

Bridging Communication Gaps: Essential Resources and Strategies for Junior Consultants

Prepared for Gen Bus 360 Instructors

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Executive Summary

Purpose and Scope

This report provides insights into the consulting discourse community, focusing on valuable resources to junior consultants, and an analysis of a crucial communication challenge; junior consultants often struggle to ask for advice from senior team members. This report also explores strategies to address this challenge to improve efficiency of consulting teams, and career advancement of young professionals.

Valuable Resources for Junior Consultants

International council of Management Consulting (ICMCI),

A platform which provides specific and qualified reporting on various industry news topics and trends. The platform also emphasizes professional development through a certification program and resources like summit events/award recognition.

Consulting Magazine

A platform which offers high-level industry trends, firm rankings, and actionable advice. It's webinars, and analysis articles are useful in keeping junior consultants informed on regulatory changes, mergers, and crucial industry trends.

Communication Challenge: The Struggle to Ask for Assistance

Problem Definition

Management consulting is regarded as a high pace learning environment, where consultants gain understanding and industry knowledge through real-world project experiences, especially from senior team members. Consultants often struggle to ask senior team members for assistance, and with tight timeframes this can lead to project delays and hinder the career progression of young professionals.

Strategies for Overcoming Communication Barriers

Preparing targeted questions

Junior Consultants can use pre-prepared, targeted questions based on prior research to display to senior team members that they respect their time and to lead to better feedback.

Active listening and relationship building

Attentive listening during communication ensures junior consultants can work towards fostering open team communication, creating a collaborative work environment.

Significance and Impact

By leveraging these strategies, consultants will be able to navigate challenging communication subjects, which in turn will increase the efficiency of our project teams and ensure the continued success of junior consultants.

Introduction

Consulting is a dynamic, high-pressure field, which requires effective communication and team collaboration, within projects and with clients. This report explores key industry sources, as well as a key communication challenge faced by junior consultants: the hesitation to seek guidance from senior team members. Drawing on insights from a variety of reputable sources, this report highlights strategies to address this challenge and support the success of junior consultants in the industry.

Valuable Resources for Junior Consultants

Source Analysis: *The International Council of Management Consulting Institutes (ICMCI)*

How Does the *ICMCI* Support Junior Consultants?

The *ICMCI* tailors its content to junior consultants by offering resources for professionals to refine their skills, broaden industry knowledge, and build powerful networks—essential components for consultants early in their career. *ICMCI's* [mission](#), “To provide opportunities for engagement and collaboration among professional management consultants,” is reflected across its publications. For example, a recent *ICMCI* [article](#), Mihalicz emphasizes “Engagement is driven not by the frequency of communication, but by creating clear accountability and cross-functional workflows that align team members toward shared goals.” This aligns directly with *ICMCI's* mission statement to support junior consultants in developing the necessary skills and teamwork, highlighting a key strategy for junior consultants within their teams.

What Regular Features Does the *ICMCI* offer?

The *ICMCI* offers a variety of regular features to support junior consultants. One such event is “[Resource Summit Events](#)” that provide a venue for consultants to engage with their peers—talking through industry trends and sharing experiences. These recurring features are also especially useful for junior consultants in building their networks. In a similar way, the prestigious recurring, “[Constantinus Award](#),” highlights exemplary consulting projects and engages junior consultants; the award encourages junior consultants to aspire to high standards and gain inspiration from industry leading projects. For early professionals, the *ICMCI* not only facilitates learning and networking, but also provide visibility into what a successful consulting practice looks like. Together, these recurring features reinforce *ICMCI's* excellence in the field.

How Does the *ICMCI* Establish Credibility Through Expertise?

