

My reflection on my time at The Boston Consulting Group (BCG)

The past 6 months working at BCG have honestly been incredible! Before I found this position on neucool, I had never even heard of this company, so I am grateful that I took the time to scroll through the site and find the perfect co-op for me. During this experience with BCG, I worked as a paid intern on the Career Services team, in the HR department. I was pleasantly surprised that BCG offers this service to their consultants as it shows how they take the extra step in caring about their employees by helping them improve on, and discover what field they could potentially succeed in post consulting (as not a lot of people stay in consulting for a long time). I did not have a lot of previous knowledge on this position, as I had never heard of “career services” in a business setup before. However, after reading the accurate job description on neucool, asking detailed questions during my interview, and practicing the tasks and gaining more insight during my co-op, I can safely say that I have truly enjoyed being a part of such a small, but vital team in the company.

The job application process for this position (actually any position within this company) was a bit more complicated and extensive than my first co-op application process as there were multiple steps I had to take in order to get an interview and finally land the job. Before I could even send my resume to the BCG HR recruiting team, I had to have an informal interview (set-up by Lisa) with the co-op advisor for the business school, Linda Sarkisian, as I am not a business major, and this company is connected with the D’Amore McKim Business School at Northeastern. This was a rather informal interview, in which you explain your reason for wanting to apply to the company, and review your resume to see if you are eligible to apply. Thankfully I passed this first step in the process and was on to the next. I had already attended a presentation on BCG, and a “Careers in HR” talk, where I met the same recruiters, which I believe increased my chances of getting a job in this company.

Whether it is your first or second co-op, I would strongly suggest that you find out when specific company presentations/info sessions are being held on campus (either before or after you have decided to apply and send your resume. The reason I suggest this is because it helped me gain a lot of insight on the company and the different departments they have and that I could potentially work for. This brings me to the third step in my application process, where I had to apply to 4 different positions within the company, after which I heard back from two teams in the HR department offering me an interview, which was great! The last and fourth and final step was indeed, the interview.

This final stage is usual where most people get nervous, lose their train of thought or do not have the proper etiquette. I just want to say that interviews are actually a breeze, that is, if you prepare for them properly. I was honestly a nervous wreck when preparing for my interviews with BCG, which I came to discover was a good thing, as it meant that I really wanted a position in this company, and will work hard to do so. I reached out to people and friends that I know had done previous co-ops with BCG and grabbed coffee with them to get more information on how best to prepare for the interview. This really helped me! Also having a good support system like my family and friends to give me the confidence boost I needed to own this interview was vital. So my advice to anyone preparing for their first co-op is to be

Seyi Alakija
The Boston Consulting Group
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confident, be yourself (but a bit refined), do lots of research (by either reading the website or reaching out to previous co-ops), and ask a lot of reasonable questions.

After accepting my offer to join the BCG Career Services Team, I began preparing for my first day, thinking of the tasks I will be doing, as well as setting out goals for what I had hoped to learn by the end of my co-op. I had hoped to learn to communicate with people within the company in a professional manner, and learn more about consulting as I found myself becoming interested in this as well as HR. I was able to achieve all these goals I had hoped to, giving me more reason why working at BCG was by far the best co-op experience out of the two co-ops I have successfully completed.

During my co-op, I spent most of my time working on a personalized laptop that is given to each employee to do my tasks. I spent the mornings checking emails, the early afternoons working on spreadsheets and decks, and lastly I will check my emails again before I close for the day. I spent a lot of my spare time talking to people in the office and getting to know some of the other co-ops as my team worked remotely and I sat by myself most of the time. Sitting by myself, and not having a physical team everyday in the office was a bit challenging for me, but I liked it because I was able to meet people I would not necessarily have had the chance to do so if I was always surrounded by my managers. I felt like a very important member of the team, more so when my line manager left halfway through my co-op and I was handed most of her tasks to take-on while my managers searched for a new coordinator position. Once my line manager left, I suddenly got given more responsibility by being given more tasks to do. At first, I was a bit anxious about this, but after a few weeks I became more comfortable and confident in getting these tasks done, and felt more like an interim manager than a co-op. I believe the decision my line manager made to leave BCG was a blessing in disguise as it gave me the opportunity to prove that I can handle more than was originally assigned to me as a co-op.

With the new change and new responsibilities being added to my role, I faced a number of difficult tasks that I tried as best as I could to resolve by myself. However, the most challenging task I had to deal with due to this change was creating a presentation for the people that will be helping out the Career Services Team once I had completed my co-op. This was a step-by-step guide that broke down all the tasks I had been doing throughout the duration of my internship. From creating these presentation decks, I learnt that it is important to get second opinions from my managers so I can be certain that the guide makes sense to those that will be using it, as I would not be there to train them myself. The reason this was challenging for me is because I was the only one who knew how to do these tasks since my line manager left. My new managers had no idea how to do more than half of the tasks, but luckily my former manager had created a few decks for me before she left, which I found very useful when pulling the slides together.

Besides the challenges I faced during this co-op, I also had some fun and exciting experiences such as going to different events, helping set up for some of these events, going for work lunches and the monthly toasts (with free cupcakes!). However, the most exciting and meaningful activity I did during my time at BCG was being a part of the “Culture Club”. This club was actually founded by a former Northeastern student who got a full-time position after completing her final co-op with BCG. This club was a space where all kinds of people from different departments can come together during lunch and learn about each other’s cultures, as we are a very ethnically diverse company with employees from different parts of the

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world. The reason this was exciting for me is because I love learning about other people's cultures and languages, and the fact that I get to do that work was even better, as I am also able to make connections and form friendships with people outside the HR team. Another thing I loved most about this club is that anyone is invited to share stories and facts about their culture, and also bring food. I was honored and excited when I was asked to present something on Nigerian culture. Although the notice was last minute, I worked hard to pull a couple of slides together and bring some Nigerian food, which everyone enjoyed.

From my experience shared above, I would say that this co-op has definitely had a positive impact on me and has helped me grow and develop, not just professionally, but personally as well. I have learnt that it is not good to panic and stress out about certain things, as everyone makes mistakes. I just have to take responsibility of my actions and avoid making the same mistake twice. Nowadays, I find myself wanting to learn more, read more and work harder for the things that I really want. During my co-op, I have decided that I will like to stick with HR and work in different teams over the years, but would first like to try my hands at consulting (hopefully at BCG) immediately after I graduate (or a year after), and have already started preparing for this. I have also decided that if consulting is something I enjoy doing, I would get an MBA with a concentration in HR to work in higher consulting levels, or work in HR consulting.

Furthermore, from my previous co-op with Education First (EF) and my most recent co-op at BCG, I have learnt that people in different societies, on a global scale, are interested in learning more about other people's cultures and languages, and break through the barriers that prevent this from happening. These two companies that I have worked for serve as perfect examples of how from a business perspective (BCG) and an educational perspective (EF), both companies are impacting and making a difference in people's lives, not just within individual societies, but on a global scale, across borders, and I am proud to have had co-op experiences in both companies.