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MANAGEMENT CONSULTING LABS – GALP SOCIAL MEDIA

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A Project carried out on the Management Consulting Labs course, under the supervision of:

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to study a possible presence of Galp at Social Media. The importance of this study appears as a consequence of the company's need to adapt to a new mean of communication that is changing our society and the companies way of doing business. In the consulting labs, the analysis was done taking into account the best practices for business at Social Media and the singularities of the company. The output of this study was a collection of specific guidelines concerning several fields to develop a strategic presence at Social Media.

Keywords: Social Media, Consulting, Project

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0 BRIEF CONTEXT: CLIENT AND THE INDUSTRY + ITS SITUATION AND COMPLICATION

0.1 The client and the industry

Galp Energia is a portuguese oil company, that owns the two existing refineries in the country and is also, a leader in the portuguese fuel retail market.

I believe the oil industry is very complex. Transactions take place on a global scale, the supply chain is long, and some product' prices vary largely.

0.2 The situation and the complication

In the past few years, social media has been gaining more and more importance in our society. The Social Media serves exactly the same purpose Media does: it's a mean of information and communication, but more like an "upgraded version". Social Media is faster, reaches a higher number of individuals, allows anyone to share content and connects people – and these two last points make all the difference. When people are connected through social media, they share their experiences with their friends, influencing their opinions. Fully aware of this situation, companies started entering social media, and using this mean of communication as another tool for business. For instance, in the United States, since April 2008 ComCast, helped more than15000000[1] customers through Twitter.

However companies vary widely, and they can't all have the same approach on social media, because their goals differ and also the reaction of customers is different depending on the companies' products. A company with a more emotional product engages much more easily than companies with simpler products.

[1] **Comcast**. 2011.Comcast http://www.cmcsk.com/documentdisplay.cfm?DocumentID=6024 (accessed January 5, 2012)

Having said that, considering the power of Social Media Galp asked our team to analyze what a possible presence of this company at social media could be.

1 REFLECTION ON CONTENT DONE FOR THE CLIENT

1.1 Problem definition

1.1.1 What was it? Why was it relevant?

The initial purpose of this project was to support Galp in the analysis of a possible presence at Social Media, which aimed at creating a different approach to address frequent customers issues, as a result of their daily interactions as clients, more institutional issues, usually discussed by the general public, and, simultaneously, took into account consumer preferences in order to create a presence that was pleasant and added value to the consumer.

Additionally, two main explanations were given to support this request: firstly, the company needed to adapt itself to a new reality - the appearance of the social media, and secondly, they noticed that other companies had already done it and got positive results.

Soon, the team realized that goals were missing in this project. Given that all companies generally have specific goals to attend social media, (e.g. social commerce, brand loyalty etc), and our client didn't seem to fit in any of these aims, we had to step back, and help the company to understand what goal would be more relevant to achieve with a presence at social media, taking into account the consumer advantages, as well as, our clients' position, concerns and demands. To do so, we had to change its priorities.

With a new priority for a possible presence at social media, Galp's problem was translated in two main questions:

A. How should Galp's presence at social media be seen by their users?

B. Which implications could such presence have for Galp?

By analyzing these questions, we would give our client some answers to their main concerns regarding a possible presence in the social media, and some guidelines on what that presence could be.

1.2 Hypothesis -> Analysis -> Work

1.2.1 What was the original approach? How did it evolve over time? Why?

After the challenge presentation to the team, we were advised to become experts on the subject. Hence, we started with basic desk research on the subject of Social Media, studying best practices, tools and several companies' behaviors on the web, in addition to consumer perspectives on the subject. With this desk research we intended to understand the social media phenomenon and all its potential, the reason why people were so engaged at social media and how we could help Galp exploring this new opportunity.

Based on the customers' requirements and what our supervisor considered key issues, we divided five workstreams among us: (1) institutional issues, (2) frequent costumer issues, (3) internal issues and processes (4) engagement and, (5) market research.

In the institutional issues workstream the team started by identifying and clustering the issues most commonly raised. In this way we went from a huge number of themes to few relevant questions. Then, we tried to create a new approach on these issues, that is, moving from a rigid strict institutional approach toward a more educational, pedagogical one.