The *ICMCI* remains credible for several reasons. First, *ICMCI's* offers actionable strategies. For example, in an recent [article](#), Keith Jones and Tessa Sharp, explore the importance of communication within consulting teams, and suggest strategies to build productive relationships. By providing action items, the trade journal leverages its resources to do far more than just observe the industry, but provide applicable, real-world solutions to these issues. To further reinforce the credibility of these recommendations the publication is produced by industry leaders. For example, in an [article](#) written by *Dwight Mihalicz*, the author can speak to his personal experience on the evolution of the industry, and provide relevant examples which

support his claims. All things considered, *ICMCI* remains a credible resource for entry level consultants due to their actionable advice, provided by experienced industry

Where Does the *ICMCI* Sit Within the Consulting Ecosystem?

ICMCI exists in a unique space within the greater consulting information ecosystem: a global authority providing structured professional development. While other sources such as *Consulting Magazine*, cover broader industry trends, such as collective rankings of the “[best firms to work for](#),” *ICMCI* offers a more focused platform for certification and professional networking. As an example of *ICMCI*’s focus on career building, the site offers a certification program: the *CMC* Designation, which provides consultants with access to a network of certified professionals worldwide. To reinforce this idea, the *CMC* history [website](#) highlights its commitment to “promote a universal level of competence” through certifications like the *CMC*. The culmination of global recognition, unique certification offerings, and specific information set *ICMCI* apart in the landscape of similar media organizations.

Source Analysis: *Consulting Magazine*

How Does the *Consulting Magazine* Stay Relevant to Junior Consultants?

Consulting Magazine tailors its content and events to professionals in the consulting and related industries by addressing current industry trends, challenges within the industry and overarching news within the industry. For example, in a recent [article](#), Michael Webb highlights, how volunteer opportunities play a role in positive work experience in the industry. New consultants can use this information to improve their own practice. In a similar way, the general news information offered by *Consulting Magazine* provides information for daily use. For example, in another [article](#) the magazine discusses the future purchase of Guidehouse by a Bain. This information is valuable in helping new consultants understand shifts in market share which may be relevant in their projects and final deliverables.

What Recurring Features Does *Consulting Magazine* Offer?

Regular Features are another valuable way consulting magazines tailors its content to new industry professionals by consistently covering themes that resonate with challenges, trends, and opportunities within the consulting industry. For example, in a recent [article](#), Webb highlights which firms have taken initiative in providing opportunities for women. This theme is valuable for people looking to enter the industry. This concept is corroborated by an interview I conducted with [REDACTED] a consultant at Accenture. He mentioned that there is a great deal of valuable firm rankings online which can be valuable for an entry level employee looking for where to build their career. *Consulting Magazine*’s regular features encapsulate which firms young professionals may find align with their values.

How Does *Consulting Magazine* Provide Balanced Industry Insights?

Consulting Magazine tends to approach topics with a mix of observations, analysis and practical advice, positioning itself as a key resource in the consulting industry ecosystem. Most of their informational [blog postings](#) are centered on observations of new initiatives within companies and analysis using surveys; these articles are typically at a high level. In contrast, practical advice is more present in [webinar and information sessions](#) which the site facilitates. These sessions help consultants stay updated on specific company recruitment and objectives. *Consulting Magazine*

uses a unique mix of observations, analysis and practical advice, to provide junior consultants with a high-level analysis of trends in the industry.

Communication Challenge: The Struggle to Ask for Assistance

Management consulting is frequently regarded as a high pace learning environment, where consultants gain understanding and industry knowledge through real-world project experiences, especially from senior team members on the same project. Consultants often struggle to ask these more senior team members for assistance on projects, and with tight time frames this can lead to serious delays in the project timeline and to hinder the career progression of young professionals.

Further Problem Definition and Context

This communication challenge is clearly detailed in a popular magazine [article](#) titled, “*How to Ask for Help Without Making Yourself Look Bad.*” Melody Wilding suggests that junior consultants often hesitate to seek assistance for fear of appearing unqualified or bothering their fellow team members. Building on this idea, an [article](#) written by *The ICMCI*, discusses the extensive lack of mentorship present in consulting can lead to a decrease in corroboration and subsequent efficiency of the project. These sources together, present a meaningful challenge young professional consultant’s face: overcoming the fear of asking for help, to ensure personal and project success.

