EXTRACT

SOURCE

Client Perceptions Studies

PERSPECTIVES

Perceptions of Consulting in the UK in 2025

Feb 2025

Report

About us

We partner with professional services firms to turn insight into strategic advantage. Our proprietary research and tailored, firm-specific studies provide clear, actionable guidance to inform your firm's strategic decisions.

Through our work, we help professional services firms to:

- Anticipate key industry trends
- Identify and evaluate growth opportunities in existing and emerging markets
- Understand client perceptions and competitive positioning
- Refine propositions and messaging to better align with client needs
- Maximise the reach, impact, and commercial value of thought leadership

To dig deeper into the insights in this report, explore our other publications, or learn more about bespoke research for your firm, please **get in touch**.

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What really matters

We have identified three key messages for firms from the wealth of data and information contained in this report and the associated data portal:

1 UK clients are as sceptical about value as ever.

At odds with a global rebounding of value scores, perceptions of value among clients in the UK have remained stubbornly low this year, with only 32% speaking positively about the value firms deliver.

When digging into the data, we find that the C-suite clients are pulling down value scores in the UK, with only 26% believing that consulting firms have added more in value than they paid in fees. It suggests that those in charge of the purse strings are unhappy with the level of clarity firms have been providing around the return on their investment. Firms need to be clear in how they can create long-lasting value beyond the project scope and how to communicate this to clients. Listening to senior clients to understand what added value means to them is a good place to start.

2 Firms must work harder to convince prospects that they can deliver high-quality work.

This year, we have seen perceptions among the most distant prospects—those aware of a firm, but that haven't shortlisted or used it before—markedly fall when it comes to the quality of firms' work and the strength of their attributes.

It suggests that firms need to do more to get the word out about what it's like to work with them. Those that are aware of a firm without having worked with it rely solely on what they see and hear from their marketing activities and word of mouth (from peers who are direct clients)—so highlighting the successes you've had with other organisations in thought leadership, case studies, and conversations could help improve perceptions.

3 The Big Four are considered leading thinkers across the issues that matter most to clients.

There has been a shake-up in the firms that clients believe are the leading authorities across the most pressing issues to them. Across growth, improving productivity, taking advantage of emerging technologies, and adapting their workforce to new challenges—the most pressing areas to clients this year—the Big Four firms are most likely to be seen as the leading thinkers. In some places they have overtaken IBM and Accenture, usual stalwarts when it comes to the top firms in our authority ranking.

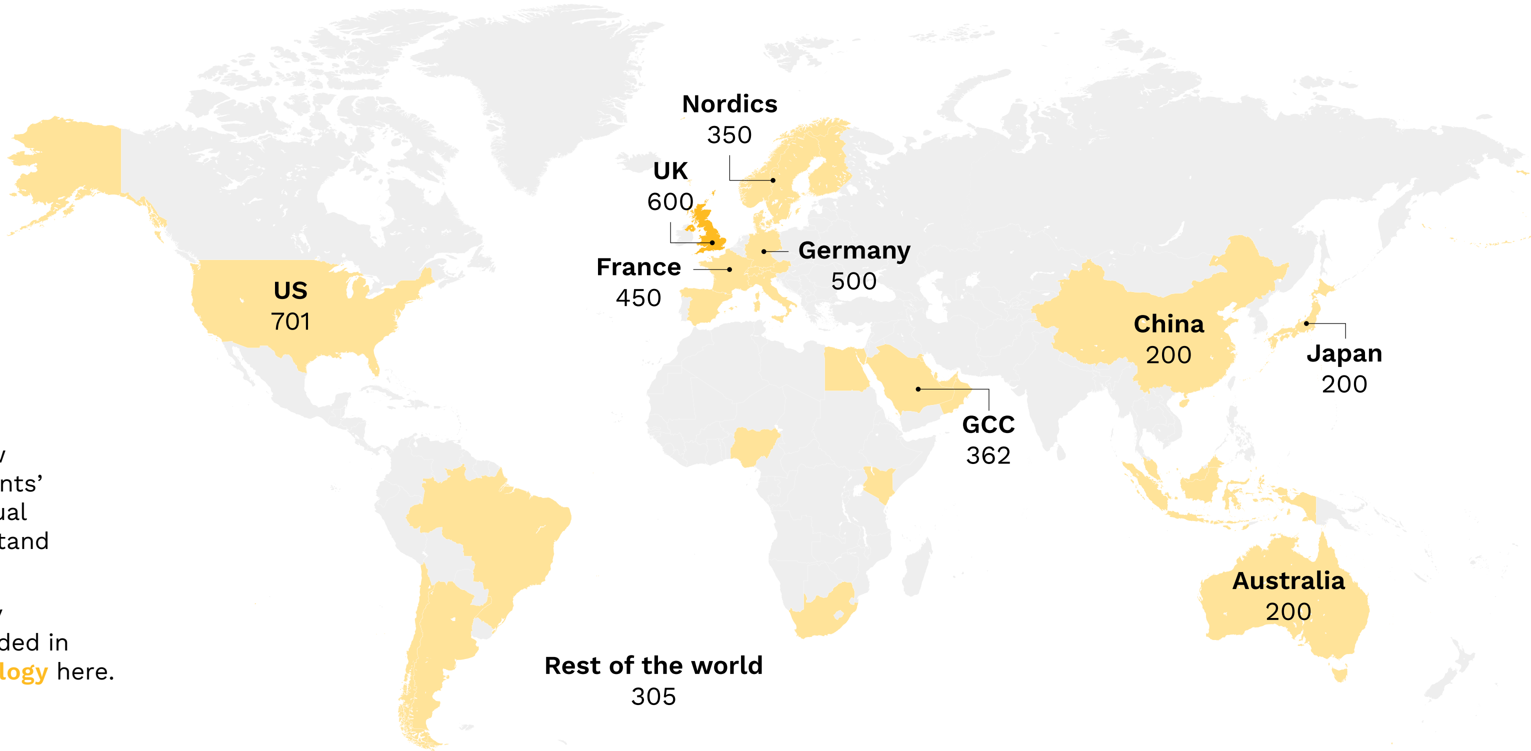
To help improve perceptions of authority, a key tool at firm's disposal is, of course, thought leadership. Firms may want to consider their current approach, and check whether they are covering the topics that are most relevant for the target audience. They also need to make sure that the consultants working side-by-side with clients on a daily basis are up to speed on the latest innovations and trends in their industry.

What is this Client Perceptions Study?

Underpinned by our extensive and industry-leading client survey, this report reveals what senior end-users think about the leading consulting firms in the UK. The report contains a detailed analysis of the firms' buyer funnels and examines what clients think about different firms. The report also includes rankings of the leading firms, in order to help you better understand your firm's positioning in the market, and the overall competitive landscape in which you are operating.

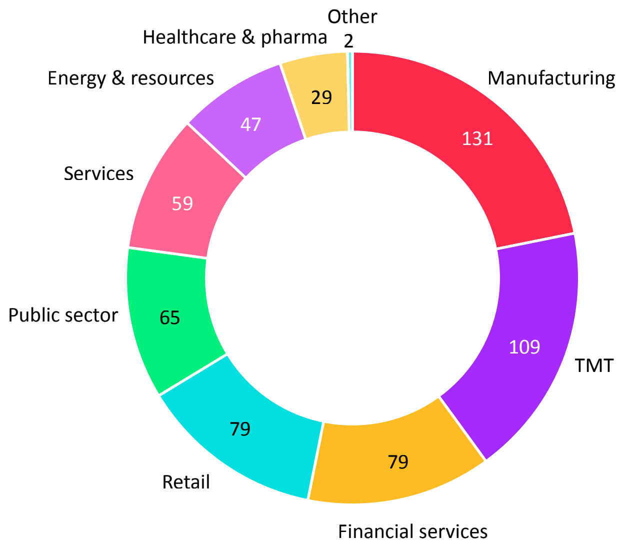
Created to provide you with a snapshot of client views, and to better understand how well positioned your firm is to support clients' needs, this report also comes with individual firm profiles to allow you to better understand your competition.

To the right, we have illustrated the survey responses that underpin the analysis included in this report. You can read the full methodology here.



Who did we talk to?

We have 600 responses from our survey of executives, directors, and senior managers in the UK undertaken in November to December 2024, all of whom have been responsible for buying consulting services in the past two years. We ask all respondents about three firms they're aware of, giving us 1,800 responses about perceptions of the quality, value, and attributes of different firms. They represent a wide range of sectors and business functions, and 91% work in organisations that generate more than $500m in revenue.



Which firms are included in this report?

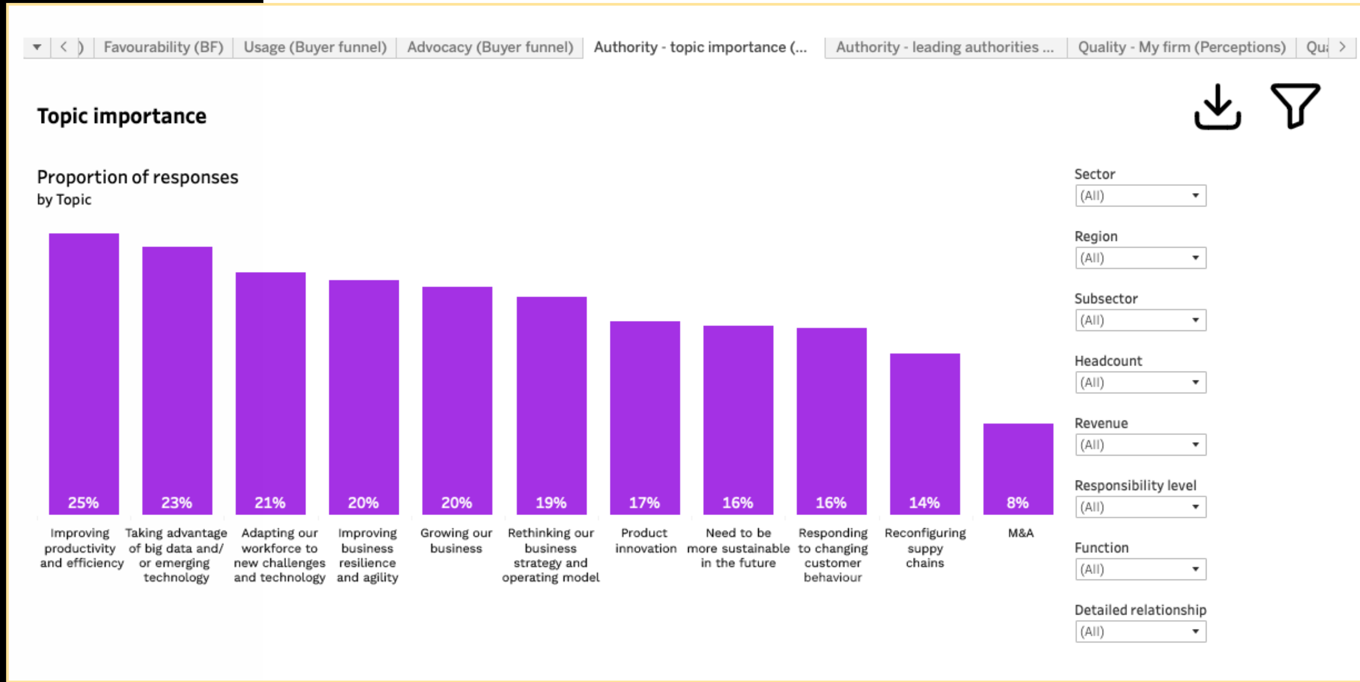
	Did we ask about this firm in this market?	Detailed profile available?
Accenture	✓	✓
AlixPartners	✓	✓
Bain & Company	✓	✓
Boston Consulting Group (BCG)	✓	✓
Capgemini	✓	✓
Deloitte	✓	✓
EY	✓	✓
IBM Consulting	✓	✓
Kearney	✓	✓
KPMG	✓	✓
McKinsey & Company	✓	✓
Oliver Wyman	✓	✓
PA Consulting	✓	✓
PwC (including Strategy&)	✓	✓
Roland Berger	✓	✓

Discover more online

The data contained and referred to within this report is also available in our online portal, where it can be sorted and filtered according to your preferences, also providing access to historic data from our past surveys.

To access the data, visit the main report page and click the blue "Explore the data" button. When you log on, you'll notice a sample information dashboard. Here you can check the sample size for certain cuts of the data. In addition, hovering your cursor over values on a chart will display the number of responses related to that particular value.

If you have any questions about any of the data, please **contact us**.



How are these studies different?

The views about each firm expressed in this report come from senior end-users of professional services—your clients and prospects, in other words. They differ from typical feedback studies firms often perform with their own customers in four 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 direct clients (clients who have bought services from a firm) and prospects. This enables us to understand a firm's "brand pipeline", and the differences between expectation (prospects) and reality (direct clients). It also tells us something about the differences between a firm's marketing and what it actually delivers.

A view of the buyer funnel

We analyse the buyer funnel, from awareness, to familiarity, to the extent to which clients are prepared to shortlist and use a firm, and whether they would advocate for the firm. This gives us insight into the stages of the client relationship at which firms' brands are particularly strong or weak.

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. What's more, we're able to bring to bear the expertise we've gained over years of analysing the consulting market, helping to interpret the results within the context of the wider market.

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 Source's view, nor is it a comment on market share or a recommendation to clients about which firms to buy from. The audience of these reports is very much the firms featured in them, and those interested in the strength of the competition in any given market.

We profile individual firms in our reports—indeed this remains one of the most popular parts of the reports with readers—and we do, separately, provide tailored presentations to firms that buy this report, contextualising the results for that individual firm. However, our Client Perceptions Studies are not exhaustive studies of clients' opinions about specific firms, and do not remain statistically robust at a very granular level of the market. They are not designed to replace the sort of in-depth client research that many firms ask us to carry out for them.

All analysis 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 quickly. 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. To that end, Source is completely independent of any professional services firm we work with or comment on.

Contents

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Overview of the buyer funnel in the UK

Leading firms across the buyer funnel

A strong consulting brand is not only one that plenty of potential clients know, but one that attracts new clients to it, can transform those new clients into repeat buyers by retaining and growing those accounts, and is well positioned to take advantage of the new opportunities thrown up by emerging trends.

On top of the questions we've asked since 2016 about the quality, value, and attributes of firms, since last year we've also asked additional questions to create a buyer funnel tailored to buying professional services.

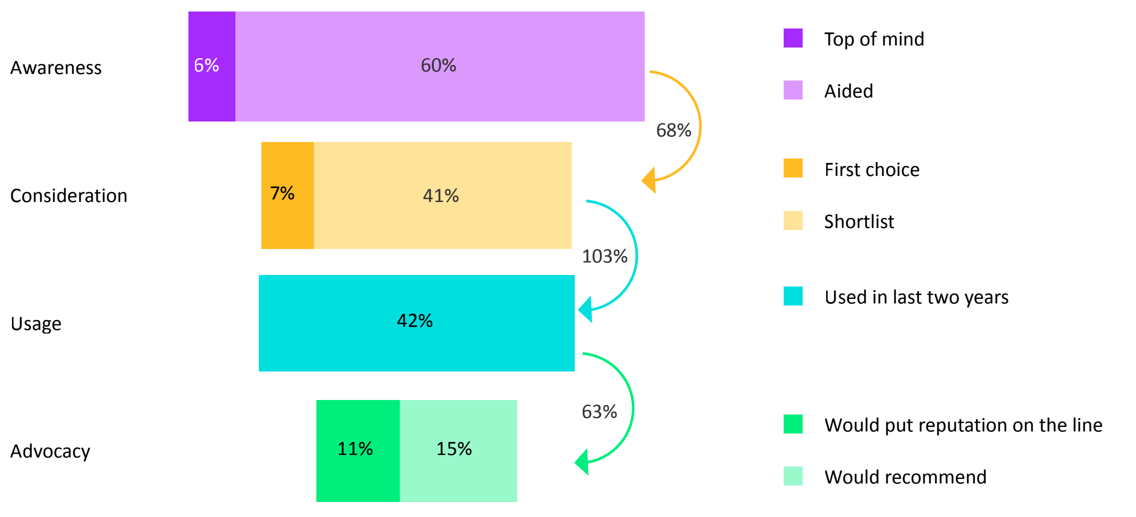
Key differences from a buyer funnel that one might see in a B2C context include the recognition that familiarity means different things to different buyers, which we tease out by asking about knowledge of capabilities, relationships with experts at firms, and prior bias towards a firm (in the sense of whether clients would speak highly of the firm). We also explore not simply whether a firm would be used again, but whether that trust extends into adjacent services—a key avenue of growth for many firms. Lastly, we ask whether clients are prepared to stick their neck out and put their personal reputation on the line to advocate for a firm, in recognition that recommending professional services firms can mean taking a risk.

By looking across the buyer funnel, we can see where the strengths and weaknesses of different brands lie, and therefore where firms need to focus their efforts to improve their brand's strength.

This chart shows the average buyer funnel. The chart on page 11 shows the scores and ranking position of the firms we've asked about in the UK across the buyer funnel.

What does the average buyer funnel look like?

The chart below shows the average buyer funnel for the firms we ask about in the UK. An explanation of the methodology used at each step can be found in the **methodology in full** section later in this report.



Performance across the buyer funnel

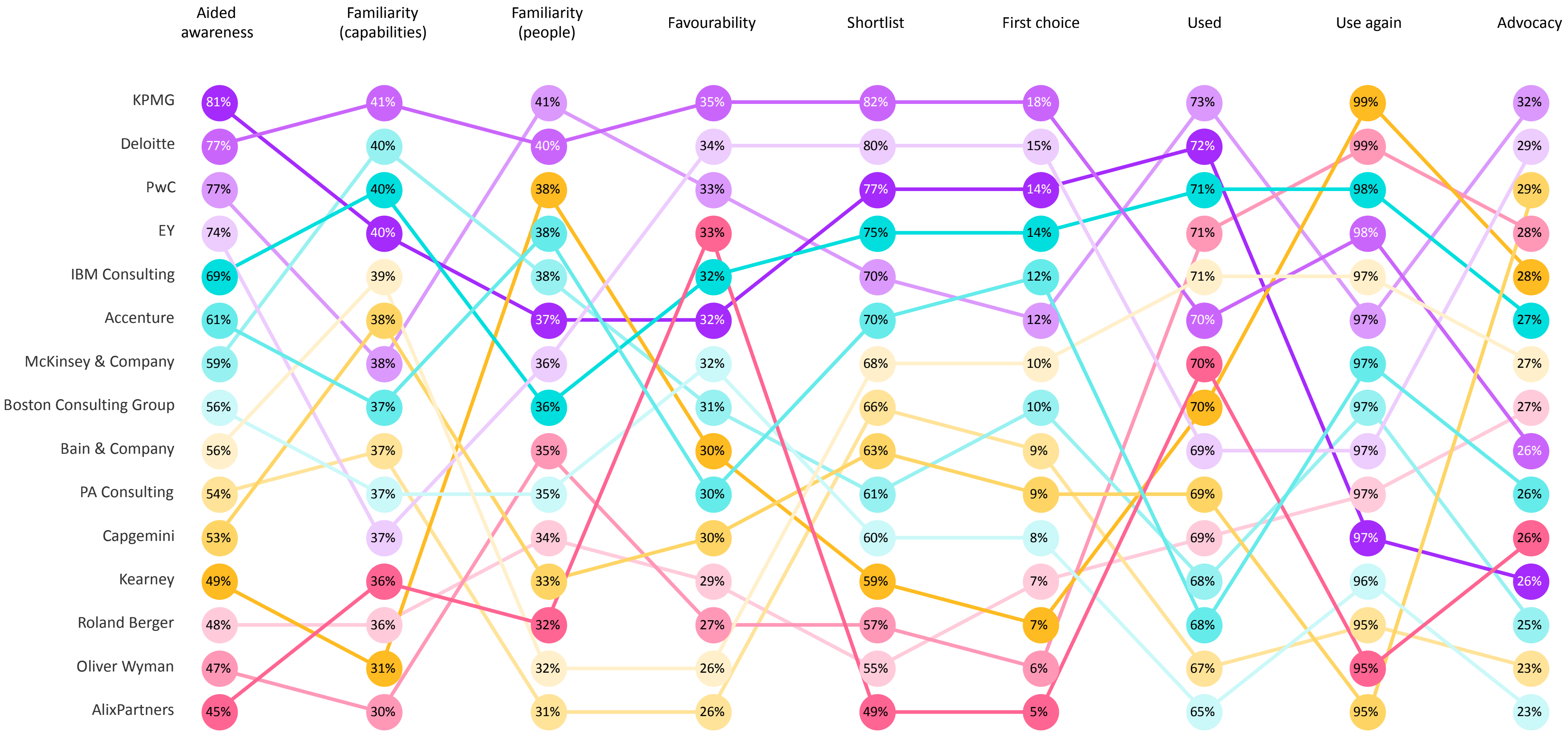
The chart on the following page details the relative performance of all firms covered in this report at different stages of the buyer funnel. It shows all stages we ask about (not just the summarised buyer funnel presented on the previous page and in the firm-by-firm section). An explanation of the methodology used at each step can be found in the methodology in full section later in this report, but we summarise the approach in the table below.

Stage	Metric	Question asked	How the figure is calculated
Awareness	Unaided awareness	When thinking of firms providing consulting services, what's the first firm that comes to mind?	% of respondents who named each firm
	Aided awareness	Which of the following firms are you aware of?	% of respondents who are aware of each firm from a pre-defined list
	Familiarity (capabilities)	Please describe how familiar you are with each firm's capabilities in general terms	% of clients that are aware of each firm that say they know a firm's capabilities very well
	Familiarity (people)	Please describe your relationship with consultants at each firm	% of clients that are aware of each firm that say they have a good relationship with experts at a firm
Consideration	Favourability	What is your overall attitude toward each firm?	% of clients that are aware of each firm that say they'd speak highly of a firm without being asked
	Shortlist	Would you shortlist any of these firms in each of 13 service areas?	% of clients that are aware of each firm that say they would shortlist a firm in at least one of 13 different service areas
	First choice	Which firm would be your first choice in each of 13 service areas?	Average of the % of clients that are aware of each firm that say the firm would be their first choice across 13 different service areas
Usage	Used	Has your organisation bought consulting services from these firms in the last two years?	% of clients that are aware of each firm that say they have bought services from the firm in the last two years
	Use again	Would you work with these firms again in the same or new areas?	% of clients that have bought services from a firm that say they would work with them again in the same areas or new areas
Advocacy	Advocacy	Which of the following statements most closely applies to your sentiment towards each firm?	% of clients that say they would work with a firm again that say they would put their personal reputation on the line for the firm

Ranking and scores at different stages of the buyer journey

Figure 1

Ranking and scores at different stages of the buyer funnel



What's most important when choosing a firm to work with?

We ask clients what attributes are most important when choosing a firm to work with from a list of 17 attributes. This is calculated through best-worst scaling, where respondents are shown a subset of this list of attributes and asked to indicate the most and least important relative to the others. This is repeated a number of times in a systematic way so we can order how clients view the importance of all attributes. We explain how the scores are calculated in the **methodology in full**.