This workstream had many difficulties along the project: (1) firstly, the client had different priorities, regarding the workstreams, (2) secondly, the institutional issues were very sensitive to the company and data for these interactions was very hard to get,

(3) thirdly, answering these problems evolved very deep knowledge on a very complex industry, (4) fourthly, the skills of the person assigned for this frontdesk (me), weren't matched with the issue in question, (5) fifthly the process was very repetitive, it involved testing many hypothesis which failed many times either because the numbers weren't what we expected or we couldn't prove a relation between our problem and our hypothesis and, finally (6) the department that could help the team with this matter didn't agree with our project, which raised the insecurity of our client and didn't make the life of the team easier.

At the first progress review we changed our client perspective, presenting a good analysis for a very complicated issue, and showing her that we could do the same thing for other issues; and in the second project review we started materializing this workstream as a possible presence at Social Media. However the other difficulties were still an issue, which ended up delaying this workstream until the end of the project.

Regarding the frequent costumer issues, for the first progress review, based on data given by our client, we re-classified those client issues under the customer's point of view and selected the ones with most likely to appear in the social media. The next step was prioritizing them taking into account two variables: volume and complexity.

In the second progress review, after some benchmarking on other companies at social media regarding these types of interactions, we were able to settle the look and feel of these interactions at social media. Additionally, the team figured out a way to integrate the social media platforms with the existing company webpage (which was a concern raised by our client) and some processes that could internally be improved. With this presentation, we exceeded all the expectations given by the client, and this workstream was finalized.

The third workstream, regarding how Galp could internally deal with the official presence at Social Media, started in the first progress review with the definition of problems that could emerge inside the organization based on real case studies and possible solutions.

Later, on the second progress review, we lined up, tactics to manage the relationship between internal conflicts and the social media, and, processes to prevent these problems based on the best practices we researched. However, due to workstreams priorities, the team didn't spend too much time with this front and we ended up delivering something that didn't fit in the organizational culture and we had to change it. This front was therefore delayed. In the third progress review, in addition to reformulating the workstream strategy that got the organization away from troubles before and during the possible entry at social media, we also defined relevant roles and relationships inside the organization to manage Galp's presence at social media.

The engagement workstream, concerning the attractiveness of the social media presence to the consumer, was almost always put aside by the team, due once again to priorities and how easy it seemed to anyone work quickly on this front. In the end the team developed a few ideas to engage customers at social media, but I have the feeling that we could have added much more value in this field if we had the time, as we didn't define some details like frequency and seasonality, or a strategy to generate buzz and create willingness to share some of our ideas.

Finally, we had to test and validate some hypothesis. In order to do so, we created another workstream market research. In this work stream we had two kinds of focus groups and the team wrote the proposal for the market research and took the respective conclusions. However due to the difficulties of moderating a group of this kind, the client choose to have a specialized company to do it. This was very interesting because we had to cope with another entity and explain them our project and respective goals. This workstream also lasted the entire project, due in part to the delay of the first workstream.

1.2.2 Benefit of hindsight: what added most value? What should have been done differently?

In my opinion what was most valuable to the process was the fact that we had a workplan. We had milestones to achieve for each workstream, and it guided us through the entire project. I couldn't imagine the team managing so many workstreams, with such an amount of information if there wasn't a work plan.

Regarding what should have been done in a different way, given the importance and the insights that came out of the market research, today I would have probably eliminated the first focus group. It only confirmed our hypothesis and what our research of the best practices at social media told us.

In addition, I think that, in the institutional issues we spent too much wasted time searching for data and requesting information at Galp, trying to figure out some problem. If we had made more assumptions from the beginning, probably we wouldn't have jeopardized the other fronts as we did.

Moreover, each week we had a project leader, but with time each person started to get more independent, and this concept was lost. So each time we had a progress review it was getting harder to have a holistic vision of the project.

All in all, I don't think that the team performance was completely wrong, but I think we could have done some things better.

Regarding the company, at the beginning I had the feeling that we're seen, by some members, as "interns" that were going to help Galp in their project. We could manage that situation with our analysis and presentations, but perhaps due to our young age some information's we're never able to reach. Also, we weren't always completely independent to speak to whom we needed, this changed during the course of the project but only for people within the company. That influenced negatively the project, as certain issues took more time that what wassupposed too.

