



PERCEPTIONS OF CONSULTING IN TECHNOLOGY, MEDIA & TELECOMS

*Assesses the reputation of consulting firms,
as seen by clients*



OUR VALUES AND INTEGRITY

Our purpose is to help you grow your business. We aim to provide you with the best data and analysis to help you make the right decisions for your firm.

To that end, Source Global Research is completely independent of any professional services firm we work with or comment on. Moreover, the quantitative data and rankings shown in this report are based on the views of senior end users of professional services (your clients and prospects), not on our view. The analysis, on the other hand, is our own—as experts in interpreting client data, our aim is to help you make sense of it and bring the important messages to your attention.

It is not possible to influence our rankings either by subscribing to our research or by paying us money—it never has been and it never will be.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **IBM Global Business Solutions** (IBM hereafter) is the firm TMT clients are most likely to tell us about, closely followed by **Accenture**. The top five is rounded out by a collection of strategy firms, with **McKinsey** taking third place, ahead of **Bain & Company** and **The Boston Consulting Group**, which finish in fourth and fifth place respectively.
- When we look at the overall quality rankings, a mere 15 points separate the top-rated firm from the bottom-rated firm. IBM sits at the top of the ranking, but second-placed Accenture is hot on its heels, closely followed by **Deloitte**, which is the best placed of the Big Four.
- When it comes to the value added in relation to the fees paid, IBM is once again the firm with the highest proportion of clients speaking positively about it. **Capgemini Consulting** sits in second place, with **Strategy&** close behind. Just five points separate these top three firms.
- While perceptions of value have largely improved across the consulting market as a whole, the proportion of TMT clients speaking positively about value has hardly changed.
- Using a firm for some service lines significantly increases the likelihood of the client speaking positively about the value added. The strongest relationship is with sales, marketing & customer service; and risk management. Regulatory-driven work is also not far behind.
- There's a relationship between positive perceptions of a firm's ability to implement and positive perceptions about value. Such a relationship is also evident with a firm's global reach, the quality of a firm's thought leadership, and the methodologies a firm uses.

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HOW TO USE THIS CLIENT PERCEPTION STUDY

It's very important to be clear about what our Client Perception Studies are, and are not:

What they're not are exhaustive studies of clients' opinions about specific firms that remain statistically robust when filtered to provide detailed data about views at a very granular level of the market. So if, for instance, you want statistically robust data about what clients in the pharma sector in Germany think about McKinsey's operational improvement capabilities, you won't find it in these reports. We do profile individual firms in our reports to the extent we can—indeed this remains one of the most popular parts of the reports with readers—and we do, separately, offer in depth analysis of the world's leading consulting firms, but our Client Perception Studies are not designed to replace the sort of in-depth client research that many firms carry out (and often ask us to carry out for them).

What they are designed to do is provide a snapshot of views within a particular consulting market at a point in time. What they lack in detail about individual firms they make up for in three important ways:

- A multi-firm view. Our reports enable consulting firms to see how they stack up against their competitors in the minds of clients.
- A view from prospects, not just existing clients. We include the views of people who aren't current active clients of the firm they're telling us about, enabling us to understand what we tend to think of as a firm's brand pipeline, and to compare the views of prospective and active clients. In doing this last, we're able to assess the extent to which clients' expectation of a firm are met in reality, and how well a firm's marketing and delivery capabilities are aligned.
- Independence and expertise. The trouble with conducting your own client research is that clients are often reluctant to express negative views about firms (and people) with whom they've worked closely. They have no such concerns when they're telling us. Added to which, we're able to bring the expertise we've gained over years of analysing the consulting market to bear, helping to interpret the results within the context of the wider market and the strategic priorities of consulting firms.

It's important to remember that this is a study of client perceptions; a summarised view of what we're hearing from the market. It's not our view, nor is it a comment on market share or a recommendation to clients about which firms to buy from. The audience for these reports is the firms featured in them, and those interested in the strength of the competition in any given market

OUR CUSTOM RESEARCH SERVICES

Over the course of the last ten years we've worked with leaders in many of the world's biggest professional services firms, to help them find solutions to some of their most important challenges. Here are some typical examples of the kind of work we do.

