business - which is the bigger n growing one. Hence we went into discussing why is that - thought both from supply and demand side. Do we have the capacity, skills, quality product and demand for our products, etc compared across countries who were doing well vs India. Here when we reached to pricing n cost, I asked a point blank question - what's the key driver for the industry. And I was told it was the labor cost and Bangladesh/Vietnam were capturing the market share that China was losing (don't remember why). On further discussion we figured that India has the potential of becoming a leader in textile industry, if supported by Govt policies and that should be our pitch.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Stay calm when u see a new PS - they are usually real cases so they are set very differently compared to what we practice beforehand.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Only Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Principal (Ankush Wadhera)
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Let try to double the income of a farmer
Scoping Questions	Don't remember much about the interview. It was a super stressful interview full of numbers and interviewer was a little unfriendly. Anytime I made a mistake he kept saying ..okay so you made that mistake right - which scared me more. By now I had given three interviews without a break and was super tired. I started with basic scoping - what are the revenue streams of the farmer (vegetables and cattle), channels through which he sold the vegetables, etc etc He gave me lots of numbers and a whole PnL statement. And asked me to prioritize what sequence of line item will I go for increasing income. Then he gave me some situations like what will happen if we buy another cattle, invested in a tractor which will increase the productivity and 2-3 more such levers (which we had discussed earlier). He asked me to calculate the new PnL. I did horrible and we went a bit ahead on the calculations and stopped the case. I thought I won't make it.
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Even though you can apply a framework for profitability but the discussions may go in such directions that you will not be able to stick to it.

	While preparing for cases, have friends who can do this to you or take help from buddies. You may have very different types of interviews, I had two extremes in same firm. If you get nervous, just don't give up, take ur time..keep going.

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The round was heavy on PI..went on for more than 15-20 mins. He asked everything on my CV - extra acads, projects, academics
Scoping Questions	Very standard approach, not much surprise anywhere. He just asked cross questions on the questions I asked to know my insights. I recognized different levers for increasing profits. I don't remember a lot, we discussed about bundling, new product introduction, etc.
Approach Used By Candidate	Don't remember - just that it went very well and the partner told me at the end that the approach and analysis I did was almost what his team did. Was extended the offer post this round
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Just stay calm even if you don't do a round well. Most of the times you will get another chance if your other round went well

12.

General Information	
Name	Ankit Bhargava
Pre-ISB profile in brief	NTU Singapore (Electrical & Electronics Engineering), 5 years of operations, logistics and project management experience with Rolls-Royce
Company interviewing for	The Boston Consulting Group
Number of interview rounds	2

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner
Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Our client is a leading mining corporation facing profitability issues.
Scoping Questions	Company - Products, Location, Revenues, Customers Profitability - What issue? Since when? Broke it into revenue & costs and then further drilled down costs and figured transportation was fairly high for them.
Approach Used By Candidate	Through my analysis, I evaluated that our client was a legacy mining company having licenses since long. Understanding what drives the industry seems important. For mining, location of mining sites closer to markets drives transport costs.

	Answer: Licenses of our clients were very old. New competitors were bidding for more strategic mining sites with closer access to market driving lower transportation costs resulting in additional profitability.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Don't fit frameworks if you can't. Be logical about your approach. That is better than cramming 15 frameworks.

Roland Berger

1.

General Information	
Name	Juhi Agarwal
Pre-ISB profile in brief	BTech from IIT Kharagpur, 4yrs 8 months of experience with Oracle Finanical Services Software and later with Goldman Sachs
Company interviewing for	Roland Berger
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	PI: Tell me 5 things you liked about IIT Kharagpur and few things you did not. I mentioned that I was the topper in my department but there were no core companies willing to hire BTechs that year. This led to a case. Case: You are the Training and Placement cell of IIT Kharagpur and have been asked to submit a budget to increase core placements for the year of 2018. Plan a strategy and come up with a budget.
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	Case Approach: The interviewer was interested in knowing what factors I would consider for the budget and how will I plan the placements. I started by saying that my batch had 42 students, for simplicity I would assume 40, the interviewer nodded okay. Then I subdivided them into how many would look for core placements as few either go for higher studies or take up non-core jobs. The interviewer gave me few numbers(30-core, 5-higher studies, 5-non core). Then I suggested ways of how do I gauge number of companies I need to contact. I suggested that we use the Alum network to start with and also the multiple events hosted by the

