



# CAREER PATHS IN COMPUTING

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## The Making of an IT Strategy Consultant



### NAME

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### BACKGROUND

**Danish**

### CURRENT JOB TITLE/EMPLOYER

**Partner & CEO at IT ADVISORY  
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### EDUCATION

**M.Sc. in Computer  
Science in 2005, Aalborg  
University, Denmark**

**M**ANY YEARS AGO, during an internship at IBM in Tokyo, my mentor asked me how I envisioned my career. I replied, “It’s important that my work is fun.” She replied rather dryly, “You can’t live off fun, Kristian.” Today, my response would be: “It’s not living without it.”

But my story really starts even further back in time—to 1987—when I was just six years old. I can still recall the exhilaration of playing with that Commodore 64 as if it were yesterday. This experience manifested as a life-long fascination with technology, and I eventually graduated with a master’s degree in computer science from Aalborg University (Denmark) in 2005. My first job, that internship at IBM Tokyo Security Research Lab, turned out to be the most remarkable experience, personally as well as professionally. Culture, expertise, people, in-

ternational collaborations, innovation, fun—it was all there, and I wanted more.

After several years as a project manager at the largest bank in Denmark, I accepted a position as CIO of the Agency for Health in Greenland, which came with IT responsibility for the entire country’s healthcare system. Greenland was breathtaking and completely different from anything I had ever experienced. Notably, there are zero roads to connect the 16 cities and 56 settlements, making IT critical to connecting hospitals, general practitioners, specialists, and patients. I became a “Swiss army knife”—CIO, with days ranging from political strategy alignment to vendor management and patching switches in the data-center. The experience sharpened my planning abilities, ingenuity, and leadership skills dramatically.

The last 12 years, however, I have been an entrepreneur and independent IT management consultant in addition to business director for the French consulting agency Devoteam.

I left Devoteam for an extended paternity leave in 2017. To my delight, former clients started calling. And that was the beginning of my current company and passion—IT ADVISORY. The concept is simple: truly independent IT advice for top management. Although IT ADVISORY is more about producing documents, coaching, and facilitation, I would not be nearly as effective at it without a solid foundation in computer science. The theoretical and mathematical foundation enables me to understand, combine, and utilize new technological innovations.

Over the last couple of years, IT ADVISORY has transformed into a truly network-based business model. This approach provides access to experts in a way that other consulting models simply do not support: while we think in terms

of expertise, teamwork, value, and outcome, our competitors are thinking CVs and billable hours. The difference is tremendous. It’s not just about assigning suitable people to each project. It’s about bringing together the very best. And this makes each day fun and inspiring.

To prospective computer science professionals with an eye on consulting, I offer the following advice:

1. *There is no work/life balance—just life.* True wealth is discretionary time. When you focus on delivering value instead of racking up billable hours, your mindset transforms, and you become inspiring to work with.

2. *Developing yourself will give you more return on investment than anything else.* While university teaches you academic skills, you have a lot to learn about yourself. Be curious and devote time to explore your strengths and weaknesses.

3. *Writing skills set you apart.* Even though you may have done a lot of writing during your studies, you have a lot to learn about management communication. When, for example, you can concisely communicate a plan with balanced insight into options and risks, you will be taken seriously. Find a seasoned mentor and get feedback from peers.

4. *Collaborate and embrace conflicts.* Surround yourself with the best people you can find—not the most agreeable. Learn to manage conflict and accept that conflict is part of life and need not be intrinsically destructive. With a base of mutual trust, conflict leads to innovation.

Your education is a life-long journey. I am still learning new things every week at age 41, and I love it! As author James Clear (*Atomic Habits*) puts it: “When you fall in love with the process rather than the product, you don’t have to wait to give yourself permission to be happy. You can be satisfied anytime your system is running.”

