EXTRACT

The France Consulting Market in 2022

Market Trends Programme





What's included in this report

Our reports offer a wealth of market sizing, growth, and forecast data alongside engaging, in-depth analysis of the trends that matter. Using our highly flexible, multidimensional model we provide firms with robust, trusted data to make informed decisions about strategic investments and plan for the future.



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Explores the key trends that were front of mind for consulting firms in this market in 2021.

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About this report

Our report draws on four main sources:

- Our Global Data Model covering the professional services market
- Our annual global client perception survey of senior end-users of consulting firms
- Our interviews with senior management consultants from a range of consulting firms
- Our in-depth desk research on the market

A detailed view of our methodology and more information about Source can be found below:

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After a tumultuous 2020 punctuated by COVID-19, lockdowns, and a contraction in demand, France's consultants had a much better 2021. While the pace of recovery from the pandemic slump varied significantly across the market, the sectors and services that had started to pick up in late 2020 accelerated further last year, and the markets worst hit by COVID-19 disruption were largely back in full swing by the summer. As a result, consulting revenues in France jumped 11% in 2021.

From a services perspective, cybersecurity remained among the fastest growers in France, with revenues up 13.7% amid the continued prevalence of remote working and the ongoing shift to cloud services. Demand for cybersecurity advice, wargaming, and technology and security risk services saw a strong uptick with clients seeking to better understand the vulnerabilities in new and existing systems. Incident response activity saw the sharpest rise, with demand surging nearly 20% as clients who had suffered breaches sought support plugging the gaps exposed in their systems and mitigating the fallout of data losses, system fragilities, and reputational damage.

Technology consultants also saw a significant rebound last year, with revenues rising 13.6%. There was a sharp climb in demand for UI and UX expertise thanks to clients looking to boost the accessibility of their systems by making them more streamlined and user-friendly. Transition to the cloud was another key driver of consulting work, with double-digit increases in cloud service advice including provider selection and employee training programmes. ERP expertise also enjoyed exceptional demand, despite SAP's decision to extend the life of previous ERP versions by two years. Indeed, if anything, demand around ERP upgrades accelerated, owing to clients eager to progress with upgrading their existing systems to the latest platforms in order to realise the benefits sooner.

Strategy consultants enjoyed a significant rebound in 2021, with revenues rising 10.3% after contracting 3.3% in 2020. A booming deals market proved a boon for those with a strong M&A offering as clients of all stripes sought out bargains; demand from private equity clients was especially strong. Research was high on clients' agendas, too, as companies sought to better understand how the markets and their customers' behaviours were changing as a result of the pandemic and other concerns, such as sustainability. Firms also saw an uptick in new market entry work, with clients in France eager to explore growth opportunities at home and abroad.

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The client perspective

Nearly there? Client organisations are slowly shifting to recovery mode

When we surveyed clients in France at the start of 2021, 54% told us they were negatively impacted by the pandemic, and a third that they had received, or were continuing to receive, government support. At that time, one of the best markers of a client's appetite for consulting support came from their understanding of the risks facing their sector.

While the picture this year cannot be described as rosy, it is at least less grim. Now, the crucial question for understanding a client's consulting appetite is about where they find themself on the path out of the pandemic. A winter of Omicron may have sent workers back to their homes, but it looks increasingly as though organisations of all kinds are better set up to ride out such difficulties as part of normal working.

The aim of this part of our report is to look forwards, to explore investment priorities and challenges, and to understand the impact of those on demand for consulting services in 2022.

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Details of our survey methodology are here.

For the purposes of analysing the key differences by sector, we've aggregated the responses into three main groups: financial services; goods and services (which includes the manufacturing, retail, and services sectors); and technology, media, and telecoms (TMT). The public sector market operates under very different constraints and parameters, but we've commented on it where especially relevant.

Throughout this report, the term "large organisations" refers to businesses with more than 5,000 employees, and "mid-sized organisations" to those with between 1,000 and 4,999 employees.

