



THE INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS OF INDIA

CONSULTANTS FORUM

MARCH 2025 ISSUE NO 149

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Esteemed Members,

As we step into March, a pivotal month for our association, I am reminded of the strength, expertise, and vision that define our community of management consultants. With the upcoming elections on the horizon, this is not only a time for reflection on our collective achievements but also a moment to look ahead at the leadership that will guide us into the future.

Our association has always stood for professional excellence, ethical consulting, and impactful advisory services. This forum serves as a platform to exchange insights, discuss industry trends, and strengthen our network—ensuring that we remain at the forefront of business and strategy consulting.

As we prepare to elect our next set of leaders, I encourage each of you to actively participate in the process. Strong leadership is the cornerstone of any thriving organization, and your engagement is essential in shaping the direction of our association. I urge all members to evaluate the candidates, their visions, and their commitment to our mission. Let us uphold the values of integrity, innovation, and inclusivity as we make our choices.

Beyond elections, this forum will focus on critical themes impacting our profession—from digital transformation and AI-driven consulting to sustainable business strategies. I look forward to engaging discussions, knowledge sharing, and collaborative opportunities that will empower us to drive even greater value for our clients and industries.

Let us make this forum a productive and inspiring event. Your voice, your insights, and your leadership matter. Thank you for your dedication to our association and to the consulting profession. I look forward to seeing you all at the forum!

Warm regards,
Anuj Bhargava,
President

EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear Readers,

We are delighted to present the March 2025 issue of the IMCI Consultants Forum. Consultants Forum provides an opportunity to share your views, ideas, and experiences, fostering a vibrant community of knowledge sharing and professional growth.

We are pleased to share the contributions of Mr. Prashant Upadhyaya, Mr. Robin Sethi, Mr. Sukant Ratnakar, and Mr. Shrikant N Pangarkar. Their insights have significantly enriched this issue of the Consultants Forum.

In the present complex economic environment, consultants are expected to provide innovative solutions that align with the latest technological changes. Technological advances such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Digital Transformation have dramatically changed the consulting sector. You need to continually upgrade your knowledge and consulting skills. You need to possess the necessary skills, experience, and knowledge in a specific field. Successful consulting should yield constructive and tangible outcomes and meet the client's requirements, goals, and objectives.

As an effective consultant, you need to be a professional. Professionalism implies a commitment to the quality of consulting work and dedication to the client's interests. IMCI provides you the opportunity and advantage to network with consulting community members. The code of conduct and ethics laid down by IMCI governs you, and the clients trust you implicitly.

Your active participation is crucial to making the Consultants Forum a vibrant platform for knowledge sharing and professional growth. Your contributions are valuable and integral to shaping the content and direction of the Consultants Forum. We eagerly look forward to your continued involvement in the forthcoming issues.

With best wishes,
Ramesh Tyagi

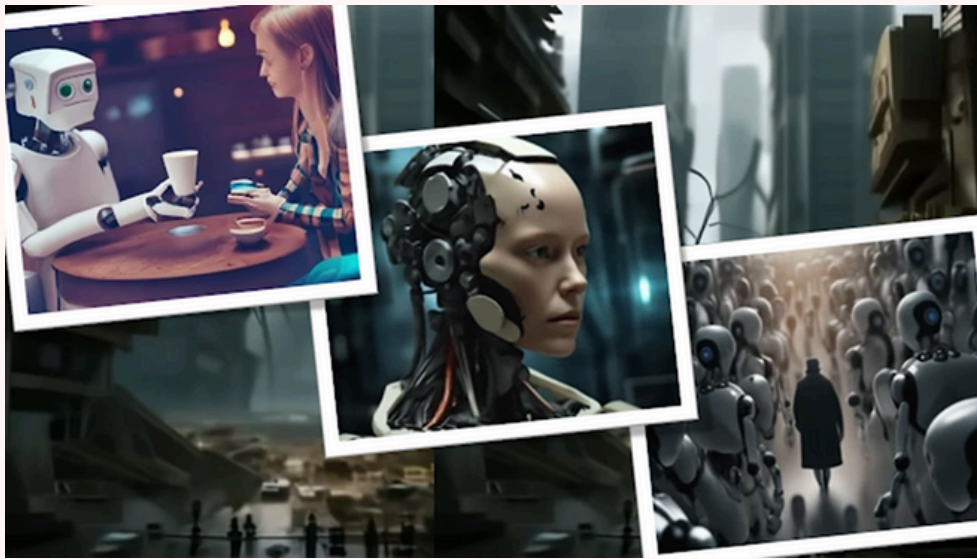


TECHNOLOGICAL APOCALYPSE AND ANTHROPOCENTRIC INFORMATION SECURITY

PRASHANT UPADHYAYA

Impending Technological Apocalypse amidst IR 4.0 and Web 3.0: The Need for Anthropocentric Information Security