Figure 2

Attribute importance scores

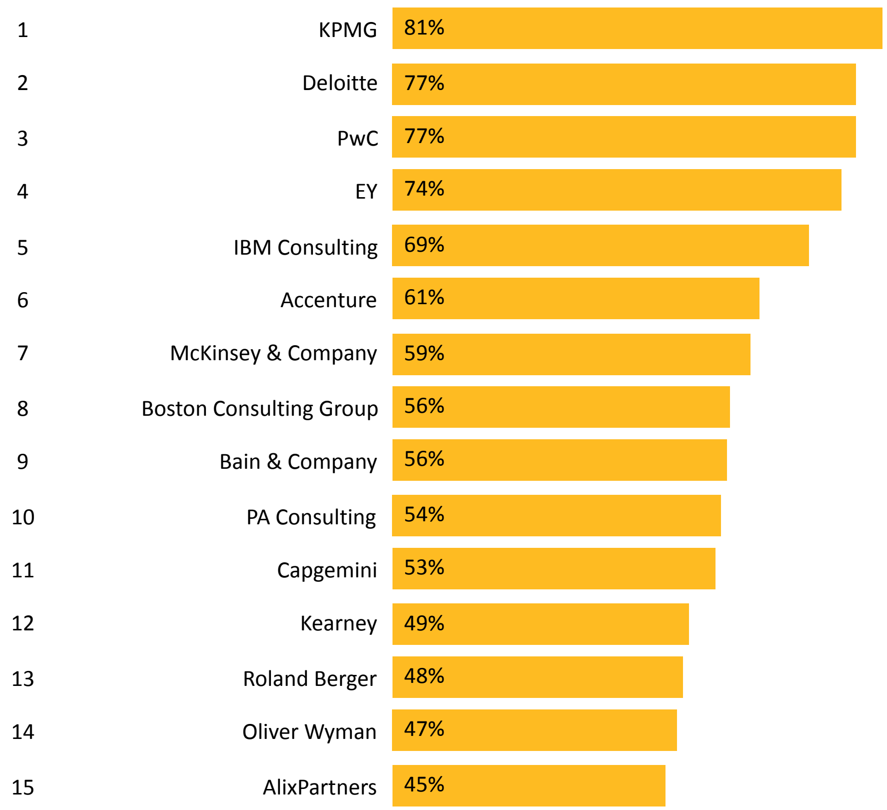
1	Sector knowledge & expertise	53.70
2	Quality of the firm's subject matter experts	51.89
3	Responsiveness & flexibility	51.51
4	Quality of thought leadership	51.28
5	Level of innovation	51.15
6	Brand & reputation	51.13
7	ESG credentials	51.13
8	Ability to match suitably qualified people to projects	50.90
9	Ability to implement	50.63
10	Breadth of the firm's services	50.57
11	Speed of delivery	50.51
12	Account management	50.39
13	The methodologies the firm uses	49.84
14	Global reach	49.15
15	Prices	48.99
16	The firm's alliances & partnerships	48.41
17	Culture	47.48

Who is most well known in the UK?

When it comes to winning clients, a key determinant is who clients are most aware of. This will influence who clients are likely to shortlist for work and speak to first when considering bringing on consultants. We look at this in the aided awareness measure, which observes the percentage of respondents who say they are aware of a firm.

Figure 3

Most well-known firms in the UK

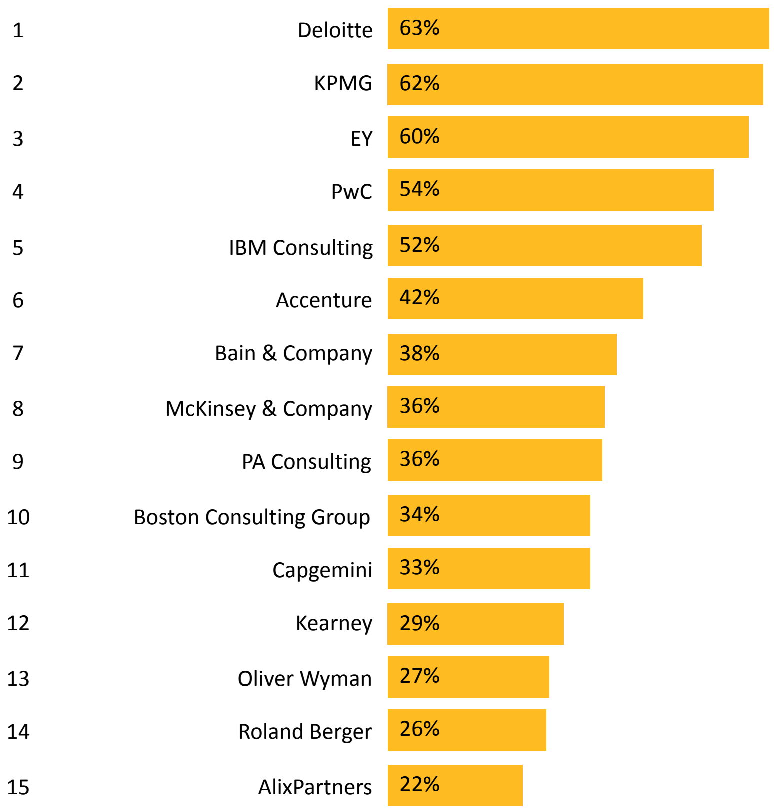


Who is getting shortlisted?

Awareness of a firm does not necessarily translate into considering them for work. We go on to ask clients, of the firms they're aware of, who they would shortlist for work across 13 different consulting services. We calculate an overall score by calculating the average percentage of clients who would shortlist the firm in at least one of the services we ask about. The chart on the right shows the firms that are most likely to be shortlisted, without adjusting for different levels of awareness.

Figure 4

Most shortlisted firms in the UK



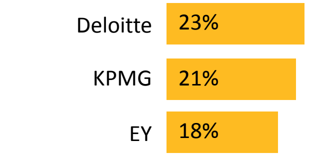
Most shortlisted firms by service area

The charts here show the three firms that are most likely to be shortlisted for work in each of the 13 service areas we ask about, without adjusting for different levels of awareness.

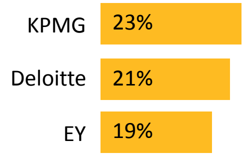
Figure 5

Most shortlisted firms by service area

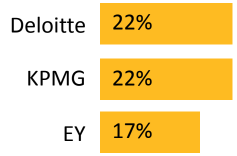
Financial management



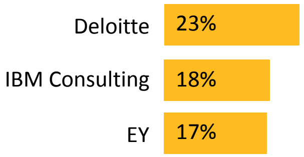
Regulatory-driven work



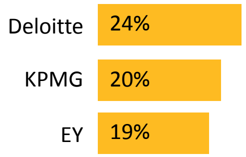
Sustainability & resilience



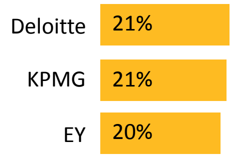
AI advice & implementation



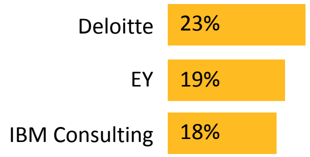
HR & change management



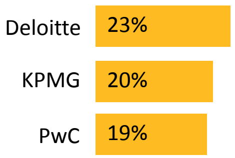
Risk management (incl. cybersecurity)



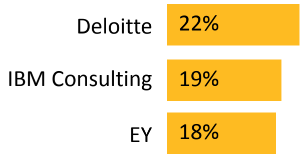
Transformation (e.g., digital, business, etc.)



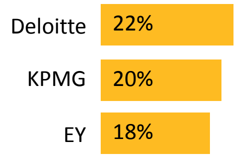
Business strategy



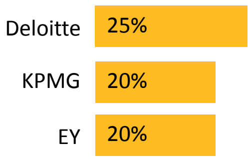
Improving legacy IT infrastructure



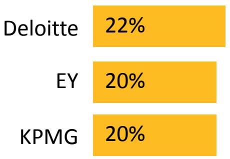
RPA advice & implementation



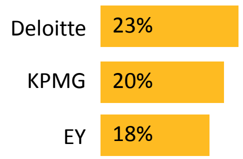
Data & analytics



Operational improvement



Sales & marketing (incl. customer experience)



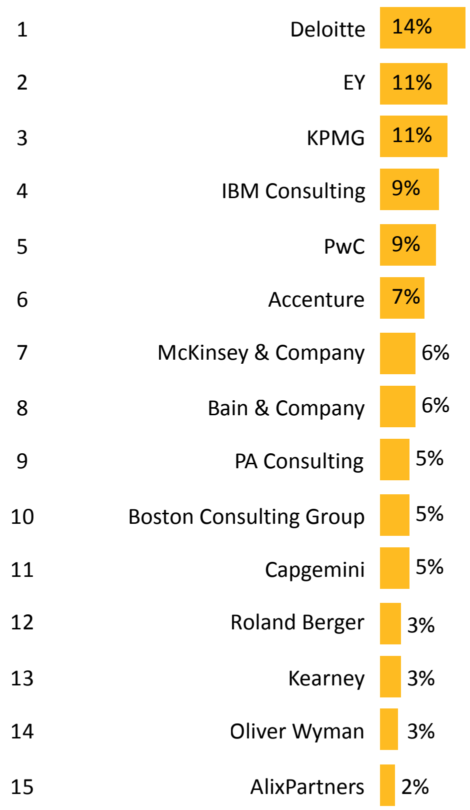
Who is first choice with clients?

Although many firms may be in the mix when clients are thinking about who to work with, clients will often have in their own mind an idea of who is the leading firm for that service. Being thought of as first choice is important: Even if leading firms are considered to be largely similar, being seen—even marginally—as the first choice gives a firm a significant advantage when clients are making decisions on who to work with. Clients need a strong reason to go to an alternative provider.

We ask clients, of the firms they would shortlist, who would be their first choice for work across 13 different consulting services. We calculate an overall score by calculating the average percentage of clients that consider that firm first choice in each service. The chart on the right shows the firms that are most likely to be first choice, without adjusting for different levels of awareness.

Figure 6

First choice firms in the UK



First choice firms by service area

The charts show the three firms that are most likely to be considered first choice for work in each of the 13 service areas we ask about, without adjusting for different levels of awareness or likelihood to be shortlisted.

Figure 7

First choice firms by service area

AI advice & implementation

Deloitte	14%
EY	11%
IBM Consulting	10%

Business strategy

Deloitte	14%
EY	11%
KPMG	11%

Data & analytics

Deloitte	15%
EY	12%
KPMG	10%

Financial management

Deloitte	14%
KPMG	12%
PwC	10%

HR & change management

Deloitte	16%
EY	12%
KPMG	12%

Improving legacy IT infrastructure

Deloitte	14%
IBM Consulting	11%
EY	10%

Operational improvement

Deloitte	13%
EY	13%
KPMG	11%

Regulatory-driven work

KPMG	15%
Deloitte	11%
EY	11%

Risk management (incl. cybersecurity)

Deloitte	13%
KPMG	11%
EY	11%

RPA advice & implementation

Deloitte	14%
KPMG	12%
EY	11%

Sales & marketing (incl. customer experience)

Deloitte	14%
EY	12%
KPMG	11%

Sustainability & resilience

Deloitte	15%
KPMG	13%
EY	11%

Transformation (e.g., digital, business, etc.)

Deloitte	14%
EY	11%
IBM Consulting	11%

2

Overview of perceptions of firms

SOURCE

Perceptions of firms across key metrics

While the buyer funnel gives us a snapshot of how successfully firms are converting awareness into familiarity, into consideration, into work, and potentially future work, it doesn't tell us what clients think are the strengths and weaknesses of the work of different firms. If perceptions of the work of firms is weaker than others, the buyer funnel may deteriorate over time.

We ask clients, for three firms they're aware of, chosen at random, what they think about the quality of work, the strength of different attributes of working with firms, the value firms add relative to fees charged, and the extent to which they're seen as an authority on the pressing issues of the day. The chart on the right summarises how firms score in each of these areas. We ask about perceptions of both prospects and direct clients to have a rounded view of the perceptions of firms' brands in the market.

Figure 8

The top firms across key metrics in the UK

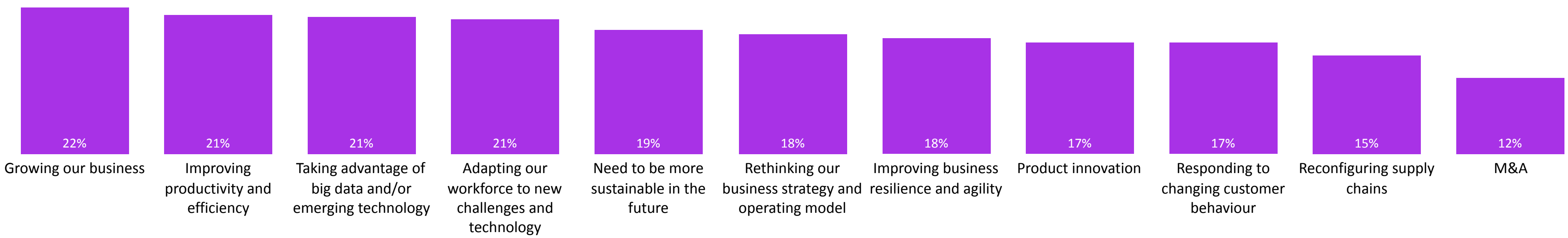
What topics are front of mind with clients?

An important aspect of brand is the extent to which a firm has a reputation for being a leading authority on the issues of the day. These firms can have the power to shape the public conversation and wider thinking about particular topics. Being an authority goes beyond having high-quality thought leadership content: It's about the extent to which a firm is seen as having the most cutting-edge thinking, and having the leading thinkers, academics, and public commentators associated with the issues clients are concerned about.

We ask clients to select, from a list of 11 topics, which two are the most pressing issues to their organisation over the next two years. We then ask clients which of the leading consulting firms they're aware of is the leading thinker or authority on each of these 11 issues.

Figure 9

Most pressing topics to clients in the UK

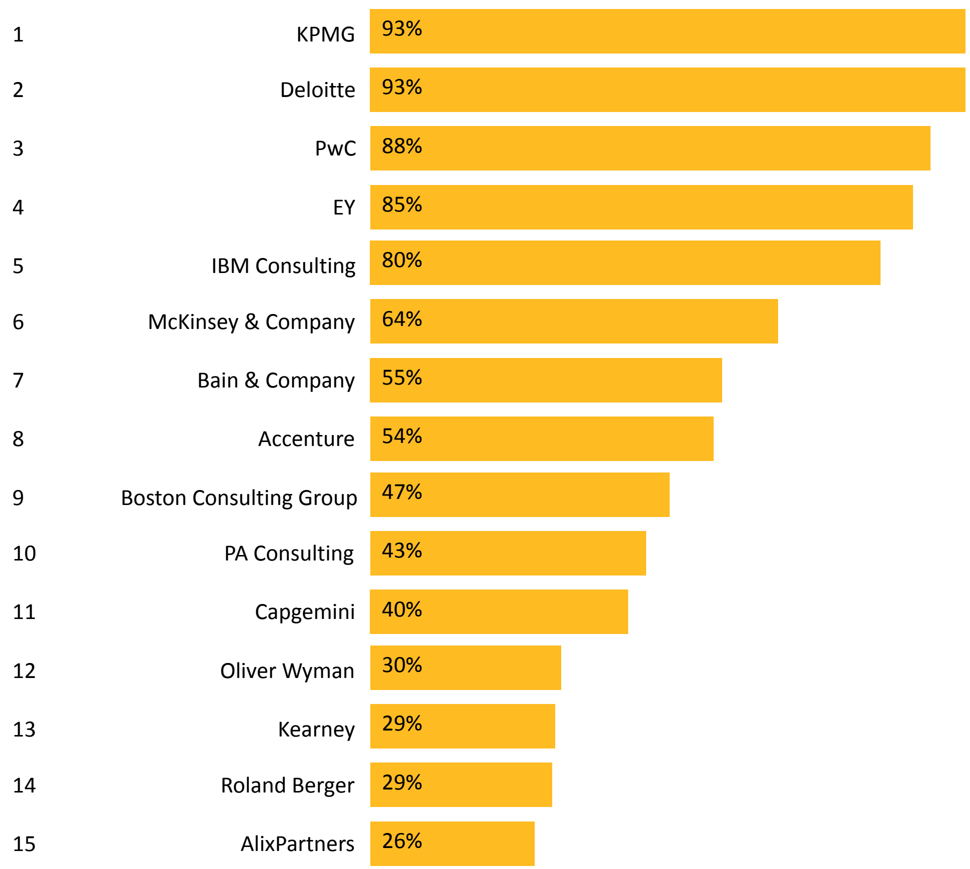


Who are the leading authorities?

To give each firm an "authority" score, we divide the count of respondents that said each firm was an authority on a topic, by the count of the highest scoring firm for that topic. This is then weighted by the importance of the topic according to clients. A firm's total authority score is the sum of its score for each topic. The score firms are given is out of 100, with a score of 100 indicating that a firm is the leading thinker across all topics.

Figure 10

Most authoritative consulting firms in the UK



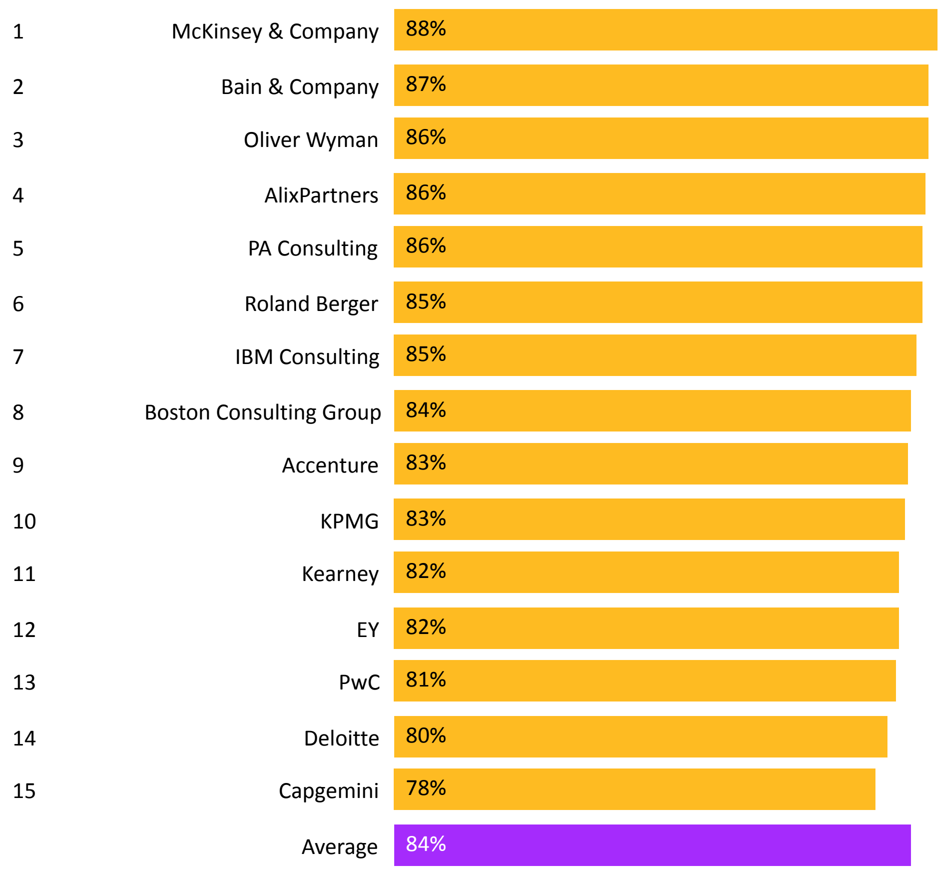
Who delivers high-quality work?

If firms aren't thought of as consistently delivering high-quality work, then clients may be reluctant to buy work from firms, or to continue to buy more work if they're already clients.

We ask clients to rate the quality of consulting firms' work in 13 different services. The scores below are based on an average across all 13 services for each firm. We base our rating on the sum of the proportion of people who describe quality as either "high" or "very high". Where that produces an equal result between two firms, we take into account the share who have described quality as "very high" to determine the order in which they are ranked.

Figure 11

Top-rated firms for overall quality of work in the UK



Perceptions of quality by client type

Here we look at the views of direct clients—those that are currently buying consulting services from a firm—and prospects—those aware of a firm, but who aren't currently buying consulting services from it. This gives us an idea of the lived experience of the quality of firms' work compared to clients' expectations for quality projected by the brand.

Figure 12

Top-rated firms for overall quality of work in the UK—**direct clients only**

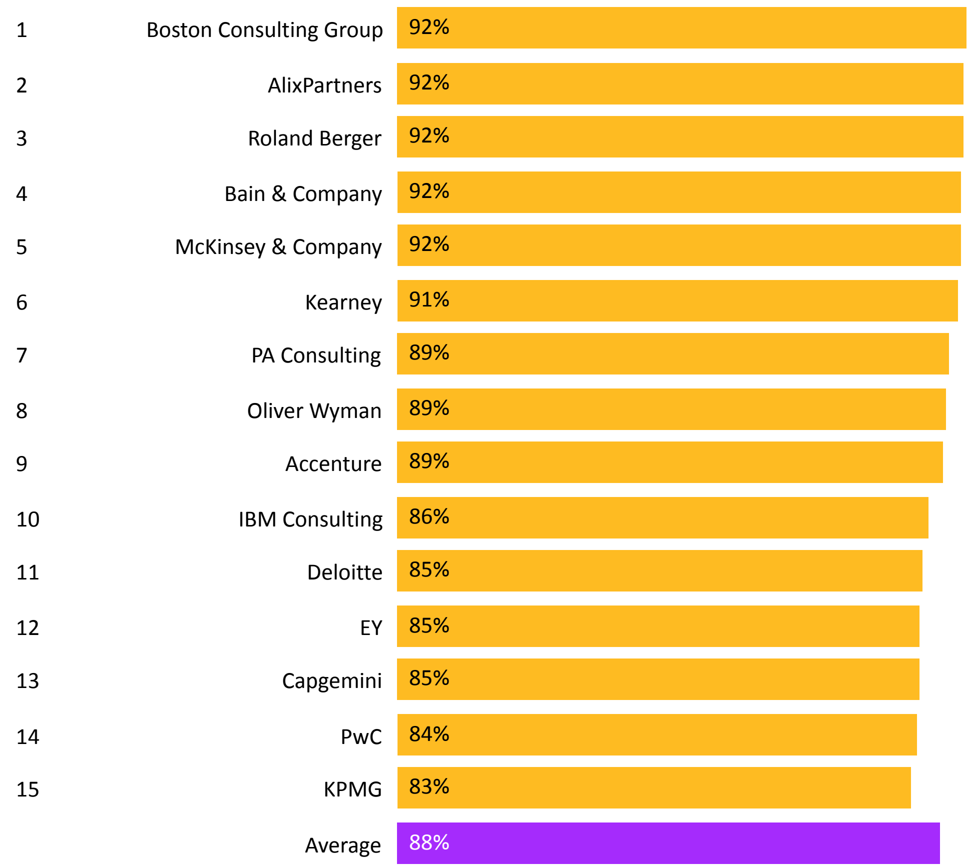
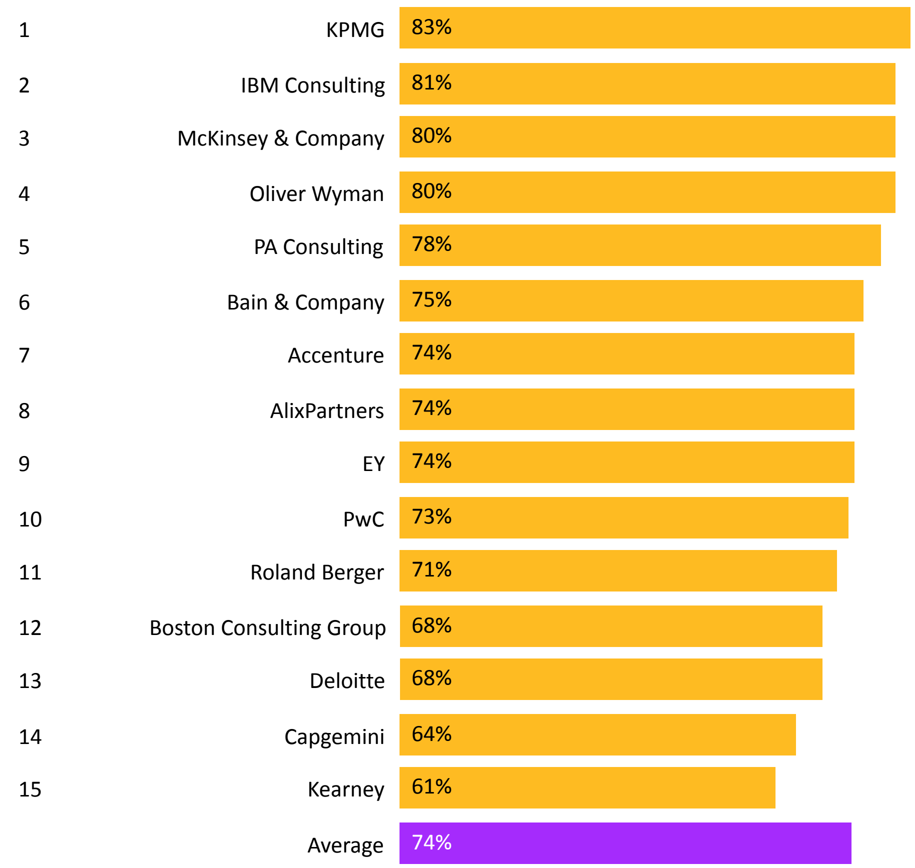


Figure 13

Top-rated firms for overall quality of work in the UK—**prospects only**



Quality rankings by service

The tables below show the three highest-rated firms for quality across each of the 13 service areas we ask about, listed in alphabetical order by service.

