



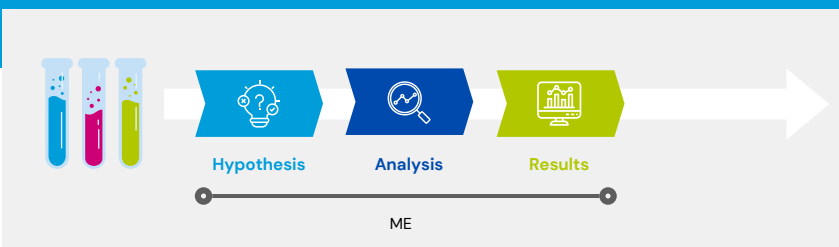
m² managementors

My Journey from Science to Consulting

Having been a research scientist before a career in management consultancy, I am often asked, “How did you get here?”. In this blog, I talk through my journey that led me to being an experienced hire at Managementors, and some of the key lightbulb moments I have had in the last 18 months of being on project with clients.

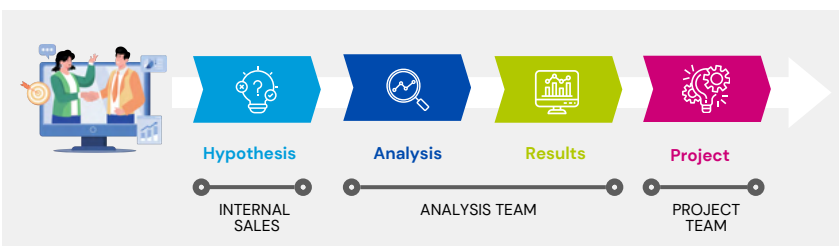
As a student doing my A-Levels I was very much ‘into’ Science, studying Biology, Chemistry and Physics. This continued to university with an anatomy-based degree, followed by a PhD in Developmental Neurobiology. Following on with science, I worked as a research scientist in Germany. Subsequently, I made a move ‘out of the lab’ and started working in academic research management, applying my analytical background to data-driven decision making for academic colleagues. Having picked up some experience as a project manager in the public sector, I followed that with time as a project management in the Life Science industry.

SCIENCE



This time gave me some key transferable skills that have helped me in consulting:

CONSULTING



- A strong analytical background, with lots of practice forming and testing hypotheses.
- A second language.
- Experience of working in highly regulated environments.
- A mixture of public and private sectors.

As I began my time as a consultant, my onboarding process consisted of learning about the theory of our methodology, visiting project sites to get an understanding of the way we work with clients and reviewing approaches and upcoming projects with senior managers. Even with all of this it was not until I started on a project that I was able to 'do' consulting I was able to truly start learning properly!



LIGHTBULB MOMENT 1

The Management Operating System (MOS)

My first project was in financial services, working with a large pension provider. I was supporting a team that had a large backlog of work to get through, and it was here that I was able to follow the MOS through from end to end: from the team's forecast, to their plan, their manager's control against that plan, and how they then reported and reviewed performance. And, as the MOS is a cycle that then repeated, with iterations made where needed, creating continuous improvement and effective change management. Being able to see the MOS 'in real life' cemented my understanding of the theory, which is why I now like to learn with a mixture of theory and real-life experience.

LIGHTBULB MOMENT 3

Daily Reviews and Managing by Numbers

My next project was a Hard FM scheduling project, where we were working with schedulers and engineering supervisors to implement new ways of working to improve productivity. The Delivery Manager was teaching us the importance of the simple daily review, where today's progress is assessed by the supervisor, and then tomorrow's plan is agreed. This simple way of controlling against the plan ensures engineers have sufficient work and are accountable for the completion of that work. It was this straightforward way of comparing plan vs actual that was the key to coaching the client in management by numbers. With this approach, the client was controlling against the plan, and aware of on-site behaviours and performance. The lesson of not overcomplicating the change journey for clients, promoting simple but effective tooling has served well in subsequent projects and no doubt will continue to help me going forward.

LIGHTBULB MOMENT 2

Resilience, Control and Managing Upwards

On my second project, we were working with an M&E installation company that was fitting out services for a new factory. When we started the project, it became clear that there were competing priorities for the senior clients, who were busy firefighting other operational issues. While senior management was busy trying to resolve these issues, I had people on the floor to work with. I realised at that moment that I needed to improve my resilience and ensured that I used my own project management skills to highlight risks that were out of my direct control and then focused on the things within my control: my stakeholders. Working in this way, from bottom up, meant although we did not gain traction with the senior clients straight away, we made good relationships with on-site supervisors and were able to coach behavioural changes in terms of their ability to control against the plan. This lesson helped me move into my next engagement, something my line manager commented on in a recent 1:1.

Where am I now?

Having been a consultant for about a year and a half, my previous experience has both helped me to guide other colleagues and relate better to clients. I have learnt to use this to my advantage, an extra unexpected string to my bow. While I continue my journey in management consultancy, I hope to have more light bulb moments and will learn as much from them in the future as I have done in these first few projects.