1.3 Recommendations

1.3.1 What are the key messages? What do you expect to add the most value?

We can divide the team recommendations to the client in four topics:

First we tried to give guidelines to our client about what a presence at social media should be, considering three main areas: costumer issues and institutional issues that could emerge at Social Media, and the general needs and customers' preferences at social media platforms.

> Regarding the institutional issues, we suggested reaching the customers, with an educational approach that we developed, using, the pertinent tools and programs available at social media. I believe that this approach is the most valuable, mainly because it was the work stream where Galp by itself had most trouble to deal with and because it can make a difference on the actual Galp's relationship with their customers. We also gave suggestions for next steps in this workstream in order to give continuity to our project :
>
> - Define a strategy for issues suitable of appearing and damaging the company's presence on social media

- Validate our institutional issues approach with the appropriate Galp departments and consumers
- Materialize our approach

Concerning the possible frequent consumer issues, the main messages are that they need to create a simple structure considering the best practices we collected and adapted for them, that would allow Galp to help their customers and make its customers willing to get help. As next steps for this front we proposed: simplify some internal processes and optimize the existing knowledge on frequent customer issues and define how to connect the departments with the social media responsible

Pertaining to the topic of costumer's preferences and needs, we go back to the principles of social media: it's all about sharing and being positive. Keeping this in mind we gave some ideas to implement at social media in order to engage with the public. Hopefully, Galp using the proper tools and the principles we applied, will create strong connections with the audience.

Secondly, we defined some tactics to manage the relationship between internal conflicts and the social media. Here I believe the most important message to take is the need that some behaviors should be encouraged. In addition, the organization must be prepared for an entrance at social media. This requires preparation, monitoring tools and processes and the team made some suggestions for both of them.

Next, we traced an organizational model to operationalize Galp's presence at Social Media, where we took into account that some resources will be more dedicated to Social Media, but inputs from the rest of the organization might be needed too. Therefore we tried to connect the social media team to the rest of the organization.

Finally, we gave specific recommendations about which platforms they should use in the short run, and the advice to enter the social media only when they're ready.

1.3.2 Grains of salt: Any concerns regarding implementation?

I think our recommendations are feasible and add value to the company, however, during the implementation Galp might have some difficulties when dealing with costumer issues:

For institutional costumer issues the concerns are:

(1) The possibility of precipitated answers to unexpected situations that will be closely followed by public opinion that can damage the company's image and easily transform the company's presence at social media into a nightmare, not because this is a worst risk mean of communication but due to its speed, reach and level of exposure

(2) For certain issues our approach validation and acceptance will depend largely on the way they are presented and communicated. This process didn't worked so well during the project, because there was a third part involved, and for the most of the time a client's intermediary was conveying our requests to that third part, and neither one (the intermediary and the third part) agreed with our approach. So, will Galp be able to find someone to communicate it properly?

(3) Institutional issues always have different perspectives on the matters. And because we had to test several hypothesis and some of them failed, and also because the industry is very complex, there's also the threat that something similar with what happened recently with the coca-cola commercial *"Há razões*

para acreditar num mundo melhor"[2] - where some consumers believed that Coca-cola was hiding the truth, although they were just revealing an optimistic perspective, might happen with a more sensitive issue.

In order to address concerns (1) and (3), if I was the client firstly, I would carefully review each institutional issue, secondly, I would assure that the teams preparation was adequate manage social media, and finally I would develop a plan and choose a responsible person to deal with unexpected situations at social media. Regarding concern (2) I would look for another entity to communicate the issues.

I'm confident that regarding concern's (1) and (3) the client sees theses issues in the same perspective I do, but I have doubts regarding concern (3). Mainly because the results of the communication process were shown in the last day of the project and despite the presentation not being the most adequate, due to the circumstances, partially it worked.

For frequent consumer issues it worries me that:

(1) The possibility of not being able to help, either due to a lack of preparation of the team managing social media, or because there's too much bureaucracy in the company. A situation like this can damage the company's credibility and cause anger among the customers.

(2) Time. How long will it take Galp to give a proper answer the costumer issues? We all know that at social media things process much faster, but will this large and complex organization be able to manage all the internal processes in a suitable time?

