



Chair's Annual Report 2020

Overview

This report covers the period from the AGM in October 2019 to end September 2020.

The Consultancy Specialist Group planned to deliver 8 events as it had in the previous year and delivered 7 events. Around 800 people benefited from attending a Consultancy SG event or viewing the video recording on the BCS YouTube channel. In the circumstance of the COVID-19 close down this was a very credible performance. This involved rapidly redeveloping the events programme from physical evening events in London to on-line webinars. In recent months the SG has been able to field two webinar events per month (in part to catch up on its targets).

A goal for the SG has been to video record its events (now webinars) and make them available as on-demand videos on the BCS YouTube channel. Efforts during the year have delivered on this goal and all webinars are now being placed on-line within a few days.

On average the SG events/webinars attract an audience of 30-60 on the night and 60-120 people view them on-line in the 2-3 months after the event.

The SG operated well within its budgets prior to the pandemic and since the pandemic has not needed to use its budgets (see separate Treasurer's report).

Whilst the plan for next year remains an events programme of 8 events, this is likely to be exceeded based on the autumn 20 period. We will also grow the number of members and non-members benefiting from events/webinars.

All the events take effort to organise and I am grateful to the speakers for their contributions to the SG and to the Committee members who make all the arrangements and manage the event on the night. I am also extremely grateful to the staff of the BCS who work behind the scenes to help with publicity, bookings and setting up of the event/webinar on the day.

About the BCS Consultancy Specialist Group

The Consultancy SG is one of the largest groups within the BCS with around 1400 members. Our aim is to debate, encourage and promote the practice of 'Professionalism in IT consultancy' and to help our members develop their knowledge and consultancy competencies and skills. Additionally, through liaison with academic and other professional institutions the Consultancy SG helps to develop best practice within the consulting profession. It is open to all BCS members who are interested in consultancy whether they are sole practitioners, employed by large or small consultancy practices or are internal consultants within organisations in the private and public sectors; and there is no additional annual membership fee. Events and on-demand videos are available to non-members too.

Events Programme

This year's seven events continued the mix of soft skills and informative topics of relevance to consultancy.

Month	Event Title & Speaker	Attendees	YouTube
08 Oct 19	Consultative Selling and How To Do It by Simon White	33	N/A
12 Nov 19	Strategic Engagement of IT and Business: The State of the Art by Alan Warr	41	>50
09 Jun 20	How to Practice Safe Consulting by Simon Wallace	35	>100
14 Jul 20	Developments in Neuroscience for Consultants and Project Managers by Carole Osterweil	60	>120
23 Jul 20	Strategic engagement of IT and business: Roadmaps & managing demands by Alan Warr	40	>110
08 Sep 20	Will AI disrupt Project Management Consulting? By Lloyd Skinner	67	>30
24 Sep 20	Choosing a Public Cloud MSP by David Pool & Barry Turner	27	>60

Events attract both BCS Members and non-members in roughly a 60:40 ratio for attendees.

For the physical events in 2019 we charged attendees a small fee to cover the cost of refreshments. The webinars in 2020 were free of charges.

Committee Meetings

Four committee meetings were held during the year.

Date	Meeting
16 Jan 20	Committee Meeting
23 Apr 20	Committee Meeting
16 Jul 20	Committee Meeting
28 Oct 19	Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Committee Finances

The financial and budget performance of the SG is reported in detail in the Treasurer's report.

Key is that the SG operated well within its budgets for the year releasing funds back to BCS and that under the Treasurer's experienced leadership there were no issues.

Other Committee Activities

A lot of effort has gone in by all committee members this year. The following are the main contributions of the SG to the BCS additional to the events programme.

Contributions to the wider Communities area within the BCS. This has included attendance at Community workshops and participation in the on-line Communities discussion forum.
Bedding in the physical events prior to the pandemic into the new City offices of the BCS.
Adopting and learning the GoToWebinar platform .
Expanding our digital marketing .
Generally developing our processes for finding speakers, agreeing talks, marketing events, delivering events and for editing video recording and publishing on the BCS YouTube channel.
The Chair has contributed to requests coming into the Press Office from journalists and this has led to quotes for the BCS in two articles in Computer Weekly and IT Pro magazines.
The Chair has also contributed to the BCS's Essential Digital Skills Qualification (EDSQ) .
The content of one of our events led to an article in IT Now by the speaker Carole Osterweil.