Why Do Junior Consultants Struggle to Ask for Help?

Within management consulting, miscommunications between junior and senior team members can hinder project progression and junior consultant’s professional growth. In an interview I conducted with [REDACTED] an experienced analyst at Accenture, he mentioned that junior consultants don’t feel empowered to ask questions and may turn in subpar work, leading to a negative reflection from that individual’s team. In addition, the problem is only exacerbated when someone asks for help poorly. As outlined by Darcy Elkenberg in an [article](#) written by the *Harvard Business Review*, lingering negative impressions from poor communication with a superior can lead to junior consultants receiving poor feedback and slowing their career progression. Together, these factors can create a communication bottleneck that affects junior consultants' career aspirations and the success of their project.

How Do Consulting Teams Work and Who is a Senior Consultant?

To further break down this communication challenge, [O*net](#) lays out the responsibilities makes the responsibilities of a consultant transparent; consultants typically work on small teams of 3-5 consultants, composed of junior and senior consultants (including a project manager), who collaborate to ensure project success. Drawing on the job descriptions from [McKinsey](#), [BCG](#), and [Bain](#), teamwork within these small teams is necessary for project success. While this team dynamic positions junior consultants near experienced professionals, it also constrains the number of resources to interface with specific problems, causing a dependency on senior team members. Building on this dynamic, a recent *ICMCI* [article](#) emphasizes the importance of learning from senior mentors within a team. The senior consultants within a team provide crucial industry insights and guidance, that junior consultants rely on for success in projects.

The Ripple Effects of Miscommunication

Communication breakdowns within the consulting industry have far-reaching impacts, especially for junior consultants who depend on senior guidance to learn the nuances of the industry.

[Consulting Magazine](#) highlights that junior consultants need mentorship to "deliver beyond expectations," which builds trust and supports career growth—without this, project quality can suffer. Pierre le Manh of [The Project Management Institute](#) echoes this concern, warning that ineffective communication leads to "inefficiencies and project delays," which underscores the need for successful communicating between junior and senior consultants. Similarly, the [Harvard Business Review](#) contends that miscommunication creates disunity, disrupting workflows and undermining trust within teams, especially when junior consultants lack clear, supportive frameworks. All considered, a communication breakdown within this discourse community can be detrimental to the firm and the individual's career progression and development.

Asking Targeted, Prepared Questions Will Ensure Productive Conversation

To supplement the communication challenge, one focused strategy junior consultants can use is preparing specific, targeted questions in advance of meeting with a senior consultant. This approach serves to respect the senior partner's time and ensures the conversation is productive. One consultant I interviewed noted, "When a junior employee brings more prepared questions after trying to do it by themselves, it shows initiative and makes the guidance more helpful." Similarly, [Erica Dharana](#) of the *Harvard Business Review* elaborates how using specific questions reduces misunderstandings and contributes to a cohesive team environment. By preparing questions, junior consultants show sensitivity and a successful information transfer.

What Are the Benefits of Targeted Questions?

Inherent in asking specific questions is a level of preparedness. Junior consultants will be required to have a complete understanding of the subject matter. Preparing questions based on your understanding and research can transform communication dynamics within a consulting team. In an [article](#) written by the *Chicago Tribune*, Bruce Eckfeldt emphasizes that productive discussions require clarity and preparedness. This can ensure everyone remains engaged without derailing the conversation or wasting time. Similarly, in another [article](#) by the *Tribune*, Stephanie Vozza elaborates how there is a massive importance of "deep questions" as a tool for communicators. Asking well prepared questions reveals genuine interest in the other party's expertise and insight and will lead to more success in asking for assistance.

