

cognosis

Applicant Information and Guidance

Cognosis

Prepared by Cognosis
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1 What is consulting?



What is Strategy Consulting?

CONSULTING: An **advisory service** that can cover various aspects of business operations.

Strategy Consulting is...

- ...defining **goals and priorities** to solve complex, sometimes ambiguous business problems
- ...gaining in-depth industry knowledge of **markets and competitors**, and **how to win** in that area
- ...understanding **what the opportunities are**, and **how to pursue them**



Strategy Consulting is not focussed on...

- ...advising businesses on detailed **systems, software or infrastructure choices**
- ...hands on support to teams **adopting new tools or processes**
- significant business re-organisation / cost optimisation
- ... embedded **implementation** management on behalf of clients



Strategy consultancies come in all shapes and sizes

Small Consultancy

Potential Benefits

- More immediate client exposure
- Greater responsibility earlier in career
- More hands-on training
- Close-knit, authentic culture
- Greater exposure to business development

Potential Downsides

- Less formal training / infrastructure
- Potential reliance on small number of breadwinners
- Less recognisable brand on CV
- Benefits package may not always compare as favourably

Examples:

Cognosis, Elixirr, Lippincott

Large Consultancy

Potential Benefits

- More structured training and career path
- Work mainly with large sized clients on larger/longer projects
- Recognisable brand on CV to open doors
- Comprehensive benefits package more likely

Potential Downsides

- Less client exposure in early career / more hierarchical
- Less hands-on training
- Potentially poorer work/life balance
- May take longer to build own internal network

Examples:

McKinsey, Strategy&, Oliver Wyman

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2 Who are Cognosis?



We help business build strategies that ignite & sustain growth



STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Making choices that drive growth

- Business Strategy
- Competitor Strategy
- Opportunity Identification



STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Turning strategy into action