Figure 14

Quality rankings by service

Operational improvement

1	McKinsey & Company	92%
2	Oliver Wyman	89%
3	AlixPartners	87%
	Bottom	72%
	Average	84%

Regulatory-driven work

1	PA Consulting	88%
2	McKinsey & Company	88%
3	AlixPartners	85%
	Bottom	76%
	Average	82%

Risk management (incl. cybersecurity)

1	Bain & Company	88%
2	Boston Consulting Group	88%
3	McKinsey & Company	88%
	Bottom	77%
	Average	83%

RPA advice & implementation

1	Roland Berger	90%
2	IBM Consulting	88%
3	Oliver Wyman	88%
	Bottom	73%
	Average	84%

Sales & marketing (incl. customer experience)

1	McKinsey & Company	95%
2	PA Consulting	90%
3	Oliver Wyman	88%
	Bottom	76%
	Average	84%

Sustainability & resilience

1	Bain & Company	91%
2	EY	90%
3	McKinsey & Company	89%
	Bottom	77%
	Average	85%

Transformation (e.g., digital, business, etc.)

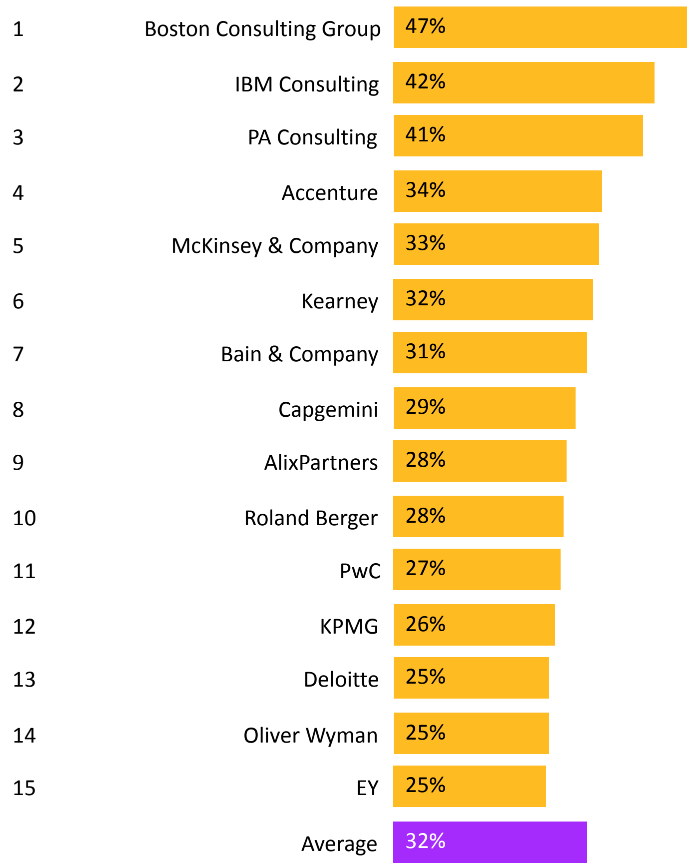
1	McKinsey & Company	89%
2	PA Consulting	89%
3	KPMG	87%
	Bottom	77%
	Average	83%

Perceptions of the value added by firms in the UK

It’s important for firms to not just provide high-quality work, but also a return on investment for clients to justify spending money on consultants. We ask clients to tell us (for three firms they’re aware of, chosen at random) whether they think firms add more in value than they charge in fees. The score represents the total proportion that say a firm adds more in value than it charges in fees.

Figure 15

Top-rated firms for value in the UK



Perceptions of value by client type

Here we look at the views of direct clients—those that are currently buying consulting services from a firm—and prospects—those aware of a firm, but who aren't currently buying consulting services from it. This gives us an idea of the lived experience of the value of firms' work compared to clients' expectations for value projected by the brand.

Figure 16

Top-rated firms for value in the UK—**direct clients only**

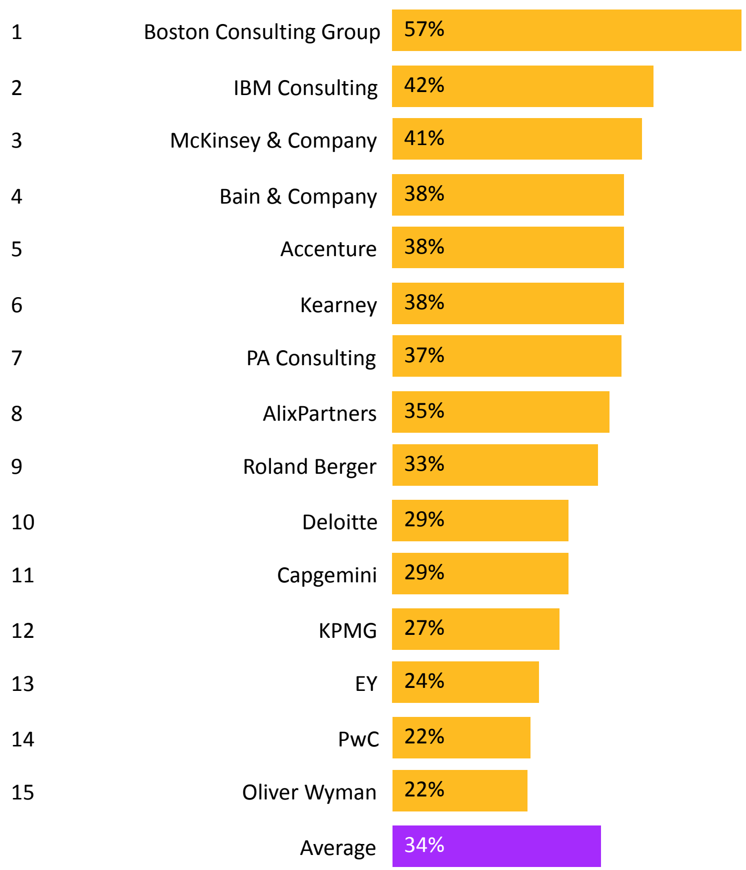
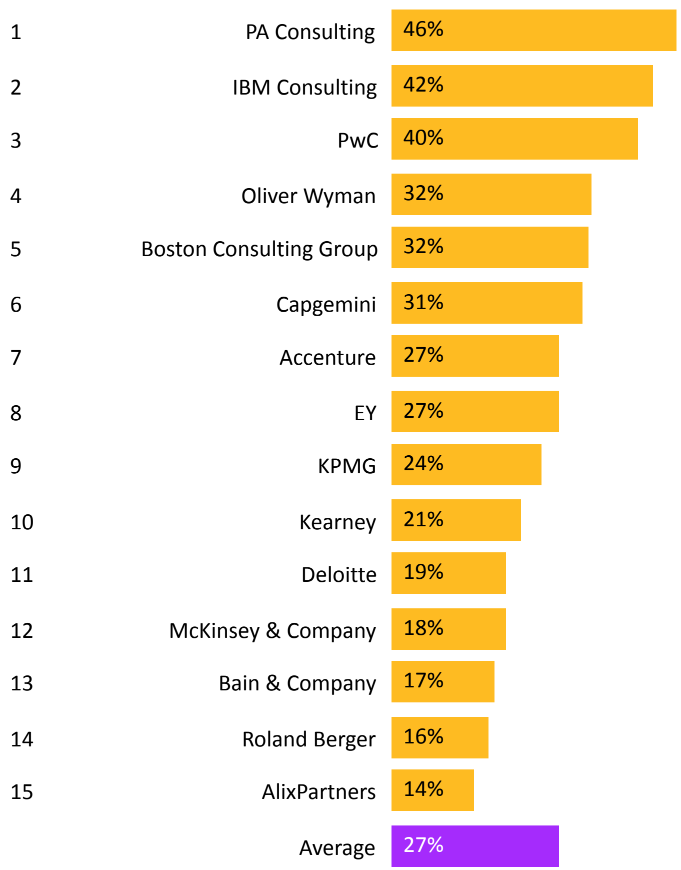


Figure 17

Top-rated firms for value in the UK—**prospects only**



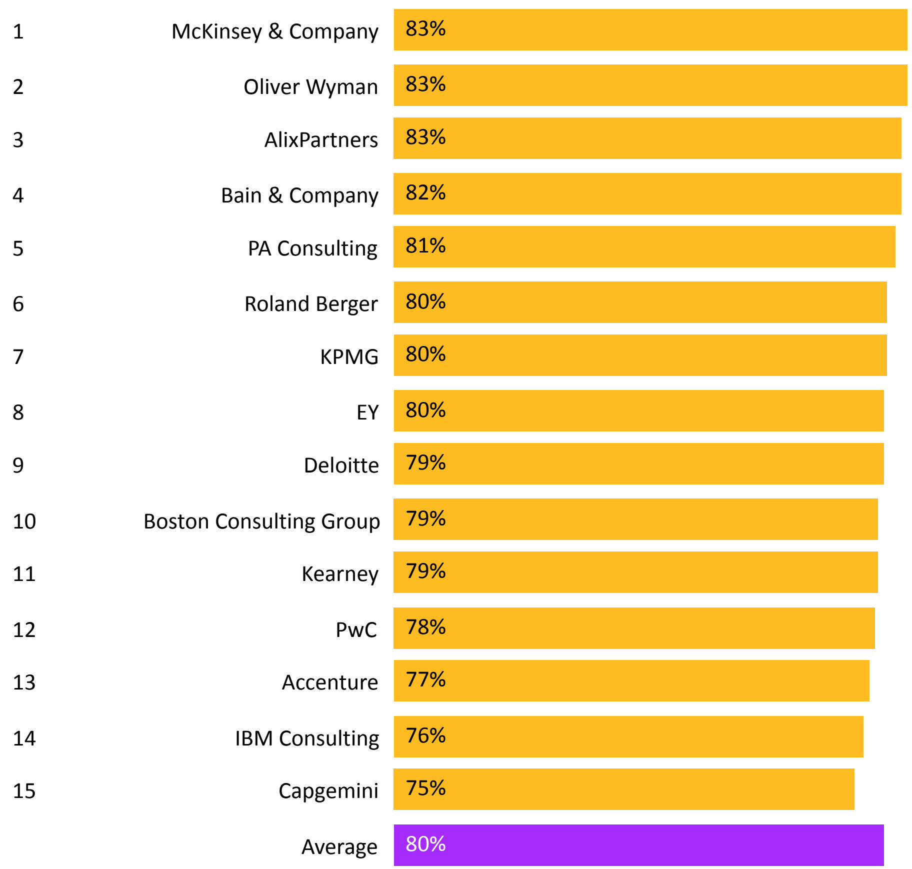
Who is best to work with?

While the output of consultants' work is crucial, the journey to that output is also important. If the experience of working with a firm is lacking in some way, then clients may be reluctant to work with them again if they feel they can get deliverables of similar quality elsewhere.

As well as asking which attributes are most important when choosing a firm to work with, we ask clients to rate three consulting firms they're aware of across 17 different attributes. The scores below are based on an average across all 17 attributes for each firm. We base our rating on the sum of the proportion of people who describe the strength of an attribute as either "good" or "very good". Where that produces an equal result between two firms, we take into account the share who have described attribute strength as "very good" to determine the order in which they are ranked.

Figure 18

Top-rated firms for overall strength of attributes in the UK



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Top-rated firms for overall strength of attributes in the UK—**direct clients only**

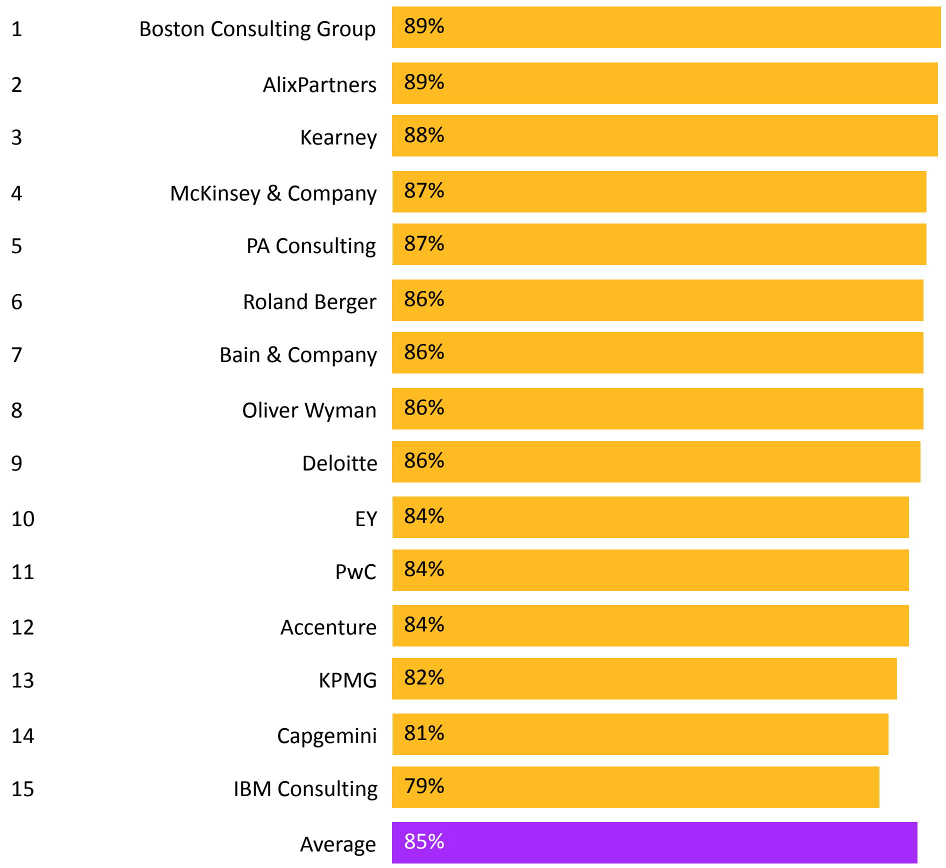
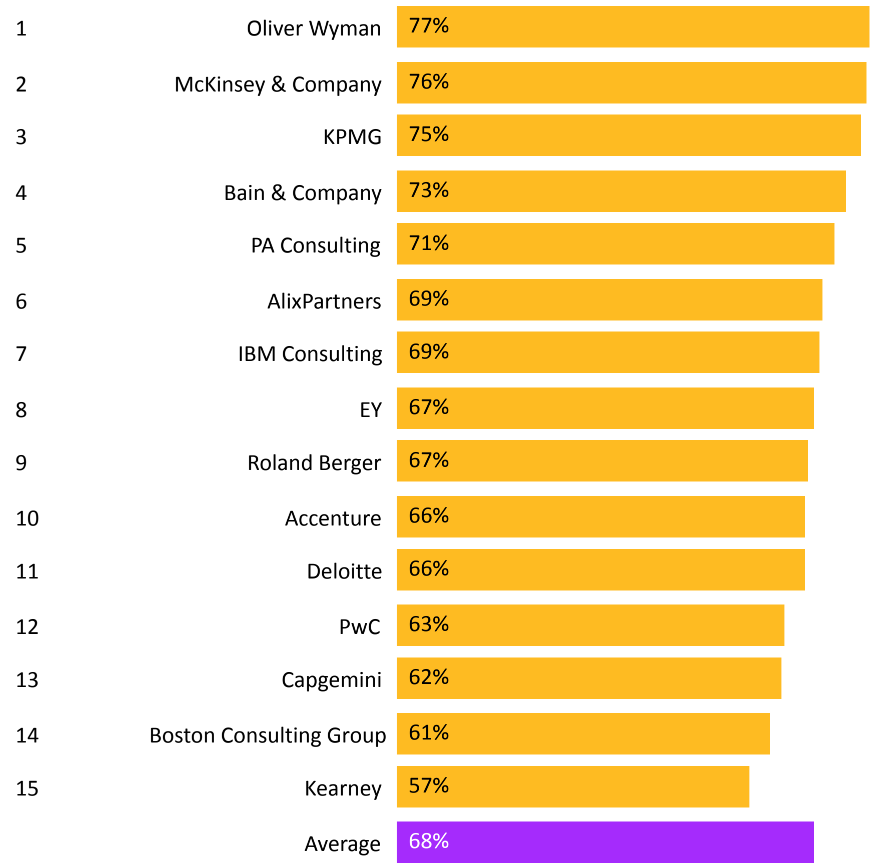


Figure 20

Top-rated firms for overall strength of attributes in the UK—**prospects only**



3

What clients are telling us

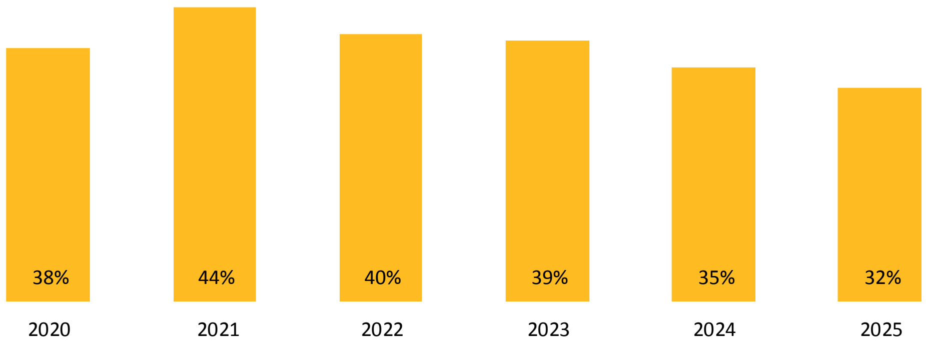
UK clients are as sceptical about value as ever

Perceptions of value among clients in the UK are continuing to decline, with only 32% speaking positively about the value firms deliver, down three percentage points from last year.

Value scores have been slowly declining in the UK since 2021

Figure 21

Proportion of UK clients speaking positively about value added, from 2020 to 2025

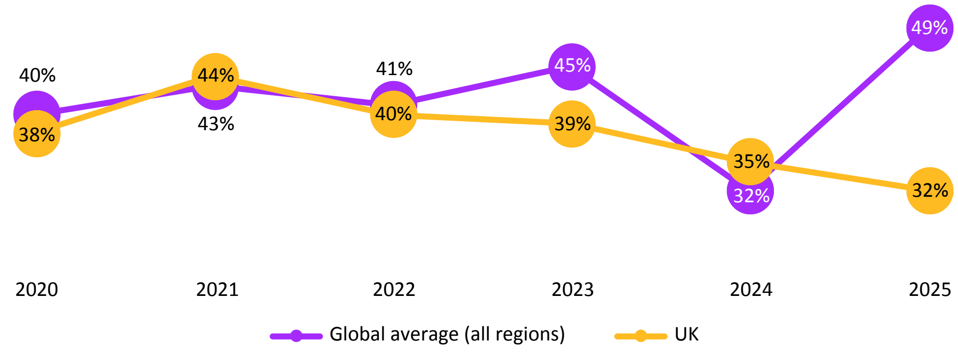


What's particularly striking, however, is that the slight decline in value scores in the UK this year is at odds with the global picture. With an average increase of 17 percentage points in value scores globally, the UK is an outlier in an otherwise positive story about value this year.

Clients in the UK are noticeably less positive about value than their counterparts in other regions

Figure 22

Proportion of clients in the UK speaking positively about value added compared to global scores from 2020 to 2025



At this point, it's worth mentioning that what appears on the surface to be bad news for consulting firms is perhaps more about UK clients simply believing they are getting what they paid for: Fifty-seven percent of clients believe they are getting the same value as the amount they paid for in fees, the second highest proportion of all regions. Only 11% believe they are getting less value than they paid in fees, which is only slightly higher than the global average (9%). Nevertheless, it still speaks of a difficulty among UK clients to see the value that firms can offer beyond the predetermined scope of the project.

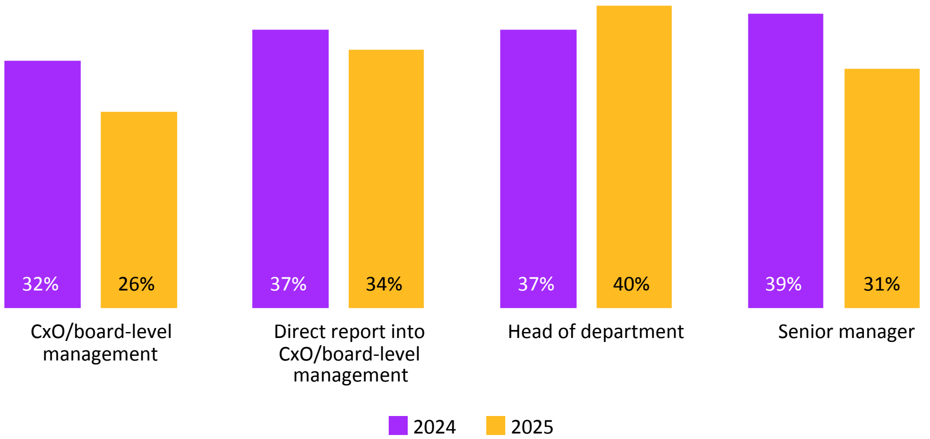
To better understand why positive perceptions of value—clients saying that firms have delivered more in value than they paid in fees—remain stubbornly low in the UK, we examined which client groups are particularly negative this year and may warrant particular attention going forward.

Most notably, only 26% of C-suite respondents are positive about value this year, down six percentage points from 2024. This is the second year in a row that the C-suite have been less positive than their more junior counterparts (including direct reports, heads of department, and senior managers) about the value added by the firms they have worked with.

The C-suite are the least positive about the value added by firms in relation to the fees paid to them

Figure 23

Value scores by seniority, from 2024 to 2025



After a turbulent few years, the UK economy remains on shaky ground and businesses are still uncertain. It's very possible that the C-suite—ultimately in charge of the purse strings—are still looking at the return on investments they're making with a particularly discerning eye, and perhaps feel that firms are not being clear enough about where they're offering more than what clients are paying for.