Using Active Listening Will Show Senior Consultants Respect

Another valuable strategy to address this communication challenge is active listening. A recent [article](#) by the *Harvard Business Review* written by Kelly and Ben Decker highlights the importance of active listening to facilitate open communication between the junior consultant and senior team member. The article outlines how regular meetings and effortful listening provide a platform for both sides to express concerns and ask for assistance. Similarly, another [article](#) by Steven Rogelberg, highlights "To get his team's buy-in, Amit had to be more transparent... and demonstrate that he was listening." This further reinforces my prior point; active listening not only fosters mutual understanding but also encourages team alignment.

What Are the Benefits of Active Listening?

This approach fosters regular valuable communication between the parties. There are several associated benefits with this approach. To start, actively listening enhances operational efficiency by fostering an environment of psychological safety—consultants feel comfortable seeking guidance without fear of judgment. In an [article](#) published by *Consulting Magazine*, operational leaders are increasingly valuing agility, flexibility, and efficiency to drive growth. Creating firm value is more convenient when there are open sources of conversation. Similarly, the [PMI](#) outlines that soft skills like communication, collaboration, empathy and listening ability are essential to project success. By making a conscious effort to listen more closely, you will develop stronger relationships, projects will be more successful, and individual's will be more productive and content overall.

Conclusion

Effective communication is a fundamental skill in any professional environment and is especially relevant within high pressure consulting project teams. Addressing challenges like miscommunication and hesitation to seek guidance requires strategic thinking and deliberate strategies, such as active listening, providing specific questions, and building strong relationships. Sources like *Consulting Magazine* and the *ICMCI* emphasizes the importance of these skills, and by implementing these strategies, consulting teams can cultivate an environment that supports both individual project success and opportunity for vertical mobility for junior consultants.

Checklist for Required Sources

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW conducted on or after the start of the semester (September 4, 2024)

Interviewee name: [REDACTED]

Interviewee job role and employer: Analyst at Accenture

Date of interview: October 15th

Three job ads relevant to the job role you discuss in your report (cite *three* job ads below)

Job ad 1 title/position: Consulting Associate

Job ad 1 company/employer: McKinsey & Company

Job ad 1 hyperlink: <https://www.mckinsey.com/careers/search-jobs/jobs/associate-15178>

Job ad 2 title/position: Associate

Job ad 2 company/employer: Boston Consulting Group

Job ad 2 hyperlink:

https://experiencedtalent.bcg.com/careerhub/explore/jobs/790298546610?post_onboarding_pid=790298546610&&&profile_type=candidate&&customredirect=1&utm_source=cpc_search&utm_campaign=NAMRP2024_global_ta_consulting_consultants-high-24_consulting+full+time_p&utm_medium=namr_paid_092024&customredirect=1

Job ad 3 title/position: Associate Consultant

Job ad 3 company/employer: Bain and Company

Job ad 3 hyperlink: <https://www.bain.com/careers/find-a-role/position/?jobid=10395>

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION content page, article, blog post, podcast, etc. published on or after September 1, 2023

Organization name:

Article/post/page title:

Date material was published/posted:

Hyperlink:

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION content page, article, blog post, podcast, etc. published on or after September 1, 2023

Organization name:

Article/post/page title:

Date material was published/posted:

Hyperlink:

Trade magazine article or podcast episode published on or after September 1, 2023

Author/host name: ICMCI Staff

Article/episode title: Constantinus International Award 2024

Trade magazine name: ICMCI

Date material was published/posted: 2024

Hyperlink: <https://www.cmc-global.org/content/constantinus-international-award-2024>