As we stand on the precipice of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0) and the dawn of Web 3.0, the cybersecurity landscape is evolving at an unprecedented pace. The convergence of physical, digital, and biological spheres is creating a world of infinite possibilities – and equally boundless vulnerabilities. In this article, we'll explore the potential technological apocalypse looming on the horizon and argue for a shift towards anthropocentric information security to mitigate these risks.



The Perfect Storm: IR 4.0 and Web 3.0

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is characterized by the fusion of technologies that blur the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres. Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, and quantum computing are just a few of the technologies reshaping our world. Simultaneously, Web 3.0 promises a decentralized internet built on blockchain technology, offering increased user autonomy and data ownership.

- 1. Algorithmic Trading Gone Wrong:** In 2010, the "Flash Crash" saw the Dow Jones Industrial Average plummet nearly 1,000 points in minutes due to high-frequency trading algorithms, highlighting the potential for AI to cause significant financial disruption.
- 2. Autonomous Vehicle Accidents:** The fatal crash involving a Tesla in Autopilot mode in 2016 raised questions about the reliability of AI in critical decision-making scenarios and the appropriate level of human oversight.
- 3. AI in Healthcare Diagnosis:** IBM's Watson for Oncology was found to make unsafe and incorrect treatment recommendations, demonstrating the risks of over-relying on AI in critical healthcare decisions.
- 4. Facial Recognition Misidentification:** In 2018, Amazon's Rekognition facial recognition system incorrectly matched 28 members of Congress to criminal mugshots, highlighting the potential for AI bias in law enforcement applications.
- 5. Social Media Algorithm Manipulation:** The Cambridge Analytica scandal revealed how AI algorithms could be exploited to manipulate public opinion and influence democratic processes.

These examples underscore the need for a human-centered approach to technology development and deployment, especially in high-stakes environments.

The Need for Anthropocentric Information Security

To avert this technological apocalypse, we need a paradigm shift in our approach to information security. Enter anthropocentric information security – a human-centered approach that puts people at the heart of security strategies.

Key principles of anthropocentric information security include:

- 1. Human-Centric Design:** Security solutions should be designed with human behavior and limitations in mind, making secure practices intuitive and easy to adopt.
- 2. Ethical Considerations:** As AI and automation play larger roles in security, we must ensure that ethical considerations guide their development and deployment.
- 3. Digital Literacy:** Invest in widespread digital literacy programs to create a more security-aware population.
- 4. Adaptive Security:** Develop security systems that can learn and adapt to human behavior, providing personalized protection.
- 5. Transparent AI:** Ensure AI-driven security solutions are explainable and transparent, allowing human oversight and intervention.

6. **Privacy by Design:** Incorporate privacy considerations from the ground up in all technological developments.
7. **Resilience Training:** Prepare individuals and organizations to respond effectively to security incidents, fostering a culture of cyber resilience.

AI Ethical Considerations

As AI becomes increasingly integrated into our security infrastructure, it's crucial to address the ethical implications:

1. **Bias and Fairness:** AI systems can perpetuate and amplify existing biases. For example, facial recognition systems have shown higher error rates for minorities and women. We must ensure AI security systems are trained on diverse datasets and regularly audited for bias.
2. **Transparency and Explainability:** The "black box" nature of many AI algorithms poses a challenge for security. We need to develop AI systems that can explain their decision-making processes, especially when those decisions impact human lives or rights.
3. **Accountability:** As AI systems become more autonomous, questions of liability arise. Who is responsible when an AI-powered security system makes a mistake? We need clear frameworks for AI accountability in security contexts.
4. **Privacy:** AI systems often require vast amounts of data to function effectively. We must balance the need for data with individuals' right to privacy, implementing strong data protection measures and giving users control over their information.
5. **Human Oversight:** While AI can process information faster than humans, it lacks human judgment and contextual understanding. We must maintain meaningful human oversight in critical security decisions.
6. **Autonomous Weapons:** The development of AI-powered autonomous weapons raises serious ethical concerns. We need international agreements to regulate or prohibit such systems.
7. **Job Displacement:** As AI takes over more security tasks, we must consider the impact on human security professionals. Retraining programs and new job creation should be part of our security strategies.