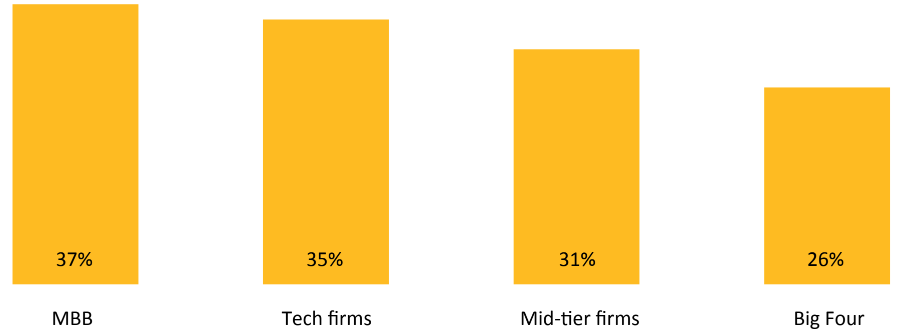
Also notable is the decline in perceptions among senior managers (also by eight percentage points). While value scores remain higher for this client group overall compared to the C-suite, it perhaps signals that there is not just a value problem in the boardroom, but on the ground at the client's site too. Senior managers are likely to be the ones working most closely with consultants on a project, and the decline in value scores may suggest that perhaps they don't consider firms to be delivering above what they would be able to achieve internally. It's important for firms to be able to demonstrate their value-add in the day-to-day running of projects: CxOs may have the final say in the decision-making process, but their less senior colleagues can undoubtedly influence this decision by highlighting the firms they do and don't like working with.

When we dig further into the data, we find that clients are most likely to be positive about the value added by MBB firms (McKinsey, Bain, and BCG) and technology firms (IBM, Accenture, and Capgemini), more so than the Big Four.

Clients are most positive about the value added by MBB and technology firms this year

Figure 24

Perceptions of value by firm type[1]



We think this could point to the nature of the work different firms do. When we speak with clients, they expect to pay a higher price for strategic visioning work, which probably speaks to the value they see in this type of work. Strategy firms also tend to be more associated with factors that can drive added value—such as wider market intelligence, access to benchmarking data, and the ability to challenge clients' thinking. And when it comes to technology firms, perhaps clients find it easier to see or capture the value of technology improvements across their organisation, beyond the original scope of the project. It stands to reason that implementing a big digital transformation programme can result in visible changes across different functions.

1 Tech firms: IBM, Accenture & Capgemini. Mid-tier firms: PA consulting, AlixPartners, Oliver Wyman, Kearney, and Roland Berger. MBB: McKinsey, BCG & Bain. Big Four: Deloitte, EY, PwC & KPMG.

These results suggest that firms need to think about how they can demonstrate the value they can add in projects that might not make such tangible changes, but still contribute to the efficiency and growth of an organisation. This is particularly pertinent for the Big Four, who have the lowest value scores as a collective.

Any firm that wants to improve perceptions of value among UK clients will therefore need a strong story to tell about the ability of its consultants to create value. The important thing is to listen to clients and understand what intrinsic value they are looking for from their projects. Beyond the immediate changes, what impact do they hope the work can help them achieve? Is there a way to measure and track the value that persists long after the project has closed, especially on some of the less transformational projects? These are questions that firms should be looking to explore if they want to improve perceptions of value among senior clients in the UK.

26%

Only 26% of clients are positive about the value added by the Big Four firms—the lowest score among firm types

Firms must work harder to convince prospects that they can deliver high-quality work

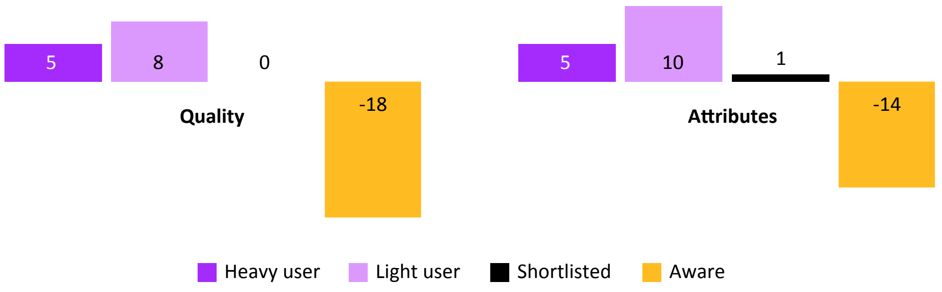
Across all the key metrics we capture about consulting firms, prospects tend to be less positive than direct clients. Actually working with a firm is more impactful on shaping clients' views than simply reading marketing content or speaking to consultants at a pitch meeting, giving firms the opportunity to boost perceptions with their current clients.

However, this year, we have seen perceptions among the most distant prospects—those aware of a firm, but that haven't shortlisted or used it before—markedly fall when it comes to the quality of firms' work and the strength of their attributes.

The clients least familiar with firms are even less positive about the quality of firms' work and how they work with clients compared to last year

Figure 25

Percentage point change in quality and attribute scores from 2024 to 2025, split by client relationship



While this finding is in line with the rest of the market, it's particularly marked in the UK.

Globally, perceptions of quality and strength of attributes have fallen among the most distant prospects

Figure 26

Percentage point change in quality and attribute scores from 2024 to 2025 of those "aware but not shortlisted or used", comparing UK to global results

What could be causing this? It suggests that firms might not be doing a good job at getting the word out about what they're like to work with. Clients that have not had direct experience with a firm, or even a conversation or proposal, rely solely on what they see and hear about firms through their marketing activities, word of mouth (from peers who are direct clients), and broader media noise.

With both attribute and quality scores for this client group falling in the UK, it's important that firms are clear about what it's like to work with them, for example by highlighting their sector expertise, the quality of their consultant's subject expertise, and responsiveness & flexibility in delivery, all attributes that are important to clients in the UK. To improve perceptions of quality, firms should focus on communicating their approach clearly, for example by sharing the successes they've had with current clients in thought leadership, case studies, and conversations, too. This will help convince this important group of potential new clients of the firm's strong track record, and hopefully get a foot in the door when it comes to shortlisting.

The Big Four are considered leading thinkers across the issues that matter most to clients

For the last four years we've asked clients about the most pressing areas for their organisations and the firms they consider to be the most authoritative in these areas.

We've seen a small change in terms of the areas that matter most to clients this year: Growth has returned to the top of the list of priorities, after it was middle of the pack last year. Meanwhile, improving productivity, taking advantage of emerging technologies, and adapting their workforce to new challenges all remain pressing to clients for a second year in a row.

Growth has emerged as clients' most pressing topic this year

Figure 27

Ranking the most pressing topics for clients over the next two years, comparing 2024 to 2025

This could signal that clients in the UK are shifting their focus towards thinking about growth and looking out at the wider market again after a year of managing more pressing issues internally.

However, what's particularly interesting is that there has been a shake-up in the order of firms that clients believe are authorities across these areas. Taking just the top four most pressing topics to clients, we can see that this year, the Big Four are most likely to be to be seen as the leading thinkers, and in some places have overtaken IBM and Accenture to become one of the top three firms.

The Big Four are most likely to be seen as the leading authorities across the most pressing topics to clients

And when we look at what this means overall, in terms of the average ranking of firms across all issues, we see that the Big Four dominates the ranking.

Figure 28

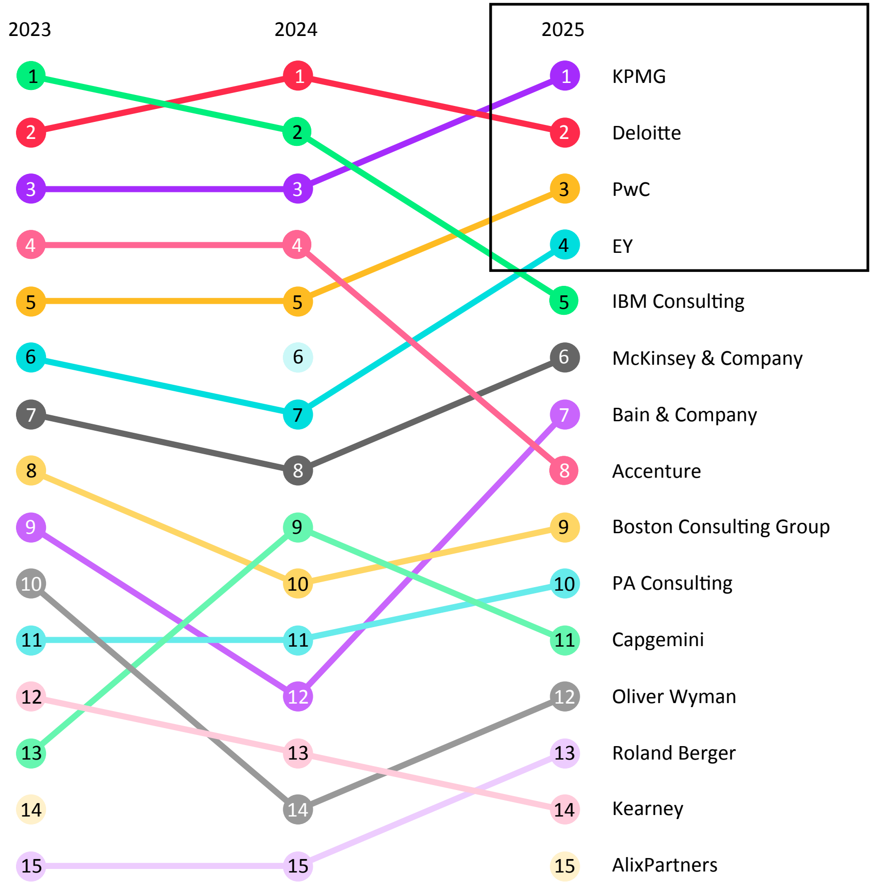
Top three firms for authority for the most pressing topics to clients, 2024 compared to 2025

	Growing our business		Improving productivity and efficiency		Taking advantage of big data and/or emerging technology		Adapting our workforce to new challenges and technology	
	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
1	Deloitte	KPMG	Deloitte	PwC	IBM	EY	Accenture	Deloitte
2	Accenture	Deloitte	KPMG	IBM	Deloitte	Deloitte	Deloitte	KPMG
3	IBM	EY	PwC	Deloitte	KPMG	IBM	KPMG	PwC

On average, clients consider the Big Four firms to be most authoritative across the pressing topics

Figure 29

Ranking based on average proportion of clients that consider each firm to be the leading thinker across the areas we asked about, from 2023 to 2025



The noticeable movers are EY and Bain, with the former rising from middle of the pack to fourth in the overall ranking for authority, and the latter jumping from 12th to ranking seventh. On the other hand, IBM and Accenture have taken a tumble, with IBM usually sitting among the top firms, but now ranking lower than the Big Four. Accenture has fallen to the middle of the pack, suggesting that the firm may not be dominating some of these issues as much as it has in the past, especially in the area of adapting the workforce to new challenges and technology—an area that the firm has historically ranked highly in.

We wonder whether the drop in authority scores for technology firms in comparison to the Big Four speaks to a certain accessibility that more generalist firms are able to offer clients about the intersection of technology and business. While Accenture and IBM have historically led the way in terms of exploring topics around emerging technology—and have been the authority on the impact of technology on productivity and the workforce—now most firms are able to offer their views about how the latest innovations can be applied to client organisations. Given their generalist focus, the Big Four are able to span a wider set of client sectors and functional roles, perhaps increasing the number of clients that consider them an authority on particular topics. While technology firms might excel at implementing tangible technology value-adds, Big Four firms seem to be stronger at communicating these technologies in generalist terms. And of course, it's worth noting that we're not just asking about technology topics, but also topics such as improving business strategy & operating models and M&A—which are outside the traditional scope of technology firms' services.

All this is to say that firms can't afford to rest on their laurels. In a tight market, any shifts in perceptions of the leading thinker on a particular issue could also lead to shifts in the firms they consider bringing in to help them tackle it in their own organisation.

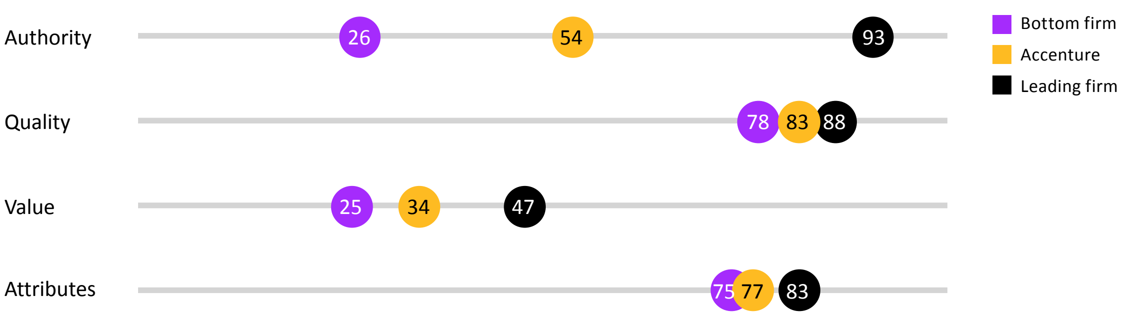
For those who are looking to be seen as *the* authority in a particular area, a key tool at your disposal is, of course, thought leadership. Relevance is key: with so much content out in the market, the organisations that provide research that strikes right at the heart of the issues clients are most worried about, with clear analysis, thoughtful takeaways, and ideas of how the insights can be used within their own organisations will more likely win. But thought leadership isn't just about high-quality written reports and articles published by a firm, but also the extent to which individual consultants could be considered thought leaders, their quality of thinking, and how they can speak to wider thinking on a topic. Firms should ensure that the individual consultants on projects are putting their best foot forward, staying up to date on the latest changes and trends relevant to their client's industry to prepare themselves for any wider conversations that may occur.

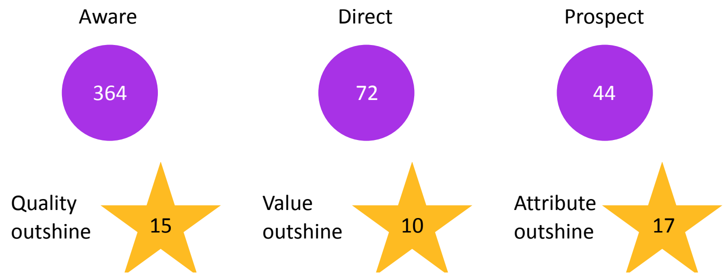
4

Firm-by-firm analysis

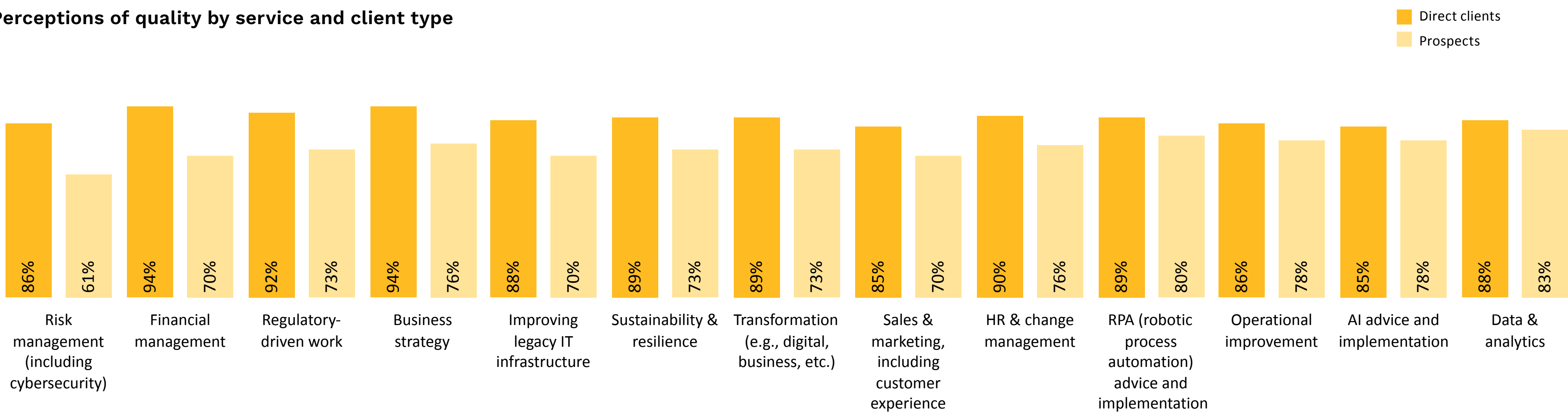
In this section of our report, we summarise the views of clients about each firm in turn. We explain further the methodology behind the data presented here in the **methodology in full** section later in this report.

Accenture

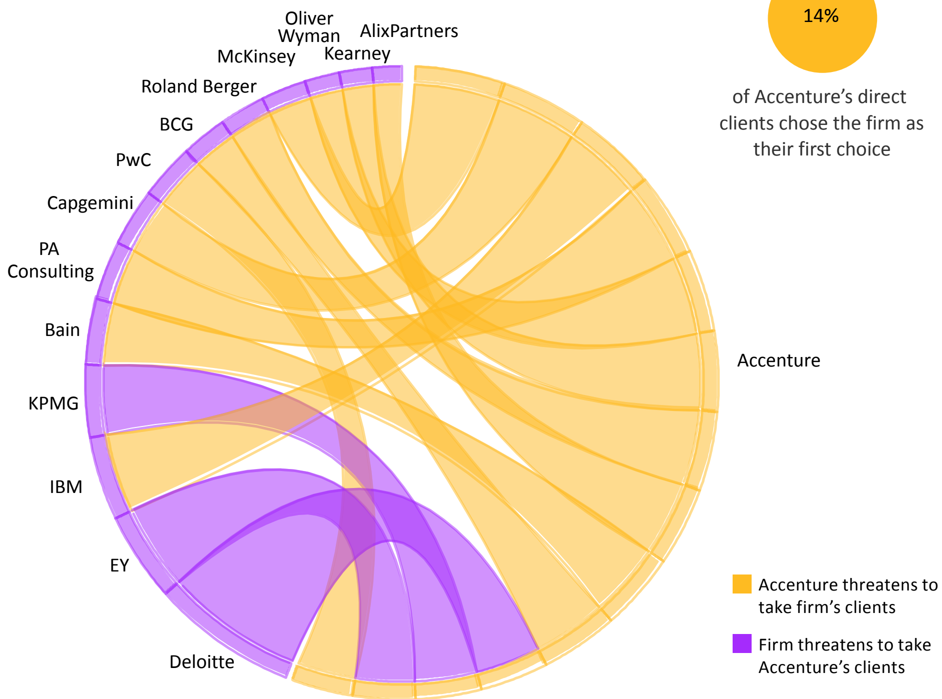




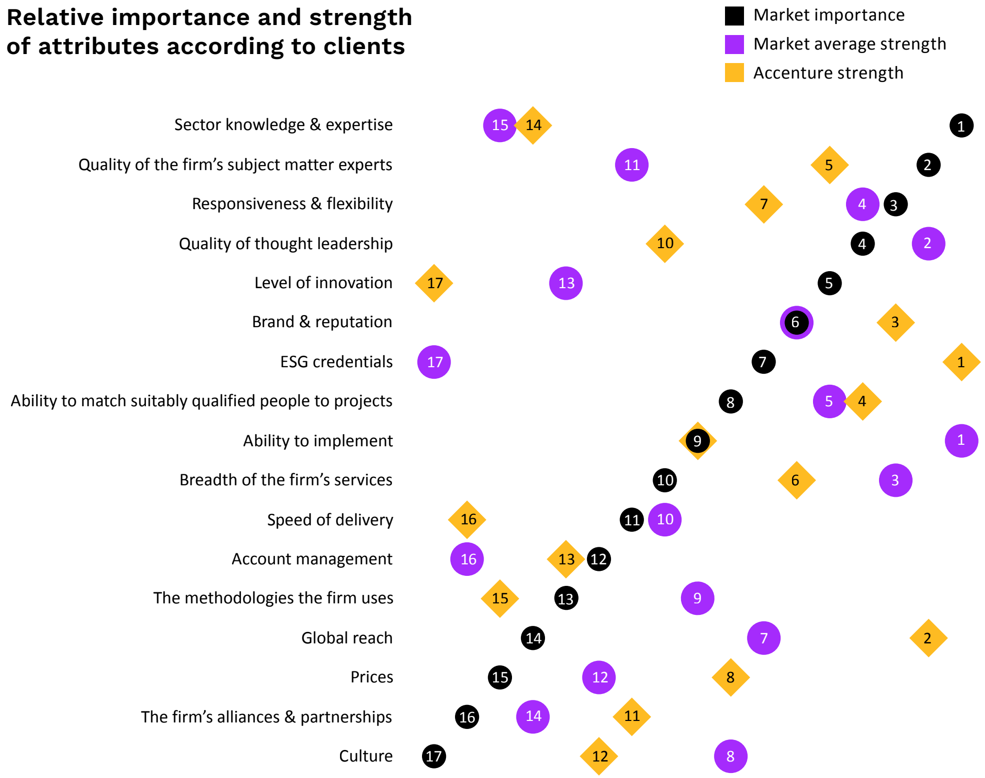
Perceptions of quality by service and client type



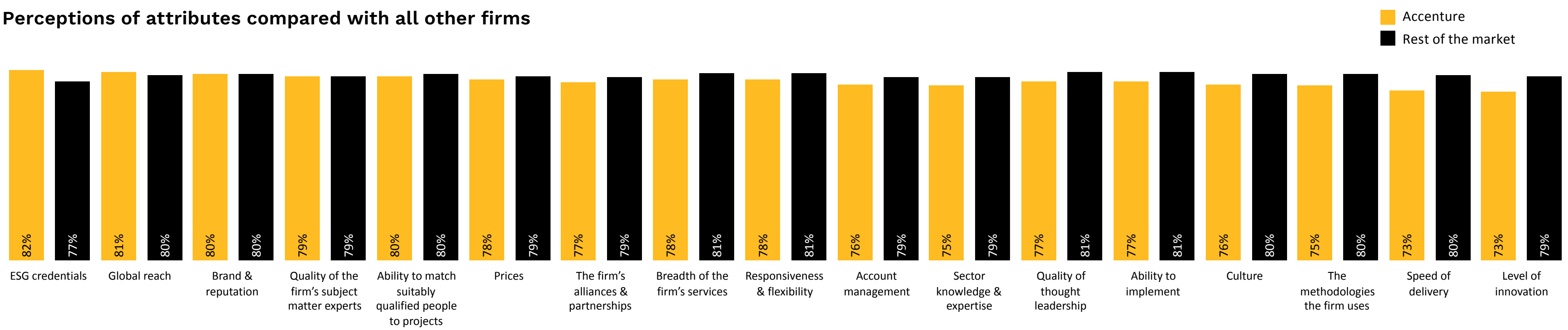
First choice firm of direct clients



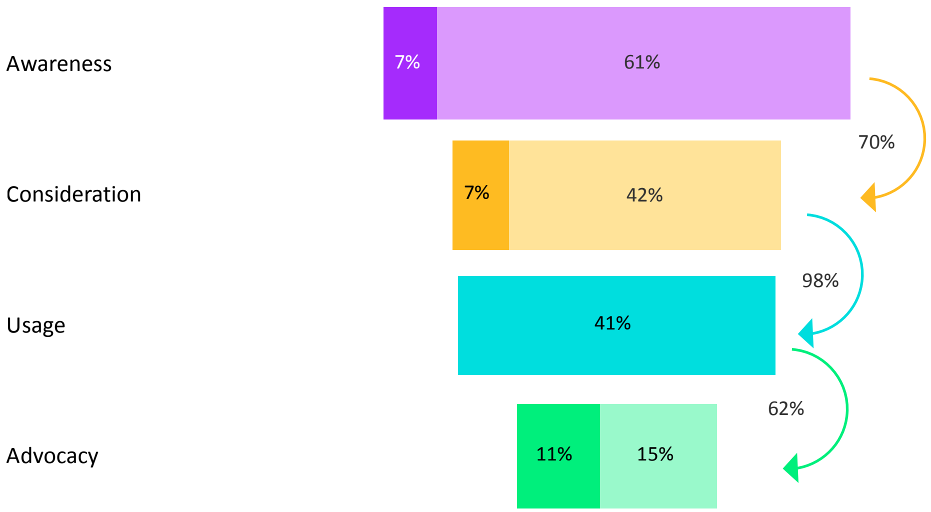
Relative importance and strength of attributes according to clients



