Consultancy Specialist Group

Chair's Annual Report 2021

Overview

This report covers the period from October 2020 to end September 2021.
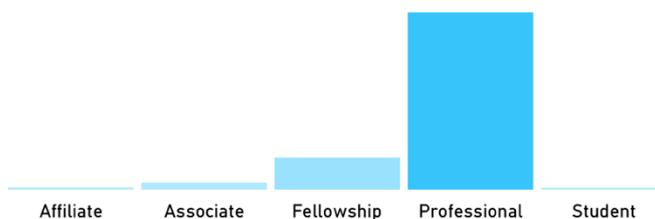
About the BCS Consultancy Specialist Group

The Consultancy SG is one of the largest Specialist Groups within the BCS. 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. Membership 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 (BCS event supporters) too.
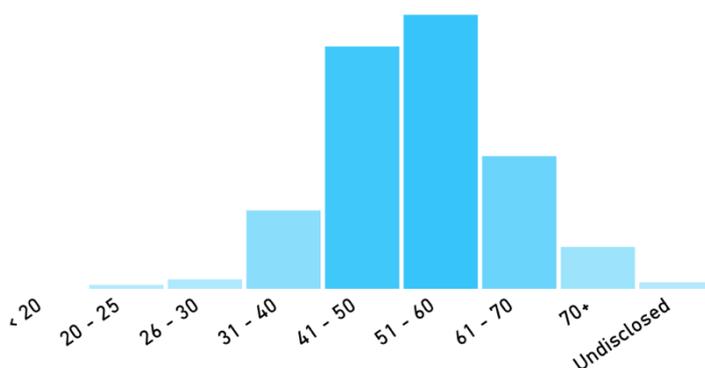
Membership

Over the last year and thanks to hard work by the BCS staff, we have developed better information on the membership of the Consultancy SG at the aggregate and anonymised level.   This has been revealing and has already led to developments. The SG has grown to 2166 members. The grade, age and gender distributions are illustrated in the following 3 graphs.
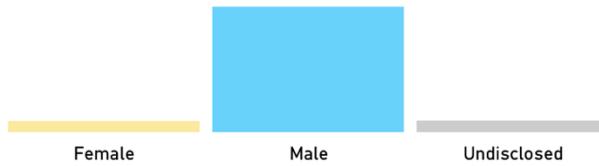
Grade Distribution

Affiliate   Associate   Fellowship   Professional   Student

Age Range Distribution

< 20   20 – 25   26 – 30   31 – 40   41 – 50   51 – 60   61 – 70   70+   Undisclosed

Gender Distribution

| Female | Male | Undisclosed |

Clearly, the SG has attracted a membership that is senior in membership grade, well advanced in their careers and mainly male. Most of the SG members (1917) are in the UK with over half in Greater London.

Opportunities clearly exist to grow further by attracting those audiences in the IT consultancy industry that are currently under-represented. Efforts this year have focused with great success on an events programme that aims to serve "new and aspiring" consultants. Diversity has also been a focus. Efforts via social media to attract a more international audience have also begun with non-members now attending our webinars in small numbers from overseas.

New & Aspiring Consultants (NAC) Programme

Our most significant new development of the year has been the development of a programme specifically for early career members and BCS supporters (non-members). The programme is developed and managed by Simon Wallace. He has attracted a lot of support from the consultancy industry with over 20 speakers volunteering to deliver content on the programme. The programme runs throughout calendar 2020 mainly on the last Wednesday of the month and comprises 8 events, each covering three topics with three speakers from the consulting industry.

It has attracted strong audiences with approx. 90 joining the live webinar and a similar number opting for the on-demand recordings on the BCS YouTube channel.

The following six events on this programme were delivered during the year to end September with a further two events planned for October 21 and November 21.

Date	Event Title & Speaker
31 March 21	Webinar: How to be a consultant: What is different about being a Consultant - Episode One with Simon Wallace, Mike Weston-Burt & David Lightfoot
28 April 21	Webinar: How to be a consultant - Episode Two: Being a consultant, Interviews, fact-finding & evidence, managing projects with David Lightfoot, Gary Lloyd & Colin Butcher
26 May 21	Webinar: How to be a consultant – Episode Three: Client Relationships - Analysis & Problem Solving, Ethics & Behaviours with Clare Spalding, Stephen Aldridge & Roberta Carter
30 June 21	Webinar: How to be a consultant – Episode Four: Selling, Fees, Commerciality and Reports with Colin Butcher, Simon Wallace & Stephanie Horsfield
21 July 21	Webinar: How to be a consultant – Episode Five: Creativity, Presentations, Quality & Risk Management with George Karseras, Gary Lloyd, Adam Leon-Smith & Simon Wallace.
29 Sept 21	Webinar: How to be a consultant – Episode Six: Trust, Influencing, Solution Design, Buy-in & Teams with Gary Lloyd, Yemi Adeniran & George Karseras

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programme

This year we expanded quite dramatically our CPD programme. Against a budget & target of 8 events we delivered 12 CPD events on a variety of contemporary topics. All speakers were from the consulting industry. All were held as webinars due to Covid 19 and became available as on-demand recordings on the BCS YouTube Channel.

These have typically attracted an audience of around 40-50 for the live webinar and typically around 50-100 for the on-demand recordings.