Committee Members

The SG has been fortunate to have a small, dedicated set of committee members who have all contributed significantly throughout the year.

Committee members:

- Terence Freeman
- Antonio Hildago Landa (Secretary)
- Colin Pearson (Treasurer)
- Simon Wallace
- Alan Warr (Chair)

During the year Derran Stokes stood down from the Committee. The Chair would like to acknowledge, with gratitude, his service to the Consultancy Specialist Group where he played a key role in events, welcoming attendees and ensuring events ran smoothly.

The Committee has put out a call for volunteers to serve on the Committee to spread out the workload and to create some of the Committee roles that are not formally addressed like academic liaison and diversity.

Contributions from BCS Full-Time Officers

The Chair would like to acknowledge with gratitude the contribution of Sallyann Cossey & Mandy Bauer from the BCS staff who superbly supported the Consultancy SG throughout the year, along with the many other staff who contributed in numerous ways.

Notable Challenges Experienced During the Year & Actions to Address

Finding speakers was a challenge and our pipeline ran dry in Autumn 19. A call for speakers was sent out in January 20 and that led to a fairly full pipeline for 2020. Three of the events were nevertheless from Committee members. And finding good speakers remains a challenge.

Covid-19 impacts were significant leading to abandoning the physical events programme that we had scheduled and planned. A webinar events programme was developed and we were back up and running by June and have broadly caught up with our base-line targets for events.

Roadmap of Developments for the Coming Year

The following **continuous improvement opportunities** are planned:

Specialist Topics. In addition to the event topics with general appeal which we have used traditionally, we have reserved the last Thursday evening of each month for specialist topics of narrower appeal.

Invited Speakers. Recently we have relied upon speakers coming forward and volunteering. We were successful at the beginning of calendar 2020 with a general call for speakers. As part of the general call for speakers for 2021 we will also identify consultancy industry speakers to formally invite to present.

Interactive Webinars. We will add Zoom as another webinar platform to GoToWebinar, to support speakers who want to be interactive in their webinars with more engagement of their audience and potentially break out groups.

Industry Liaison. The connection to the London Committee of the Institute of Consulting has waned during the year as the IC London Committee has not been active. We are reaching out to re-establish our collaboration on joint events, if they are able to support this. Additionally, the SG is exploring forging connections into the IT and management consultancies for mutual support and sponsorship. We believe the work of the SG should be supported by the Big consultancies and those IT vendors with major consultancy divisions or consultancy partner networks.

Automation. Good progress is being made on establishing repeatable processes and that will now open up the potential to automate the events programme.

Building the Audience. The SG's audience has been growing over the last two years. But given the value of the events and the potential to reach well beyond the BCS over the web, we should be able to grow our audience further.

The following **SG development opportunities** are being worked on. They are inevitably constrained by the capacity of a volunteer effort.

Early Consulting Career Events Programme. Our events are currently covering CPD for experienced consultants. We are in the early stages of looking at webinars which are aimed at entry level consultants or IT professionals preparing to move into consultancy or students. These would likely be around the core consulting skills. Given the reach of the Internet is global this could also be of additional value to low and middle-income countries where we understand such training is not easily accessed.

On-line Professional Networking. In responding to Covid-19 and moving on-line we lost the networking aspects of our physical events. This did traditionally afford an opportunity for IT consultants to get together and discuss industry developments and business opportunities. We are exploring what we might do to restore these but with the on-line meeting platforms.

Restoring a Physical Events Programme in London. Over the next year we may need to follow the lead from the BCS and restore the evening events in BCS's London offices. Our working assumption is that this seems unlikely to be practical until the summer 2021 or even later. On this, the SG will follow and apply the BCS instructions.

Dr **Alan Warr** CITP MBCS
As Chair of the BCS Consultancy Specialist Group
25th October 2020