

## UP THE LADDER

# I've Been Promoted 4 Times At The Same Company — Here's What's Helped Me Grow My Career



As a global management consulting firm, [Alvarez & Marsal \(A&M\)](#) specializes in providing leadership, action and results for clients who are facing complex business issues. Every day, client teams are presented with new challenges to develop and execute customized solutions around. The firm has expertise across various industries — including healthcare, an ever-changing and vastly complex sector.

The Healthcare Industry Group at A&M brings deep industry expertise to partner with healthcare organizations, helping them improve financial and operational performance and ultimately drive better products, services and care for their patients and consumers. The A&M culture lends itself to attract innovative, action-oriented thinkers.

We spoke with one woman who joined A&M early on in her career. After completing medical school, she left clinical practice and, within A&M's supportive culture, found her true niche: helping healthcare clients develop solutions to critical business issues while working alongside top-tier talent, inspirational colleagues and mentors. On her continued path of career development, the Healthcare Industry Group has provided key resources for mentorship, skill development and leadership opportunities, allowing her to grow and develop personally and professionally.

Below, we spoke with [Karishma Sharma](#), Senior Director in Alvarez & Marsal's Healthcare Industry Group, about her [A&M career trajectory](#) and why she is right where she wants to be.

Tell us a little about how your career in the healthcare industry began.

From as early as I can remember, I knew I was going to be in the healthcare industry. I wanted to make an impact on the community, so I decided to go to medical school in the hopes of making a difference in a very tangible way. Very soon after, I began clinical rotations during medical school and realized that several factors outside of clinical knowledge impact patient care decisions. Access, affordability and quality of care are impacted as much (even if indirectly) by organizations' financial and operational decisions as by a physician's clinical decisions. This led to my interest and ultimately earning a Master's in Healthcare Finance and Management from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

How did you find your way to A&M?

I was introduced to A&M's Healthcare Industry Group during my time at Hopkins. The Healthcare Industry Group had just begun to grow and branch out from A&M's core restructuring roots, expanding into operational turnaround and performance improvement services within hospitals and health systems. What struck me the most about the people I met during my interview process was that almost everyone had been former operators in the healthcare industry. They had been in roles of leading and running organizations and continued to do that at A&M, albeit in a slightly different capacity. This was the A&M differentiator and, ultimately, a deciding factor in my joining A&M's Healthcare Industry Group in 2008.

What was your experience like as a new joiner to the firm?

Within the first few years of joining the team, I found myself not only analyzing and assessing the operations, but also planning and implementing the improvement recommendations in the client's organization. A&M is unique compared with other consulting or advisory firms because our most critical work begins where other firms' deliverables end. We work, side by side, with our client's management teams to execute the improvement opportunities and deliver results. This, in my view, is the most interesting, challenging and extremely satisfying part of my job.

A&M has an entrepreneurial culture. Combined with the opportunity to dive into client experience right away, this culture enabled and accelerated my professional growth. I was surrounded by leaders with terrific professional experience and the willingness of committed mentors.

How did the Healthcare Industry Group grow and your role evolve over your career?

Throughout the last decade, our practice grew rapidly, and so did our offerings across healthcare sectors. This rapid growth of our organization offered me the opportunity to develop and progress my career. As I gained tenure at A&M, I began leading the execution of performance improvement transformations for various clients with support and guidance from the leadership of the practice.

I have led operational turnarounds of multiple large and small organizations within care delivery and the health plan space, delivering hundreds of millions of dollars, cumulatively, in bottom line impact.

The foundation of our approach can be distilled down to data-driven solutions, robust implementation risk and mitigation planning, and rigorous management of progress by metrics and results measurement. This focus on delivering results is what makes us effective with our clients.

What was your ‘aha!’ moment that validated your decision to join A&M and move out of clinical care delivery?

Five years ago, in an interim Chief Operating Officer (COO) role for a \$1.5B Medicaid Health Plan, while working side by side with the management team, we developed a \$120M / 24-month turnaround plan for the organization. It is during the execution of this ambitious plan that I fully realized the value of A&M’s focus on not only the financial results, but also on the sustainability of these results. Leading people to align with the organization’s vision and the hard work, including cultural change required to get there, is a critical success factor for sustainable change management. After this very successful transformation and assisting the management team and the board with a sustainability plan, I continue to be proud of that organization’s growth and performance even today.

Our recent transformation work has helped large, national integrated healthcare organizations turnaround and grow operations in regions they were originally struggling to sustain. Leading care delivery and managed care organizations to financial and operational sustainability and growth is ensuring that access, affordability and quality of care continues to improve for our community – exactly what I hoped to have an impact on as a young medical student.

I have had a tremendous upward career trajectory while working in the same organization. This has allowed me to develop a solid professional family and, I’m certain, lifelong friendships. A&M is focused on investing in our people, their growth and their development, and I am just one of the many examples of that. Come join our growing team!