The pandemic holds the headlines, but Brexit has still had an impact in France

Brexit has had almost as much impact on businesses in France as on their UK counterparts, with 68% of respondents saying that it has somewhat or significantly impacted their business. The impact hasn't been as acute, but it's easy to lose sight of just how many client organisations in France have had to make adjustments to accommodate new changes in regulation, especially around imports and exports.

Figure 4



A year after the UK's exit from the EU, to what extent has your business been impacted by Brexit?

That they've been doing this in the midst of the pandemic makes Brexit something of the straw that broke the camel's back. Asked in October, a third of respondents said that, for them at least, the pandemic wasn't over, and a third said that their organisation had the challenges of the pandemic under control. Three months on, and after a winter of the Omicron variant, the percentage who see a return to normality has fallen nine points, while responses that place clients in crisis mode have risen slightly. The scales do seem to be tipping towards recovery, though, as 48% now believe that they're into the recovery phase.

While we need to be careful about drawing broad conclusions given our sample size, it's still worth noting that a third of financial services respondents see themselves as having returned to normality. At the sub-sector level, it's even more pronounced for those in banking and capital markets-60% of respondents say that things are back to normal.

Insights from consultants

Interviews with consulting leaders

At Source, we have always believed that the only way to truly understand a consulting market is to have real conversations with the consultants who are on the ground working in that market, serving their clients day in and day out. Below, you'll find condensed versions of our most recent discussions with France's consultants, as they reflect on 2021 and, in the case of a few brave souls, venture a guess as to what comes next.

Kai Bandilla, Executive Vice President, Simon-Kucher & Partners

How did the consulting market perform in France in 2021?

It got hotter and hotter. We saw extraordinarily high demand from customers as a result of work restarting on all of the projects that were put into the cupboard during COVID. That had a considerable effect given that pre-COVID, we had a booming economy and high ambitions, which translated into booming demand at that time. There was also a second layer of demand coming from projects linked to the specifics of the new post-COVID world.

Last year was a kind of catch 22 though, because, as people woke up from COVID, they looked to begin a new chapter in life. That meant that, across all firms, there was a much higher churn rate than we've seen before, especially in the crucial middle layer of consultants—those with between three and seven years of experience.

Those difficulties on the delivery side, combined with very high demand from clients, make this a super-hot market. As a result, we've already had to delay the start of some projects and turn some work down, so we're getting extremely selective about where we allocate our pitching efforts. Our rates have also been raised significantly—far above double digits—because, if we're able to keep consultants by paying them more, we will. In many cases, though, the churn rate isn't about money.

Are any services seeing particularly strong demand?

Inflation is the number one issue right now. Thirty years ago, during an era of deflation, the idea was to purchase in Asia to safeguard competitiveness, and so all kinds of goods and services were sourced from there to get low prices. In the future, though, we're going to see a fundamental shift away from that because of what I call the 3D effect. The first D is demography—as we've seen with lorry drivers recently, there is a shortage of people with the right skills and experience. Then there's decarbonisation—if the world turns green, energy will be more expensive. The third D is deglobalisation—as work in all kinds of industries is back-shored to Europe. In the future, because of this 3D effect, we'll have products produced in Europe at European—rather than Asian—costs.

My personal read on what's ahead is that all these factors will combine to bring about a paradigm shift, with chief purchasing officers becoming less important than they have been over the last 20 or so years. Instead, in the future, chief pricing or selling officerspeople who can price higher costs-are going to be crucial.

Have Brexit or COVID been accelerants in this shift?

On Brexit, my answer might have been different two years ago, but today, we're seeing nil from that area. It's the opposite case for COVID, though. As a result of the pandemic, there's been a massive shift towards digitalisation and direct-to-consumer, with customers bypassing classical retail and brands talking directly to their final customers.