Implementing Anthropocentric Information Security

To implement this approach, organizations and policymakers should:

1. Invest in human-centered security research and development.
2. Incorporate behavioral sciences into security strategies.
3. Develop comprehensive digital literacy programs.
4. Create regulatory frameworks that mandate ethical AI and privacy considerations in technology development.
5. Foster collaboration between technologists, ethicists, and policymakers.
6. Establish ethics review boards for AI security systems.
7. Develop international standards for AI ethics in cybersecurity.

Conclusion

As we navigate the complexities of IR 4.0 and Web 3.0, the threat of a technological apocalypse looms large. The real-world examples of "Man vs. Machine" scenarios highlight the urgent need for a more balanced approach. By shifting towards an anthropocentric approach to information security and carefully considering the ethical implications of AI, we can harness the power of these technological revolutions while mitigating their risks. It's time to put humans at the center of our security strategies – our digital future depends on it.

Read My New Book



"Manuscript: Designed For Mankind" is a groundbreaking work by Prashant Upadhyaya that explores the intersection of humanity and technology in the digital age. This book delves into the concept of 'Manuscript,' a term that likely combines 'Manus' (Latin for 'hand,' symbolizing human touch) and 'Crypt' (suggesting encryption or protection).

Click here to buy it (if in India): <https://amzn.in/d/8TVdCRI>

Click here to buy it (if outside India):

<https://www.whsmith.co.uk/products/manuscript-designed-for-mankind--anthropocentric-information-security/prashant-a-upadhyaya/paperback/9781032863641.html>



EMERGENCE OF PHARMA-MERGING MARKETS TO THE BIG STAGE AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR STRATEGY CONSULTANTS

ROHIN SETHI

The healthcare and pharmaceutical business context has rapidly changed in post-COVID environment across the emerging markets. In the post pandemic era, many economies have rebounded back to the levels of normalcy, and growth is on the cards for overall economy and pharmaceutical industry. This makes these markets an attractive option for the MNCs that were primarily focussed on US and Europe to drive their revenues. More companies are now trying to make their way into emerging markets.

Within my observation period since the pandemic, South-East Asia viz Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam and the biggest South Asian market India, there have seen several paradigm shifts.

The governments have responded on both fronts within R&D space and payer coverages of novel therapies that show incremental clinical benefit. Although, each of these countries have their own transition journey and their responses differ on a spectrum, however, the ideology remains the same, to provide accessible & affordable healthcare to all. For instance, Singapore has presence of well established hospital infrastructure and network of primary care, hence it focusses more on covering more and more novel innovative specialty care medications for its Citizens at a very low cost and subsidize healthcare for unaffordable ones. However, in the case of Malaysia the focus remains to increase healthcare infrastructure and reduce prices with regulatory mechanisms. Indian government continues its efforts to strive for national healthcare insurance for the uninsured to maintain some form of healthcare insurance coverage. Although, this might be the author's bias, but I firmly believe that the Indian stakeholder's approach to making healthcare affordable and accessible is fundamentally strong, as the focus is to bring the best of technology for the beneficiaries, such as in the case of CGHS, Armed forces, and recently developing PM-JAY insurance plan as the purchase price of technology is a second priority at the moment since the large customer base of 1.5 Bn people makes us a haven for price volume discounts coupled with option for local production to reduce the cost-heads and serve the region from India. This is truly a demographic dividend for India i.e. it's extremely large, educated, growing and thriving middle class. Similar stories can be quoted from Thailand and Indonesia, Vietnam and Philippines whose governments are trying to achieve Universal Healthcare Coverage for their citizens.

Historically, we have seen that the time from US and Europe launch of novel medicines however, in recent times, these delays have reduced since more and more company's throng to these markets. However, the highly used term in consulting "How to Play" i.e. the strategy and tactics have its own facets in the Pharma-merging and are quite interesting at times, if I may add.

If I were to point out the case of India market, where I have some close working ties. In the recent restructurings, we see that India is being seen as a "separate region" that requires focussed strategic assessments, leadership teams, market resonating product portfolio similar to any other high yield market like US, Europe, Japan that needs focussed attention in its Go-To-Market planning.

