Call for Papers: Management Consultancy Stream

‘Taking Stock: Thinking about the past and envisioning the future’

Stream Description:

Management consultancy has been one of the fastest growing and most vibrant sectors of many western economies. In recent years this has been mirrored by an explosion of interest in consultancy work from academics in a range of discipline areas. In the main this work has examined the dynamics of the industry, the management of the consultancy firm and the dynamics of the client-consultant relationship. Whilst this work has made considerable strides in developing significant insights into a previously poorly understood area, it nevertheless remains rather disconnected and fragmented. This conference, therefore, provides an opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved to date, to explore links between existing approaches and to stimulate new conceptual and empirical work that further advances our understanding of this important area of research.

In light of this, the stream wants to encourage debate, dialogue and new thinking on management consultancy, and related knowledge based occupations, around the following themes:

1. Knowledge and innovation. Where do consultancies obtain innovative knowledge? What is the role played by the discovery of new and innovative sources of knowledge in the rise of new forms of consultancy? To what extent does the reliance on distinct bodies of knowledge influence, the practices, structural arrangements and service delivery modes adopted by consultancy firms?

2. Client-consultant relationship: What are the important factors shaping client-consultancy relationships and how do they affect the use of knowledge for each party? How do the different parties seek to manage each other and the relationship? What forms of business knowledge are the focus of the relationship and how, if at all, do they change over time? To what extent do clients and consultants learn and apply knowledge resulting from the relationship?

3. Consultancy as profession service firms: Are consultancies a sub-set of professional service firms? How do they contribute to broader debates about the changing nature of the professional service firm? What is the jurisdictional relationship between consultancy and other forms of knowledge in professional service firms? How has the recent re-organization of the industry following Enron and Sarbannes-Oxley impacted on the management and structure of consultancy firms?
4. **Consultancy and debates surrounding new professions**: To what extent is consultancy an exemplar of the new knowledge-based occupations? How can we assess the challenge posed by consultancy to the established professions? To what degree does consultancy offer the traditional professions an alternative strategy to building occupational success?

These issue areas are regarded as a starting point, additional issues and ideas are very welcome.

**Details of the Convenors:**

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