

The ideal combination

Internal consultants are valued for the close advice and support they provide to clients from the beginning of a project to its end.

Into the line

Moving from internal consulting to line management is the basic concept of Siemens Management Consulting (SMC). Thomas Weitlaner is a partner at the oldest inhouse unit in Germany and has been with the company for eleven years. "Moving into line management is a very attractive option for many of our consultants."

SMC prepares the consultants for a career in management from the start. A comprehensive training program covers not only technical expertise, but also includes seminars on personality development, interacting with clients and communicating with top management. Even beginners should have a clear idea of where they are headed after internal consulting, so that aside from the on-the-job training they can specifically take on projects which build expertise in the relevant areas.

Overcoming old prejudices

Inhouse consultancies used to struggle against the big names of external competitors. Meanwhile, however, inhouse consulting has become a worthwhile and intriguing career option for talented graduates.

Part of the company

Clients especially appreciate internal consultants when it comes to the implementation of a project. "Our job does not end with developing an analysis and then bowing out. We care a lot about the project being successfully implemented. After all, we're part of the company, and that fosters a heightened sense of responsibility and motivates us to perform to our best," Weitlaner points out.

Christian Offermann – 27-year-old trainee at Merck – concurs: "As an inhouse consultant, I support a project from the starting shot to the finishing line. This also enables me to check on problems later and see if we've done a good job." What is more, internal consultants tend to have a better standing with their clients. Often a certain level of trust already exists; open, constructive relationships and cooperations are much easier to establish as a result.

On the other hand, the limited spectrum of topics could be seen as a problem – even with major corporations like Siemens or Merck. "If you want to work with banks, we simply cannot provide you that opportunity," says Weitlaner. "In this regard, you'll have more variety working for external consultancies. Still, Siemens covers a broad range of products and services, and our projects are just as diversified." Different consultants also have individual preferences. Christian Offermann for one likes inhouse consulting at Merck precisely because of the specialization it offers: "I've also done an internship at one of the major external strategy consulting companies. There you often had to commit yourself to a

certain function or industry sector. Inhouse consulting at Merck allows me to combine my interest in the pharmaceutical industry with a functional specialization.”

Source: Staufenbiel, Consulting 2013, *Die ideale Kombination*.