	department to get companies interested. Then we need to understand how many would be willing to hire from IIT Kgp. He provided few numbers again. (Number of companies and per company vacancy). After this I said that we need to have TnP representatives assigned to these companies and interacting with them. I suggested that the whole procedure might take 2 months to get a company on-boarded successfully as well as each TnP rep can handle 5 companies at a time. I was provided with few numbers I requested- Utilities charged per employee? Employee salary? Any travel expenses? Souvenirs or gifts? He provided me all numbers and I came up with a budget. He asked me if there was anything else that I would consider, I said that there is no airport at Kharagpur and companies usually come from Kolkata, we might have to look into transportation costs. He ended the case there.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Always follow proper structure and explain your thought process while you solve the case.

Round 2	
Interview Type	PI; Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	PI: Tell me about yourself, the interviewers were from Metallurgy and Mechanical department as well, so they gave me a case on steel industry Case: An iron pellet mfg. is trying to understand the market scenario in India. Help them.
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	Case Approach: I followed a standard framework of industry analysis and company analysis. The industry as a whole was witnessing declining growth. I asked who the customers were. The interviewer said, the steel industry. I asked if it was just the steel industry in India to which i was told yes. Then I asked if the customers of the steel industry sourcing their demand from exporters now. To this the interviewer nodded that China had started to dump their produce in India. I followed this with the

	company analysis(SWOT framework) to analyse if company could survive the crisis. It was comparable to its competitors. The interviewer then asked me what would I recommend. Recommendations: I provided several recommendations on how the company can remain in the business and all were rejected. The interviewer asked me if I had any other suggestions, I said that the company should look at getting a valuation and see if it can sell at premium and exit the business. Then the interviewers asked me if I had any further questions.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Always follow structure and keep your interviewers engaged.

Round 3	
Interview Type	PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The round was a discussion on the Partner's plan for Roland Berger's consulting in the Financial Services Domain. There was a detailed discussion on my work at Goldman Sachs followed by my knowledge about the FinTech space and financial services industry in India. Then there was a discussion on my interest in music. Finally , because I had other offers I was asked why I would choose Roland Berger over them.
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

2.

General Information	
Name	Nikita Antony
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Mergers and Acquisitions Advisory – Deloitte
Company interviewing for	Roland Berger

Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The interview began with a few questions based on my resume that the interviewer found interesting. Since I'd worked on a sell-side deal for a VRLA battery manufacturer, I was given a case on the Electric Vehicles industry in India. Case: ACMA (Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India) is to be advised regarding how to best adapt to the Government's plans to push Electric Vehicles sales and production in India. (Lithium ion automobiles require different parts specifications, and thus a certain degree of design alterations is required).
Approach Used By Candidate	I was given market share details of the largest auto companies, and data on how ACMA is structured (thus giving insight into which players need to be influenced, and hold the most power in ACMA and SIAM). Additional numbers : Forecasted growth estimates for EVs in India (Best and worst case). Since this is a tripartite system, my approach factored in ACMA, SIAM and the governments perspectives and matched each party's objectives with the final recommendations. I broke down the motivations of each party and drilled down on the recommendations employing MECE structures on that base. Suggestions : Some cases are loaded with data, and while some numbers play a crucial role in the decision making process in a case, there are a few that are largely unnecessary. Don't waste time on analyzing every single data point, and keep the bigger picture in mind. Additionally, when faced with a seemingly tough case, remember that the interviewer knows it's a tough case, and will evaluate you on an appropriate scale.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case

Case Type	Profitability
Question / Problem Statement Narration	An iron ore pellet manufacturer is facing declining profits
Approach Used By Candidate	I identified the falling profit metric at the start to understand whether I'd need to look at tax or interest cost implications. Post the usual scoping questions, I mapped out the value chain, which eventually led me to the answer. The second half of the interview focused on why I wanted a consulting job, and a few other standard consulting interview questions.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	I would keep vocalising my thought process and what all I was thinking towards the question and my interviewer would chime in from time to time about his opinions of my decisions and thought processes, occasionally telling me to think/estimate in a particular way or clearly state what my assumptions were

Round 3	
Interview Type	PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Partner round
Approach Used By Candidate	Right after the 2nd case round, I was directly sent for my partner round. The two gentlemen were quite affable and the conversation began with my achievements playing music, and largely centered around my CV, past consulting experience, and my opinions on various academic and non-academic matters. I was asked conceptual questions in Economics (I'm an Econ grad), and my opinions as an Econ grad on current affairs (and to graph them out as well). Offered the job ☺

3.

