BUSINESS MANAGER PROFESSION

Meritocracy does not exist in Consulting Firms. Welcome to the Era of Resultocracy

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In consulting firms, Business Managers are judged primarily on their results, much more than on their efforts. This article deciphers the rules, benefits, and limits of this "resultocracy."

In the business world, and particularly within consulting firms, the term "meritocracy" is often touted as a fundamental value. Meritocracy, that noble idea that individuals progress through their skills, hard work, and personal merit, seems like an enticing utopia. Yet, in the harsh reality of consulting firms, promotion and salary increase are not necessarily a reflection of the effort put in, but rather of the results achieved. Welcome to the era of Resultocracy.

Efforts vs. Results: the harsh reality

Consulting firms are extremely competitive environments where performance is constantly scrutinized and evaluated. Business Managers are not rewarded for their dedication, perseverance, or ability to work long hours, but for their ability to produce tangible and measurable results. In other words, no matter how hard you work or how much effort you invest, what really counts are the results you manage to achieve.

Resultocracy in action

Numeric objectives

In a consulting firm, every Business Manager is evaluated based on numeric objectives: revenue generated, number of new clients acquired, client retention rate, and so on. These objectives are often

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precise and measurable, leaving little room for interpretation. Promotions and raises are directly linked to meeting or exceeding these goals. If you meet them, you are rewarded; if you don't, no matter your efforts, you won't be.

The team's performance

For senior Business Managers who oversee juniors, the team's performance plays a crucial role in their evaluation. If the team underperforms, even the most dedicated manager may see their career stagnate. Juniors must be well supervised, motivated, and effectively led to achieve the desired results. The ability of a senior Business Manager to maximize the collective performance of their team then becomes a key criterion for professional advancement.

Financial results

Financial results are the be-all and end-all in consulting firms. Business Managers who manage to increase company profits, reduce costs, or optimize resources see their efforts rewarded. However, this pursuit of short-term results may lead some managers to take shortcuts in business dealings. While these shortcuts may pay off in the very short term, they can prove disastrous in the medium and long term when they become systematic, compromising the company's sustainability and reputation.

Resultocracy: Advantages and Disadvantages

Resultocracy has several distinct advantages:

- **Clarity of expectations**: Objectives are clear and precise, allowing Business Managers to know exactly what is expected of them.
- **Objective evaluation**: Results are measurable and quantifiable, reducing the risks of favoritism or bias.
- **Performance orientation**: Resultocracy encourages maximizing efficiency and productivity, which can lead to better overall company performance.

However, resultocracy also has significant disadvantages:

- **Stress and pressure**: The constant pressure to achieve results can lead to stress and burnout, with all the consequences on company results.
- **Deterioration of skills**: By focusing solely on immediate results, Business Managers may neglect some fundamentals of business in the consulting sector, for example by using one-shot sales techniques to achieve results quickly.
- **Perceived injustice**: Unrewarded efforts may lead to a perception of injustice among Business Managers, affecting their morale and engagement. This perception could be heightened by client distributions or favorable or unfavorable environments that are not taken into consideration when comparing results and awarding related gratifications.

Conclusion

Meritocracy, although idealized, does not reflect the reality of consulting firms. In these environments, resultocracy is often the golden rule: it's not the efforts, but the results that count. To successfully navigate this framework, Business Managers must not only be competent and dedicated but also strategically oriented towards achieving specific and measurable goals. By understanding this dynamic, both companies and their employees can better align their expectations and strategies, thus ensuring clearer and potentially more prosperous career paths. To avoid failures and frustrations, it will be essential to address these points early in the recruitment process so that each party is clear on what to expect from the other.

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