

Spotlight on Select Employers Career Services LSHTM

Date: February 19, 2022

Organization: The Bridgespan Group
Based in: New York (previously Mumbai)
LSHTM Alum: No

Name and Title: Niloufer Memon, Manager
Years at organization: 5 years, since early

1. What's your background? Please share brief details of your education, work experience, career trajectory and overall career goals.

- Education: Did B. Pharm and M. Pharm from India
- Early Work Experience: Private Sector (Intellectual Property Rights > Business Research > Consulting)
 - After M.Pharm, she joined an intellectual property research (IPR) firm called **Evalueserve**, in life sciences sector in Delhi. Worked for 1 year.
 - Then shifted to Business Research (BR) team of a consulting company, **KPMG** in Delhi), focused on pharma and healthcare domain. The BR unit primarily served consulting unit at KPMG so she internal clients (India and abroad). When not assisting on consulting projects, she built knowledge/thought leadership for KPMG. Worked for 1.5 years.
 - Moved internally to **KMPG consulting** – [external] client facing role. Still focused on private sector only - Pharma companies in India (mostly MNCs). Her consulting projects typically included cost optimization, go to market strategy, product portfolio optimization for pharma MNCs in India. Worked in the role for 2.5 years.
- Career Change Phase: Shift to Social/public sector consulting
 - After 5+ years in different roles – she started looking for opportunities in public sector – she considered think tanks, and public research centers. She got the opportunity to work at public health practice of **Deloitte** but still felt like incremental move as the mind set was not social sector oriented. While at Deloitte, she worked on project for MOHW India on a supply chain project in 7 states for RMNCH drugs in public sector. It was funded by DFID. It helped her understand public health landscape and Stakeholders (urban and rural) in India. 1 year.
 - She then joined **Dalberg** in 2015 – organization more focused on social sector, and relatively more mission-centric. It was a small team in Delhi of 5 people. Considers it a good move as it allowed her to expand into social sectors beyond health. Clients were bi/multilaterals. She worked there for 2 years. Learnt a lot but still the mindset was consulting and she was failing to see the impact of her work.
- Career Development Phase (current)
 - She joined 'The Bridgespan Group' in 2017 in Bombay, company's first office outside of the US. Bridgespan also operates like a consulting firm but is a non-profit organization itself – working for philanthropists and leadership of other non-profits (clientele). The firm doesn't aim to turn profits and is careful in selecting projects. Alignment with clients is important.
 - The Bridgespan Group still charges fee for consulting (but not as high as Dalberg, typically 1/3 of BCG/Bain, etc.) and they raise funds for their own operations. They also do leadership trainings for a group of nonprofits together at a cheaper cost in order to raise revenue for their work.
 - Their thematic focus is advisory and knowledge generation. There are no sector-based verticals at the firm though they work in public health.

Long-term Goals: Her long-term role is to take a strategy role in non-profit/philanthropy organization.

2. Please describe the kind of projects you work on? How does your average work day look like?

She has done mix of projects with philanthropy and non-profits (clients) and both in advisory and knowledge generation. Few examples:

- CIFF (Children's Investment Fund Foundation) – how they should think about engaging with grantees. They are a high-level funder and mostly take a hands-off approach in grantee management. But CIFF wanted to know how can they add more value in addition to giving grants. There was a cultural shift needed within the organization, with different grantee management approaches for effective engagement and evaluation.
- Audacious Project – she worked with two eligible organizations in last round to develop investment thesis – kind of proposal but very detailed.
- mothers2mothers (m2m) – Worked onsite in Johannesburg on their five-year strategy, geographic presence, issue areas and funding model, partnership strategy.

Her average day is hectic. 25% of her time is spent on calls per day (internal/clients). She sometimes travels for a project. Travel could be few days or for months to be on site. Depends on her location and if it makes sense to be based at client site rather than traveling frequently.

Typically, she plays the project manager role for two projects. 2-3 consultants work under her on a project. She reports to partner in a country office where the project is based out of. She works with multiple country offices.

3. Please share brief details about the organization – type of work, staff size, and presence in different geographies.

Founded in 2011 as an offshoot idea from Bain. It's still a different legal entity but still affiliated with Bain. Bain offers trainings, IT and office infrastructure to Bridgespan staff. The two co-founders worked at Bain; then there is a leadership team (comprised of country office heads, consulting practice heads (x2), and knowledge generation practice head).

300 staff. Offices are in NY. Bombay, Johannesburg, Boston, San Francisco, Singapore. There are 200 staff in the US.

4. Please share details about the team you work in? (focus, size, presence, organizational hierarchy level)

Typically, if a consulting firm is under 500 staff, they don't typically divide into sectoral teams. Similar style at the Bridgespan Group. So, she doesn't have a specific sectoral team. Client-wise – she has more experience working on non-profit client projects

Hierarchy: Office country head > partners > managers > consultants > associate consultants, associates

5. What type of skills your team looks for in public health candidates?

- **Entry level (0-1 years of experience)** – degree doesn't matter (engineer or social)
 - If little experience (1-2 years) – consulting or business/market research is relevant. Graduating from a good reputed university is also a positive.
 - Interview process is case-based – how the candidate structures and solves the problem
- **Experienced (equal to or more than 4-5 years of experience)** – post graduate degrees (MBA, MPA, MPH) are typically considered; professional experience in social sector or consulting is

desired; industry sector experience is not preferred but working in corporate social responsibility teams of an industrial sector company may be relevant.

- With 4-5 years of experience, entry level will be at consultant position. Same case-based approach is followed.
- For managers – 6 years minimum experience is needed – prior work experience becomes more important for manager role; a mix of consulting and social sector experience is top-valued.

6. What is the advice you would like to give to public health candidates looking for job opportunities in your organization?

- **Is there any competitive advantage for candidates with LSHTM education background?** There will be an advantage if the hiring is in the the context of public health projects. They hire some MPH candidates. But they rarely advertise sector-focused positions.
- **Are all positions (internships, country/global level fulltime roles, consultancies, etc.) advertised on the organization careers portal? If not, how can one apply or find out about these roles?** No global role or internships, only country office-based roles.
- **How strong is the opportunity for interns to continue in full-time roles after their internship ends?** NA
- **What type of academic skills/courses you think are interesting and/or useful to work for your organization?** No such focus in recruitment
- **What type of work experience and application tips you have for candidates in following stage of career?**
 - **Early career candidates: what is the type of work experience they need to get in order to be considered?** Passion about social sector, volunteerism and trying to link your education/university learning with social impact.
 - **For career developers (experienced candidates), what is important to highlight in their application?**
 - Showing that the candidate is able to do consulting kind of work; can engage with stakeholders, have project management skills and have natural skills at problem solving
 - Highlighting any social impact skills – or relevant prior work experience
 - People management (team management) is important if applying at manager level
 - **For career changers (experienced candidates who are looking to make a switch), what is important to highlight in their experience?** Same as above. But they might only get the job at consultant level. Social sector/consulting experience is necessary for manager roles however such roles are not high in number. So it might be a more competitive than usual if the candidate is seeking a career change.

7. What are the possible career options after working at your organization?

Can go to a non-profit management role, philanthropy strategy role, sustainability arm of a private sector company or foundation of a private company.