General Information	
Name	Vinay Bhandari
Pre-ISB profile in brief	BE Mechanical, 12 years' experience. 7.5 years derivatives trading, 4 years financial services management consulting
Company interviewing for	Roland Berger

Number of interview rounds	1

Round 1	
Interview Type	Only PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Rahul Gangwal
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	My interview was postponed a couple of times due to schedule managing issues - the logistics were haywire. Don't let that faze you - distract yourself from the confusion and focus on staying relaxed. Also, the second postponement actually resulted in me being placed before a partner that could appreciate and correctly value my expertise (I'm an SEC with deep finance background). So sometimes setbacks are pretty useful.

Samagra Development Consulting

Name	Suhail
Pre-ISB profile in brief	Deloitte Consulting
Company interviewing for	Samagra Development Consulting
Number of interview rounds	4

Round 1	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	Development Case on Implementing Grievance Redressal System - A written case

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Ankur
Case Type	Case on implementing a book delivery mechanism (logistics solution) for underprivileged children, write a value chain and then start

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	
Case Type	Implementing a Dial 100 application for new law and order system in Haryana, write a value chain, look into each component and be crisp

Round 4	
Interview Type	PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Rahul
Case Type	Personal interview round, be thorough about Resume

Siemens Management Consulting

1.

General Information	
Name	Tanvi Garg
Pre-ISB profile in brief	~ 5 years of engineering experience with Intel (California USA)
Company interviewing for	SMC
Number of interview rounds	4

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI+Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Ashwin Nair
Case Type	SMC interviews were very strict wrt the 30 min interview duration. So after entering the room, Ashwin made the format of the interview clear. He wanted to focus 5 min on introductions, 10 mins on PI and 15 mins on a short case
Question / Problem Statement Narration	PI questions were as follows: Why SMC, why Siemens, why India? Why does digitalization interest me? (here I was able to give a few examples of Siemens work in India- so do your thorough research from Siemens website before interviewing for SMC). There were a few back and forth questions after which we jumped into a short case. The case was straightforward. He wanted me to look at ways to grow Siemens India's business (wrt to gas turbines). I drew the Ansoff matrix and he wanted me to look at market expansion strategy. He then asked me where?
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	I mentioned Africa, S. America (may not make sense due to distance) and ruled out Europe and America as Siemens Germany will dominate business there. He asked me to quickly come up with a rough filter to narrow down which country. I mentioned GDP and its growth rate (historical and projected). He was happy with that. After narrowing this to 4 countries, he now wanted me to see which country would make sense. For that I came up with a few factors to evaluate that. Competition factor was the

	main point here where Siemens China was already present in two of the 4 countries, after which he gave same numbers for the remaining two and the choice became obvious. As he was discussing what actually happened, he started throwing some numbers at me which I wasn't sure were needed for the case but I noted them down anyway as they came up. He then asked me to do some simple maths using those numbers. Even though it was simple, I took extra 20 seconds to make sure I had not made an error and he ended the case there.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 2	
Interview Type	Case + PI + Guesstimate
Interviewer Designation / Name	Ankur Bansal
Case Type	PI questions: Why Siemens? (SMC really wants to make sure you are passionate about Siemens as they prepare you for line management roles)
Question / Problem Statement Narration	This round was a role play where the only thing that worked was being yourself. As an internal consultant, the round was about getting information from a peer in one of Siemens businesses. After the role play, Ankur gave me a short guesstimate and asked me to do simple maths (with a stopwatch on).
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Jens Dinkel (Head/VP of SMC India)
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	This round was my best round with SMC. From the very beginning, I was able to establish a connect with Jens (who had lived in the same area in California 10 years ago). PI in this round was more focused on my global experience. Jens was very friendly to talk to and it never felt like an interview.