As a result of COVID, we're also seeing another change in consumer behaviour, which I call 'hedonistic revenge'. We're entering a period in which people want to somehow win back the years they lost under COVID, which translates into numerous behaviours: buying unnecessary things, for example, or having breaks from work of six months or longer.

On the consulting side, we've also seen an impact from COVID: We now recruit people and run projects online from A to Z. We've reduced physical interaction with our clients because they're in agreement with us that future delivery will include just one initial face-to-face meeting to get to know each other. Once that's done, the rest of the project will be done entirely online. Because of this increase in virtual working, staffing is getting more and more international. Firms like ours are beginning to staff projects from countries that have very skilled, English-speaking labour forces, like Turkey and Egypt. I think that's the future, and as a result of this decrease in business demand for travel, I'm extremely sceptical about the airline industry.

Are you seeing a big impact from ESG and sustainability demand?

Absolutely. As the European Central Bank has clearly pointed out, the inflation we're seeing in Europe right now is driven by energy prices, and green energy will only cost more.

ESG is an especially important area of thinking, even within the consultancy business. Salaries are already equitable at my organisation, so the focus for us is much more on the purpose we can deliver to our consultants. That's the point on which we compete with all kinds of start-ups. Like a lot of consultancies, to increase our sense of purpose, we're putting a lot of emphasis on pro bono projects and using our know-how to help out



environmental groups or those that work with refugees, for example.

Do you see the upcoming elections in France having any impact?

I don't think so. In the past, there used to be a bit of a pre-election slowdown in strategic projects from some of the bigger, state-owned companies. Now, though, that's completely eclipsed by the extreme need for companies to adapt their thinking and ways of operating in this new world of inflation, rising prices, scarcity of demand, and supply chain difficulties.

Are clients asking for new ways of working?

Pre-COVID, our clients wanted us to train their people and facilitate methodology more than actually deliver the work. The thinking was, 'We'll do the job ourselves; the less we pay you, the better.' However, the talent churn that we're seeing is also being experienced in industry, so even our clients are desperately looking for people. Post-COVID, then, when we ask clients whether they have the teams to support our work internally, and the answer is a simple 'no'. Inevitably, that means that a project now costs more-20-40% more-than it would have pre-COVID.

We're also seeing a shift in attitude around riskreward pricing models, which we've been playing with for a long time. Clients used to see outcome-based pricing as a way to get us to put skin in the game, and they would negotiate for lower fixed rates and higher success fees. Today, our customers tell us they're not looking for that; they just want to get the work done, so they're looking for guarantees around timelines. That's particularly the case for inflation projects: Because they have a clear calendar timeline, everyone wants support from us at the same time, so there's a fixed peak for demand from September onwards.

Are the challenges around talent causing you to change how you deliver?

Every consultancy works with a layer of freelancers who come from players offering white-label consultants. No one's truly happy about doing this; we do it because we're forced to. What we hope for, out of that, is that those freelancers understand who we are and join us afterwards.

Are you seeing any changes in the competitive landscape?

Not really, because everyone's in the same boat, fighting the same battle. We're all seeing truly good people quitting—people we would've promoted to partner a couple of years down the road. A lot of them are moving to tech firms, but as we saw with Facebook recently, every increase in interest rates will put more pressure on tech development financing, which will lead to higher prices, and therefore a more stressful working environment. As a result, my thinking—and my secret hope as an employer—is that the 'Alice in Wonderland' landscape of tech will deflate as it's exposed to higher stress, which will result in churn back to us.

About this report

Methodology Sources

Megamodel: our Global Data Model

The quantitative market data in this report comes from our unique model of the global professional services market.

Rather than making high-level assumptions, this model has been built from the bottom up, sizing the market capability by capability—assessing how much work a firm earns delivering each professional capability within each sector and country. This results in a robust view of the size of the supply-side market, which can then be broken down to view the size of the market by country, sector, line of business, capabilities, and service.