- Target Operating Model
- Organisational Design
- Transformation & Change

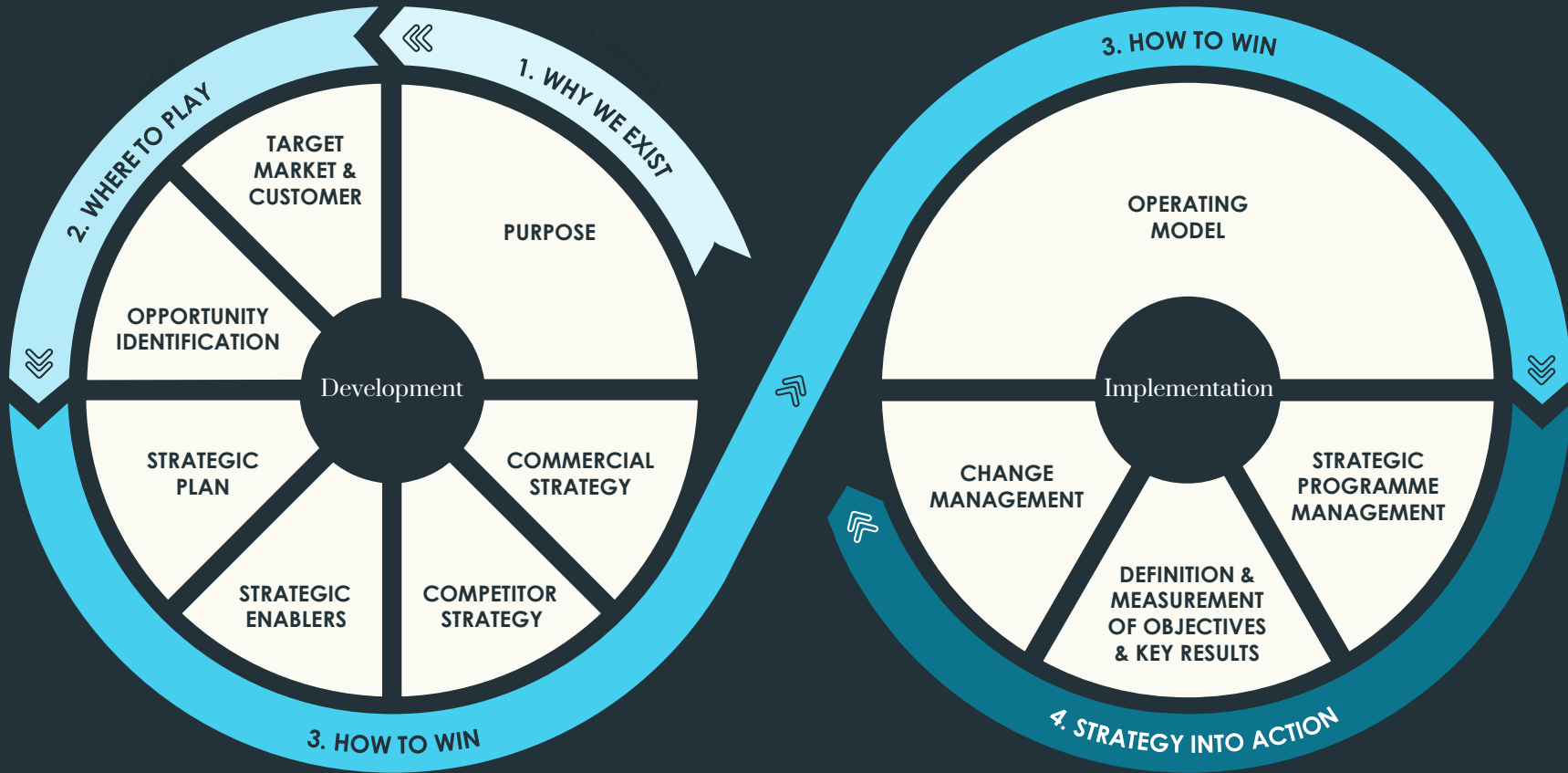


BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION

Reimagining the business for tomorrow

- New Proposition Design
- Business Model Development
- Pilot & Launch

We work with clients at different stages of their strategy journey



THE STRATEGY JOURNEY OF A BUSINESS

Top UK
Consulting Firm
for Strategy and
Innovation
in 2024

2 YEARS RUNNING



Introducing Cognosis

For over 25 years, we've been **igniting growth** across more than 60 countries with some of the world's **most ambitious** companies

SECTORS		SELECTED CLIENTS			
B2C	Beverages	ABInBev	DIAGEO	LVMH	Red Bull
	CPG	Beiersdorf	McCORMICK	AkzoNobel	Scholl
	Apparel	Pentland	Dr. Martens	Clarks	tapestry
	Leisure	ODEON	Entain	IHG HOTELS & RESORTS	SPORT ENGLAND
	Technology	Lenovo	DAZN	IG	3
B2B	Financial	HISCOX	St James's Place	cifas Leaders in Fraud prevention	Staysure
	Goods	DS Smith	arco Experts in Safety	CAMELLIA	PENCARRIE
	Services	BEES	GSMA	SureserveGroup	COMPASS GROUP

Our clients span many industries, including alcoholic drinks and tobacco. Whilst we cannot guarantee that industry preferences can be accommodated, we seek to do so when feasible.

Top UK
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2 YEARS RUNNING



Some examples of work we have done in the past

ABInBev

Budweiser had set themselves an ambitious 3-year volume 'dream'. However, they were facing significant challenges to reach it because:

- 1) Markets **didn't have clear guidelines** on how to act
- 2) **Heineken** were stealing share.

Cognosis were approached by the global alcohol company to build an **innovation strategy for Budweiser** to help them reach their goals.



LVMH

One of the key LVMH business divisions had a number of **potential product development options**, but they needed strategic logic **to guide which options to pursue, and how.**

They tasked Cognosis with making sense of it all: defining a **coherent brand plan** that could guide the crucial decisions of **where to play** (which product categories) and **how to win** (e.g. defining target audience, sales strategy, marketing)



AkzoNobel

A **new competitor had stolen significant share** and over £20m in sales from Dulux in the colour mixing category, since entering the UK market. Now it was looking to expand into the decorative sector, which is a heartland sector for Dulux.

