A DAY IN THE LIFE

RYAN

Consultant

Houston

A CONSULTANT'S PERSPECTIVE

Ryan, a Consultant with Alvarez & Marsal in Houston, is currently working on-site with a local client. Using his background in business administration, accounting and finance, he demonstrates a work-life balance, while continuing to grow and advance his career. Here's an account – in Ryan's own words – of a typical day working with a client as an A&M Consultant.

6:30 a.m.

I wake up and drive to my client site. I have been fortunate enough to be on an in-town project for the past nine months and am listening to an audiobook called *Super Freakonomics* during my commute. Who would have thought you could train monkeys to use currency? I pull into the garage and begin to think about the items that I need to accomplish today.

7:50 a.m.

I set up my laptop in the conference room our client has reserved for us. The whole team is at the same table, so I am glad to be the first one there and have some quiet time to plan my day. We are working on implementing a tool that assists our client in developing forecasted revenue guidance in its quarterly and annual reports.

8:00 a.m.

As the team arrives, we begin to discuss our "game plan" for the meeting this afternoon. Our client has called a meeting to discuss its process for reporting monthly results. The CAO, Treasurer and a few regional controllers will be there, so it is especially important that we have our facts straight. After a group discussion with our Project Manager, another Consultant and our Senior Director, we come up with a list of opportunities for improvement and need to put them in a presentable format.

9:30 a.m.

As another team member works on the PowerPoint deck for our meeting this afternoon, I dial in for a call with a regional operating unit's CFO. He is trying to pull together his 12-month revenue forecast and has a question about how to forecast money-losing jobs within the Planning and Forecasting tool we are implementing. As the person with the most accounting knowledge on the team, these questions are normally sent my way. Thankful that I am able to answer the CFO's questions, I get off the call a bit early and prepare for our weekly status meeting.

10:00 a.m.

The Project Manager writes each of our "to-do" lists up on the whiteboard as we discuss them. That way, each team member is not only aware of their own assignments, but also the assignments of the other team members. The Project Manager prioritizes my list and asks me if I think his expectations are reasonable. The answer to this question is "yes," and I explain my plan of action before we move on to the next team member.

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11:00 a.m.

The PowerPoint deck from our discussion this morning is ready for review and is circulated to the team for comments. We need some detail around a couple of issues, so I commit to amending the slide and sending it back before lunch. I start sifting through some issues we encountered last week and find more than enough detail for our discussion later today. I make a few extra notes to bring into the meeting (you never know what might come up!), and ask the team where we are going for lunch.

12:00 p.m.

We decide to have lunch at a Thai restaurant a few blocks from the client site. Our Project Manager once explained, “I always try and get out of the office for lunch. It is great for team building, and gives your mind a quick recharge for the rest of the day.” I really enjoy this time with my co-workers, and many times our clients even join us. It’s great that we have this hour to catch up, get to know each other as a group and discuss any issues that may have come up earlier in the day. We quickly touch base on a few pending items and head back to the office.

1:00 p.m.

Feeling good about our upcoming meeting, I begin to work on my list of items for the week. Some of our client’s Operating Companies need to see their direct and indirect costs at a more detailed level in order to adequately forecast. Where can we get this information? How can I display the data in a meaningful format? What else might they need that wasn’t specifically mentioned? I start brainstorming ideas and jot them down on paper just in time to head into our meeting.

2:00 p.m.

The client’s CAO kicks off the meeting we have been preparing for all day and informs the participants of Alvarez & Marsal’s role as advisers. As the discussion begins, the client turns to the list of issues the team has pulled together. I chime in from time-to-time, when appropriate, but I find it is better to let the client do the talking. Throughout the meeting, I try to write down my thoughts and any action items we might have. The bulk of the conversation is regarding communication between Corporate Accounting and Operating Units. The meeting concludes and I am happy with the result. Many of the team’s issues have been addressed and I leave optimistic about the rest of the week.

4:00 p.m.

As I head back to the conference room with the rest of the team, I switch gears back to the Direct and Indirect cost problem I began working on earlier today. I switch my Pandora radio station to Ludwig Van Beethoven. There is always conversation going on in the crowded conference room, and the classical music helps me concentrate on the problem at hand.

6:30 p.m.

I pack up for the day and head home. I am meeting my family for dinner at a local Tex Mex restaurant and I do not want to be late!

ABOUT RYAN

Ryan is a Consultant with Alvarez & Marsal in Houston. He specializes in accounting and finance. Since joining A&M, Ryan has worked on an accounting remediation project at a $1 billion oil and gas manufacturing company. As part of this project, he helped revise its revenue recognition policies and procedures, and has developed tools and templates to automate the calculation of revenue for long-term projects. Currently, Ryan is assisting with the implementation of Oracle’s Hyperion Planning application for a $5 billion provider of specialized contracting services.

Prior to joining A&M, Ryan interned with PricewaterhouseCoopers, where he assisted in the year-end audit of an energy E&P company and a medical services firm. In addition, Ryan also interned at Chevron, in its Deep Water Exploration Projects group, where he performed SOX-404 testing and various project accounting functions within SAP.

Ryan earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration, with a concentration in accounting, and a master’s degree in finance from Texas A&M University. He has passed all Certified Public Accounting (CPA) examinations and is currently on track to meet his experience requirements to become a licensed CPA this year.

Note: Alvarez & Marsal employs CPAs but is not a licensed CPA firm.

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