Alongside this market segmentation, we also limit our market sizing and analysis to what we at Source call "big consulting"—work done by mid- and large-sized firms (those with more than 50 people). Please note that we don't track the long, thin tail of work done by contractors and very small firms, as most readers of this report would not seek or be able to compete in this part of the market.

All of the data in the model is calibrated through extensive interviews with, and surveys of, professional services firms and their clients, allowing us to discuss broader trends in the market alongside detailed dimensions such as headcount. These interviews and surveys are supplemented with desk research, which allows us to assess the impact of wider macroeconomic trends on professional services. This, combined with our detailed modelling, results in a longterm view of the market that is able to support both historic and forecast data. All figures given in this report are in pounds. For reference, Source is using the following exchange rates in its reports this year:

US dollar to British pound US\$1 = £0.73

US dollar to euro US\$1 = €0.84



Client perspective

We carry out a client survey to help us build a rich picture of how different trends in France are affecting clients' organisations and their use of consulting. One survey focuses on trends in France, providing detailed insights into the nuances of the market. For this, we surveyed 100 senior clients of consulting firms from across France, all of whom work in organisations with more than 500 employees. This survey focuses on the following areas:

- How they expect to use consultants during 2022 and the first half of 2023
- Factors that affect the way clients work with consulting firms
- The ways consulting firms market themselves to clients and the impact this has on client decision making.

Figure 36

Respondents by sector











Interviews with senior consultants

In addition to our quantitative research, we interviewed 12 very senior consultants in France, representing most of the leading consulting firms in the geography and many smaller local specialists, to understand more about how the consulting market is performing and the major trends, changes, and challenges consultants and their clients face. Throughout the year, Source analysts remain plugged in to the global consulting market through our bespoke research and consulting projects, adding further depth to our understanding of the consulting industry.

In-depth desk research

We also conducted a thorough PEST analysis in France that drills down into finer macroeconomic details on a holistic and sector-by-sector basis and allows us to fit our research into a wider macroeconomic picture.

Definitions of sectors and services

Our definition of management consulting includes a broad range of business advisory services, but excludes:

- tax advisory
- audit
- the implementation of IT systems
- the delivery of outsourced/offshored services
- HR compensation/benefits administration and technology

Where mergers & acquisitions work is concerned, consulting on deals is included (under strategy), but corporate finance fees on deals themselves are generally not included, although it is not always straightforward to separate the two.

For more information about how we classify consulting services and sectors, please see "Definitions of sectors and services".

Definitions of sectors and services

Sectors



Energy & resources

Energy Includes the exploration and production of energy, including oil, gas, coal, and renewables.

Utilities

Includes the delivery of electricity, gas, water, sanitation, and other related services.

Primary resources

Includes agriculture, chemicals and chemical products, commodities, forestry, fishing, metals, mining, and plastics.



Financial services

Banking

Includes retail banking, commercial banking, and lending.

Insurance

Includes general insurance (e.g., motor, home, pets, health-anything on an annual contract), life insurance, pension products, and retirement planning.

Private equity

Includes both consulting work for private equity firms and consulting work with private equity portfolio businesses.

Capital markets

Includes investment banking, trading of stocks and financial products, corporate finance, and broking.

Investment and wealth management Includes private banking, high net-worth banking, investment management, trust funds, the management of pension funds,

and asset management.

Manufacturing

Aerospace

Includes space research and technology, the manufacture of aircraft, aircraft parts, rockets and other space equipment, and tanks and ammunition.

Automotive

Includes the manufacture of motor vehicles, industrial vehicles, and vehicle supplies and parts.

Construction

Includes surveying, architectural, and engineering services, heavy construction, house building, and the building of infrastructure

Consumer packaged goods

Includes the manufacture of clothes. foods, alcohol, tobacco, furniture, home furnishings, cleaning products, small arms, children's toys, and sports equipment.

Consumer and industrial electronics Includes electrical components, household and industrial appliances, commercial and professional equipment.

Industrial products

Includes industrial machinery, steel and metal products, and plastic products.



