

What's The Difference Between A Management Consultant, Business Analyst And Project Manager?

Quite often, Management Consultants, Business Analysts and Project Managers perform very similar and overlapping tasks:

Moving from a current-state to a target-state is cognitive as well as tactical – requires high level thought as well as execution. Many theories argue that the higher level thought is irrelevant without good execution.

Each likes to call himself/herself by the other terms, depending on where they think value and status lie - Project Managers like to consider that they incorporate higher-level strategy and other disciplines in their work; Management Consultants like to consider that they are also good at execution (McKinsey argued recently that all their strategy work incorporated execution).

The technical distinction goes something like this (using house building as a metaphor):

Management Consultants engage in higher-level strategy (should we build houses or shopping centres or apartment blocks etc? Where does the growth lie? Where do we want to go? etc). The management consultant will look at the latest academic theories and next-practices etc.

Business Analysts engage in specific projects (like an architect who will design the house or mall; what does it look like? What do we need to do here? etc). The business analyst will have a big picture view of the department, workflow or specific project.

Project Managers manage the execution (tell the builders what to do and bring the project in on time etc). The project manager will have strong relationship skills and be able to effectively manage people on the ground.

Each uses models that are the base of an MBA and each focuses in on different aspects of the Greater Value Chain:

Management Consultants will use strategy models to determine direction (Ansoff, Porter etc).

Business Analysts will use workflow and process models etc (SIPOC, SERVQUAL etc).

Project Managers will use change and implementation models and processes (Action Plans, Jump Charts, Change Phases) depending on the project.

See Guerrilla MBA at: <http://www.clickok.org/>