Unsure how to respond, we were tasked with helping AkzoNobel **explore their new competitor's strategy** and **design a fast and effective response.**



You can discover more of our case studies on our website

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3 Life at Cognosis



Our team are curious, hard-working and ready to make an impact every day

We believe that strategy should **engage** and **excite**. We work closely with our clients to **co-create** strategy that they believe in and are excited to implement.

Our consultants employ **creative analytics**, draw out **insights** and **tell the story**. There is always an **actionable** roadmap with clear commercial goals, and we make sure the client team are **engaged and excited to deliver this ambition**.



We encourage and expect our team to make their mark with ideas to transform the business

Unlike many consultancies, each of us work on **multiple projects** at any one time. Our project teams are typically small (3-4 people) with a **flat structure** - this means everyone in the team has a real impact.

Life at Cognosis extends beyond the four walls of our office

We pride ourselves on our culture. A crucial element of this are the activities and events that happen outside of the office. These include:

- Annual two-day **company offsite**
- Insightful **'Food for thought'** sessions, sharing knowledge from recent projects over pizza
- Biannual **strategy days** to workshop our current strategy and performance as a team
- Regular **work socials** and **fundraising events** for our corporate charities



Our Cognosis Promise is at the heart of working life: We ignite & sustain growth. For our clients, for our people.

Our development

Expect interesting work with brilliant people. At Cognosis we will always seek opportunities to grow ourselves and the people around us.

Our reward

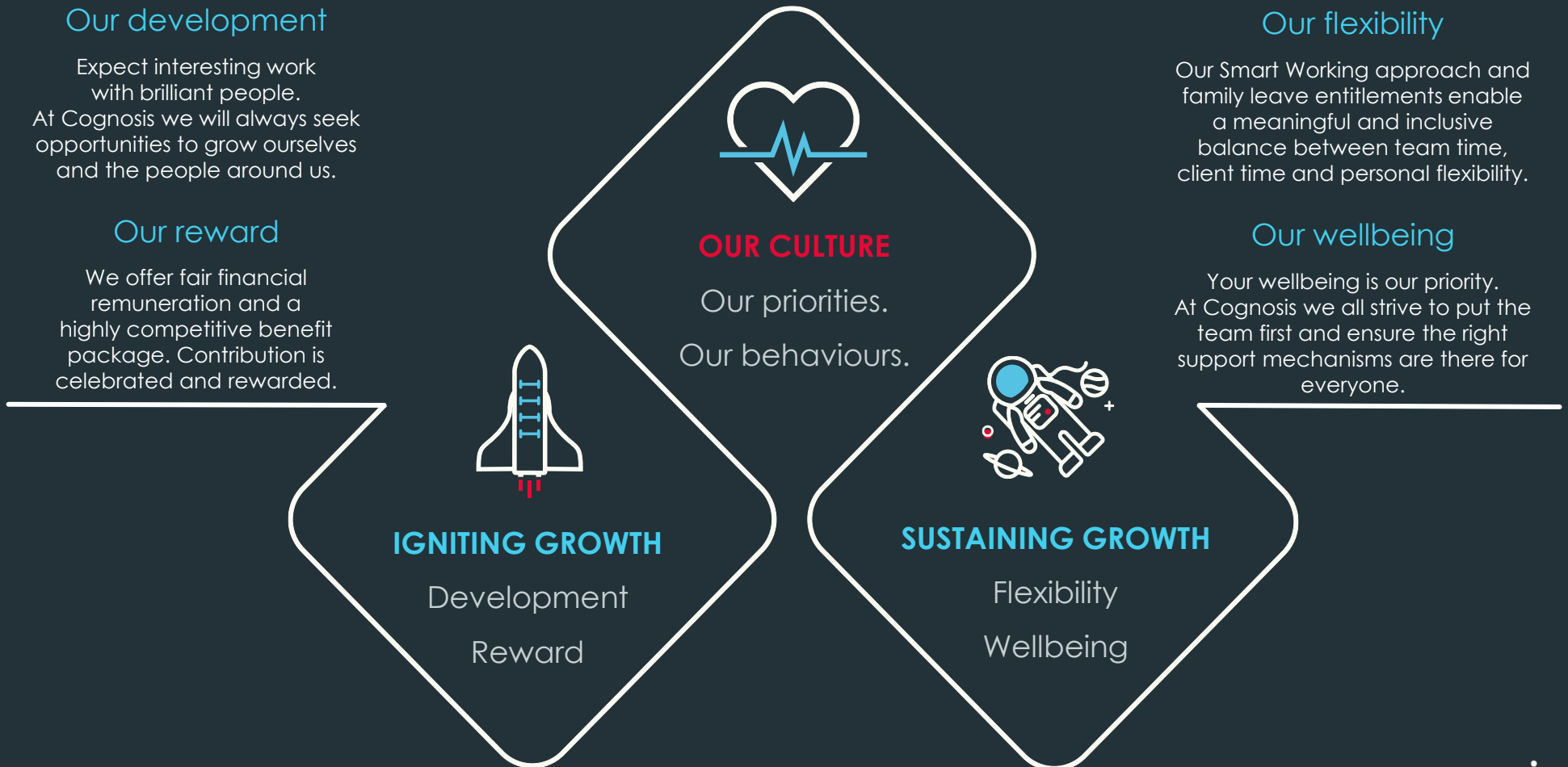
We offer fair financial remuneration and a highly competitive benefit package. Contribution is celebrated and rewarded.