From a strategic execution perspective, we have observed that pharmaceutical companies have realized that India market needs to have a separate product portfolio and pricing strategy. Unlike iPhone, which has a similar price range across the world, the price of medications offered in India are much below the average global price reference viz US, EU, Japan, Australia etc. The launch price can be as low as a quarter of the global price reference. One such strategic tactic led by many companies is launching of a "second brand", which is essentially the same brand but re-named and re-branded to protect the global price reference. Pfizer, Roche, Novartis have dabbled with this strategy a bit across these markets. One of the most successful example that comes to my mind is Pfizer's breast cancer drug palbociclib (Indian brand name Palbace and the global name Ibrance). Now the pharma companies are beginning to build upon these successful tactics.

Other such tactical moves include leveraging local production, co-commercialization, inclusion of local trial subjects in the global trial to maximize the return on investment.

There is an upside scenario to for management consultants engaged in strategic advisories who can expect to have some major localized consulting assignments where they won't face challenges from international competitors. I don't anticipate someone from Europe bidding for India consulting assignment projects, as Indian consulting bid for projects in Europe or USA.

However, there remain some challenges ahead as well. One of the key challenges that is the lack of understanding of the local dynamics and the culture which shapes the stakeholder behaviour and the buying process that forms the basis of any strategy. The inherent complexity of India and Indonesia market makes it difficult for several consultants to render an actionable recommendation for its client.

Therefore, consulting need to invest in a deep-market scan that comprehensively covers the stakeholder map in the markets and understand its evolution. For example, what's the stakeholder landscape and existing opportunity to be prioritized such as Central Government vs. state government or the private market for quick gains? Which stakeholder to engage first, how to engage them to have a lasting impact? How to ensure business sustainability and continuity? How to best deliver a product to the customers? How to engage each of the customers in right and efficient manner. These are some of the questions that cannot be answered in the same way as pre-pandemic times.

The other major area that consulting need to work is on the skill shortage. Especially when it comes to pharmaceutical industry consulting for business strategy, it entails need for strong domain expertise in the consultant viz. healthcare systems and product's usage dynamics such intended clinical positioning of the drug in the treatment paradigm, challenges in administration or dosing, pharmacological mechanism of action, side effect profile, clinical messaging to customers, access under insurance scheme etc. Strategy consultants will have to develop a strong domain level expertise coupled with understanding of the fast-changing business ecosystem.

The other areas that management consultants and agencies may need addressing from in the long term horizon is investment in Thought Leadership initiatives to lead the way, reduce attrition in agencies and promote long tenures focussed on the healthcare domain and institute and observing strong data privacy regulations such as in the likes of EU GDPR.

As I envision it, the road ahead is beautiful but to make the most of it, there will be need for some adjustments in our current dispensation of outlook and methods. The article by no means intends to criticize or make derogatory remarks on the existing working methods and services rendered by any organization, but merely seeks to share a balanced outlook and inform the readers on how to ameliorate the quality of current services provided and continuously improve our standards of delivery to serve our current clients and prospective clients in the best possible way.



WHEN INNOVATION MEETS BROKEN PROCESSES: A CASE STUDY IN CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE FAILURES

SUKANT RATNAKAR

Introduction

In the tech industry, success is no longer defined by just product innovation—it is shaped by customer experience and operational efficiency. When support systems fail, even the most advanced products lose credibility, leading to customer frustration, operational setbacks, and reputational damage.

This case study examines how a leading 3D printing company failed to execute its post-sales service effectively, causing delays, miscommunication, and business disruption. For Certified Management Consultants (CMCs), it highlights the need for process alignment, proactive risk management, and leadership accountability in customer-facing operations.

Section 1: Case Study – A Breakdown in Execution

A business owner purchased a high-end 3D printer to transform his corporate training business. His team redesigned 30+ products, shifting from traditional materials to 3D-printed versions, investing weeks of effort. However, when the printer malfunctioned, what should have been a straightforward support request turned into a logistical nightmare.

Despite following all troubleshooting steps, he encountered a series of inefficiencies:

- **Unnecessary Costs:** He was first advised to replace three parts at his own expense, which did not fix the issue.
- **Ineffective Repairs:** Support then sent four additional components, requiring hours of installation—yet the problem persisted.
- **Delayed Resolution:** The company agreed to replace the printer, but the standard wait time was two to three weeks.
- **A Broken Fast-Track Process:** He opted for the Advanced Replacement program to speed things up, but the company failed to follow through—no payment link, no return label, and contradictory instructions.
- **Slow Communication:** Each support response took three to four days, prolonging the frustration without meaningful progress.

With his 3D printer out of service, his entire production workflow stalled, delaying training programs and wasting months of design work. The true failure was not the product itself—but the company’s inability to execute its own support processes efficiently.