Approach Used By Candidate	After chatting for 15 mins, he showed me a few graphs and asked me to interpret it. Overall revenue was flat for the company- however, its two BU's had some trends for revenue. He wanted me to focus on making this company profitable and asked me to walk him through my approach step by step. After analyzing the graph, I asked him I could look at ways to increase revenue, decrease cost or both (but given the revenue projections were more or less flat), I said I would focus on costs first. He asked me which unit first? So I quickly came up with the metric of revenue generated/cost incurred, I told him I would like to make sure that costs for the BU with declining revenue is in check. He was happy with that approach and then the case became about a cost reduction effort, wherein I drew the value chain and created an exhaustive list of ways to reduce costs under each step. He ended the case after that and continued talking to me about some of his personal journey.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 4	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Mandar
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Mandar asked me to talk about one of my projects from my resume- challenges/conflicts/failures, my contribution and my learnings from it- personal and professional. He spent a lot of time on this making sure he understood what exactly I did and was happy with the discussion. He then gave me a small revenue growth case wherein I had to come up ways to increase revenue, calculate investment needed and how much time it will take to break even

2.

General Information	
Name	Shubham Arora
Pre-ISB profile in brief	5 yrs work ex with Siemens Ltd primarily across Field Operations, with some contribution to Strategy & Mktg Communications functions too
Company interviewing for	SMC
Number of interview rounds	4

Round 1	
Interview Type	PI+Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Ankur Bansal (Sr. Consultant)
Question / Problem Statement Narration	Interview: Ankur introduced himself first, and then asked me to introduce myself and walk him through my resume. For the next 25min or so, he jumped into a PI and posed a slurry of behavioral questions such as 1. Why Consulting? 2. Why SMC? 3. Why not some other consulting firm? 4. Why should we hire you? 5. Why should we not hire you? 6. If we were to contact your ex-colleagues, how would they remember you as? Give me top 3 attributes they would mention about you. 7. (Picked up a line from my resume and then said) Elaborate how did you achieve this. What was your contribution? Why do you think this worked? He then moved into a case. Picked up a line from my resume as a topic (which was on Digitalization) and built a case around it. Asked me how would I assess the Digitalization opportunity within India. I began laying out the structure, and explained to him the framework I wanted to use to analyze the situation. He then asked me to calculate the market size (and took notes of my quantitative skills while I attempted the calculations), and subsequently the pricing structure for such an offering.

	He ended the interview after exactly 40min, leaving last 5min for me to ask any questions that I had for him.

Round 2	
Interview Type	PI+Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Pratulkumar Shinde, Sr. Consultant
Approach Used By Candidate	nterview: Pratul introduced himself first and then directly moved in to the actual interview. He began by asking a lot of PI questions, such as: 1. Why did you leave Siemens? What was the motivation to pursue an MBA? 2. Why SMC now? Why not some other consulting firm? 3. Share an example where you faced a difficulty / had an altercation with your manager and how did you deal with it? 4. Why should we hire you? After spending close to 15-20mins on PI, he then moved into a role play. The given situation was as follows: Situation: Mr. A worked day and night on a particular assignment, but due to some reasons during subsequent appraisals, Mr. B who was Mr. A's colleague, was given a promotion and made the Division Head. The division head has now roped in SMC to work on the same assignment which Mr. A worked on initially, but in greater detail. SMC could greatly benefit from the research or effort Mr. A put in on this topic and therefore schedules a meeting with Mr. A. Roles: I was asked to play the role of an SMC Consultant, while Pratul played to the role of Mr. A. My task was to interact with Mr. A, who isn't willing to share his data, and convince him to come onboard and share the information he had.

	Roleplay: During the roleplay, I first tried to build a rapport with Mr. A and slowly moved the discussion towards the focus topic. Mr. A acted very rigid and outright denied sharing the data, saying he had received no formal communication from Mr. B about any such project that was being led by SMC. I understood his apprehension and suggested having a joint meeting with Mr. B to have some common consensus on the project so that we could move forward. We then moved ahead with a new meeting, assuming we have had the joint meeting with Mr. B. Here, Mr. A was relatively willing to cooperate but on a condition that he be given the credit for the data he would share. I promised him that I would try my best to ensure he received his due credit, but couldn't guarantee it completely. The role play ended with Mr. A agreeing to share the data he had. After interacting for almost an hour, Pratul asked me if I had any questions for him before I moved to the next round.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	