Our flexibility

Our Smart Working approach and family leave entitlements enable a meaningful and inclusive balance between team time, client time and personal flexibility.

Our wellbeing

Your wellbeing is our priority. At Cognosis we all strive to put the team first and ensure the right support mechanisms are there for everyone.



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4 Our graduate programme



WHAT TO EXPECT: REFLECTIONS FROM SOME OF OUR FORMER GRADUATES



Poppy de Salis
Consultant
(2025 Programme)

"As a graduate, I was surprised by how quickly I was fully involved in projects. From day one, I wasn't just assigned tasks, I was actively encouraged to take ownership and share my perspective."

"I had amazing support on the grad programme. Cognosis takes development seriously and ensures you're equipped with the right skills and experience to successfully launch your consulting career"



Robbie Polkinghorne
Senior Consultant
(2022 Programme)

"Having been on another graduate scheme before joining, the difference was stark. Here, you're not just supporting projects from the sidelines; you're in the room with senior leaders from a range of industries, contributing to discussions that shape project outcomes. That trust accelerates the development of your strategic thinking and communication skills, builds your confidence, and gives you a real sense of impact."



Francesca Belton
Senior Consultant
(2023 Programme)



Saskia Rubin
Consultant
(2023 Programme#2)

"The structure at Cognosis is supportive and non-hierarchical. Grads are encouraged to take on as much responsibility as they feel comfortable with from the moment they arrive. Having joined after a decade working in the arts, this allowed me to use my existing skills and take on a more expansive role in areas where I already felt secure."

"What separates Cognosis for me, is the responsibility you are given as a Graduate. You contribute to all aspects of impactful projects, and are supported by an incredibly talented team"



Yash Shah
Manager
(2019 Programme)

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How do we help our Analysts develop?

On joining Cognosis, Graduates are assigned a **mentor** to guide their personal and professional development via our monthly feedback cycle, tracking progress against our **Development Framework**.



The **six-month graduate programme** begins with a series of **induction** sessions.

From week 2, you can be introduced to a project team to gain practical **on-the-job learning**.

