

# Amer Ali on Working as a Business Analyst for Accenture



MEMP Alumnus

2011

By Shreevaishnavi Venugopalan



**A**mer Ali, a MEMP graduate from the 2011 batch, works with Accenture as a Business Analyst. Prior to Duke, he pursued a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from the GIK Institute at Pakistan. He worked as an operations intern with Volvo while pursuing his bachelor's degree. To leverage upon his technical expertise and acquire management skills, he chose MEMP at Duke. While at Duke, he interned with General Motors as a Product Development Intern and joined Accenture after completing the course. He led the Consulting club at Duke's MEMP by providing strategic vision and support to develop the club, helping the club grow dramatically.

"Amer, could you talk about the day to day activities involved with your role?" said Vaishnavi.

"A consulting day is a generic nine-to-five day. Variations emerge from specific needs that arise with time. Every day is different at work and depends on the projects at hand. The work involves problem solving and providing expertise to the client organization. Understanding the problem and conducting data analysis to arrive at the solution are some typical activities."

"What are the most valuable skills in your field of work?"

"Concise communication is a highly valued skill since the job involves communicating with the Directors and VP's of organizations. It is important to communicate concisely, keep the conversation quick and to the point and, at the same time, not miss any points. An analytical mindset is useful in solving problems since the problems are complicated. This also helps one use a proper framework that can aid in finding solutions. The ability to think innovatively and find innovative solutions to problems adds to the value of a consultant."

"What are some of the challenges that students face when they are looking at entering this field of work?"

"Having genuine interest in consulting is the key. Students should attend info sessions with true interest and not just to be there due to peer pressure. It is important to understand the difference between various consulting companies. Students should make an effort to know the company in depth, ask quality questions and showcase the skill set they possess that will fit the company. Networking will take students a long way since there are a lot of resumes received and it will be helpful in getting an interview call if you are known. A lot depends on the interviews. The performance in the case interview determines how effectively one can solve problems in the real world and this is a key skill that companies look for."

"Thanks, Amer! Those details will help the students. What are some courses, publications, or social events that you would recommend to students who wish to make a career in consulting?"

*It is important to communicate concisely, keep the conversation quick and to the point and, at the same time, not miss any points.*

“Being up to date on big industries and one’s industry of interest is required. One can do this by reading *The Wall Street Journal*, *Economists*, and *Bloomberg News*, to name a few. We are expected to specialize by reading up on industries through books and journals. Competitive Strategies is a good course that students should consider taking. The Practicum aids in teamwork and solving real world problems as a team. Working on a consulting project for a nonprofit creates a platform to work with constraints and obtain innovative solutions.”

*Consulting is a great first job to have. But it’s a profile where we never build a product or business. Instead, we provide recommendations.*

“How would you describe the work culture at Accenture?”

“Accenture is a large company and is organizational in nature. The culture is dependent on where you are in the company. I work with technologies and solutions, which is laid back. The culture is largely dependent on the location. The organization is open and structured. There is a fixed career path trajectory that people follow. People are approachable and helpful in the organization.”

“What is your most valuable experience from the MEM Program?”

“The opportunity to explore various career paths and interests was extremely valuable. The opportunities that Duke offered has helped me shape my career.”

“What are your five to ten year career plans?”

“Consulting is a great first job to have. But it’s a profile where we never build a product or business. Instead, we provide recommendations that might get implemented. It’s the difference between an advising and an execution role. I would like to explore the space of business development so that I will be able to leverage the skills and knowledge I gained as a consultant.” ■

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