Perceptions of attributes compared with all other firms

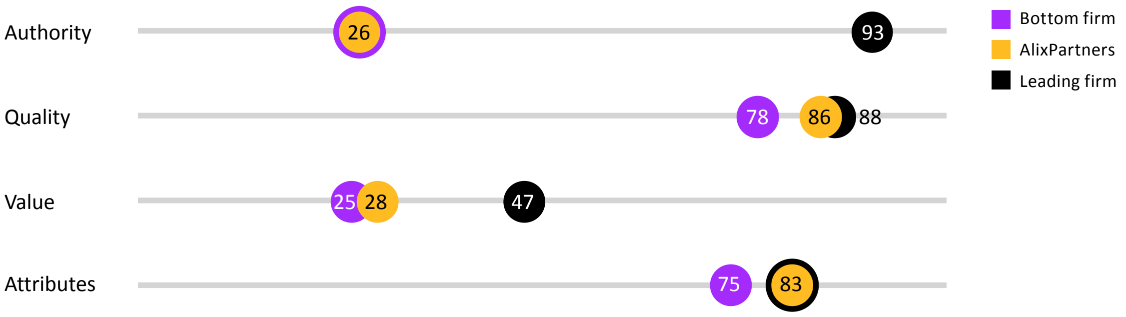


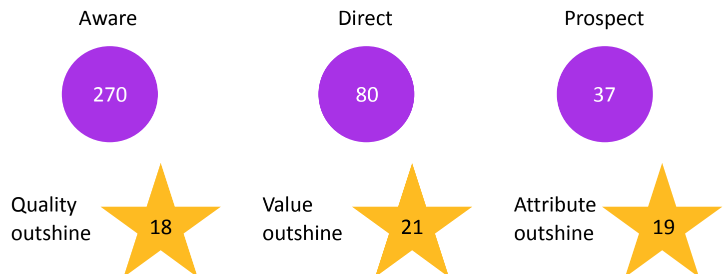
Buyer funnel of Accenture



	Leading firm	Average firm
Top of mind	18%	6%
Aided	81%	60%
First choice	14%	7%
Shortlist	63%	41%
Used in last two years	58%	42%
Would put reputation on the line	17%	11%
Would recommend	24%	15%

AlixPartners





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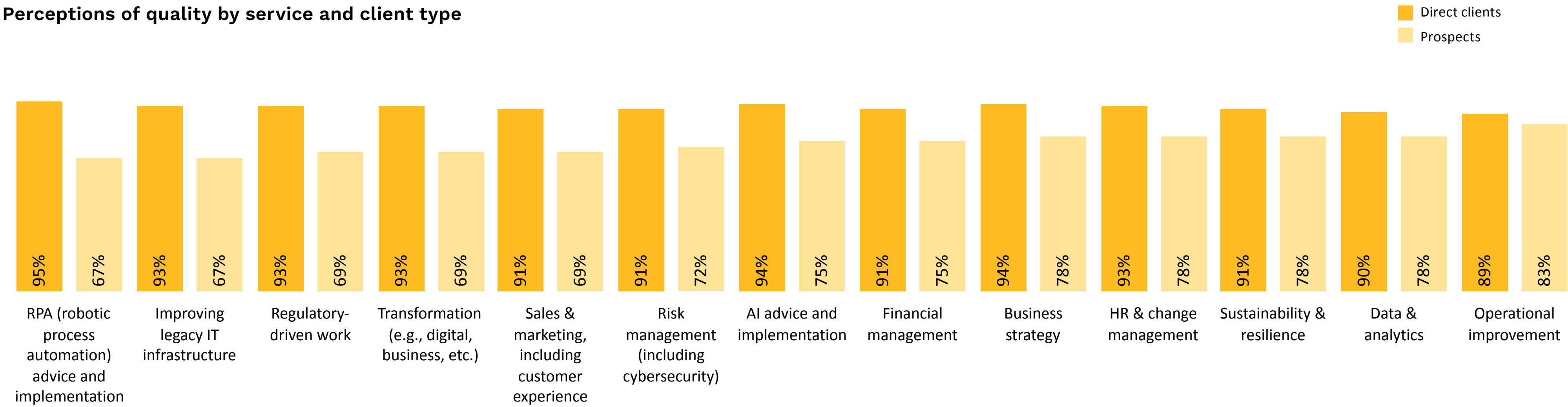

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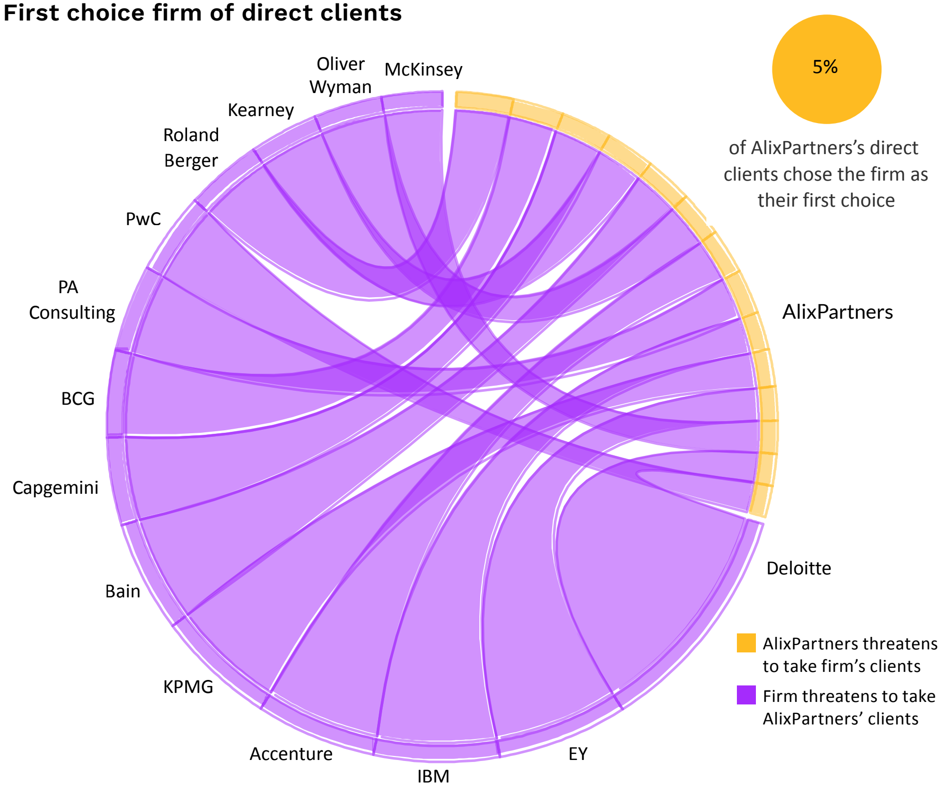

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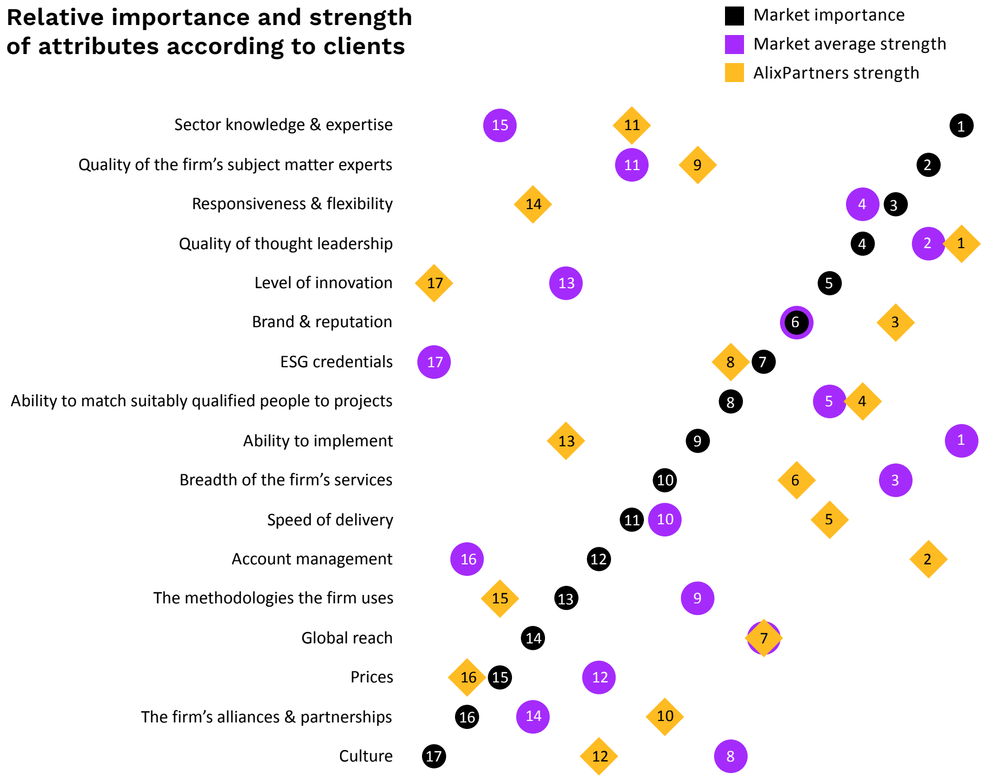
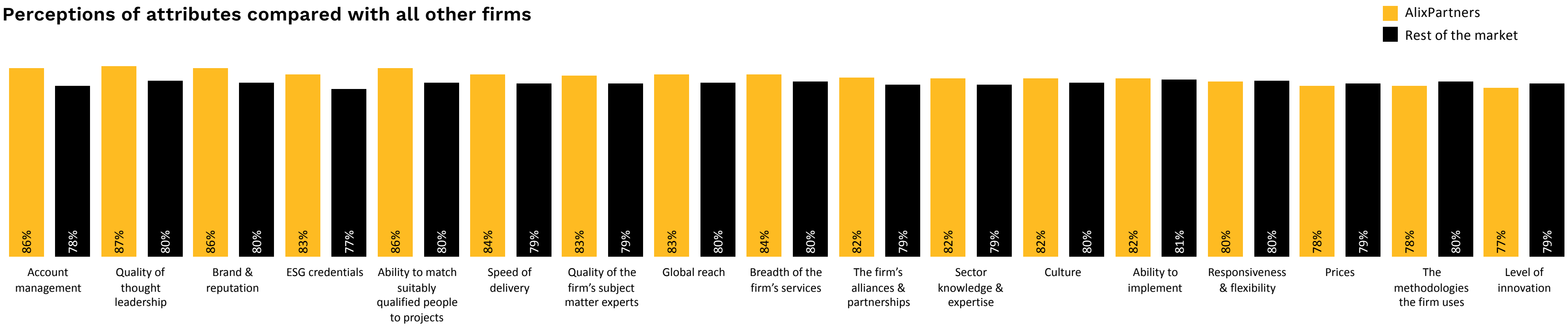
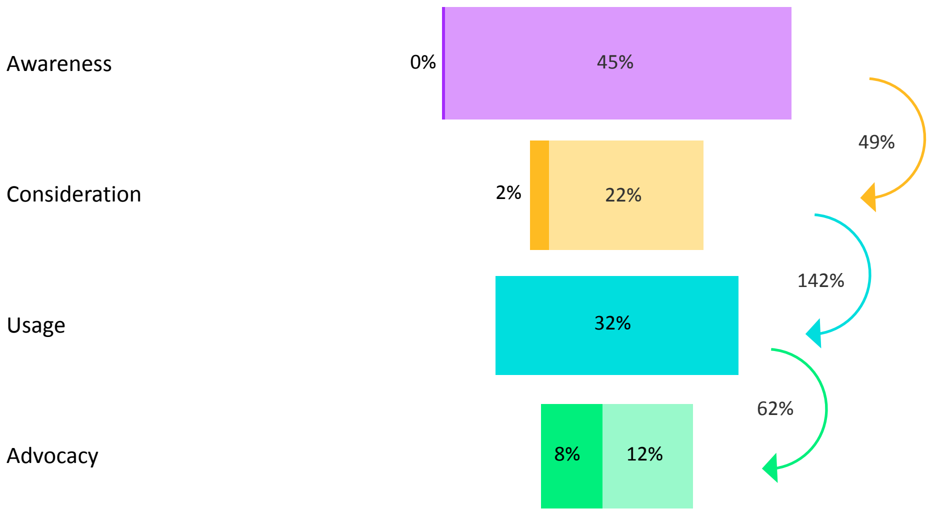


Perceptions of attributes compared with all other firms



Buyer funnel of AlixPartners



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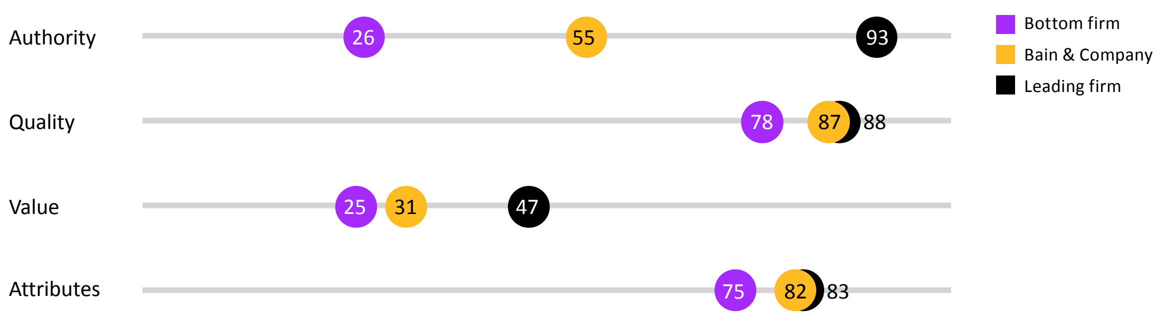
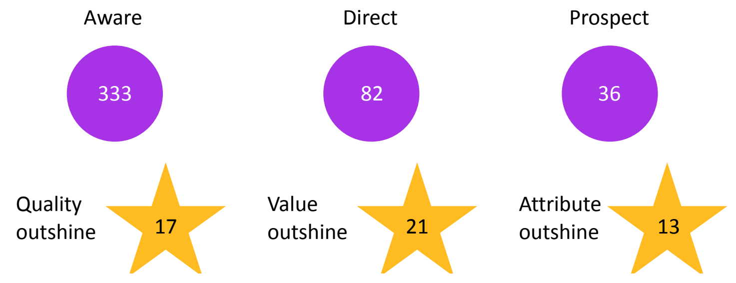
Bain & Company





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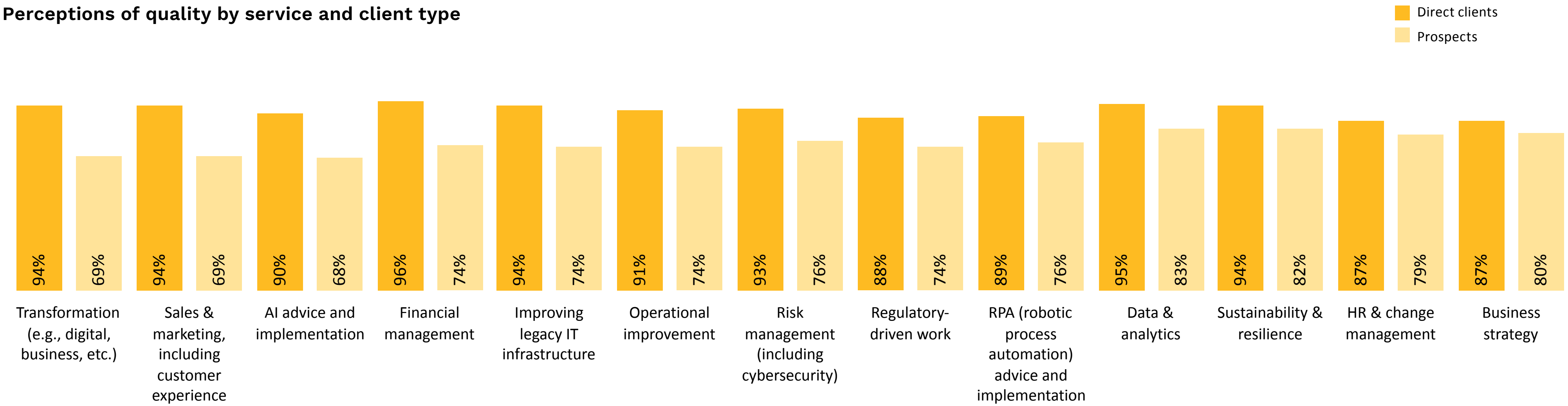
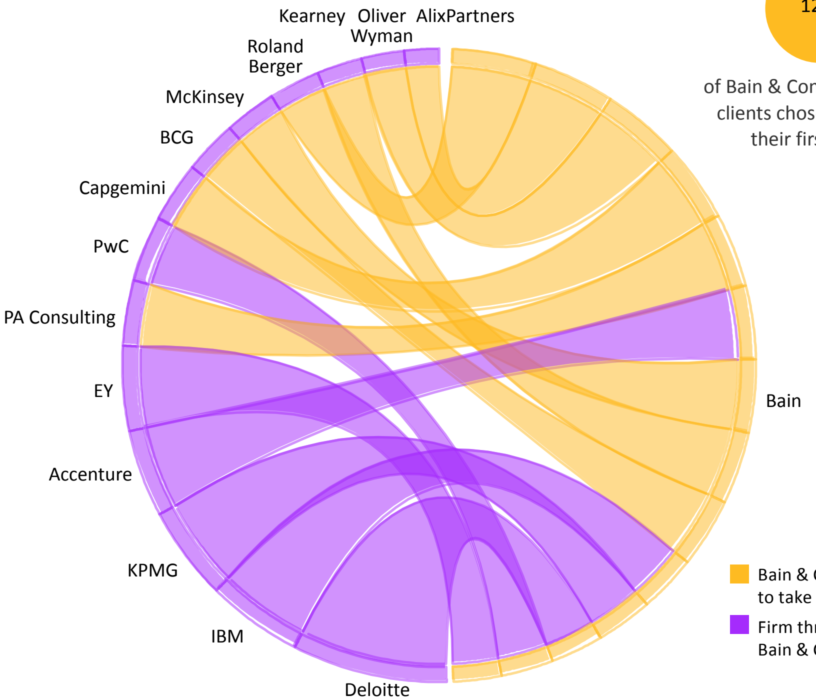


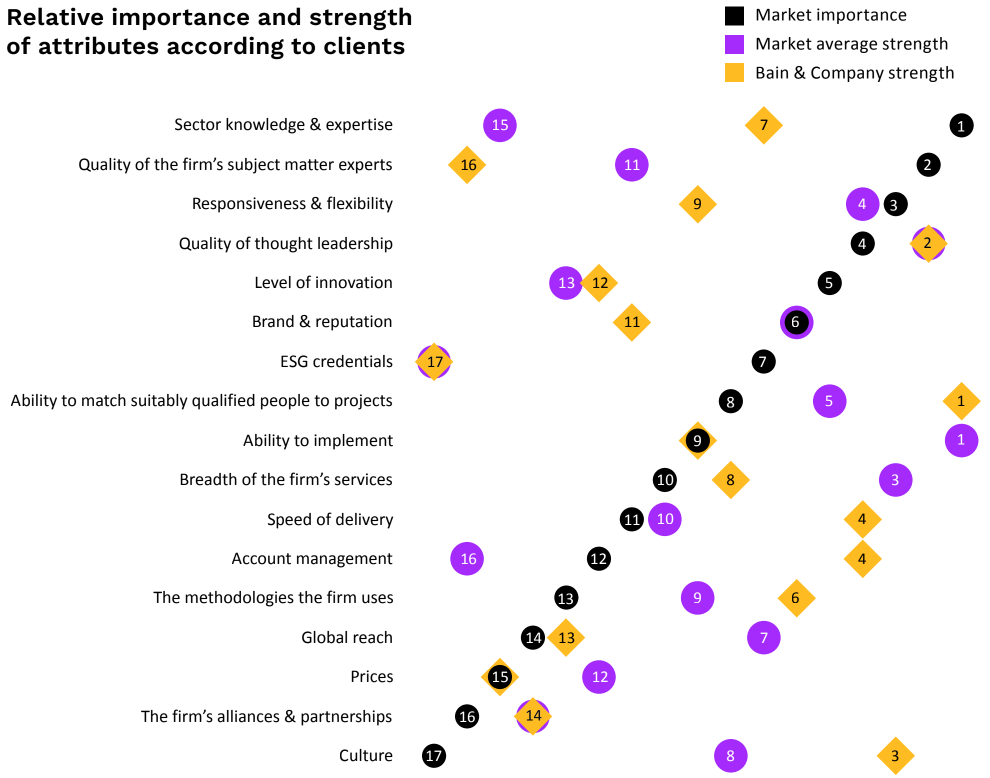
First choice firm of direct clients



12%

of Bain & Company's direct clients chose the firm as their first choice

Relative importance and strength of attributes according to clients



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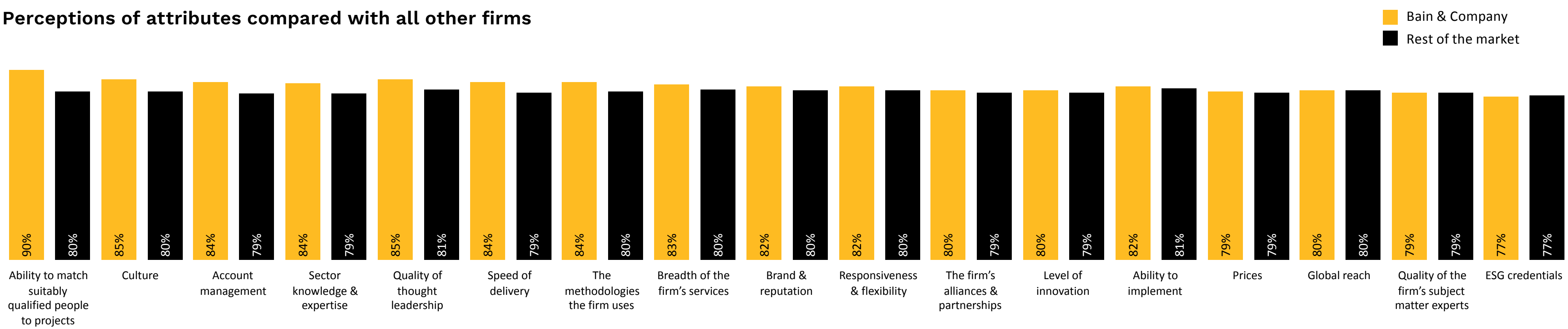
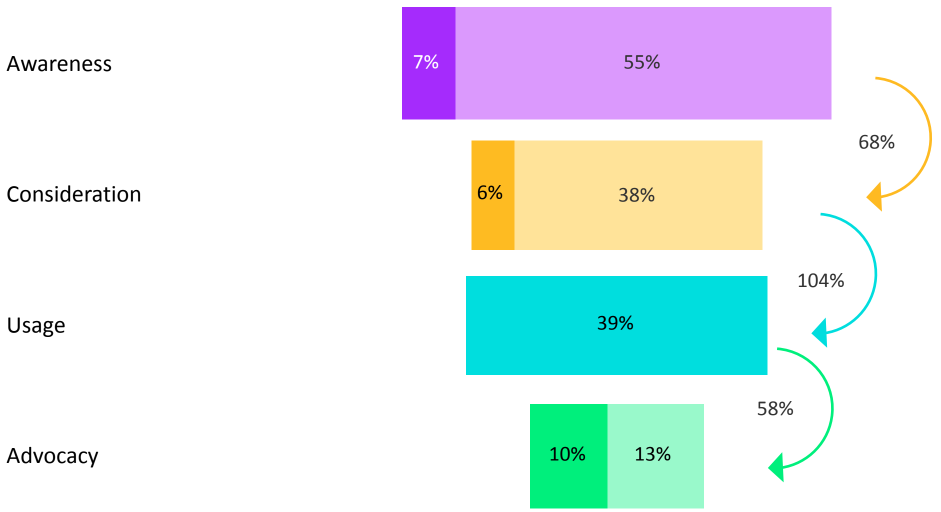