Section 2: Lessons for Consultants – Addressing Systemic Issues, Not Just Symptoms

For Certified Management Consultants (CMCs), this case is a prime example of how operational weaknesses can quietly damage customer loyalty and business value. The role of a consultant is not just to fix surface-level issues but to ensure companies address systemic inefficiencies before they lead to larger business risks.

1. Customer Retention Is Built on More Than Just Innovation

A great product may attract customers, but only a seamless support system keeps them loyal. Consultants must highlight that long-term growth depends on both product quality and post-sales service efficiency.

2. A Policy Without Execution Is a Liability

The Advanced Replacement program was designed to provide a fast resolution, yet poor execution made it ineffective. CMCs must audit internal processes, ensuring that what is promised externally is actually deliverable.

3. Customer Communication Must Be Proactive, Not Reactive

Support delays compounded frustration, leaving the customer feeling ignored and powerless. Consultants must push organizations to implement AI-driven ticketing, real-time status updates, and escalation protocols to keep customers informed and engaged.

4. Operational Failures Have Direct Business Consequences

The customer’s production delays affected revenue and delivery commitments. CMCs must emphasize that broken post-sales support is not just a service issue—it’s a profitability risk. Every unresolved issue represents potential lost revenue, increased churn, and long-term brand damage.

5. Fixing Problems Before They Become Public Crises

Companies often address inefficiencies only after they go viral or impact sales. Consultants must encourage proactive process audits so brands fix issues internally before they escalate into customer crises.

Final Takeaway

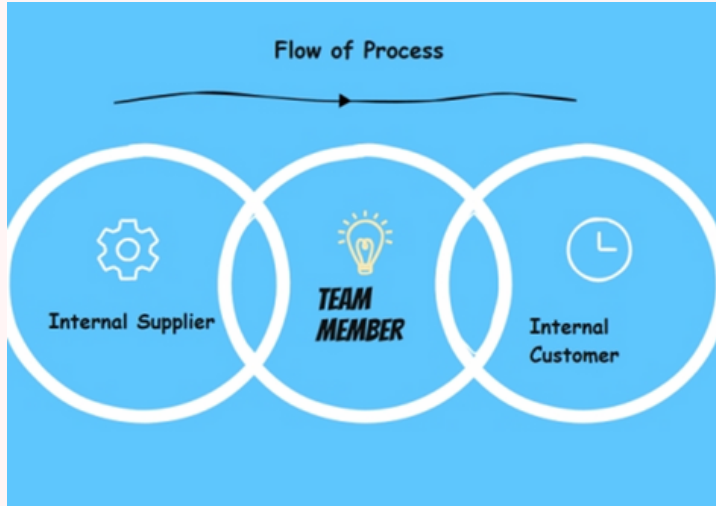
This case is a clear warning for tech and manufacturing companies: Innovative products alone won’t sustain a business—seamless execution and customer experience will. Brands that fail to align process efficiency with customer expectations risk losing long-term trust and competitiveness.

For Certified Management Consultants, the message is clear: Operational inefficiencies don’t just hurt customer experience—they quietly erode business value. It’s our job to make leadership see the risk before customers feel the pain.



BUILDING HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS

SHRIKANT N PANGARKAR



Building and leading high-performing teams is crucial for any small or medium-sized business (SMEs) in today's fast-paced business environment. Managers and (SME) Leaders need to recognize the significance of developing a culture of better collaboration, communication, and accountability within their teams to achieve optimal results and go a long way in improving the performance of the SMEs. Such culture makes a sea change in the results of the SMEs. In today's dynamic business landscape,

the capacity to construct and guide high-performing teams is paramount for the success of any SM enterprise. Practising managers and leaders in SMEs must acknowledge the importance of nurturing such a culture to attain optimal outcomes. If teams treat their immediate colleagues connected through the process as **internal customers** or **suppliers**, the relationship becomes smooth and mutually helpful.

For instance, a manager who encourages open communication among team members creates an environment where ideas flow freely among the team members, leading to innovative solutions to challenges encountered. Promoting a culture of collaboration allows team members to leverage each other's strengths and work effectively towards common goals. Such collaboration can be seen in successful companies where teams work harmoniously, supporting each other to achieve shared objectives. This is the essence of successful teamwork.

For instance, a manager who encourages open communication among team members, creates an environment where ideas flow freely among the team members, leading to innovative solutions to challenges encountered.

