

From the Dean's Desk: A Breakthrough Year in the Consulting Industry

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A Breakthrough Year for Sy Syms in the Consulting Industry

Three years ago, the Sy Syms Board of Overseers and I set a goal of **helping our students get even better jobs** in a handful of industries in which we were already strong (e.g., real estate, Wall Street, accounting) and in several other industries that could be great fits for our graduates but were a lot less established at Sy Syms (e.g., entrepreneurship/technology, consulting, commercial banking).

To support that effort, we redesigned the Board to include a representative from each of those industries who would lead a Board Committee comprised of three to six other stars from the industry. Each committee had a threefold mandate: (1) Help us figure out the parts of the **curriculum that should be strengthened** to best prepare our students for the industry, (2) help us pave a **smoother path to opportunities** in the industry and (3) help us figure out how to **best tap other industry experts** in our activities.

In total, between the Board and the Committees, we now have [three dozen star alumni and friends of YU](#) who are making board-level contributions to our next generations of students.

One of the newest committees is the **Consulting Committee**, led by YU alumna Teresa Bayewitz, a partner at Mercer Consulting who joined our Board of Overseers last fall. The Consulting Committee comprises partners and rising stars from the major consulting firms who are dedicated to helping YU students understand the recruiting process, prepare for interviews and build the strongest foundation for successful careers in the industry.

The Consulting Committee has joined several other efforts that **coalesced to make this a breakthrough year** for Sy Syms in the

consulting industry. In addition to the Consulting Committee, the pieces in this puzzle include our core curriculum (in which strategy & entrepreneurship has been the fastest-growing major), the YU Consulting Society that is led by two young alumni working in the industry, [the YU Consulting Force](#) and its sister [the YU Israel Summer Internship Program](#) and the consulting track within the student-driven TAMID club.

Each of these individual efforts has yielded important gains, and they have also begun reinforcing each other. For instance, the Consulting Committee drove the extremely successful lineup of "**expert sessions**," with which we jointly trained this summer's YU Consulting Force and YU Israel Summer Internship Program.

This month, YU published a [feature story](#) on our early success at building a path to consulting jobs for our students, focusing on this year's salutatorian, Rachel Doretsky. Please read below for an adapted version of that story and watch for future newsletters about our efforts across other industries.

One other note. We have now released 11 episodes of the **new [Founder's Dilemmas](#) podcast that I do with Charlie Harary**. Please see the bottom of this newsletter for links to individual episodes and to subscribe on the major podcasting platforms.



Dr. Noam Wasserman

Dean

YU's Combination of Courses + Practical Experiences

In August 2019, at the start of her sophomore year, Rachel Doretsky '22SB promised herself that by the time she graduated, she would snag a great job that would allow her to make aliyah.

This September, the Long Island native will keep that promise when she joins McKinsey & Company in Tel Aviv as a business analyst, becoming one of the first YU undergraduates to secure a position at one of "the most selective employers in the world, a company known for its notoriously competitive hiring process," according to *The Economist*.

How did this Sy Syms alumna get her foot in the door? Doretsky chalks it up to hard work, tenacity and, as she noted, "the realization that there are no shortcuts. If you want something, you need to be willing to work for it and do whatever it takes to get there." Helping her build the confidence and savvy to navigate the road to McKinsey's Tel Aviv office were an array of YU resources she was able to call upon: mentoring relationships with professors and alumni, interning at the YU Consulting Force, membership in YU's Consulting Society (a new alumni-led group helping YU students break into the field) and leadership roles in the YU chapter of the student-run TAMID club.

When she started at the Sy Syms School of Business, she was passionate about accounting, "but after two semesters, I realized it wasn't the career for me." She sought advice from [Dr. Sharon Poczter](#), chair of the strategy and entrepreneurship department at Sy Syms, who pointed out plenty of opportunities in business other than accounting.



Rachel Doretsky (Left) with Dr. Sharon Poczter (Right), Chair of the Strategy and Entrepreneurship Department at the Sy Syms School of Business

Targeting Israel and the Top Firm in the World

Coincidentally, as Doretsky was considering her options for a new major, the [YU Consulting Force](#)—an internship program that involves YU students in consulting projects for non-profits that I helped develop in April 2020 when COVID forced the cancellation of most internships—was accepting applications for its inaugural cohort of interns. Doretsky applied, got in and discovered what life as a consultant might be like. That moved her to increase her participation in TAMID, a student club that helps undergrads develop competencies like consulting skills by connecting them remotely with Israeli companies. One of her consulting projects at TAMID was with Zebra Medical Vision, a medical software company specializing in AI.

Her game plan was shaping up well. She had changed majors to finance and strategy/entrepreneurship and set her sights on McKinsey as a prospective employer, a choice motivated by her involvement with YU's Consulting Society. Armed with an Excel spreadsheet and tapping into her YU network, Rachel methodically reached out over the course of a year via LinkedIn to McKinsey's Israel recruiter, as well as many others, to learn about the leadership skills and experience the firm sought in a candidate, all while building a Rolodex of company contacts. "I spoke with business analysts, consultants, engagement managers, associate partners and even a partner—as many McKinsey people as possible. As a result, I met over one-third of the firm before being interviewed."

With the groundwork laid, she applied to McKinsey in December 2021. What followed were a demanding series of one-on-one case interviews with consultants, engagement managers and senior partners designed to assess her analytical abilities to solve hypothetical business problems.

The First of Three to Join Top Firms

After four rounds of successful interviews, which took months of preparation, Doretsky received an offer in February 2022 to join McKinsey Tel Aviv as a business analyst. Soon after, another Sy Syms graduating senior received an offer from a McKinsey office in the U.S., and a third student received an offer from another top firm, Deloitte Consulting, making this a breakthrough year for YU undergraduates in this emerging industry.

Her advice for success is simple and straightforward. "Be ready to pivot. Be patient but passionate, and when you decide what you want, pursue it relentlessly, even if it means going outside your comfort zone. Once I had hands-on experience in consulting and realized I loved it, I did whatever it took to reach my goal.

Thank you to Maureen Brennan for her contributions to this story.

Founder's Dilemmas

Based on a best-selling book, *Founder's Dilemmas* is a podcast that dives into how to avoid the typical startup pitfalls, co-hosted by Dean Dr. Noam Wasserman and Charlie Harary.

Episode 1: [Preparing Yourself to Found](#)

Episode 2: [Relationship Problems](#)

Episode 3: [Relationship Solutions](#)

Episode 4: ["But I Want to be CEO!": Roles and Decision Making](#)

Episode 5: [Reward Dilemmas: Splitting the Equity](#)

Episode 6: [Founding Questions and Answers, Part 1](#)

Episode 7: ["Should I Double-Down on My Bet?" The Truth About Entrepreneurial Persistence](#)

Episode 8: [Financing Dilemmas and Rich vs. King Tradeoffs](#)

Episode 9: [Equity Splits Q&A: Is the Idea Worth Anything? Are All 50/50 Splits Wrong?](#)

Episode 10: [Q&A: "Do Successful Founders Mislead Us?"](#)

Episode 11: ["You're Firing Me as Parent of My Baby?": The Paradox of Entrepreneurial Success](#)

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