Client Perceptions Studies | Perceptions of Consulting in the UK in 2025

Buyer funnel of Bain & Company



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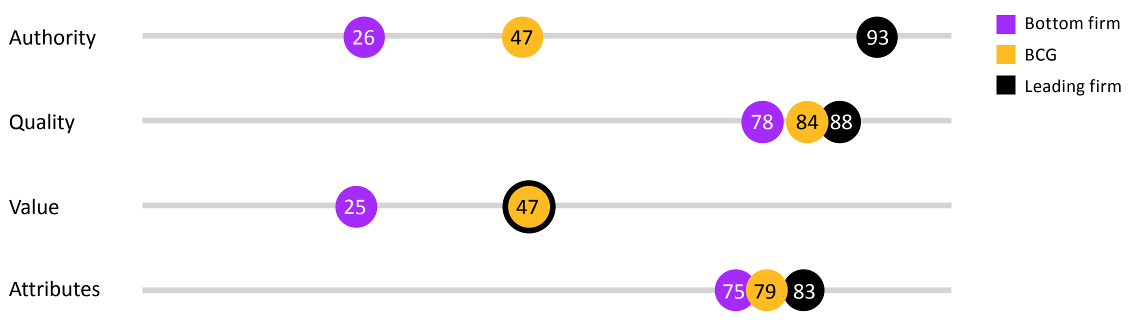
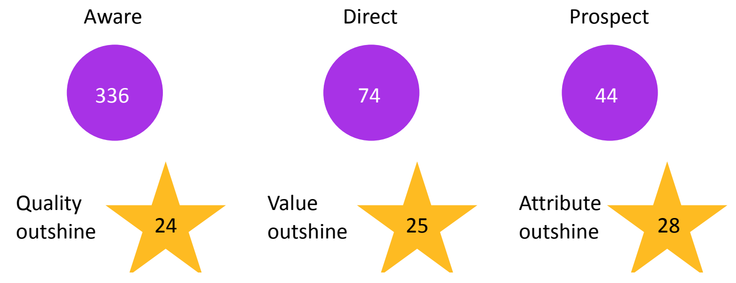
Boston Consulting Group





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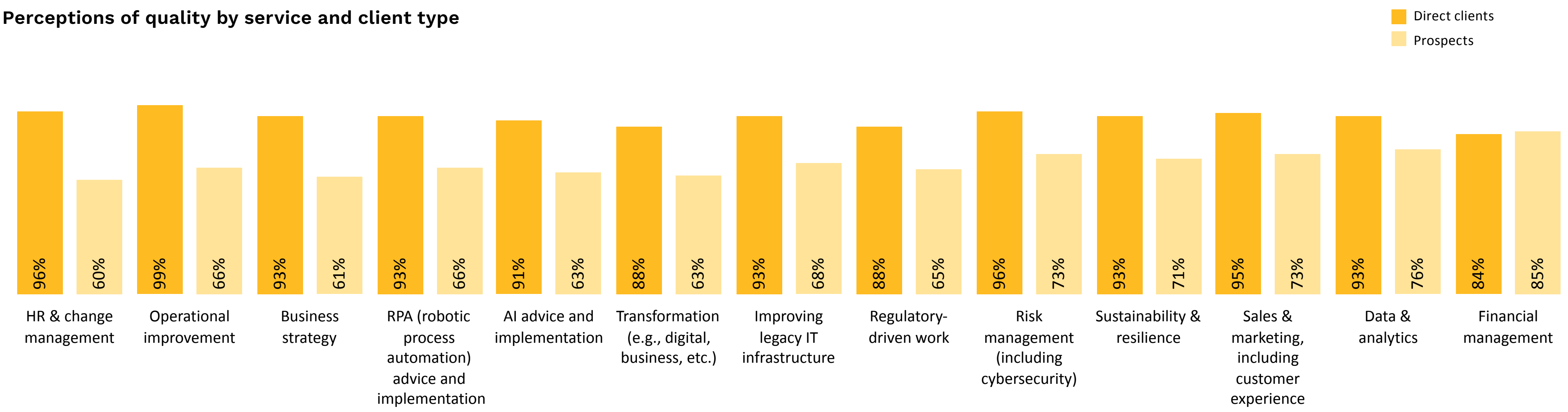

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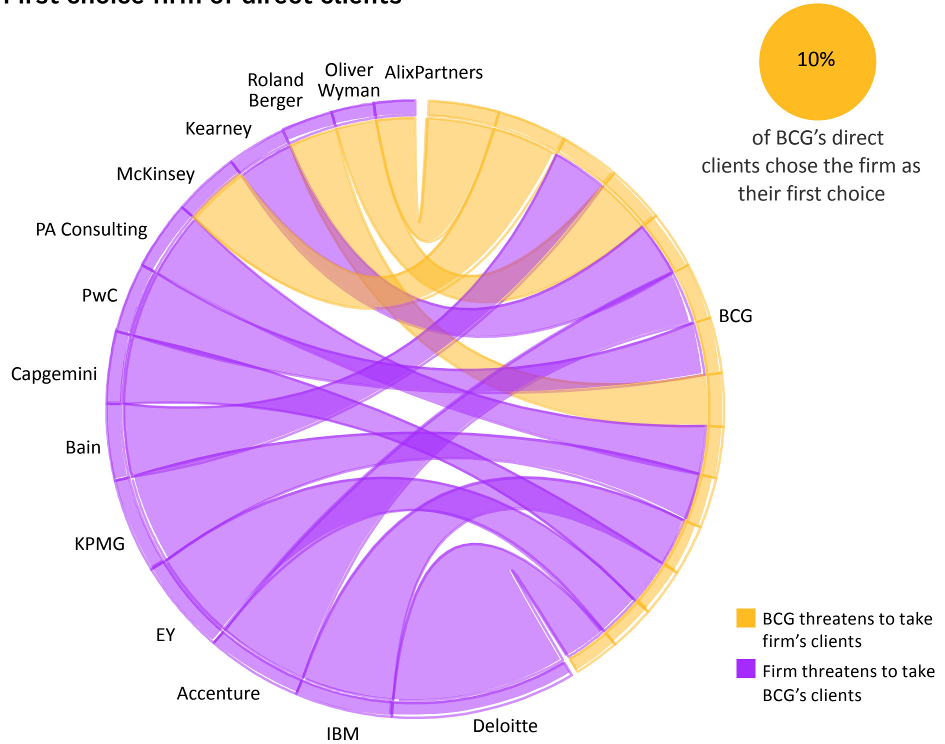
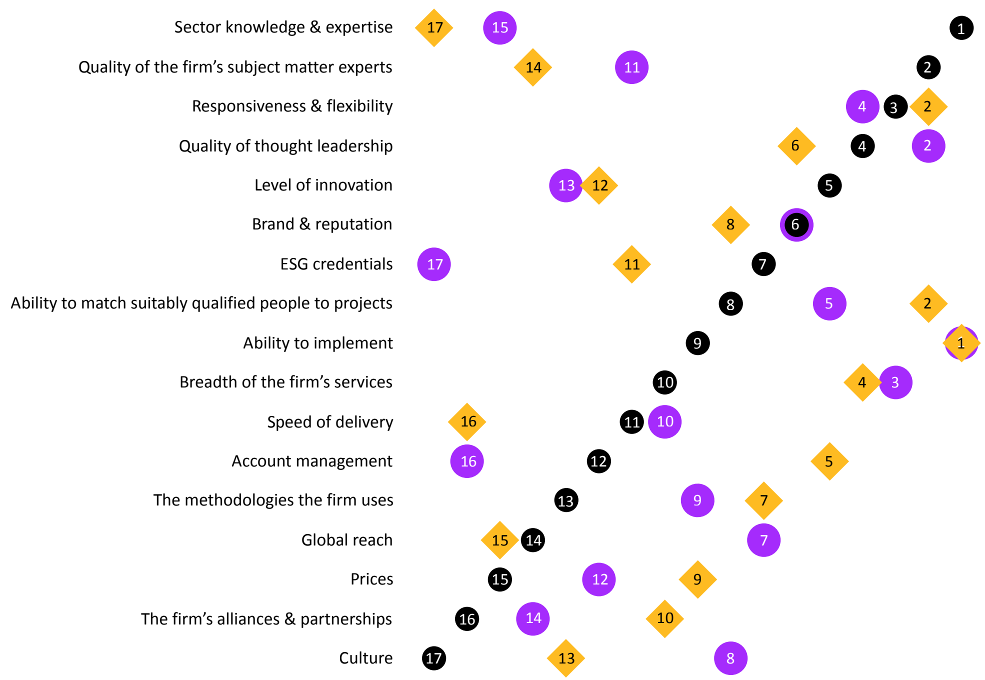


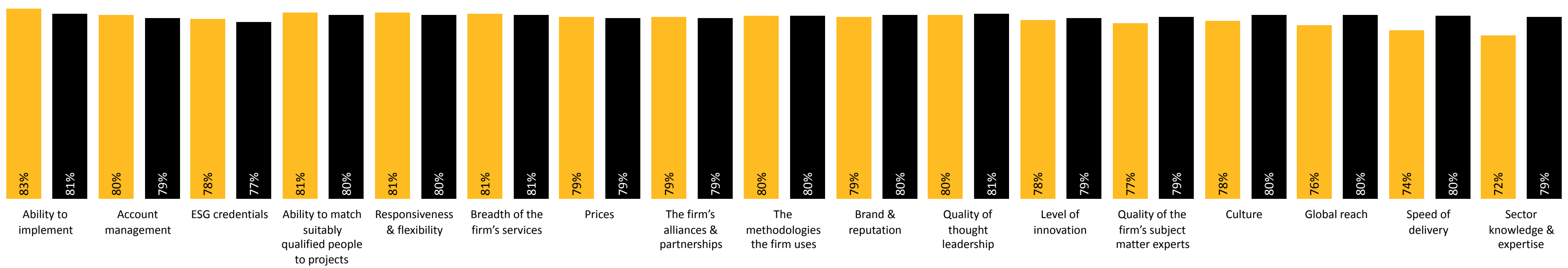
Relative importance and strength of attributes according to clients

Market importance
Market average strength
BCG strength

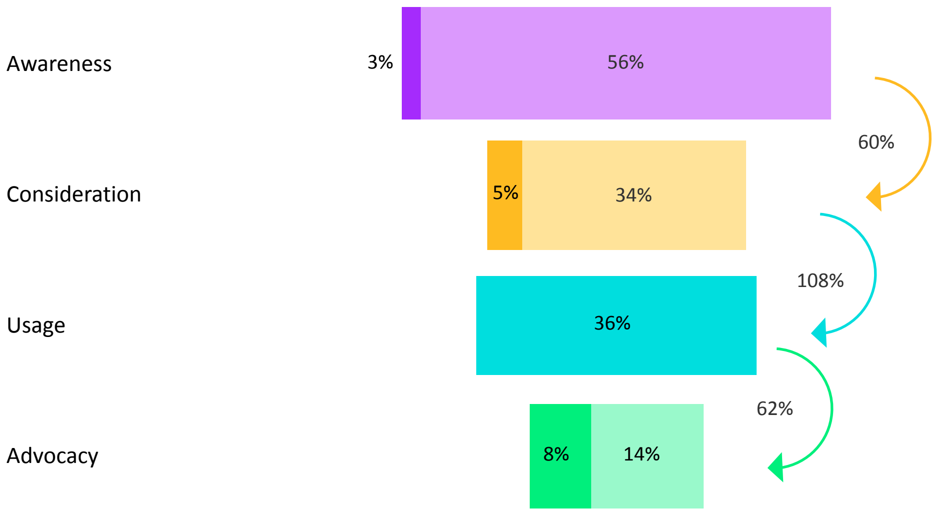


Perceptions of attributes compared with all other firms

BCG
Rest of the market

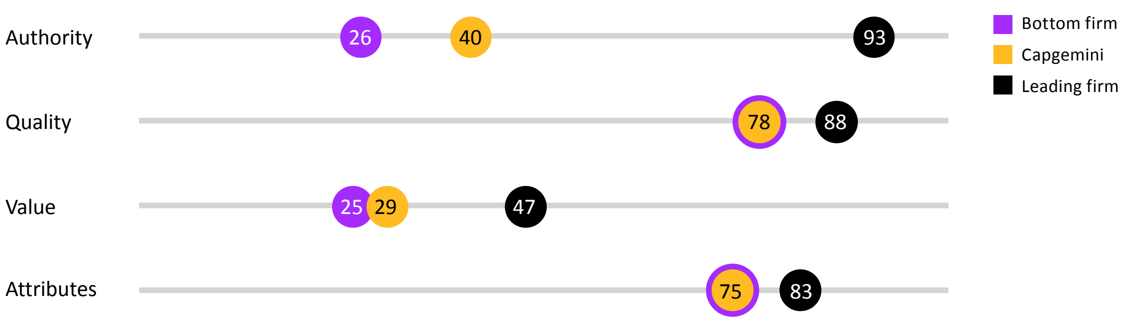


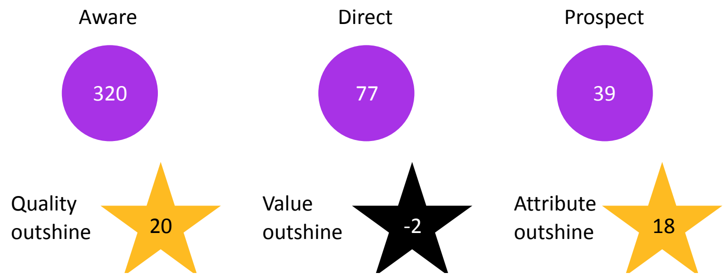
Buyer funnel of Boston Consulting Group



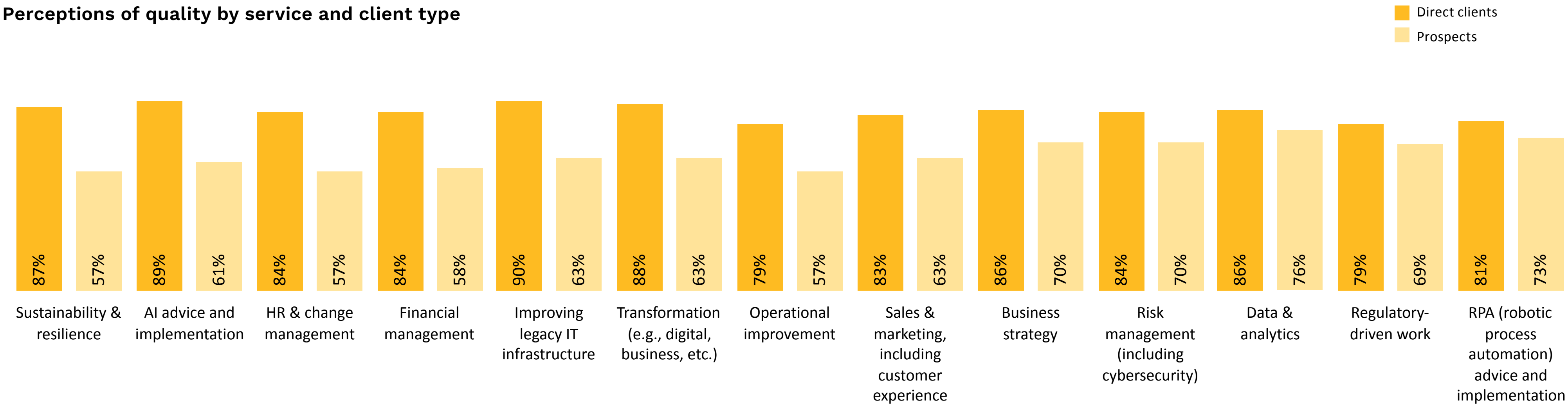
	Leading firm	Average firm
Top of mind	18%	6%
Aided	81%	60%
First choice	14%	7%
Shortlist	63%	41%
Used in last two years	58%	42%
Would put reputation on the line	17%	11%
Would recommend	24%	15%

Capgemini

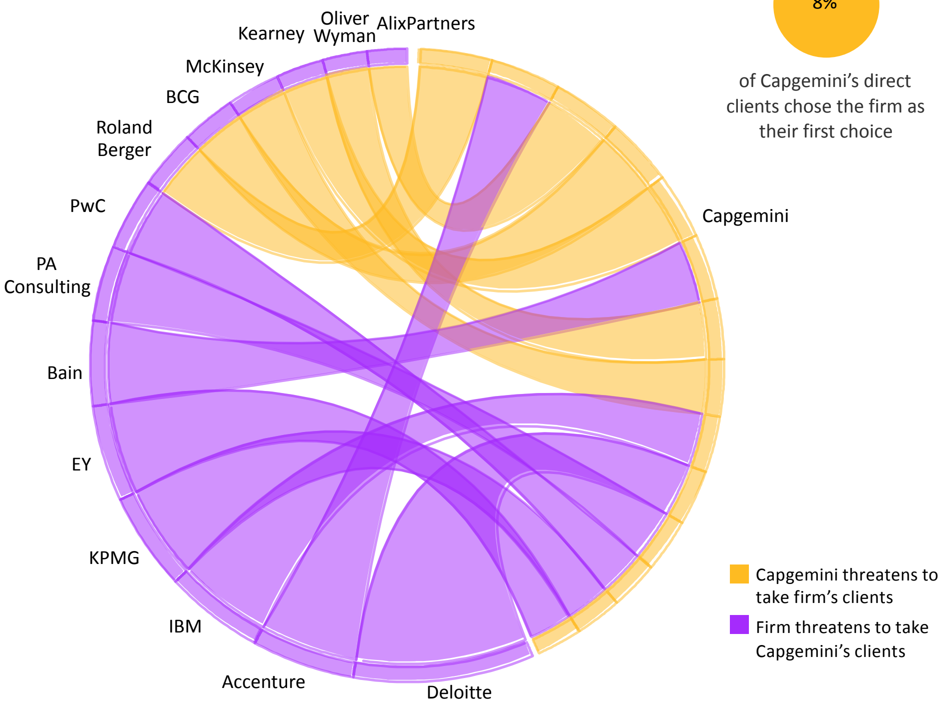




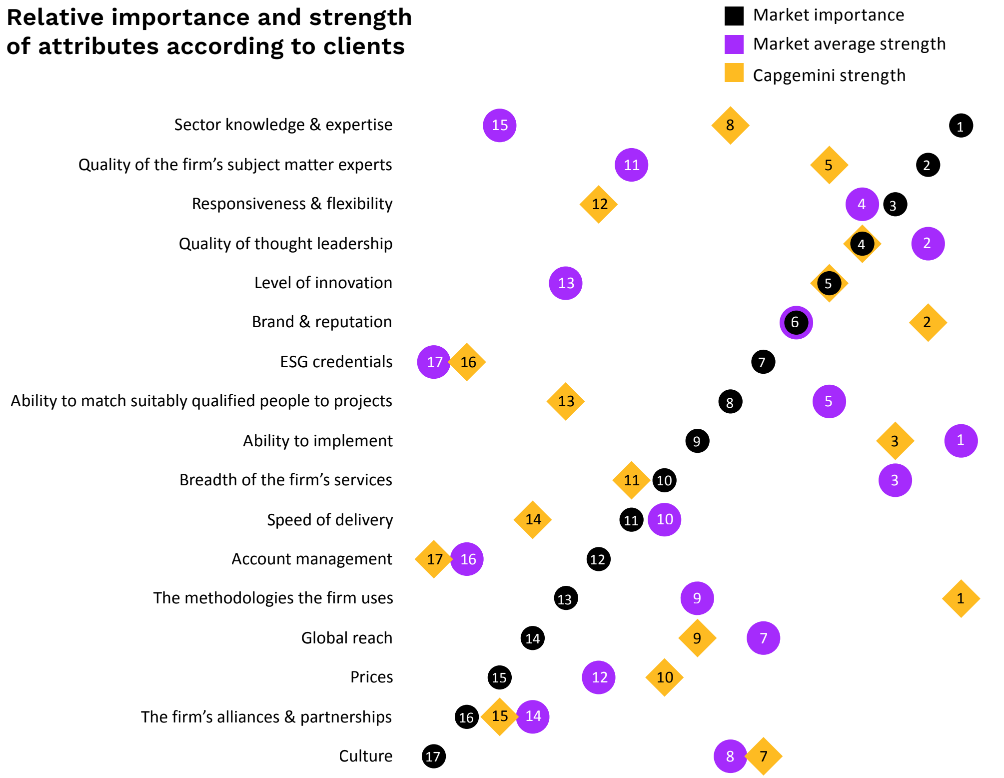
Perceptions of quality by service and client type



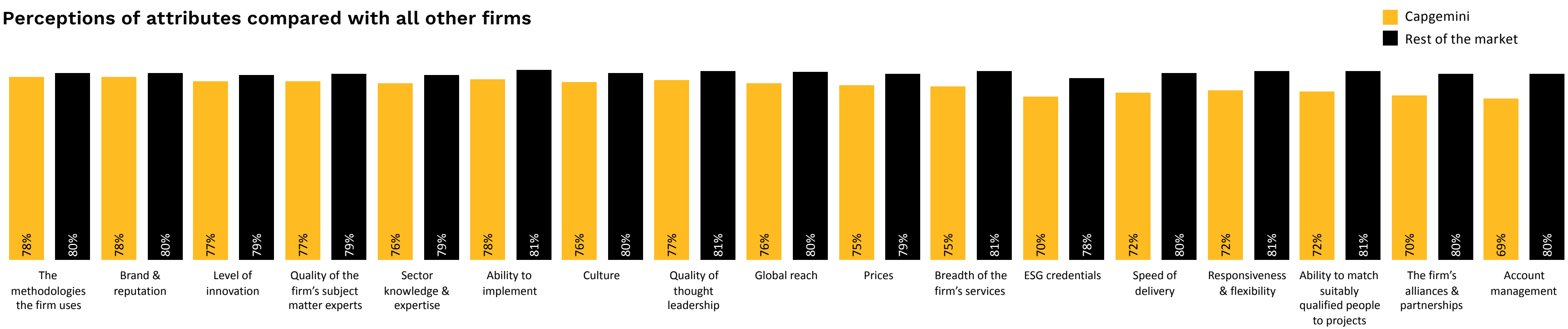
First choice firm of direct clients



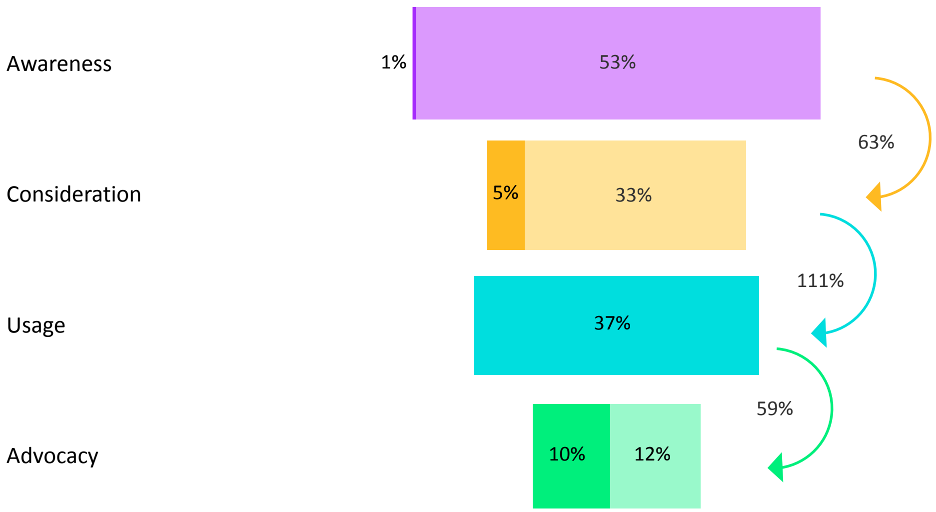
Relative importance and strength of attributes according to clients