You need to know how big your market is

We have a global data model of the professional services industry that is the biggest and most sophisticated of its kind ever created. It provides data on market size, growth rates, and forecasts across 29 industrial sectors, 10 service lines, and 84 countries. It also breaks down the market by different types of firm.

We can provide you with a version of the model that's customised to fit your needs, giving you data on all the countries, sectors, and service lines that matter to you, and none that don't. But we won't stop there, unless you want us to: Our analysts will work alongside you to make the model yours, mapping our definitions to yours, so you can look at the market on your terms rather than ours.

You need to understand what the numbers mean for you

For many of the firms we work with, pure data isn't enough, and nor are standard reports able to offer a view that's sufficiently tailored to their needs. In these situations, our analysts start with a blank sheet of paper, put your firm in the middle of it, and draw on all our data and knowledge—including about clients' perceptions—to build a picture of the world around you. You get a story that's laser-focused on your challenges and your opportunities, and that helps you to translate data an insight into action.

You're new in your role and need to understand the market for which you're now responsible

For people who have just moved into a new role, we can create packs of information specific to a particular geography, sector or service line. Our market sizing data can be used to quantify the market's potential, and our analysis of clients' perceptions and the competitive landscape will help you understand how best to seize the opportunities and respond to the threats.

You need to create clear propositions around your services

Our research tells us that having a big brand is no longer enough: Increasingly, clients expect professional firms to have a clearly articulated proposition for each service that differentiates them from their competitors. But the best propositions aren't built in a day: Our analysis, because it's based grounded in facts about clients' perceptions and behaviour, helps firms quickly cut through internal disagreement and build a clear sense of direction.

You need help with your inorganic growth plans

We also work with firms that are supplementing their organic growth with acquisitions, helping buyers find and qualify suitable targets for acquisitions. Leveraging our deep knowledge of the professional services sector, we can scan the market, profile companies, and even effect introductions. Firms use our services because we're well-connected in the industry, independent, and fast.

You need to understand how you measure up against your competitors in the minds of clients

Understanding what your clients think about your firm is critical in today's fastchanging and highly competitive market. New circumstances demand new, expert-led strategies to brand benchmarking, and that requires both independence—to get to the real story, not the one your clients think you want to hear—and deep knowledge and data about your market and your competitors.

We usually have a head-start here, because of the data we already have, but we've got all the expertise and experience that's needed to conduct new research among your clients and those of your competitors, in order to understand where your strengths and weaknesses lie, and what you need to do to stand out. The focus might be on your firm alone, but it might also be on how you can create competitive advantage over specific, named competitors.

You need to create better, more effective, thought leadership

Thought leadership has come to dominate the marketing activities of professional service firms, and with good cause: Our research with clients finds consistent evidence that good thought leadership matters to them, too. It helps them to do their job, to identify where world-class capability exists in these firms, and even to shortlist firms for projects.

How well does your thought leadership measure up? We can conduct in-depth reviews to assess quality in a sample of material that's either random or defined by you, from single pieces to entire bodies of work, on an ad-hoc or routine basis. We can also help you shape your approach to topics and understand what your competitors are doing, and can provide guidance about how to approach a specific piece of high-profile thought leadership.

We also recognise that good thought leadership doesn't happen by accident, but because you've put in place the right processes and engaged the interests and enthusiasm of your key subject matter experts. We help professional services firms create the foundations, organisational structure and processes for high-quality content. We can also run workshops that inspire your people and help make them more effective at creating thought leadership.

About Source

Source Global Research is a leading provider of information about the market for professional services. Set up in 2007, Source serves the professional services industry with expert analysis, research, and reporting. We draw not only on our extensive in-house experience but also on the breadth of our relationships with both suppliers and buyers. All of our work is underpinned by our core values of intelligence, integrity, efficiency, and transparency

Source was founded by Fiona Czerniawska and Joy Burnford. Fiona is one of the world's leading experts on the consulting industry. She has written numerous books on the industry including: *The Intelligent Client* and *The Economist* books, *Business Consulting: A Guide to How it Works and How to Make it Work* and *Buying Professional Services*.

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