

Expert or Charlatan?: The Rise and Rise of Management Consulting

John Louth



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The management consulting industry is a leading component of the world's knowledge economy permeating every segment of industry, commerce and government service. A multi-billion dollar phenomenon, it has yielded its own body of knowledge and set of practices. Exponents do make a lot of money for the consulting businesses they serve. What is not always understood, or transparent, is the value clients receive. This book seeks to make good that deficiency in our perception of the profession. Leaning on his deep and wideranging experience, Dr John Louth seeks to lift the lid on the management consulting profession in a critically reflective and accessible manner. With vignettes and examples drawn from his own experience and practice, he dissects the rational explanations usually provided by practitioners. He calls for restraint and self-awareness from both client and consultant, and advocates the reform of 15 a profession that seems increasingly powerful and unregulated. Dr Louth explores the management consulting profession on its own terrain, through its own language and discourses. He disentangles the management consultant's notions of "strategy," "risk management," "change" and "project management" so that these become meaningful to the layperson. Given the complexity that dominates the global geopolitical system and international economy, he asks how management consulting diagnoses can be effective in an uncertain and highly contingent world. With a foreword by Professor Rebecca Boden of the University of Roehampton Business School in London, this book is an accessible and scholarly monograph that is essential reading for those seeking to understand management consultancy and its role in the modern world.

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