Pharma & biotech

Includes research into and the production of drugs, biological products, medicinal chemicals, and life sciences.

Healthcare

Includes private and publicly-funded healthcare, hospitals, laboratories, and medical equipment.



Public sector Government

Includes federal/national, state/regional, local government, emergency services, justice, social services, public transport, and conservation.

Education

Includes public and private schools, universities, and libraries.

Defence

Includes national security and consulting around defence issues.

Not for profit

Includes non-commercial research organisations, religious, political and professional membership organisations, trusts, labour unions, and business associations.



Retail

Includes the selling of clothes, food, consumer goods, and automobiles.



Services

Logistics

Includes warehousing, storage, packing and crating, and distribution including cargo, freight, and haulage.

Business services

Includes services relating to law, accountancy, IT maintenance, security systems, advertising, employment agencies, and vehicle leasing.

Leisure

Includes museums, art galleries, theatre, golf courses, hotels, hospitality, travel agencies, restaurants, and bars.

Real estate

Includes estate agencies and operators of residential and commercial buildings.

Transportation

Includes private and people-related transportation, including airlines, airport management, train operators, rail infrastructure management, water transportation, courier services, and private bus services.

Technology, media & telecoms Telecoms

Includes telephone, mobile, digital, and other communication services.

High-tech

Includes IT-related devices, computer and computerrelated devices, audio and video equipment, broadcasting and communication equipment.

Media

Includes radio, television, and digital broadcasting stations and services as well as printing and publishing of newspapers, periodicals, and books.



Services

We've taken the lines of business and capabilities from our taxonomy that broadly align with traditional definitions of consulting and divided them into services that include the following. Please note that for some lines of business, for example, forensics, we've taken a subset of the relevant capabilities and excluded others.



Technology & innovation

Ideation, Innovation management, Innovation strategy, Strategies for growth from innovation, Cloud advice, ERP consulting, IT strategy, planning & review, IT training, Programme management, Vendor selection, Clean technology, Green IT, Corporate identity, Graphic & UI design, UX & service design, Customer journey & UX benchmarking, Data visualisation, business intelligence & semantic layer.



• Strategy

Capital allocation strategy, Commercial due diligence & valuation, Financial due diligence, M&A transaction strategy, Operational due diligence, Portfolio & investment strategy, Public-private partnerships, Technology due diligence, Business & financial modelling, Category management, Channel management, Corporate recovery & turnaround, Corporate restructuring, Corporate strategy, Market analysis & strategy, Policy formulation, Pricing, Strategic sourcing/offshoring services, Real estate strategy, Environmental & social impact research, Macro/microeconomic research, Market research. Customer feedback. Customer segmentation, Employee feedback, Advanced analytics, Sustainable investment.



Cybersecurity consulting

Cybersecurity advice, Cybersecurity incident response, Penetration testing & wargaming, Technology & security risk services.



HR, change & people strategy

Benefits, compensation & pensions, excluding actuarial & investment advice, Change management, Diversity & inclusion, Employee engagement, Governance & board effectiveness, HR strategy & effectiveness, Leadership, Organisational design & culture, Organisational training & development, Outplacement, Pension fund evaluation & advice, Performance management, Stakeholder management, Talent management, Team effectiveness & collaboration, Resourceefficiency strategy, Purpose-led strategy & change, Resource-efficiency implementation, Social impact & trust.



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Benchmarking, Business continuity & recovery,
Cost cutting, Customer service, DevOps,
Distribution strategy, Lean & Six Sigma,
Operational review, Outsourcing advice,
Post-M&A integration, Process design, re-
engineering & automation, Procurement/
purchasing, Property & estate management,
Sales & distribution planning, Sales force
effectiveness, Supply chain management,
Target operating model, Sustainable supply
chain, Corporate, occupier services & facilities
management, Integrated real estate developer
services, Real estate deal/transaction services.
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Ľ	Risk & financial management
	Operational risk, Programme risk, Responding
	to regulation, Risk management, Budgeting/
	financial planning process, Debt advisory,
	Finance function, Financial advisory, Financial
	restructuring & insolvency, eDiscovery,
	Forensic accounting.