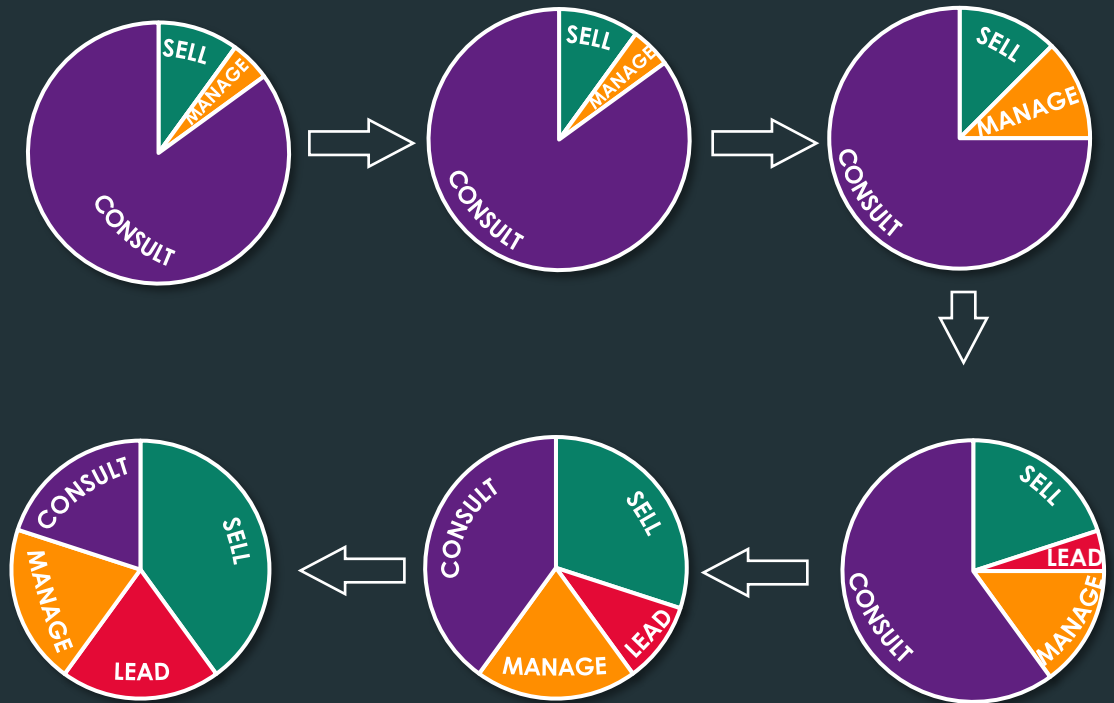
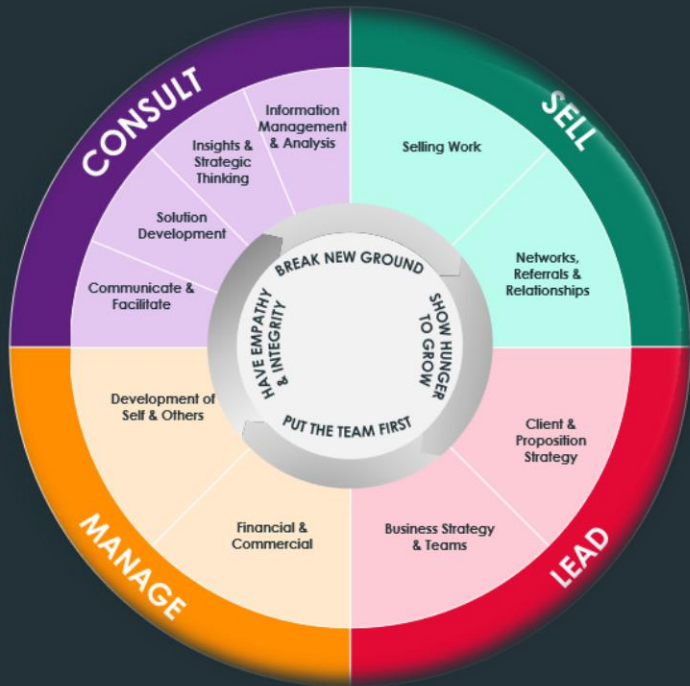
While most of your training will be on-the-job, we provide significant other **learning opportunities**:

- Regular **Skills & Knowledge sessions**. Recent topics have included *Presentation & Facilitation skills*, *PowerPoint Tips & Tricks* and *'Strategic Implications – Getting to the 'So-what?'*.
- Project knowledge is shared through our monthly **'Food for Thought'** sessions (with pizza!)
- Anyone at Cognosis can also apply for our **training budget for external learning** opportunities

Our graduate programme

Beyond the programme, we have a structured Development Framework to build your skillset at each grade

Cognosis Development Framework



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FINANCIAL BENEFITS

Salary

The salary for an Analyst is **£33,000**.