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[2] **Youtube**. Coca-Cola Portugal http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOoJNcSuK_c (accessed January 5th 2012)

In order to address these concerns, if I was the client, I would estimate an approximate time to each stage required to solve the most important issues and try to figure out the respective bottleneck of each one of them. With this information I would try to figure out an alternative stage to the bottlenecks and reduce the time of the remaining stages. Another hypothesis would be eliminating certain stages in the processes of solving certain issues, or having a responsible for each area of frequent costumer issues to assure internal processes are managed in a timely manner.

I think the client shares the same concerns I do. She was surprised with some results of our analysis and showed good will in making some changes. Also, the client understands that some changes need time to occur, and I'm positive that she won't make a precipitated entry at social media.

All in all, along with all the advantages of a presence at social media several risks are associated for Galp. However, despite the risks, I believe in our recommendations, but, at the same time, I also think that the success or failure of this project relies a lot on the capacity of Galp to adapt to the needs that this project brings and the new team decisions, since a possible entrance of our client in social media will demand a high level of preparation.

2 REFLECTION ON LEARNING

2.1 Previous knowledge

When I started the project, I had two ideas regarding the applicability of courses I had taken at NOVA: (1) being a project concerning Social Media and also because I was working on a team , I would certainly use almost 90% of the content of some courses like E-marketing and Human Resources Management, and (2) since I needed to understand my client and its business, independently of the context of the project, I would use insights from almost every mandatory course that I had during the Masters. Obviously, I was wrong. I did use some concepts that I had learned on E-marketing regarding social media (mainly because when I started I already knew what social media was and its implications for business, as well as, some strategies companies used on the context of social media), but some other concepts I couldn't apply either because they had already been used by Galp at the beginning of the project, or because there was no need to apply them.

Additionally, the Human Resources Management course was also relevant. Not the team, or the team management made me use some concepts, but two other reasons: (1) me - because I had some problems during the project and at a certain point, I needed to motivate my-self; and (2) the project itself, due to possible challenges that the company could face with a presence at social media.

Regarding the mandatory courses, Analysis of Industry and Competition insights were needed during the course of the project to understand the energy industry and our clients' position, considering business process, value chains, competitors and even the market itself.

Financial Management also provided some useful content. Many times we had to look at annual reports and extract relevant information to understand and support our approaches to certain issues.

Statistics was another relevant course to this project. Due to the amount of data available and the limited time of the project, we had to create samples to have a general idea of the interactions between the client and Galp.

Last but not least, an optional course Persuasion and Negotiation. This course wasn't applied to the project itself, but I could apply some concepts like conflict management to the team interactions and the client interactions when opinions diverged.

All in all, I think that the master courses I took at NOVA gave me some useful knowledge at certain stages of the project, but it didn't teach me everything, and it wasn't supposed to. It's impossible to learn everything about Management in the university. However, the Master programme gave me a solid starting point of business awareness that I'll develop when I start my professional life.

2.2 New knowledge

2.2.1 What are the key new methodologies and frameworks that you take away? Why?

With this project I learned several new processes and frameworks, namely:

- Applying logic trees to problem solving – Logic trees serve the purpose of breaking down problems and identify possible solutions, by diving one complex issue into several subissues to which later several hypothesis are created, analyzed and then finally tested. The benefit of this approach is in the problem simplification which allows us as consultants to think in a logical structure.
- Prepare the document for presentation with the Storyboard and the Master - These are very useful tools. The storyboard is a paper sheet scheme that allows you to create the final document with a complete vision of the presentation. You take one page and draw several squares. Each square stands for a slide and it's

where you show the main idea you want to convey on the slide. When you have finished, you have a logic sequence of slides to develop. Drawing the Master is the next step, it's an improved version of the storyboard. Now you use one numbered page to represent each slide and you start thinking on the headtitles and the scheme of the slide, and when you start creating the slides on your computer you use the master as a guide and support – this single operation of drawing the slides in paper before using the Microsoft PowerPoint software helps any team saving time. Also, if you make any alterations to the initial document in the master, you never lose information.