Round 3	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Jens Dinkel (Head/VP of SMC India)
Approach Used By Candidate	Like both previous rounds, Jens began the interview by introducing himself and then asked me to introduce myself, before moving into a PI where I was asked the following questions: 1. Why do you wish to come back to Siemens? 2. Why Consulting? 3. Why not some other consulting firm? 4. Share an example from your experience here at ISB which you're most proud of. (I ended up sharing two, one from my professional club where I was part of the core team, and the other being an

	Ultimate Frisbee inter-section tournament where I led my section to victory) He then moved into the case interview where 3 mini caselets awaited me. 1. In the first caselet, he showed me a bar graph from 2013 to 2017 that had a division's revenues and profits data. However, some figures were missing, and I was asked to calculate them (Given profit and profit %, calculate Revenue; given revenue and profit %, calculate profit; etc). Given the revenue figures for the 5 years, I was also asked to calculate the CAGR, which I unfortunately forgot the formula for! So I ended up approximating the figure looking at the numbers and doing some mental calculations and came quite close to the real answer (that I calculated later on after coming home in the evening!). 2. In the second caselet, I was asked if I knew about Siemens Healthcare and its latest developments (the spun off of Siemens Healthineers as an independent entity). He then asked me to list the 5 top priorities for the Global CEO of Siemens Healthineers, given the present condition, with valid reasons. 3. In the third caselet, I was told that Siemens Brazil has been seeing lower revenue growth and was asked to figure out why. Jens was more keen in understanding my thought process and approach rather than the real solution. After listening to my framework that I applied for the first 5 mins, he asked me to summarize the discussion and choose top 5 key metrics that Siemens Brazil CEO would monitor to evaluate growth. The interview ended after about 55 minutes of interaction, after Jens had responded to my questions for him in the end.

Round 4	
Interview Type	Case + PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Mandar (Sr. Consultant)
Question / Problem Statement Narration	This interview too, had a similar pattern like Interviews 1-3 : we quickly exchanged introductions and Mandar moved directly into a PI and posed the following questions: 1. Tell me something about yourself that's not on your resume. 2. Why do you wish to come back? 3. Why Consulting? Why SMC? 4. Share an example where you contributed beyond your domain in a professional setting. 5. Share an example where you presented an idea but faced resistance in its implementation. 6. Elaborate a specific line item from the resume and share what happened in detail and what was your contribution. We spent close to 35 mins interacting over these questions, before he finally moved to a case Case: A courier company has been facing negative profits since the last 2 years. You're called in to investigate what's going wrong. Elaborate how you'd go about it
Approach Used By Candidate	Analysis: After asking a few scoping questions about the courier company's business segments (local, regional & national), products (was asked to just focus on documents and discard parcels), and the competitive environment (competitors had +ve profits), I moved into the Profit-Loss framework and started with the Revenue side. Due to paucity of time, Mandar directly asked me to evaluate the cost side as the revenues were okay. I dug deeper into the fixed costs and variable costs and tried to understand what could be going wrong. On evaluating the value chain and the costs associated with its various aspects, I figured out the hub and spoke model deployed in the regional segment had issues. The regional hubs had higher costs but didn't have enough volumes to break even. Mandar asked me to

	wrap up the case with 3 final recommendations from my side.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Out of the initial 15 applicants that were shortlisted for the first round basis their resumes, 6 were shortlisted at the end of the first round that moved into the next 3 rounds. All 6 candidates went through the remaining 3 rounds, at the end of which only 3 were finally selected for the role, including me! :)

Strategy& (part of the PwC network, formerly Booz & Company)

General Information	
Name	Yatin Aggarwal
Pre-ISB profile in brief	B.Com (Hons)- SRCC, 3.5 years work ex across family business in steel forgings manufacturing, McKinsey & Co, OYO Rooms
Company interviewing for	Strategy& (formerly Booz & Co). Please note that this was a PPI, which I converted to a PPO based on a strategy case competition in IIM Bangalore, sponsored and judged by Strategy&. This firm doesn't recruit at ISB because of their summer internship policy for every candidate
Number of interview rounds	3

