Chapter 02: Developing an Approach

The McKinsey Way — Ethan M. Rasiel • Executive Strategy Breakdown

THE MCKINSEY WAY

1 The Problem Is Not Always the Problem

- ✓ Clients rarely articulate their real core dilemma; they present symptoms, political grievances, or historical assumptions disguised as the definitive mandate.
- ✓ Accepting a client's initial framing without rigorous diagnosis guarantees solving the wrong problem with high precision, wasting time and organizational capital.
- ✓ When a client requested an operational audit to fix a plant's 'inefficient assembly line', deep inquiry revealed that poor sales forecasting—not manufacturing speed—was flooding the warehouse with unmarketable inventory.

2 Do Not Reinvent the Wheel

- ✓ Most business challenges have structural precedents; consulting firms leverage internal knowledge repositories, past study archives, and industry subject-matter experts before generating novel frameworks.
- ✓ Borrowing validated operational methodologies accelerates diagnosis, mitigates analytical risks, and preserves team energy for bespoke client nuances.
- ✓ A junior consultant tasked with pricing a novel telecommunications asset does not draft equations from scratch, but adapts an established econometric model refined across twenty global engagements.

3 Fit the Solution to the Client, Not Facts to the Solution

- ✓ Consultants must guard against confirmation bias, refusing to force empirical findings into preconceived intellectual frameworks or pet theories.
- ✓ An analytically elegant recommendation is utterly worthless if the client lacks the organizational talent, technological infrastructure, or capital reserves to implement it.
- ✓ McKinsey consultants ensure recommendations fit the client's cultural readiness, recognizing that a phased 80% solution executed immediately outperforms a flawless 100% overhaul that paralyzes the workforce.