Trade magazine article or podcast episode published on or after September 1, 2023 <i>Author/host name: Michael Webb</i> <i>Article/episode title: Bain to acquire Guidehouse</i> <i>Trade magazine name: Consulting Magazine</i> <i>Date material was published/posted: November 7th 2023</i> <i>Hyperlink: https://www.consultingmag.com/2023/11/07/bain-to-acquire-guidehouse/</i>
Trade magazine article or podcast episode published on or after September 1, 2023 <i>Author/host name: Michael Webb</i> <i>Article/episode title: Consulting Magazine Announces 2024 Women Leaders in Consulting Honorees</i> <i>Trade magazine name: Consulting Magazine</i> <i>Date material was published/posted: September 16th 2024</i> <i>Hyperlink: https://www.consultingmag.com/2024/09/16/consulting-magazine-announces-2024-women-leaders-in-consulting-honorees/</i>
Trade magazine article or podcast episode published on or after September 1, 2023 <i>Author/host name:</i> <i>Trade magazine name:</i> <i>Date material was published/posted:</i> <i>Hyperlink:</i>
POPULAR MAGAZINE article or podcast episode published on or after September 1, 2023 <i>Author/host name: Darcy Eikenberg and Sarah Mann</i> <i>Article/episode title: When Your Colleagues Have an Outdated Perception of You</i> <i>Popular magazine name: Harvard Business Review</i> <i>Date material was published/posted: April 17th 2024</i> <i>Hyperlink: https://ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=177126411&site=ehost-live&scope=site</i>
POPULAR MAGAZINE article or podcast episode published on or after September 1, 2023 <i>Author/host name:</i> <i>Article/episode title:</i> <i>Popular magazine name:</i> <i>Date material was published/posted:</i> <i>Hyperlink:</i>
POPULAR MAGAZINE article or podcast episode published on or after September 1, 2023 <i>Author/host name: Melody Wilding</i> <i>Article/episode title: How to Ask for Help Without Making Yourself Look Bad</i> <i>Popular magazine name: Harvard Business Review</i>

Date material was published/posted: August 1, 2024

Hyperlink:

<https://ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=179403790&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Newspaper article or podcast episode published on or after April 1, 2024

Author/host name: Bruce Eckfeldt

Article/episode title: 5 rules for supportive meetings

Newspaper name: Chicago Tribune

Date material was published/posted: February 4th 2024

Hyperlink: <https://ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/5-rules-supportive-meetings/docview/2921654217/se-2?accountid=465>

Newspaper article or podcast episode published on or after April 1, 2024

Author/host name: Stephanie Vozza Fast Company

Article/episode title: Are you super at communicating?

Newspaper name: Chicago Tribune

Date material was published/posted: March 10th, 2024

Hyperlink: <https://ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/are-you-super-at-communicating/docview/2954412761/se-2?accountid=465>

NEWSPAPER article or podcast episode published on or after April 1, 2024

Author/host name:

Article/episode title:

Newspaper name:

Date material was published/posted:

Hyperlink:

U.S. GOVERNMENT website or report published on or after January 1, 2019 (O*net or a website with .gov in the URL)

*Government organization name: O*net*

Webpage/report title: Project Management Specialists

Date material was published/posted:

Hyperlink: <https://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/13-1082.00>

BOOK (not a textbook or a self-published book) published on or after January 1, 2019

Author name:

Book title:

Publisher name:

Date book was published:

Hyperlink (to ebook, publisher page, or Amazon):

SCHOLARLY JOURNAL article published on or after January 1, 2019

Author name:

Article title:

Name of scholarly journal:

Date article was published:

Hyperlink:

For those entering the medical field as healthcare practitioners only:

MEDICAL/SCHOLARLY JOURNAL article published on or after January 1, 2019

Author name:

Article title:

Name of medical/scholarly journal:

Date article was published:

Hyperlink:

I affirm that the above sources follow the restrictions outlined in the Investigative Report assignment and are included in this report.

