

EXTRACT

Partners in the Future:

Part 1: The Commercial Model

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CONSULTING, TECHNOLOGY & SERVICES

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Contents

Executive summary	3
SECTION 1: How partners spend their time	5
SECTION 2: The changing resource pyramid	13
SECTION 3: The path to partner	19
About our methodology	25
Contributors	26
About Sheffield Haworth	27
About Source Global Research	27

Executive summary

There has never been a more exciting—or challenging—time to be a leader in the consulting industry. The nature of project delivery is going through a period of fundamental change; the boundaries between consulting, technology, and other categories of professional services are breaking down, to the point where some have even questioned whether the term “consulting” is still a relevant one.

At the same time, firms are finding themselves having to grapple with increasingly complex client challenges and clients, themselves, are becoming increasingly sophisticated buyers of consulting services. Many of these challenges can only be solved through close collaboration—both between different service lines and capability teams within a firm, and between firms and their ecosystems of technology partners.

But none of this will be possible without a new approach to leadership. This is the first of a two-part report series that explores how consulting firms are rethinking what it means to be a partner—and how those partners can best be empowered to provide meaningful leadership at a time of profound change.

This first report looks at the role that partners play within their firm’s wider business, and the changes taking place in how firms leverage their partnership to produce commercial success. The second report—“The Leaders of Tomorrow”, published soon— will explore the evolution of the partnership itself, and the ways in which today’s partners look, act, and think differently from their predecessors.

No firm will be able to thrive going forward without a commercial model that takes full advantage of the skills and the knowledge its partners bring to the table:

- Partners are finding their already precious time under increasing pressure. As well as balancing their project delivery commitments against hitting sales and recruitment targets, they are now also expected to play an active role in making sure that their firm has access to an expansive pool of intellectual property and strong ecosystem alliances.
- As a response to this, many firms have tried to create space within their organisations for partners to specialise in different aspects of business development, as well as those who wholly dedicate themselves to on-the-ground delivery.
- The days of a “one size fits all” career path are rapidly coming to an end; firms are adapting to the needs of a workforce that expects flexibility in both the work they do and how they do it.
- As career paths have evolved, firms have had to explore new ways of monitoring and rewarding success. Financial metrics such as sales and utilisation are still important, but only as part of a more holistic way of evaluating a partner’s contribution to the firm.
- As clients put pressure on consulting firms to provide greater volumes of specialist resources, those firms have had to shave the lower tiers of their resource pyramid and change their attitude towards working with freelancers and contractors. Consequently, partners have to shoulder even more of the responsibility for the success of client engagements.

Contributors

We are extremely grateful to all the people we spoke to for making this report possible. Below is a list of individuals who have contributed (excluding those who wished to remain anonymous).

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Adrian Bettridge	Managing Partner	Baringa Partners
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Paul Clark	Global Managing Partner, Managed Services	EY
Wendy Conway Schmidt	Principal (Retired)	Deloitte
Lisa Dauber	Head of Experienced Hiring EMEA and US	Oliver Wyman
Christian Edelmann	Partner, Co-Head of EMEA, Financial Services, and Global Head of Wealth & Asset Management	Oliver Wyman
Lorraine Mackin	Partner and Head of Insight Led Improvement UK	KPMG
Charles Vivian	Managing Director and Portfolio Group Lead	North Highland
Hugo Walkinshaw	Chief Partnership Officer	AntWorks
Bin Wolfe	Global Deputy - Talent	EY
Jonathan Wright	Global Head Cognitive Process Re-engineering	IBM Services

About Sheffield Haworth

Sheffield Haworth is a global challenger talent consultancy focused on people led transformation and our purpose is to help organisations and people to realise their potential.

Our clients span the Consulting, Technology & Services, Financial Services, Real Assets and broader Corporate sectors and our services covers Executive Search, Talent Advisory & Development and Consulting Solutions.

Established in London in 1993, Sheffield Haworth has undergone significant growth and expansion, now employing over 150 professionals in 12 global offices throughout the Americas, Europe, Middle East and Asia Pacific regions, with a client list that includes a substantial number of leading global organisations.

Operating as a single global P&L and team approach we bring together much broader expertise from across the group to support clients with their most complex talent related challenges.

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Consulting, Technology & Services

Sheffield Haworth has merged its Business and Professional Services sector practice with the Technology sector practice, Gillamor Stephens, to form the global Consulting, Technology & Services sector practice. This integration has enabled the practice to maximise the combined capabilities of the teams across geographies, and fully integrate the acquisition of Gillamor Stephens made in 2018.

The Consulting, Technology & Services team at Sheffield Haworth has extensive global experience across the breadth of the sector. Our clients include global brands and emerging businesses across Consulting & Advisory, Technology Services, Deep Tech, Enterprise Software, Business Services and Professional Services.

The team works with clients across all industry sectors, competencies and functional areas including all aspects of technology, data and analytics, digital, cyber, strategy and operations, finance, human capital, risk and compliance. These experiences have also led to our team developing a proven track record of bringing best practice in strategy, transformation, technology and change experience to corporate clients looking to strengthen capabilities or manage disruption.

About Source Global Research

Source Global Research is a leading provider of information about the market for professional services.

Set up in 2007, Source services the professional services industry with expert analysis, research, and reporting. We draw not only on 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.

Among other things, our work includes:

- Deep market and competitor analysis
- Acquisition strategy
- Proposition strategy and development
- Brand and client sentiment analysis
- Thought leadership strategy, development, and review

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Also in the *Partners in the Future* series:

Part 2: Leaders of Tomorrow



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