Round 1	
Interview Type	Only PI
Interviewer Designation / Name	Director (Hitanshu Gandhi)
Case Type	
Question / Problem Statement Narration	This round was a PI where the interviewer asked me a series of questions related to my background, work ex, etc. He first asked me to tell him something interesting about me not on my CV. He then asked me to take him through my resume and describe the key points of my work ex along with reasons as to why I switched organizations. Next, he asked me about a specific project I had mentioned on my resume and asked me what my understanding was about the company's strategic rationale to engage in that project even though it was a deviation from its core operations. Then, given my corp fin work at Mckinsey and work ex at OYO, he asked me to calculate the cost of capital for OYO Rooms. Finally, he asked me to list down ways of locating a needle in a haystack.
Scoping Questions	
Approach Used By Candidate	For the question on the cost of capital of OYO Rooms, I approached by laying down how WACC is calculated and segregated it into cost of equity and cost of debt. I first looked at cost of equity and all its components, i.e. risk free rate, beta and market risk premium. I told him I'd take the rate on 10 year US treasury bonds as the risk free rate. He questioned as to why I would not take the rate on Indian bonds, for which I said that Indian bonds are not completely risk free and are not as liquid. For the beta estimation, I told him that I would use some publicly listed online travel agents to estimate the asset beta. I would then adjust the number to account for OYO's higher operating risk given that it ensures standardization of experience not offered by the other players. He seemed happy with the answer and we then had a discussion on how the beta could be

	refined. For the final question on finding the needle in a haystack, I listed down the following ways- 1. Manual search 2. Use a magnet 3. Use a fan to blow away the hay from the top 4. Burn the hay 5. Leave a horse loose in the haystack to eat up the hay
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	Be calm and confident. Keep smiling and try to have a pleasing demeanor. Don't get nervous when the interviewer cross questions you. They are just trying to see how confident you are and how you react to stress. Confidently give your justification as to why you made the point. It's okay to concede to the interviewer's point if his point is more reasonable.

Round 2	
Interview Type	Only Case
Interviewer Designation / Name	Director (Peeyush Doshi)
Case Type	Growth strategy
Question / Problem Statement Narration	The client is an automotive component manufacturer that is worried about electric vehicles entering the market. What should they do?
Scoping Questions	I asked the interviewer to tell me more about the company and its capabilities, the components it manufactures, customers they supply to and the competition existing in the market. He told me that the company makes pistons, which is a core component of an engine. It comes in different capacities. I asked him whether these are used in electric vehicles but he said no. About the company, he said its an Indian company which has good customer relations, good design department and low cost of production. Its customers are truck, two wheeler and car manufacturers. There are competitors in the market, but its mostly a commoditized market for the piston. Next, I asked him the rationale for why the company wanted to respond to the electric vehicles market. He said that its profits are under threat and that the market is expected to shrink 50% in the next 5 years.
Approach Used By Candidate	I approached the case from a revenue growth strategy perspective. I structured the approach in terms of how to increase growth from existing business as well as new businesses. In existing business, I looked at the number of accounts and revenue per account. I split up no. of accounts into new segments and existing segments. For new segments, I said we could set up base in a new market/geography and also start catering to the replacement market for the product by supplying to service centers/mechanics. Next, I looked at revenue per account and split it up into price, volume/account and no. of purchases. For price, I said that since it's a commoditized market, price can't be increased. I said that we can try to increase the volume per account by giving incentives to

	customers through bulk discounts. For no. of purchases, I said we can set up a loyalty scheme to incentivize our customers to purchase more from us rather than competitors. Next I looked at new related businesses we could enter and said we would need to be in the electric vehicles market eventually given our existing market would shrink drastically. I said we would have to set up manufacturing for some components used in electric vehicles since pistons are not used there, and that we could leverage our good relations with existing customers to gain a stronghold as many of them would also venture into the electric vehicles market given the industry trend.
Any comments - Learnings, DOs & DONTs	The interviewer gave me the feedback that I covered some aspects well, but I did not cover some well. He said I should have looked at the fundamental attractiveness of the electric vehicles market before recommending that the client enter that market. This was an interviewee led case and the interviewer was not giving a lot of information. The interviewer seemed to be interested primarily in the approach/structure.

All the very best for your interviews!!

– Consulting Club Co'18