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 consultants who wished to remain anonymous).

Name	Job title	Organisation
Christophe Angoulvant	Senior Partner	Roland Berger
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Vincent Le Bellac	Clients & Market Leader	PwC
Philippe Clapin	Deputy Director	Sopra Steria Next
Christophe Desgranges	Consulting Leader	PwC
Bernard Drui	Country Market Leader, France	Protiviti
Maxime Julian	Partner	L.E.K.
Jean-Francois Laget	Partner	Argon & Co
Reza Maghsoudnia	Strategic Development Director	Wavestone
Hanna Moukanas	Partner	Oliver Wyman
Nicolas Richard	Head of Advisory Consulting, KPMG France	KPMG
Cedric Vatier	Managing Director for France and Benelux, Accenture Strategy & Consulting	Accenture

Meet the experts

Ashok Patel

Ashok is a writer and editor at Source in our Market Trends team. He is an experienced writer, editor, and analyst, providing insights into the latest trends and developments across the professional services market. He has been quoted by a variety of trade publications and has previous experience in Source's Client Perception Programme. Prior to joining Source, Ashok was an editor and consultant in the commodities market, as well as working in the UK automotive industry.

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Edward Edgcumbe

Edward is Model Design & Research Lead at Source, where he is responsible for marshalling the research and data inputs for all our models, taxonomies, and databases. He has most recently led the development of the newly expanded Source taxonomy, drawing on his extensive experience of scanning the market for potential acquisitions to build a more granular, capability-driven view of the professional services landscape. He holds a degree in classics from Magdalen College, Oxford; and an MMus from the Royal Academy of Music.

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About us

We analyse and examine how change drives the way organisations use professional services, and the implications that might have for professional services firms.

Derived from data, years of experience, and sophisticated proprietary research, we use our team's extensive knowledge of the industry to provide actionable and clear conclusions on the best course of action for professional services firms around the world. Our insights not only provide interesting reading, but they have underpinned some of the biggest strategic investment decisions made by firms around the world.

So, how can we help you?



How we can help you _____

In addition to our reports, we also provide custom advice and evidence-based consulting services to the world's biggest and most successful professional services firms, helping them to better understand their markets and the challenges and opportunities they face. Underpinned by original research, interviews with your clients, extensive surveys of buyers of professional services, and our wealth of data and experience, our work is designed to help you fully understand the markets in which your firm operate, and want to operate.

Among other things, our offerings include:

- Market entry strategy
- Competitor profiling and research
- Access to our MegaModel tailored to your definition of the market

For more information about any of these, or our other work, please visit our website, or get in touch.

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Programme schedule for 2022

Reports 2022		Market Trends Programme	Client Perception Studies	Emerging Trends Programme	
Q1	January	Forecasts for 2022 UK GCC India France	UK US		
	February		GCC	Germany Financial Services	
	March		GCC France Healthcare & Pharma	Pricing: Your Biggest Barrier to Change?	
Q2	April	Nordics US	Nordics Energy & Resources Technology, Media & Telecoms		
	Мау	DACH Australia China	China Japan		
	June	South East Asia		Agility and Multidisciplinary Working	
Q3	July	Tax South America Japan Africa Financial Services		Managed Services: Opportunities and Challenges	
	August		Risk Tax		
	Sustainability September Energy & Resources	Audit	Products and Services: The New Consulting Mix		
Q4	October	Planning for Growth in 2023			
	November			The New Consulting Value Chain	
	December				

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White	A powerful research tool that allows subscribers to keep up to date with the latest content being produced and maximise their return on investment.
Space	A series of reports that analyse the quality and effectiveness of thought
	leadership are published throughout the year.