You will be given a first opportunity for promotion to Consultant at the end of the six-month programme. Upon promotion, your salary will increase to **£37,500**.

Profit Share

All team members receive a share of our annual profit, based on company performance and individual contribution.

Upon promotion to Consultant, your bonus-earning potential will double.



OTHER BENEFITS

- Hybrid and flexible working arrangements, with option to work remotely for up to 3 days per week and to work abroad or away for up to 3 weeks each year
- 30 days holiday per year after 2 years' service (25 days on joining), plus additional 'life leave'
- Private Medical Insurance, with full cover from day 1
- 24-hour confidential employee assistance offering lifestyle and wellbeing support.
- Stakeholder pension scheme, life assurance and income protection
- Regular team events & socials, including an annual two-day team offsite
- Peer recognition reward schemes
- Cycle Scheme (onsite cycle facilities available)
- Free onsite barista, free wellness and lifestyle events on site and onsite café, pizza restaurant, cocktail bar & cinema club
- Support towards setting up your home office
- Additional 'Long Service Leave' granted every 5 years
- Exceptional family leave entitlements including up to 30 weeks full pay for all new parents

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5 What we're looking for

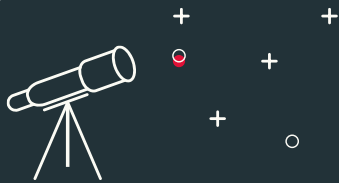


What we're looking for

Our Culture. Our priorities. Our behaviours.

We pride ourselves on our curiosity and collaborative working practices. We are brave, we celebrate difference, we live our behaviours, and we do the right thing. We care about our business, and we care about our team.

We are looking for individuals who can embody our Cognosis behaviours:



BE BRAVE AND STRIVE TO BREAK NEW GROUND

- Have a point of view: we're not paid to sit on the fence
- Be prepared to share it, bring constructive challenge - but always in the spirit of positive intent



PUT THE TEAM FIRST, ALWAYS AHEAD OF YOURSELF

- Respect team-related ways of working
- Deliver on commitments, for clients, the team, the business
- Roll up your sleeves and muck in when needed



SHOW HUNGER TO GROW, OUR CLIENTS, OUR BUSINESS, OUR COLLEAGUES, OURSELVES

- Challenge yourself: be better today than you were yesterday
- Be proactive, take accountability, act with urgency
- Give (and seek) fast effective feedback, it grows people faster