- Writing a request for information - In order to address critical issues, sometimes consultants need sensitive information from the client, and to avoid constraints it might be useful to clarify the relevancy of the data you're asking for. A structured manner to do that is to start by writing the general purpose of what you're asking, and then, for each single information, join an explanation with the purpose and the goals of the analyses, that is, what it will tell and how that information will be useful. Moreover, and especially if there are any intermediates, it might be helpful if you separate real data from open questions, and group the questions on the same topic, so the person who reads it, can easily recognize some information that might be already available and to whom they should address the remaining questions or data.
- Writing a market research proposal to the client – A Market research proposal is important because (1) Market researches generally imply costs for companies and your client will want to know why this research is important and (2) market researches take a lot of time to prepare and the market research proposal helps

you to plan timely the process and remember important details that should be settled in the beginning.

Market research proposals should include (1) a brief context description, (2) a proposal defining the areas you intend to explore and the different groups of participants you plan to include in the Market Research and what relevant information/perspectives you expect them to bring, that is, what is their added value for the results the problem definition, methodology, the groups structure and next steps; (3) the problem definition, where you define the problem and the specific goals for each area you aim to explore; (4) a methodology where you define either quantitative or a qualitative approach, how the process should be conducted and a work plan; (5) a schedule where you define for each day of the market research, who will you approach, how will you contact that person and purpose of that approach and finally (6) next steps regarding resources allocation, dates, who will contact whom etc

- Guidelines in communication tactics for presentations – there are two main aspects to consider while presenting whatsoever to your audience: you and your slides.

The slides you have prepared for your presentation function in two time periods: during the presentation and after that. For the period of the presentation, slides have a secondary role, supporting visually what you're communicating. However, after the presentation slides are the only thing really "talking" to your audience. Therefore, the rule here is: the slide must be intuitive - without big agglomerates of text, and it has to speak for itself. This is the reason why the "so whats" are important in your slides and must be supported only with facts that prove your point of view.

At the same time, you shouldn't forget the vision of the document as a whole. You should be especially careful while writing and organizing the head titles of your document as it will avoid contradictions with the main messages of the meeting and facilitate the understanding of your audience. Another trick that simplifies the way the audience perceives our messages is the inductive organization of the document – in order to do that we should use the pyramid principle and start every section with the main messages and only later explain "the whys and the hows". It might also be useful writing some golden rules that support your analysis after the main messages, and emphasize your client issues in the analysis, because it will give more credibility to what you're saying.

The way you can convey the message, while speaking in a presentation, is obviously also very important. After having your slides finished it is crucial that you start planning "your story", and you can even create a script. The point here is engaging your audience during the presentation and making it easy for them to remind later what they were told.

2.2.2 Think of business content as well as process (project management, etc)

Regarding business processes, I think I also learned new concepts during the course of this project, namely:

- Team Management – You can't always choose the people you're working with. When you start a new project with a new team, you should settle some rules concerning roles, schedules, lifestyle, conflict management; and take the time to get to know each other in terms of preferences, strengths and development needs. This will help you to allocate your resources better – giving you the possibility to match persons and tasks, and it will help you to prevent some conflicts.

- Time Management – Consulting projects are generally complex and require a team working on several workstreams simultaneously. Besides, the beginning of some workstreams depends on the end of others. Therefore, it's better if you create a work plan with specific milestones from the beginning to avoid unnecessary surprises. This doesn't mean that the plan you create will be exactly what you will do during the project, because accidents happen, but at least you will have some kind of guidance through the project. The same principle applies to meetings. Creating an agenda to meetings discriminating the topics that will be discussed with the respective schedule helps you to take the most of people's time during the meetings.
- Preparing a kick-off meeting– In addition to getting to know your client and his/her perspective on the challenge you're about to face, the kick-off meeting is also an "open door to your client's company". In the course of the project, you'll probably need to talk to other people inside the company and gather specific data - you should anticipate this situation. Additionally, you will need to discuss more administrative issues (e.g. "house rules", schedules, non disclosure agreements). Bearing this in mind, you should prepare a document to your client where you include an agenda, the administrative issues and access to business areas and data that you might need- in these last two points is important to

explain the reason why you need to talk with people in those business areas and/or the data you're asking for.