Date	Event Title & Speaker
13 Oct 20	Webinar: Running a Consulting Business with Colin Butcher
22 Oct 20	Webinar: Strategic Engagement of IT and Business: IT Business Cases with Alan Warr
10 Nov 20	Webinar: Gardeners not Mechanics: How to cultivate change at work with Gary Lloyd
26 Nov 20	Webinar: Would Chartered Consultant status give a competitive & professional edge with Zarina Naqvi
09 Feb 21	Webinar: IT Management: Past, Present and Future with Peter Leeson & Paul Hookham

Date	Event Title & Speaker
18 Feb 21	Webinar: Current and future developments of the IT consultancy profession with Rebecca George
09 Mar 21	Webinar: Contractual issues in consulting engagements with Dr Sam De Silva
18 Mar 21	Webinar: Managing Expectations - Achieving harmony between client and consultant with Martin White
13 Apr 21	Webinar: Project delivery combining across disciplines with James Lea
22 Apr 21	Webinar: Consultancy and Green IT with John Booth
13 May 21	Webinar: Effective research techniques with Paul Taylor
20 May 21	Webinar: Leading mission-critical systems projects with Paul Butcher

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

Committee Meetings

Three committee meetings were held during the year.

Date	Meeting
Tue 16 Feb 21	Committee Meeting (link to minutes)
Tue 01 Jun 21	Committee Meeting (link to minutes)
Thu 21 Oct 21	Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Committee Finances & Governance

The financial and budget performance of the SG is reported in the Treasurer's report. Key is that the SG was able to avoid using any of its allocated budget this year. This restraint was partly due to the switch to webinars but also as a wider contribution to the BCS finances in these uncertain times.

Funding has been allocated for the coming year that will be used to restart physical events for members who prefer that format. These are likely to be hybrid physical and on-line events and combined with webinars in a mixed format.

The Chair would like to acknowledge the contributions of Colin Pearson as Treasurer in securing the financial support for the SG, continuing to keep the SG in good financial order and for his encyclopaedic knowledge of BCS governance and processes that we frequently benefit from.

Other Committee Activities

A lot of effort has gone in by all committee members this year. The following are the main non-event contributions of the SG to the BCS:

- Attendance and contributions to BCS Community Groups workshops on strategy & membership.
- Support for the BCS Press Office and BCS Policy Team crafting responses to queries from journalists on a range of contemporary IT industry topics.
- The NAC programme directly supports the wider BCS efforts to support early careers with Early Career Advocates across all Community Groups.

Processes & Platforms

Chair would like to acknowledge with gratitude the ongoing efforts of our Treasurer, Antonio Landa, to utilise the Basecamp platform which the BCS has adopted as its main collaboration platform for Community Groups.

All Committee members and the wider SG membership and speakers have continued to adapt to the webinar platform. During the year the SG used Teams, GoToWebinar and Zoom. We have moved mainly to Zoom for events now.

Chair would also like to commend the work of Simon Wallace on developing techniques, his own home office technical facilities and processes for rapidly converting webinar recordings into edited videos and uploading them onto the YouTube channel. This has become a very slick operation with videos of events becoming available as on-demand webinars within a few days.

The SG communications with members has been improved with a better optimised e-mail format. Also system problems that meant not all SG members received our comms have been investigated and corrected by the BCS. We continue to use LinkedIn for communications with the wider consulting industry.

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 & Inclusion Officer)
- Amit Modhvadia
- Colin Pearson (Treasurer)
- Simon Wallace (Early Career Advocate)
- Alan Warr (Chair)

The Committee put out a call for further volunteers to serve on the Committee at the end of last year and will do so again this year. The potential to expand the work of the SG is being constrained by the small Committee. The aspiration is therefore to grow the size of the Committee if we can.

Contributions from BCS Full-Time Officers

The Chair would like to acknowledge with gratitude the contribution of the BCS staff Marie Settlefield and Mandy Baur who superbly supported the Consultancy SG throughout the year, along with the many other staff who contributed in numerous ways.

Contributions from Industry Speakers

The Chair needs to recognise with thanks the contributions of our many speakers from industry, who selflessly give their time, expertise, and engagement to the two events programmes.

Working with Other Professional Bodies

During the year the Consultancy SG worked with several other professional bodies on joint events:

- London Branch of the Institute of Consulting (IC)
- Association of Project Management (APM)
- Chartered Quality Institute (CQI)

Working with Other Community Groups

During the year, the SG had joint events with the Northern Ireland Branch, and the Law SG

Working with the Consulting Industry

We planned to engage more with the larger IT and management consultancies and some progress was made with speakers from large IT firms and from one of the big-4 consultancies complementing our traditional core support from solo, boutique and medium sized consultancies.

Notable Challenges Experienced During the Year

The pandemic was probably the most significant challenge meaning all our events were on-line. On speakers, the SG has fared better this year with a good selection of high-quality speakers volunteering to speak.

Roadmap of Developments for the Coming Year

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

Physical events – in concert with the rest of the BCS we will move some of our events to hybrid physical and on-line events at the central London BCS conference centre.
NAC Programme - This programme has events planned through to the end of calendar 21. A second series is being considered.
CPD Programme – The expansion to 12 events stretched our small committee, so we will continue to budget for 8 events as our target for the coming year.
External Liaison – Our focus remains on engaging with the large IT consulting firms in the UK.

Dr **Alan Warr** CITP MBCS
As Chair of the BCS Consultancy Specialist Group
26th August 2021