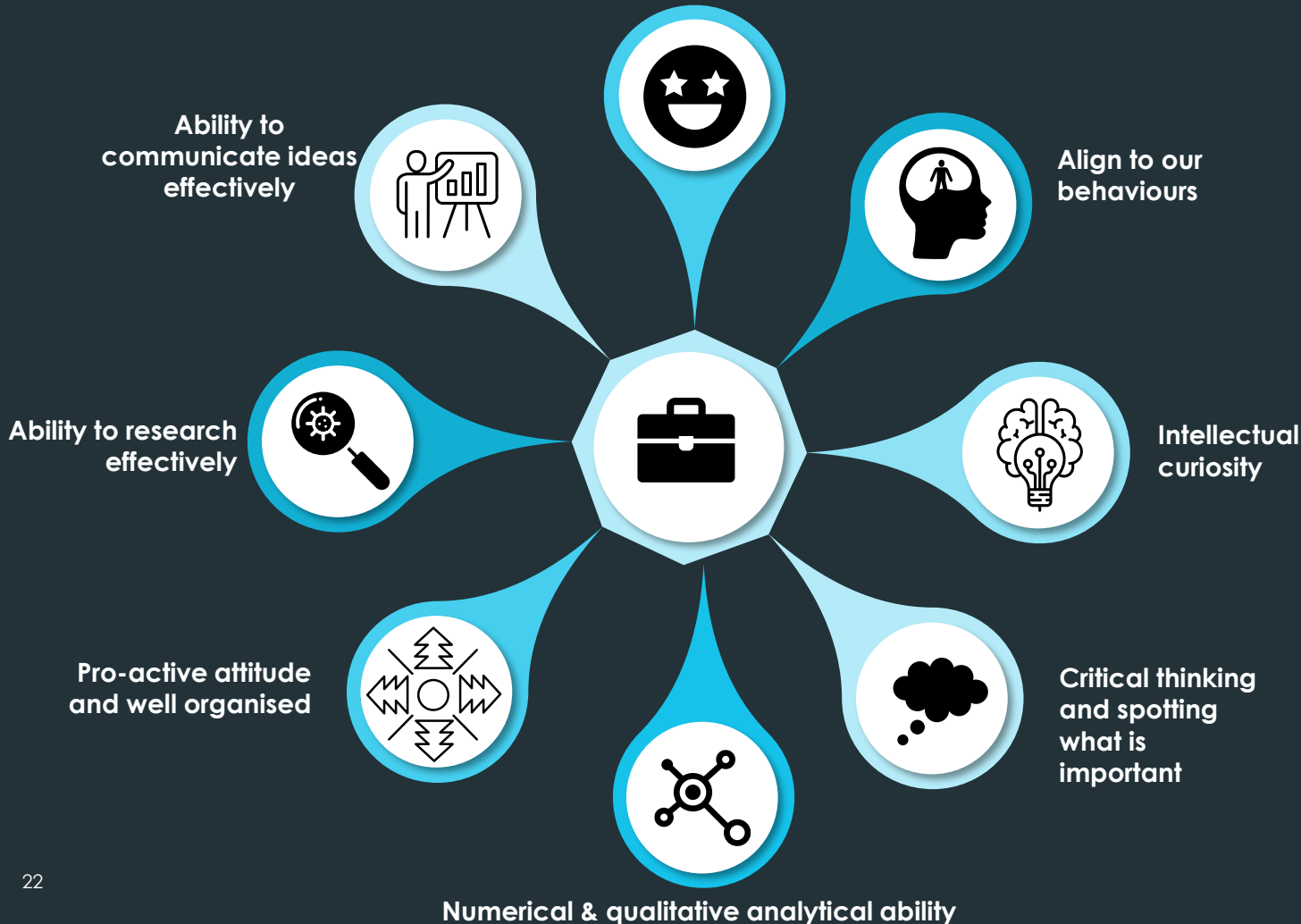
HAVE EMPATHY & INTEGRITY IN EVERYTHING YOU DO

- Respect the individual in all of us: listen first and seek to understand
- Never jeopardise the trust we've built
- We won't always be right - but we'll always do the right thing

What we're looking for

Furthermore, we are looking for well-rounded candidates with a genuine excitement for what we do

Excitement for strategy consulting



What we are not looking for – common myths:

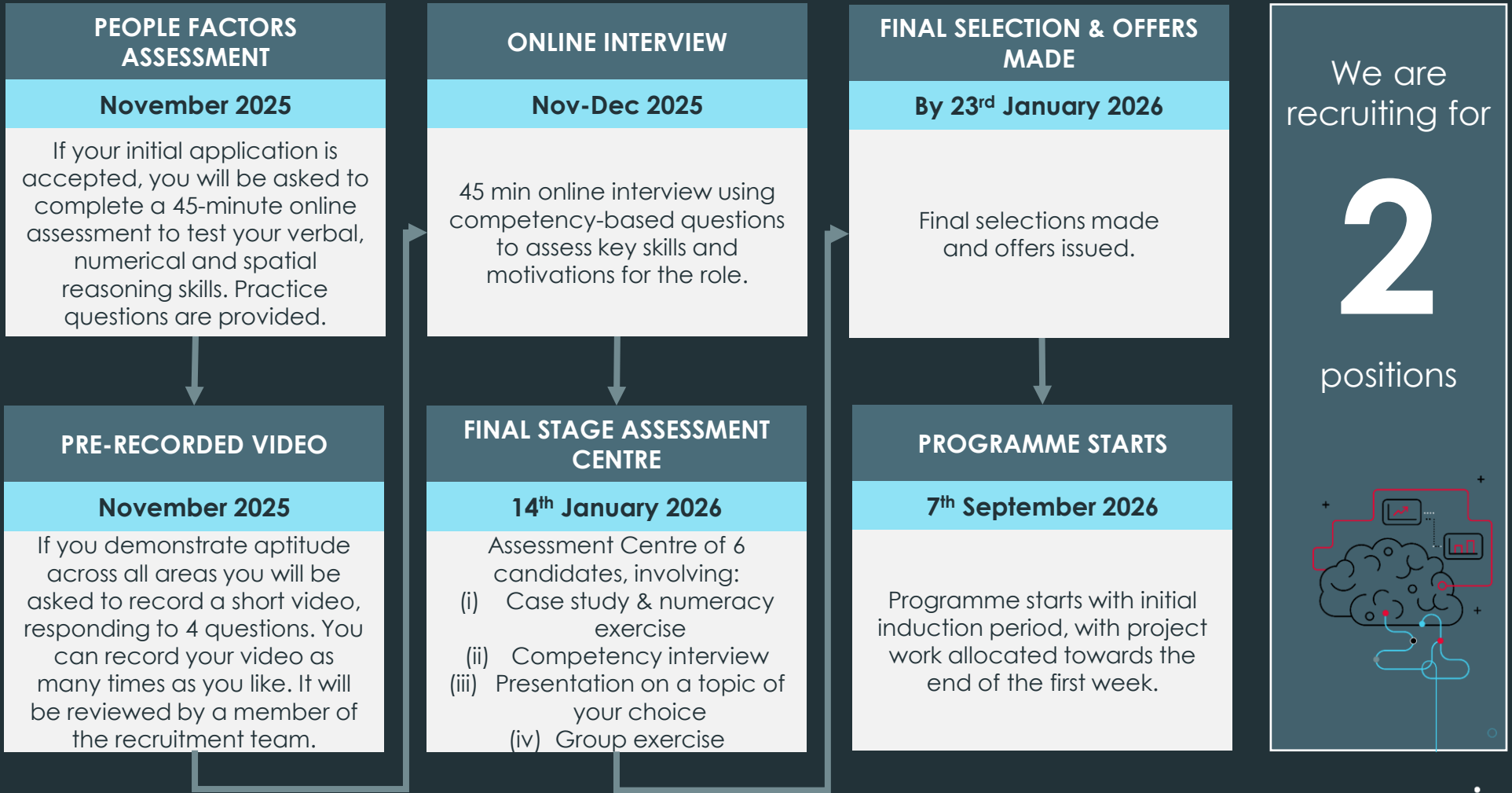
- ❖ Specific degrees
- ❖ Prestigious internships
- ❖ Specific schools or universities
- ❖ A particular profile
- ❖ The “finished article”

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6 Recruitment process

What to expect once you have applied



What to expect and tips – the pre-recorded video and 1st-round interview

Both stages will centre around three main aspects:

1

Competency-based questions

- **Experiences** which illustrate skills we're looking for. Examples can be personal, as well as from education or professional experience – choose an example that best illustrates the point.
- Keep it succinct and structured. Outline:
 - 1) the **situation**,
 - 2) what you did (the **behaviour**)
 - 3) what the **outcome** was
- **Tip**: a lot of info about competency questions can be found online

2

Motivations for strategy at Cognosis

- Keep it **clear and focused**
 - We are looking to understand your motivations, not how extensively you have memorised this pack! Talk about the things you really care about.
- Be **open and authentic**
 - help us get to know you better, don't tell us what you think we want to hear.

3

Business awareness questions

- In the pre-recorded video, we will ask you a specific question about a **business you find interesting**.
- This will require some research in advance to select a business.
- We encourage you to **think broadly** to identify a **truly interesting case study** that appeals to you – we love learning new things!
- We may return to this business later in the application process, so make sure it is something you can talk engagingly about.

Some tips...

- If possible, find a **quiet area** where you will not be disturbed and can concentrate
- Test your **video and microphone setup beforehand**, to minimise technical issues in the interview
- Once you are comfortable with your video set-up, you may find it helpful to **hide your own video from your view**: looking at yourself can be distracting, and prevent you connecting with the interviewer as authentically