Signature: Michael Vitale

Writer/reader profiles

Your Role	Associate Consultant
Your Industry and/or Sector	Management Consulting
Your Level of Industry Familiarity	I have taken courses in Finance, Risk Management, and Consulting which have given me a foundation in the business processes and an understanding of the collective field. This past summer I worked within the financial planning and analysis team of a corporate insurance brokerage firm in Chicago. This experience gave me further industry experience. In addition, I am involved on campus with Badger Consulting, and I tutor through the Business Badgers Study Cooperative. Badger Consulting is a club organization that provides pro-bono consulting for Madison area startups. Through this experience I have learned what it means to be a consultant, and what the day to day looks like. As a tutor for the BBSC, I have further honed my skills in business analytics, accounting, and finance.
Your Reader	• Name: John Gadbois • Position: Consultant • Employer: Boston Consulting Group • Training: Undergraduate degree • Years in Industry: 4 • Link: https://www.linkedin.com/in/john-gadbois-899ab0150/ My reader has extensive industry experience, working with a lot of different teams on different projects. This has provided them with a breadth of knowledge unlike junior associate consultants. They started in the same position I currently hold, and have since progressed to a senior consultant, which is a leadership role within consulting teams. To appeal to my reader, I ensured my analysis was concise and well-supported with evidence, as senior consultants expect data driven and actionable recommendations. I attempted to use a professional tone throughout my report to appeal to my audience. The report is organized in a way where the most important information is prioritized first, which is in line with what they would expect out of a writing piece

Email Cases

Tone: Deliver Bad News

To: Grace Robbins

From: Michael Vitale

Subject line: Considerations Regarding Upcoming Semester Kick-Off Event

Hi Grace,

I wanted to reach out and congratulate you on your recent promotion to president of the Risk Management and Insurance society! I'm excited to see what you have planned for the rest of the semester.

With that in mind, I've brainstormed some ideas I believe could help make the event as successful as possible. To start, there are no existing plans on transportation to Paoli, and many group members may find it difficult to find a ride or pay for transportation. In addition, the kayaking rental fees may be substantial for some members to cover on their own and the activity may be physically challenging. I know your intentions are in the right place and believe the event will be fun— I just wonder if group participation will be hindered by some of the peripheral details of the trip.

Would it be possible to offer a more accessible event for all club members? I believe a traditional kickoff event with catered food or an event at a nearby gathering space would be more inclusive, ensuring all club members feel involved and valued, while also boosting overall participation.

Again, congratulations on the new position and for helping facilitate our kick-off event. I am very willing to help in any way you may need! I'm looking forward to what we can accomplish together this semester.

Best,
Michael Vitale

Formatting: Report on How to Improve Written Communication

To: Alyx Watson

From: Michael Vitale

Subject line: 3 Crucial Writing Strategies When Communicating with Clients

Hi Alyx,

When we last spoke you mentioned your frustration with how our department interfaces with clients and prospective clients via email. I took it upon myself to generate some simple strategies that the team can consider to improve our communication abilities. My goal would be that these suggestions will provide actionable strategies that our department can use to communicate more effectively and boost our firm reputation! The three most compelling email suggestions I found are as follows:

1) Concision and Explicit Statements Enhances Readability and is More Professional

- a) *10 Steps to Successful Business Writing* recommends using “fewer words to convey messages,” which will save both the writer and reader’s time. Concise writing demonstrates respect for the reader’s time and strengthens professionalism. Our clients will surely have a more positive and professional perception of our firm.

2) Using Visual Hierarchies Can Improve Professionalism and Retention

- a) Utilizing clear headings and supporting bulleted points will not only come off more professional to our clients, but also ensure that the reader retains the most important aspects of our writing.
- b) As stated in *Business Writing with Heart*, “many readers have little patience for unstructured text,” and organization shows that we respect their time. By organizing messages, readers can absorb information and reduce the likelihood of a misunderstanding.

3) Using Positive, Relationship Building Language Garners Positive Reactions from Readers

- a) By using a positive tone, you are building trust and rapport with clients. This strategy will soften the message and improve productivity between clients and employees, as clients are more willing to collaborate when they feel respected. Being more conscientious of our tone with clients will establish a strong base relationship that will encourage continued business.