Perceptions of attributes compared with all other firms



Buyer funnel of Capgemini



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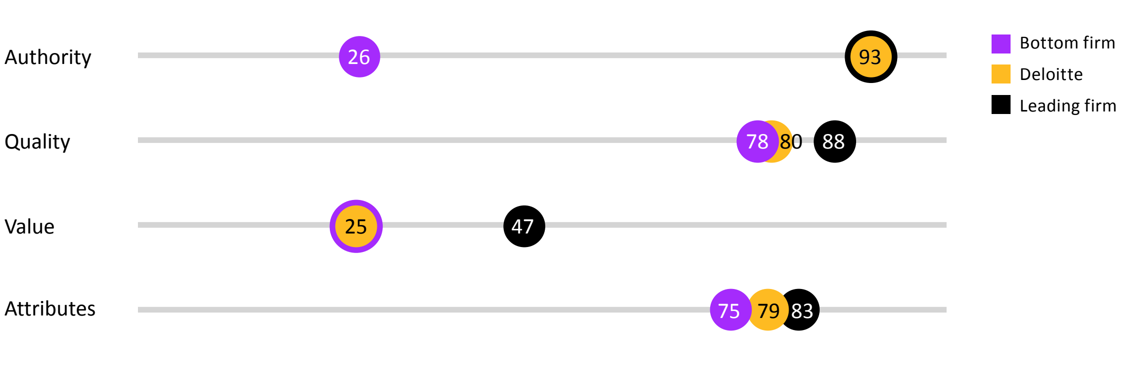
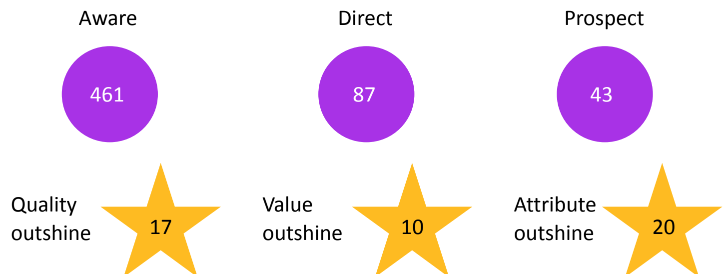
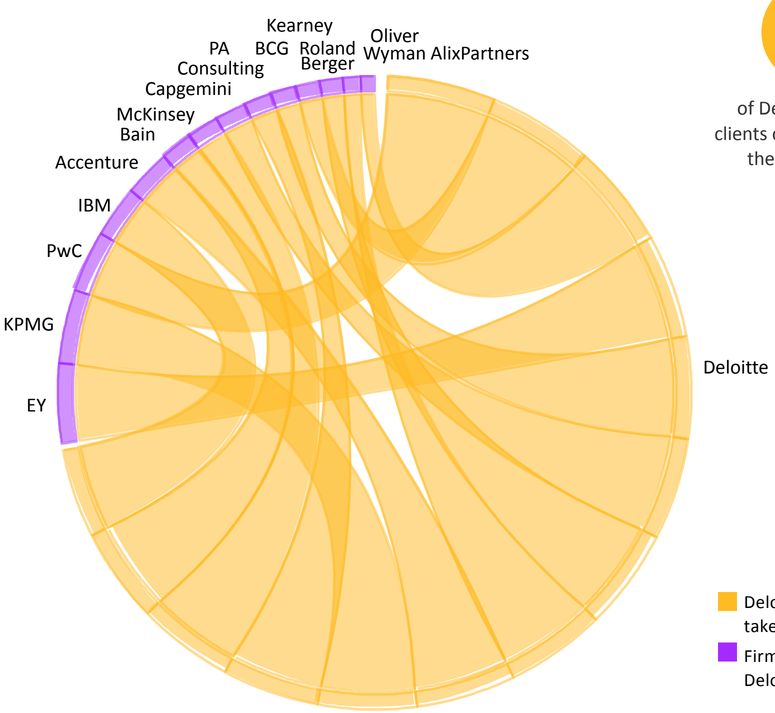
Deloitte





Perceptions of quality by service and client type

First choice firm of direct clients



21%

of Deloitte's direct clients chose the firm as their first choice

Deloitte threatens to take firm's clients

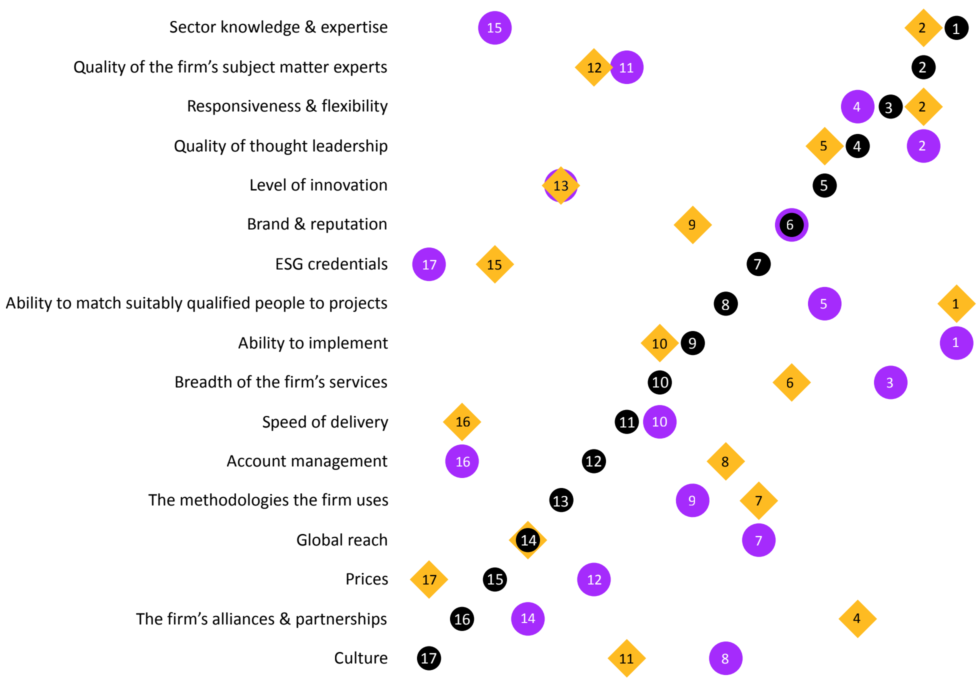
Firm threatens to take Deloitte's clients

Relative importance and strength of attributes according to clients

Market importance

Market average strength

Deloitte strength

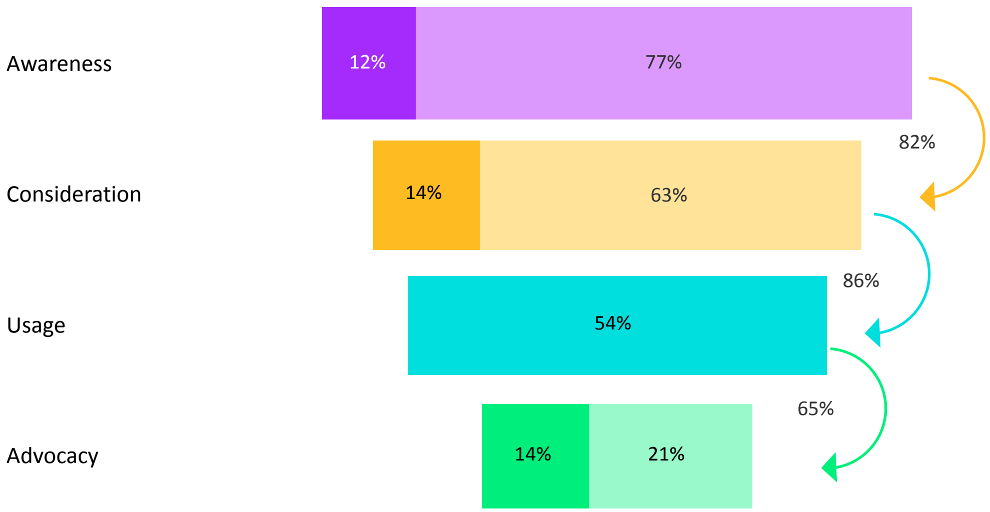


Perceptions of attributes compared with all other firms

Deloitte

Rest of the market

Buyer funnel of Deloitte



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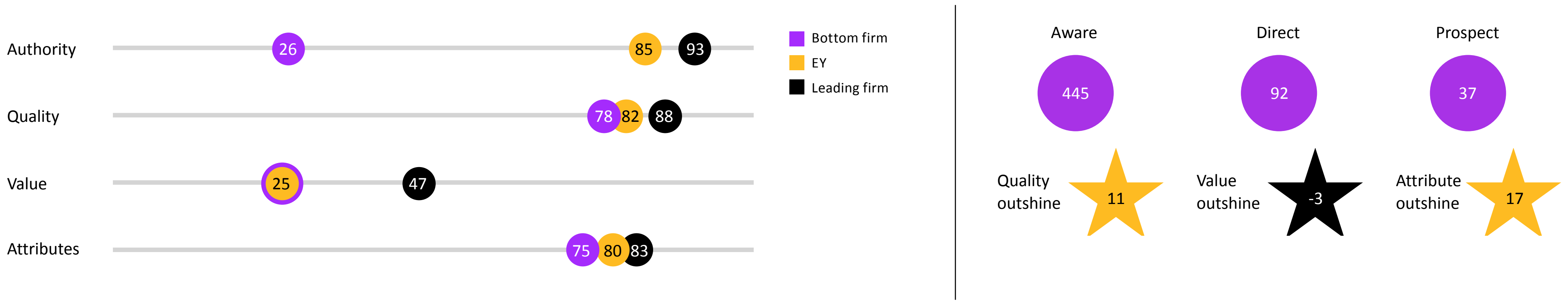
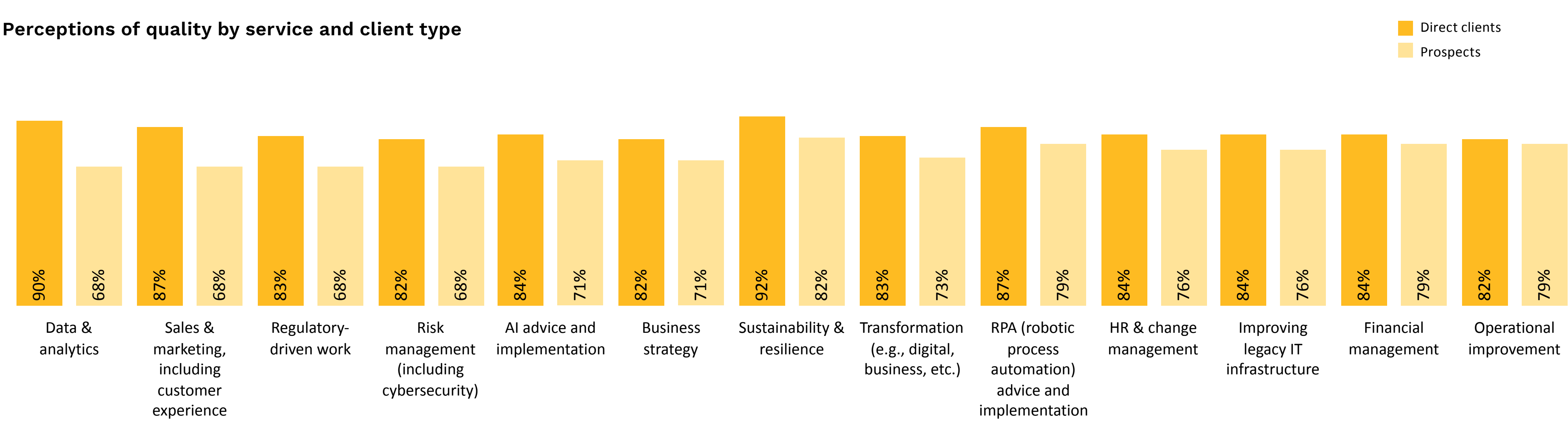
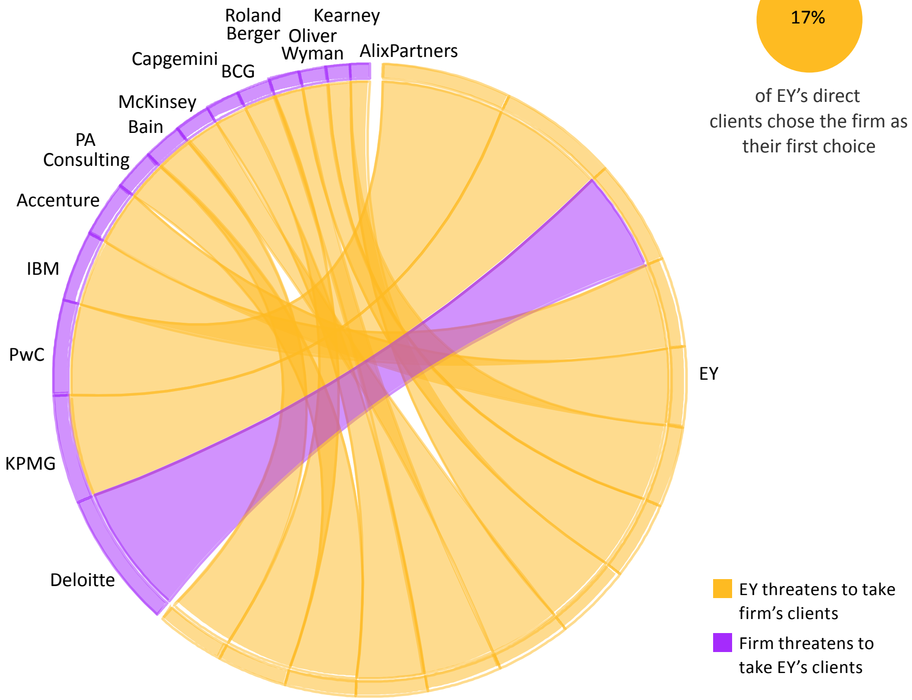
EY



Perceptions of quality by service and client type



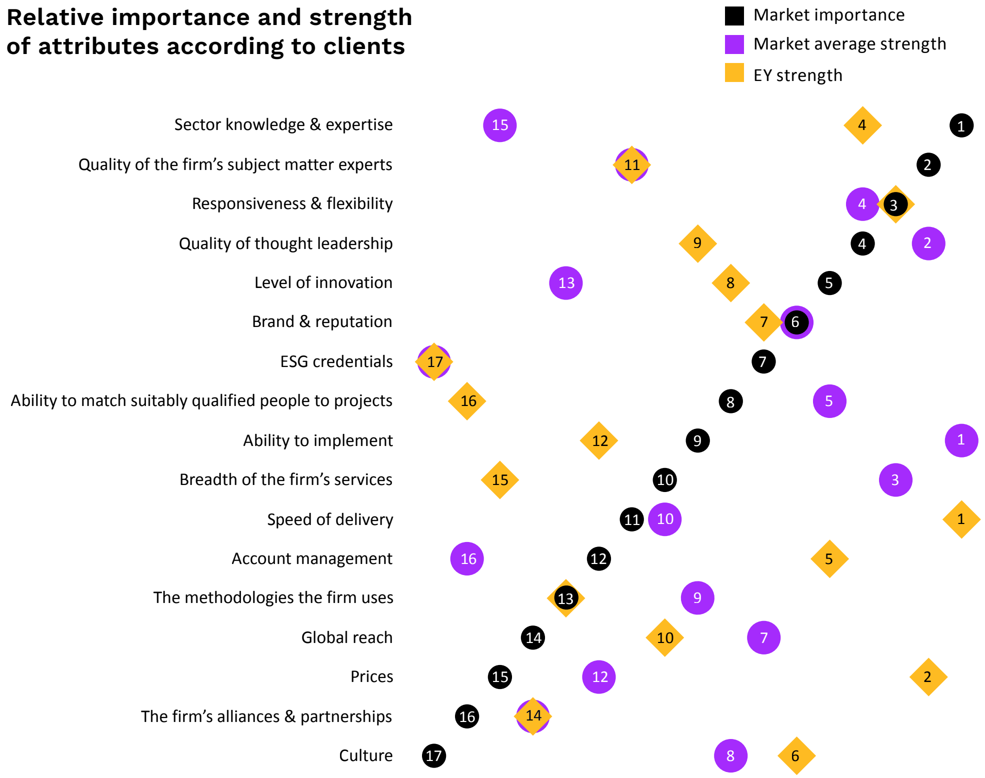
First choice firm of direct clients



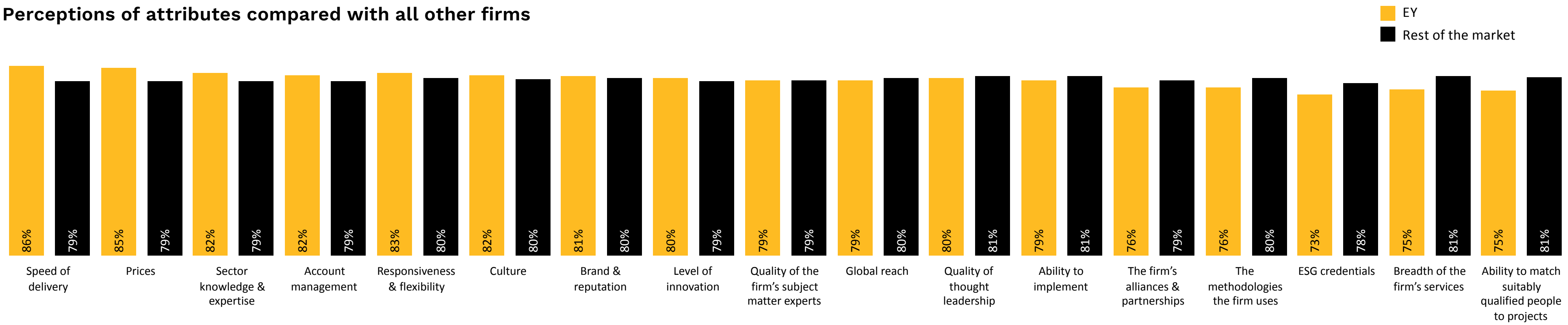
17%

of EY's direct clients chose the firm as their first choice

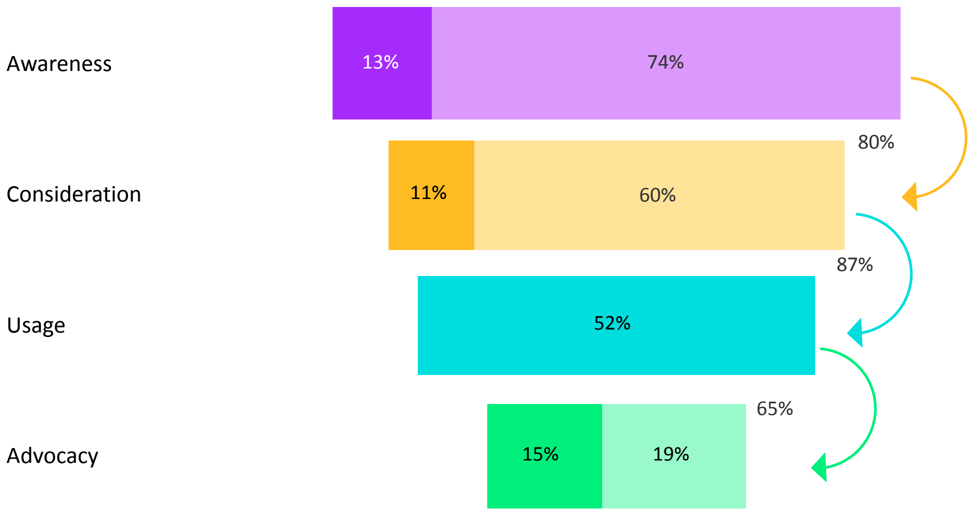
Relative importance and strength of attributes according to clients



Perceptions of attributes compared with all other firms



Buyer funnel of EY



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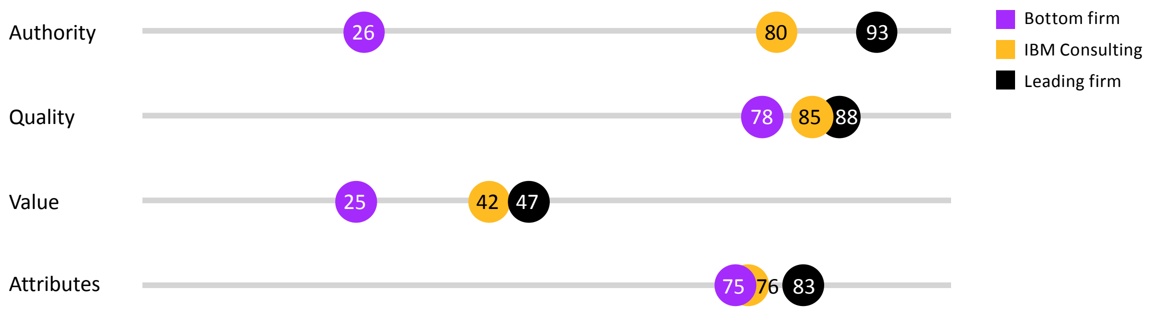
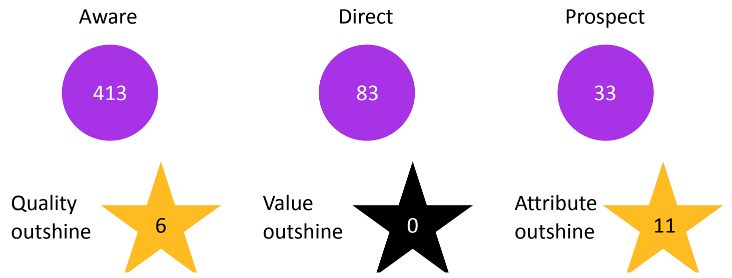
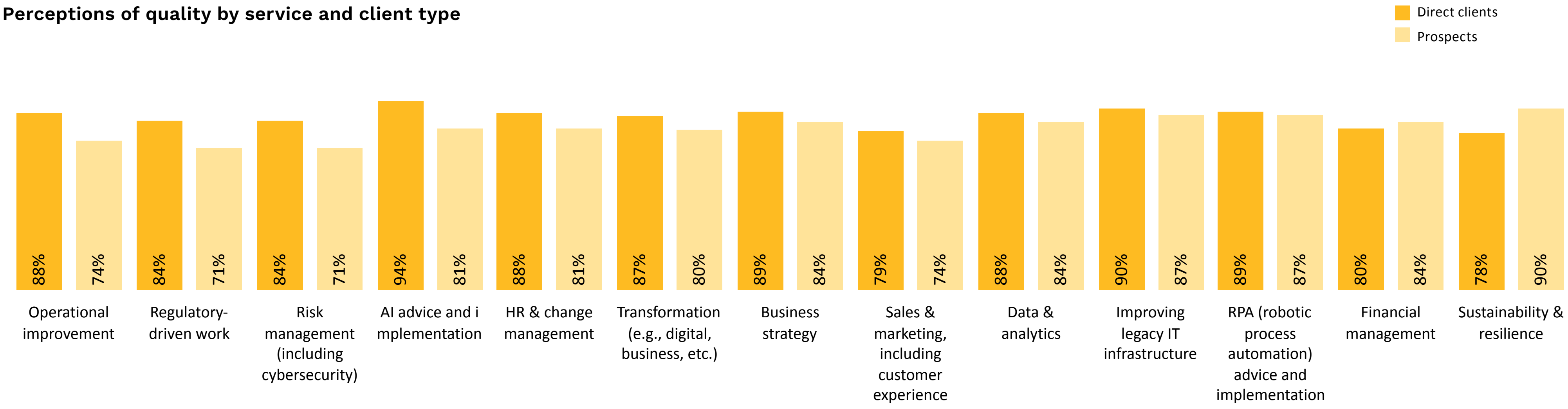
IBM Consulting