- Meeting before the "actual" meeting – Having a meeting with all the attendants individually before the group reunion to discuss relevant issues is always helpful: it will allow you to either be in a situation where everyone will attend the meeting to agree as a group to what they have already agreed individually or you'll be able to anticipate potential issues.
- Random guidelines to manage delicate situations with your client in the course of the project:
  - " Make the people you're working with on the clients' side feel comfortable" - Your client's staff might feel threatened with your presence, seeing you as someone who comes to take their role, especially at the beginning of the project. Hence, while working with them, you should try to make them feel as comfortable as possible, give them confidence and make them feel as part of the team- people tend to be more receptive and perform better if they feel comfortable with whom they're working with.
  - "You don't have to say yes to everything" - Your client isn't always right and as an advisor, if you have a different opinion you must make him/her know that. However, you don't have any interest in creating a hostile environment, especially if you're at the beginning of the project. Therefore, you should try being as constructive as possible and while talking to your client, try to put everything on a perspective of "let's see why we have different points of view", that is "you think A, because B and C, and I think X because Y". You also have to listen to your client, and by listening I don't

mean just being quiet while he/she is talking to you. You need to think and construct on what he is telling you, otherwise you won't be able to make your point.

- "Let go the elephant under the table" – Sometimes companies have tricky issues that they want to avoid talking about. If those subjects are important to the project, as a consultant you can't ignore them, as it might jeopardize your strategy. However, approaching a politically dificult theme can be extremely hard, therefore preparation is a must. You can use a single meeting to put everyone on the same page and show the first steps to the solution at the same meeting. It will give you credibility because you'll be reducing the state of anxiety and insecurity of your client.

2.3 Yourself

2.3.1 What are your key strengths and weaknesses? Are there new insights from this work?

This project taught me a lot about myself. As the project evolved, challenges emerged and my answers, to them, allowed me, my colleagues, my supervisor and even the client to discover some of my strengths and weaknesses. In the end, all of those perspectives were pointed out in the 360º evaluation.

Two of my biggest strengths were directly related with the troubles I had through the project. I had a very client-sensitive workstream and my skills weren't really a match with the problem I had to solve. Despite the difficulties, I was resilient and committed. I never gave up, I have always tried to keep focused and learn something with the challenges I faced.

My skills as a team player were also emphasized positively in this evaluation. Mainly because I kept putting the collective interest first during the project and in a team with many different personalities, where conflicts appeared many times, I was able to listen and keep neutral.

Another strength emphasized in this project was my deductive ability in problem solving, because I was effective while observing a certain type of errors in the course of the project.

Regarding to my weaknesses, my evaluators referred, some difficulties in issue identification and problem structuring. The troubles I have in recognizing key issues also affected my ability to anticipate complications in my work stream.

Another development need mentioned was my organization. As I didn't keep my files and documents always organized, I had difficulties in sharing information with my colleagues.

Lastly, my evaluators also suggested me to work on my communication skills, since while reporting issues I focused a lot on processes and should have given more importance to "so-whats" and I didn't show self-confidence exposing my points of view.

2.3.2 How do you plan to keep developing those aspects?

Regarding my weaknesses I should start focusing in developing issues in three areas: communication, organization and problem solving.

> Starting with my communication skills I intend to start thinking more positively and speak up more often, because I believe that practice plays an important role in these kind of soft skills. Moreover, I'll try to pay more attention to my body language.

Towards minimizing my organization issues perhaps I should start using a notebook to write down my notes and include at every stage date, title, conclusions and next steps in a fixed structure to keep a better track of what I'm doing . Regarding my digital files and because I always keep several versions of the same document, probably the best solution is to start saving those documents with the same title but different numbers or dates, and create several folders for different issues.

Finally, and in order to develop my problem solving skills I'll research tools and techniques to help me to define problems better.

For the purpose of developing my strengths and when I'll start feeling more comfortable with my communication skills, I intend to take more active leadership roles, in order to maximize my contribution to the group in future projects.

2.3.3 Do you see yourself as a future business consultant? Why?

There are three things that fascinate me about consulting careers: (1) the amount of information you can get on an industry on a short period of time (2) the learning experience as a result of the variability of projects a consultant can take and (3) the opportunity to develop both soft and hard skills.

However , time and schedules are a big issue, because work life balance is very important to me, and the perspective I got of consulting with this project is that, this path, is really very time consuming and probably above the average. Likewise, during the project I felt a lot of pressure to have documents and presentations among other things ready on time, which gave me the sensation of always being on a rush.

Furthermore, with my current combination of strengths and development needs I don't feel prepared to start a career in consulting.

Thus, when seeking for a job opportunity I'll try to choose something a little bit different, not putting aside my development needs of course.

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