How can we integrate these strategies into our department to increase professionalism?

By implementing these strategies, we can avoid embarrassing/unproductive email communication, improving the reputation of our firm. Our client interaction will also be a great deal more productive, and our practice can be more efficient. Thank you again for the opportunity to support our department’s communication efforts. I look forward to seeing the positive impact these strategies will bring!

Best regards,
Michael Vitale

Research: Fact-Check a Claim

To: Grace Robbins

Subject: Fact Check on Recent Meeting

Hi Grace Robbins,

I wanted to provide my findings regarding our recent discussion of sustainability; I understand the conversation quickly became unproductive and have provided an analysis that better addresses the conversation holistically, supported by professional and industry-related sources.

I can understand that the claim “sustainability in our industry doesn’t matter” can be polarizing. Many participants argued that clients expect sustainability-conscious recommendations, while others suggest recommendations are outside the realm of our responsibility unless requested. The reality is far more nuanced. While becoming more important, our recommendations regarding sustainability should be based on a client by client, and industry by industry basis. Sustainability can be very useful in creating firm value, assuming such initiatives are well suited for the firm.

Sustainability Initiatives Can Improve Firm Reputation

There can be clear advantages of incorporating sustainability strategies for firms. Research from the [Harvard Business School](#) outlines that sustainable business practices can enhance a firm’s reputation, improve employee satisfaction, and attract investment by meeting ESG standards. The [Harvard Business Review](#) outlines a perfect example to reinforce this idea: Intel. The company has demonstrated that sustainability initiatives, such as their AI-driven educational programs, can tangibly address both environmental and social challenges, while also pushing forward overall growth of the firm.

Sustainability Initiatives Can Lower Costs and Improve Operational Efficiency

In addition to the reputational benefits, there are also cost saving and operational efficiency related benefits associated with sustainable business practices, especially in developing industries. This is outlined in an article written by the [Harvard Business Review](#). For example, following a greater focus on sustainability, Sekem, an Egyptian organic farm, not only reclaimed land from the Sahara but also reduced water usage while boosting yields and revenue growth by 14% annually. This example outlines how sustainability can not only provide moral and reputational benefits mentioned above, but also quantifiable financial and operational benefits.

Ensuring Sustainability Recommendations Remain Within the Scope of Suggestions

As outlined by [Sloan Magazine Review](#) in an article titled “The Business of Sustainability: What it Means to Managers Now,” companies increasingly recognize the importance of sustainability but must weigh it against profitability and operational efficiency. Sustainability should be integrated into business recommendations, but only if it provides a net benefit for the firm. It shouldn’t be forced to the detriment of profitability or efficiency. Similarly, research from [The Accounting Review](#) emphasizes that sustainability initiatives must fit within the contexts of the firm’s objectives as they can lead to outperformance only when integrated in a way that supports the company’s long term goals. The combination of these sources reinforces that recommendations for sustainability initiatives are not a one size fits all program and must be considered in parallel with the objectives of the client.

How to go about providing sustainability recommendations

Now that we have qualified the usefulness and constraints of sustainability recommendations, how can we work these into our models? There are more immersive techniques available, though *IMD* emphasizes a more moderate approach. *IMD* contends that successful sustainability strategies involve collaborating across all branches of the company, especially the supply chain, to find opportunities for change that can meet sustainability goals, without sacrificing competitiveness.

Conclusions

In conclusion, while sustainability is an important and a growing consideration for our firm it cannot be treated as a one-size-fits-all element of our business processes. Sustainability matters in our industry, but to what extent can be determined on a subject-by-subject basis. As consultant's our role is to provide recommendations for clients that align with their goals. Sometimes this can mean recommendations of sustainability initiatives. I hope this has been a useful analysis of the discussion and we our sustainability recommendations can align with the goals of our business.

Thanks,
Michael