BUSINESS MANAGER PROFESSION

Business manager in IT services company: entrepreneur or employee?

Frédéric Le Pennec · 21 May 2025

The position of business manager in an IT services company is often sold as an entrepreneurial adventure, while it remains a salaried role with strong constraints. This paradox makes it a very formative position, but also a ground for wear and departure for the best profiles.

An Entrepreneurial Promise… That Attracts

In advertisements and interviews, the position of Business Manager is sold to you as an **entrepreneurial adventure**. You are going to "set up your own profit center," "create your BU," and "run your business like a mini-CEO."

In short, they appeal to your ambition. And it works: this promise attracts dynamic, motivated profiles who want to prove they can succeed where many fail.

But once you land the job, the reality is more nuanced: **you are an employee**. And this status has very concrete consequences.

An Entrepreneur on a Leash

In reality, you neither choose the tools, the pricing policy, nor the strategic priorities. You must follow imposed processes, provide constant reporting, and meet objectives often disconnected from the field's reality.

And above all, some consulting firms use the entrepreneurial discourse to justify **untenable working conditions**:

- Extended working hours,
- Expected presence in the evenings and weekends,
- No recognition for time invested outside of legal frameworks.

The reasoning is simple (and toxic):

"**You want to be an entrepreneur? Then don't count your hours.**"

But without decision-making freedom, profit-sharing, or real autonomy… it's just a means to **burn out juniors in droves**, making them believe they're building something.

Employee Today, Entrepreneur Tomorrow?

Yet, this employee phase isn't useless. It's even essential.

Before pretending to play the entrepreneur, you need to learn to:

- understand the intricacies of the economic model,
- master sales and recruitment cycles,
- develop a consulting stance,
- build a team,
- avoid classic beginner mistakes that can sink a business.

It's exactly like in a **franchise network**: the promise is to become independent, manage your sales point or area. But without **structured onboarding**, **gradual**, **exacting**, franchisees fail en masse.

Why do consulting firms often skip this training phase? Because they aim to move quickly. Too quickly.

The Consulting Firm Paradox

What's paradoxical is that **the best Business Managers**, those who understand the model, perform, retain, and innovate, are also **those who ultimately leave** to create their own business.

They replicate (or improve) what they learned and sometimes become direct competitors to their former company.

It's the dilemma few consulting firms dare face: **to grow your company, you must recruit entrepreneurial minds… but if they're truly good, they'll leave you.**

Should you only recruit "average" profiles? No.

But you need to embrace this model and create development conditions that make people want to stay. Or at least, that allow everyone to learn, progress, then leave on good terms.

The Business Manager is neither a simple executing employee nor yet a fully free entrepreneur. It's a **hybrid profile**, **in accelerated training**, learning in the field to juggle between prospecting, recruitment, human management, and business steering.

It's a demanding role, often poorly defined, sometimes overexploited, but incredibly formative for those who endure. And perhaps that's what makes it both rich… and limited: because those who excel often end up wanting to spread their wings.

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