Develop Synergy in HP team for Success

Accountability plays a pivotal role in team performance. When team members are held and feel accountable for their actions and results, they take ownership of their work, strive for excellence, and feel empowered. This sense of empowerment and responsibility is important in a small business situation, where setting clear expectations and deadlines for tasks and regularly reviewing progress to ensure alignment with organizational goals can significantly boost performance. To promote collaborative working. A scheme of “group incentive” is employed so that the group works together to win an incentive and the members help each other to achieve the set targets if one of them faces difficulties in individual work.

Nurturing a culture of collaboration, communication, and accountability need not be overstated. It is the cornerstone of success for SME businesses. By prioritizing these aspects, managers and industry leaders can inspire and motivate their teams to achieve sustainable results and drive business growth. For example, a manager who encourages transparent communication among team members cultivates an environment where ideas can freely circulate, leading to innovative resolutions to challenges faced by the individual members in the team. Instilling a culture of cooperation enables team members to capitalize on each other's strengths and collaborate effectively towards common objectives. This synergy is evident in successful enterprises where teams operate harmoniously, providing mutual support to accomplish shared goals.



The Institute has regional Chapters in Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai (Madras), Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai (Bombay) and Pune.



Mr. Debanshu B. Banerjee
Chairman Ahmedabad Chapter



Mr. K. U. Srinivason
Chairman Chennai Chapter



Mr. Jagmohan Singh Rawat
Chairman Delhi Chapter



Dr. Ramachandra Aryasri Ankiseti
Chairman Hyderabad Chapter



Mr. K. Jayshankar
Chairman Pune Chapter



Mr. Nitin Motiram Chikhale
Chairman Mumbai Chapter



Contact Us

THE INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
CONSULTANTS OF INDIA
NO. 306, THIRD FLOOR,
NAVJIVAN COMMERCIAL PREMISES
CO-OP SOCIETY LTD.,
LAMINGTON ROAD, MUMBAI - 400 008
TEL.+91 22 23005375 /76 MOB: +91 8767261288
EMAIL : INFO@IMCINDIA.CO.IN;
SECRETARIAT@IMCINDIA.CO.IN

About IMCI

The Institute of Management Consultants of India (IMCI) is the apex body of management consulting professionals in India, being the only registered institute of established management consultancy firms and practicing individuals in the country. Originally founded in 1963 as Management Consultant's Association of India (MCAI), MCAI was renamed as IMCI in 1991 when it joined the ICMCI as the first Asian Country to become a full member. The International Council of Management Consulting Institute (ICMCI) www.cmc-global.org has authorized IMCI to award Certified Management Consultant (CMC) certification in accordance with International Standards.

At IMCI, we understand that the world of business is rapidly evolving, presenting new challenges and complexities. That's why we have created a community that brings together industry leaders, seasoned consultants, and aspiring professionals like you. Our association serves as a platform for networking, knowledge sharing, and continuous learning.

By becoming a member of the IMCI offers several benefits, both for individual consultants and consulting firms. Some of the key benefits include:

- 1. Recognition and Trust:** For individual consultants, obtaining the Certified Management Consultant (CMC) qualification, which is recognized in ICMCI member countries, provides formal recognition of training, development, and experience, and demonstrates high standards of performance, experience, and ethics.
- 2. Professional Development:** Membership encourages the discipline of continued professional development, ensuring that consultants stay updated with the latest industry trends and best practices. Attend workshops, seminars, and webinars led by industry experts to stay up-to-date with the latest trends, best practices, and innovative strategies.
- 3. Client Attraction:** The CMC qualification serves as a Gold Standard for excellence among management consultants, making it attractive to clients who seek consultants that meet the highest professional standards of competence, ethics, and independence.
- 4. Global Network:** Members become part of a global network of management consulting professional bodies, facilitating knowledge sharing, collaboration, and access to international conferences and events.
- 5. Firm Branding:** Consulting firms can use the CMC-Firm branding elements on their marketing materials, reinforcing their status and reach vis-à-vis major international firms, and demonstrating a commitment to professional standards and ethics.
- 6. Discounted Attendance To Domestic And International Events on Zoom, Domestic And International Magazine And Cep's**

These benefits contribute to the professional growth, recognition, and credibility of both individual consultants and consulting firms within the global management consulting community (International Council of Management Consulting Institutes (ICMCI))

Institute of Management Consultants of India (IMCI) Membership is an investment in your professional growth and a commitment to excellence in the consulting arena. We believe that your unique perspective and experience will greatly enrich our community.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more, please feel free to reach out to our membership team at [Mob: +91 8767261288 Tel No.+91 22 23005376 / 75 Email ID: info@imcindia.co.in].