

Chris Sutton reports on the new Chartered Management Consultant award.



The award was launched with a high profile webinar on 26 April, organised jointly by CMI and MCA.

I had first heard of it a year ago, through a CMI post on Linked In, and decided to apply. The process is that, if you are applying as an experienced consultant with over 7 years' experience you read the guidance notes, fill out a long template to describe your relevant experience against each question on the form, and then attend an interview with someone who is also a ChMC. You pay about £800 to CMI to apply (I seem to recall there are no refunds) and also £50 as a CMI subscription. There is a different route if you are applying earlier in your career, which involves submitting a portfolio of work.

My application form got rejected first time round because I hadn't answered the questions fully enough – though I had used up all the word count that I was allowed. After a fairly brusque email from CMI telling me that I had been rejected, the same day I then got a friendly email from someone at CMI (who turned out to be my interviewer) telling me the areas I still needed to give evidence on, which was mainly in the area of “give us some examples of ethical dilemmas you have faced in your consulting career”. Fine, but they could have made that requirement clearer in the guidance notes. So I resubmitted, got invited for a fairly soft one-hour online interview, and got the T Shirt. I am now one of about 350 MCMI ChMCs – you are supposed to use all the letters, but I am determined just to use ChMC because there are a lot of other things for which I want to use the allowed word count on my Linked In profile, which is my main CV these days.

Other than the invitation to the launch, and an initial mailing about how I could help promote the brand to my network, I haven't heard anything really since from CMI. No invitations to networking events, CPD training or anything like that.

The launch meeting itself came across as quite a powerful and well-orchestrated launch event for the qualification scheme, they had lined up some big guns to advocate for the importance of having a chartered qualification for management consultants. Including Lord Grimstone the Minister of State for Trade. The Panel was chaired by Anne Francke (CEO of CMI) with Tamzen Isaacson (CEO of the MCA) also present -very much second fiddle.

Marco Amitrano Head of PwC Clients and Markets (and until recently head of PwC Consulting) was on the panel, and said how he had gone through the process of getting the qualification himself and that he had made the rest of the PwC Consulting UK leadership team do the same. It was clear from what he said that he went through the normal application route, PwC did not buy the qualification for him. I was interested that Mark (like me) was already a chartered accountant, and still saw value from the ChMC qualification. Both he and Yunus Ozler (Partner, EY) said that their firms are taking the ChMC qualification seriously, and it is becoming part of their talent attraction for new consultants. The two other panelists were Jen Hipkiss (IBM iX - representing the younger generation) and Mark Palmer (Gobeyond Partners) representing SME consultancies. Anne Francke was at pains to point out that independent consultants are also encouraged to apply, as part of CMI's commitment to inclusivity.

All in all I think the organisers gave this a good shot and was impressed by the corporate commitment of PwC and EY to the scheme. Will this move the market towards the qualification? It will take some time to prove. They will certainly need to have much more than 350 ChMCs for the qualification to have influence in the market, and find a way to connect more meaningfully with those 350

I mainly applied as a personal development challenge. Everyone will have the differing views as to the real value of the ChMC qualification. I have always been a glass half full person, and am happy to share personal experiences with anyone else who is thinking of applying.