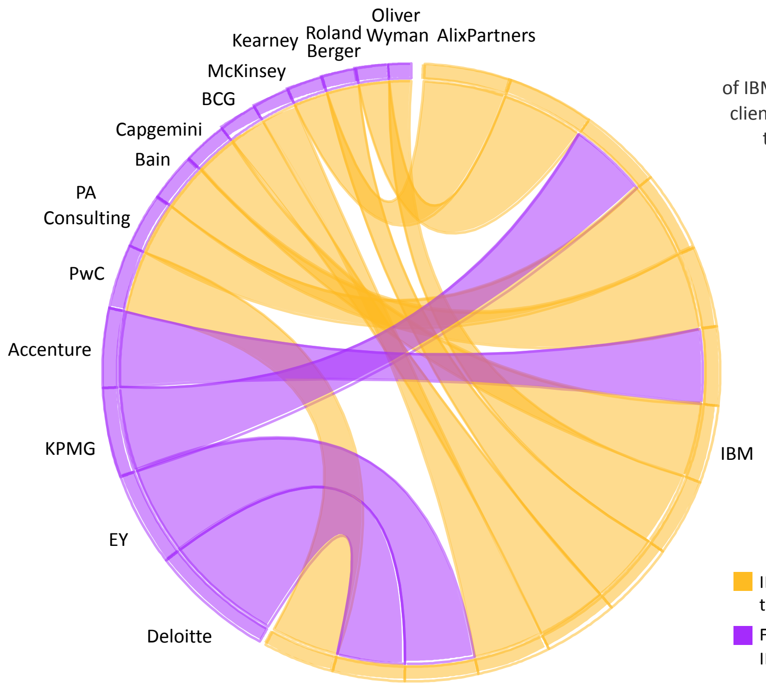




Perceptions of quality by service and client type



First choice firm of direct clients



15%

of IBM Consulting's direct clients chose the firm as their first choice

IBM Consulting threatens to take firm's clients

Firm threatens to take IBM Consulting's clients

Relative importance and strength of attributes according to clients

Market importance

Market average strength

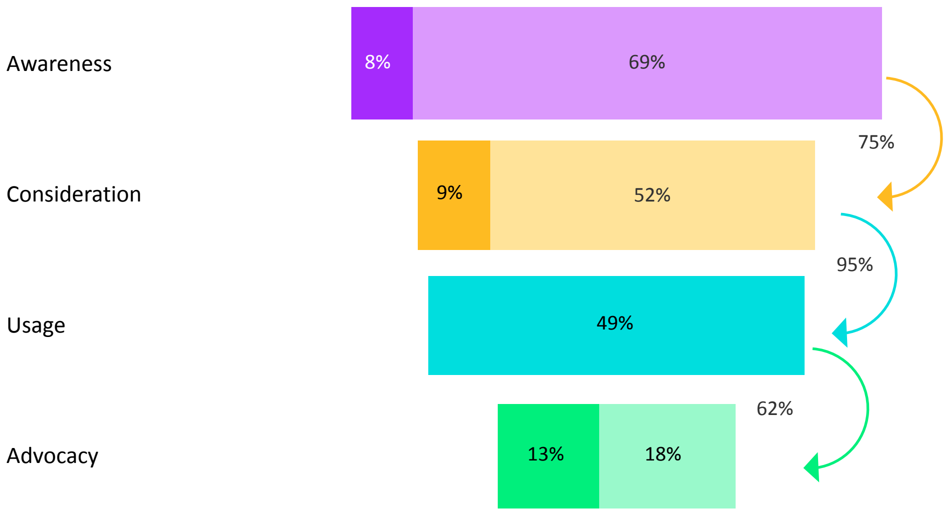
IBM Consulting strength

Perceptions of attributes compared with all other firms

IBM Consulting

Rest of the market

Buyer funnel of IBM Consulting



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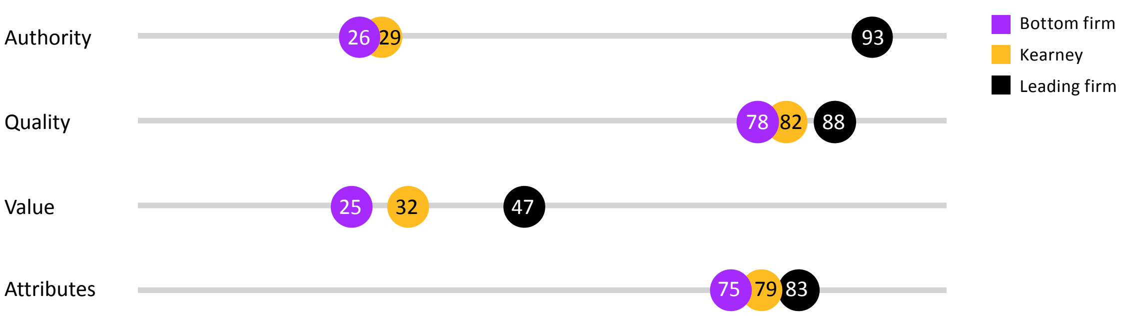
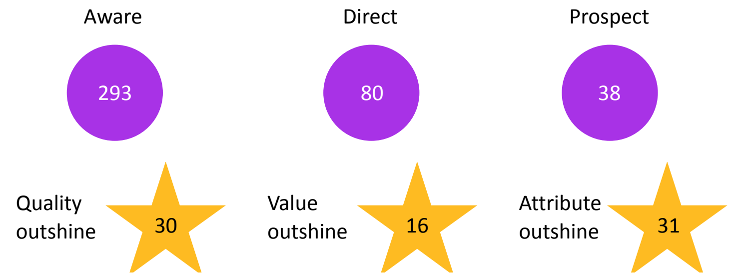
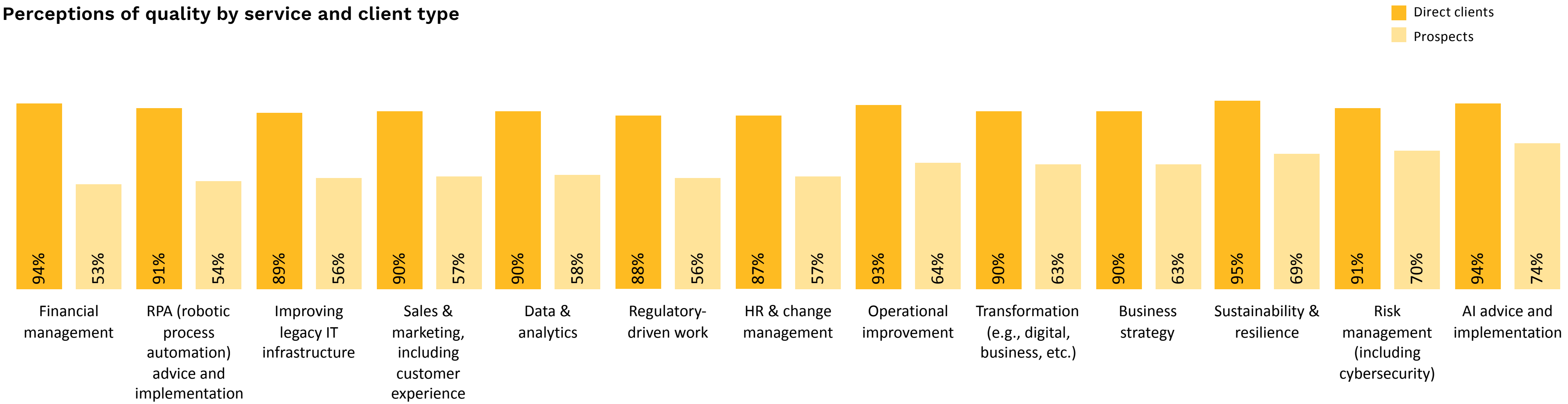
Kearney





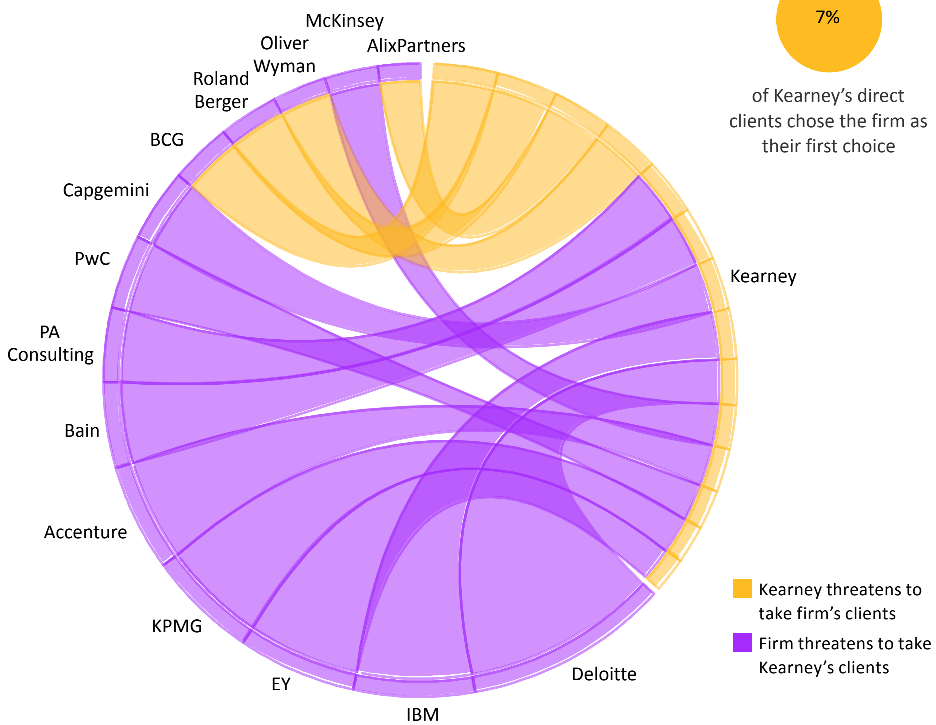
Perceptions of quality by service and client type



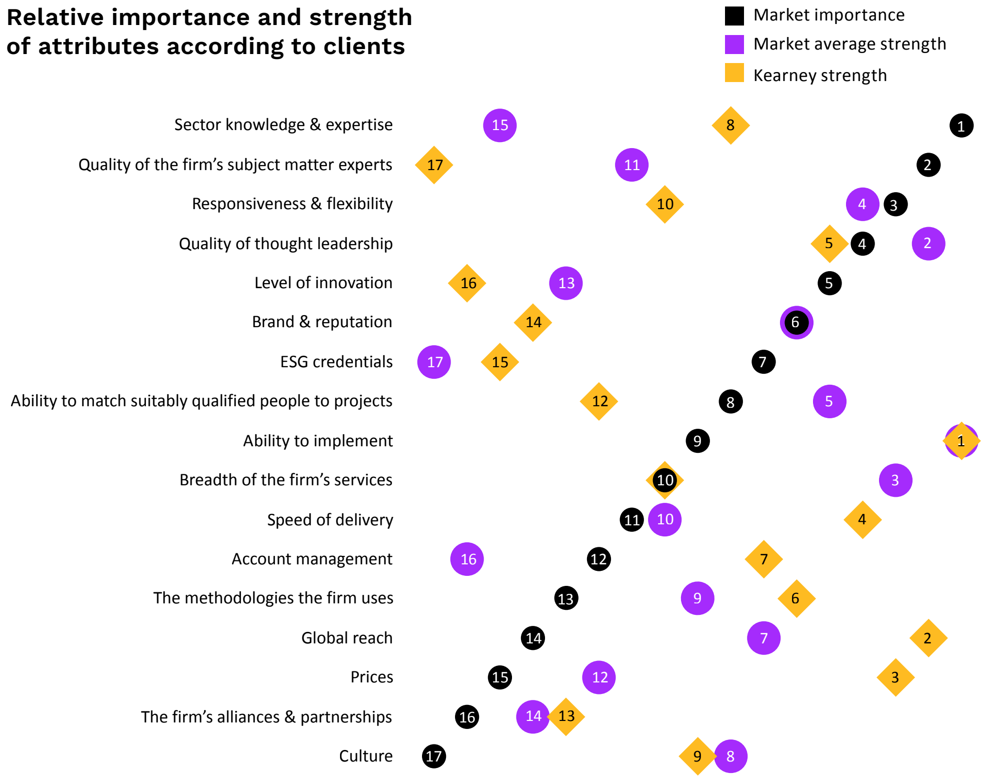
First choice firm of direct clients

7%

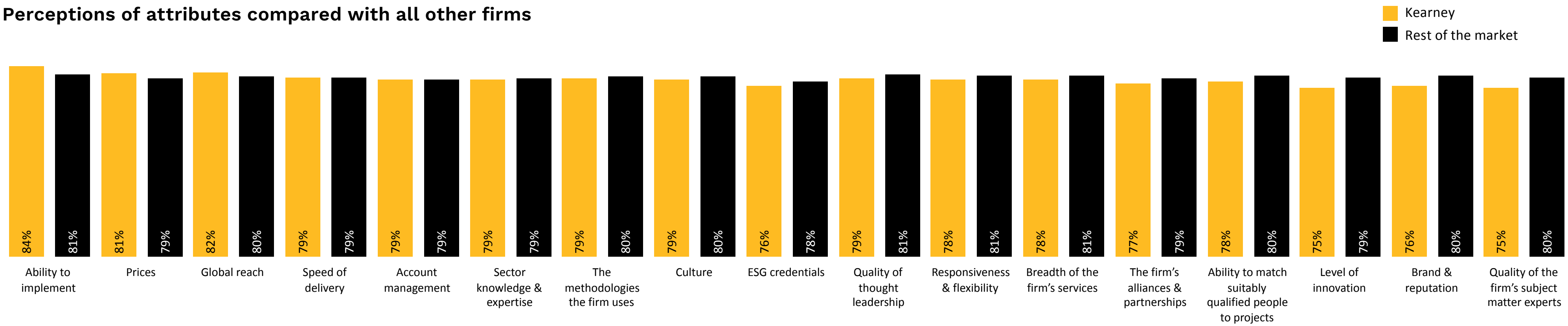
of Kearney's direct clients chose the firm as their first choice



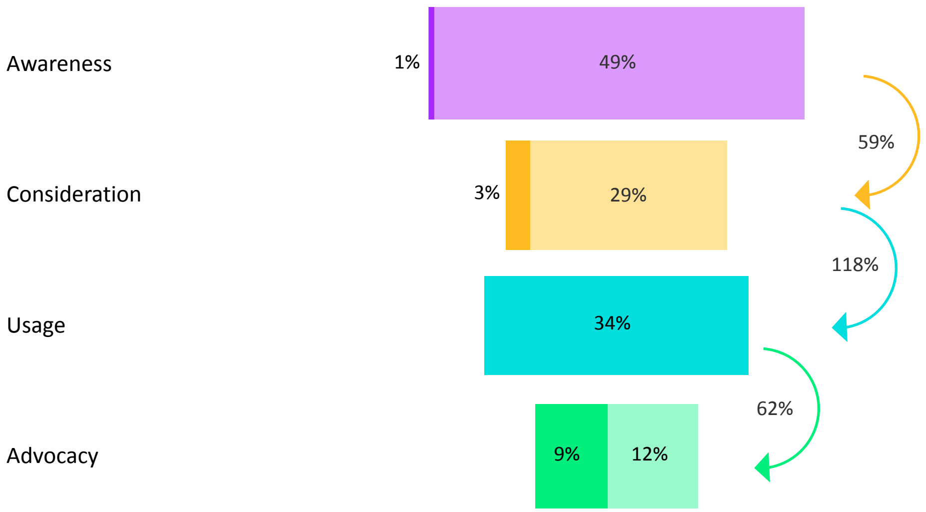
Relative importance and strength of attributes according to clients



Perceptions of attributes compared with all other firms



Buyer funnel of Kearney



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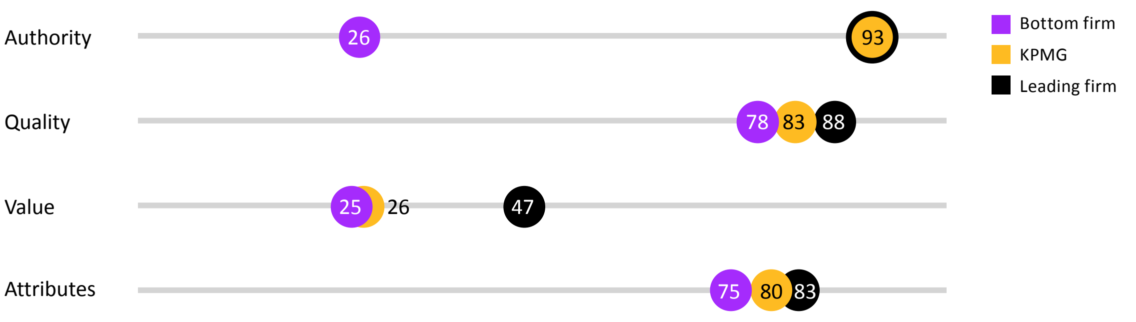
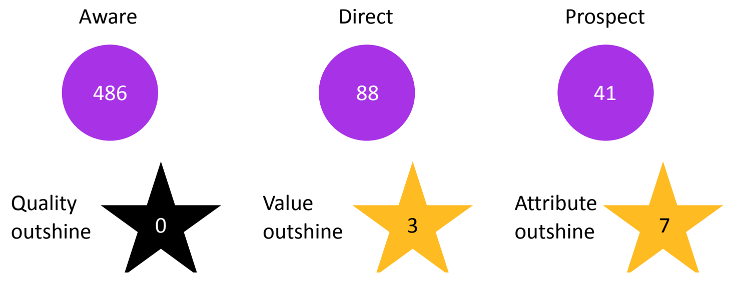
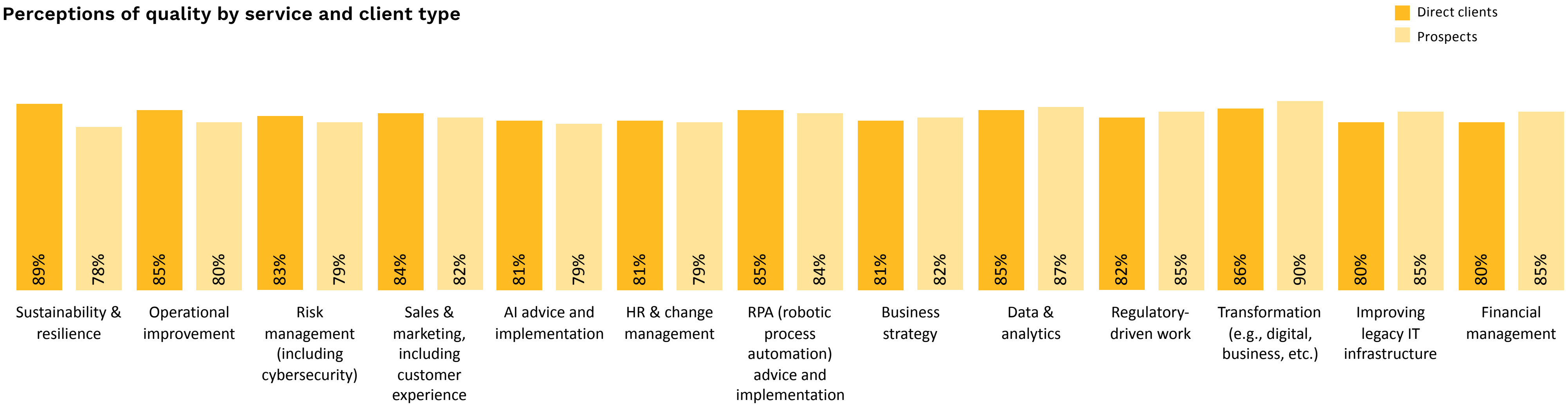
KPMG

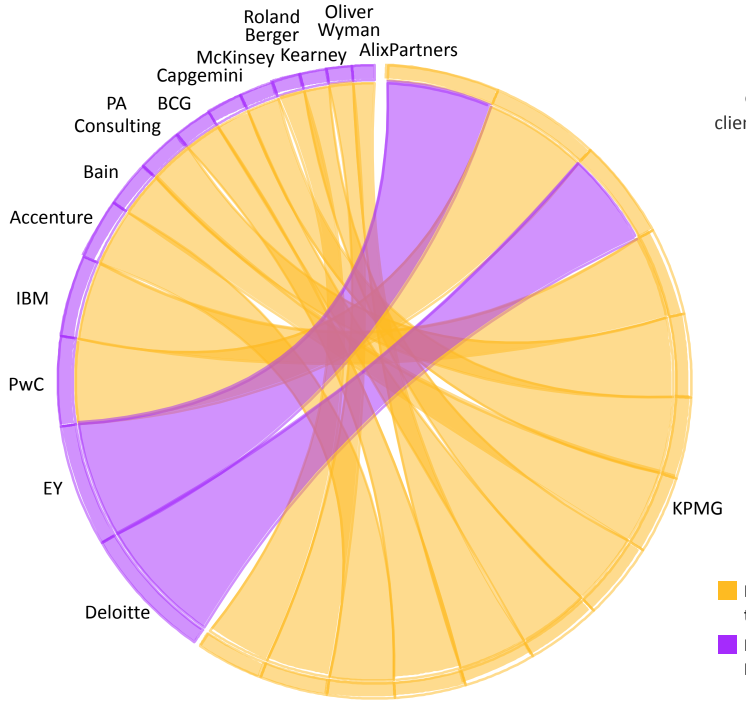




Perceptions of quality by service and client type



First choice firm of direct clients



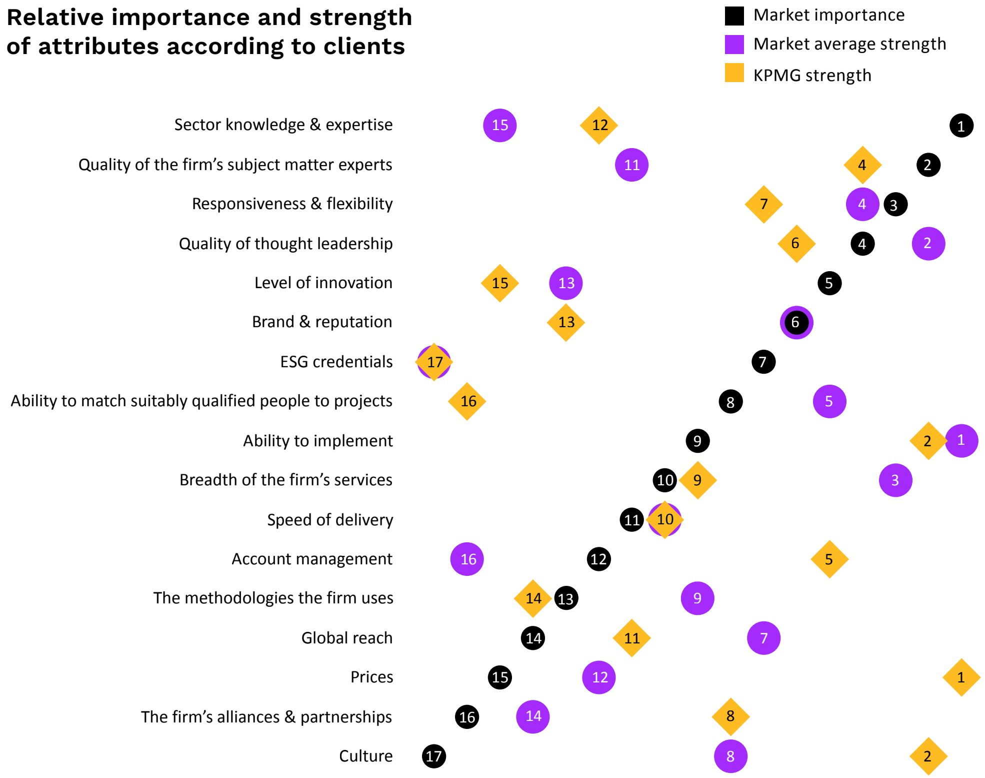
15%

of KPMG's direct clients chose the firm as their first choice

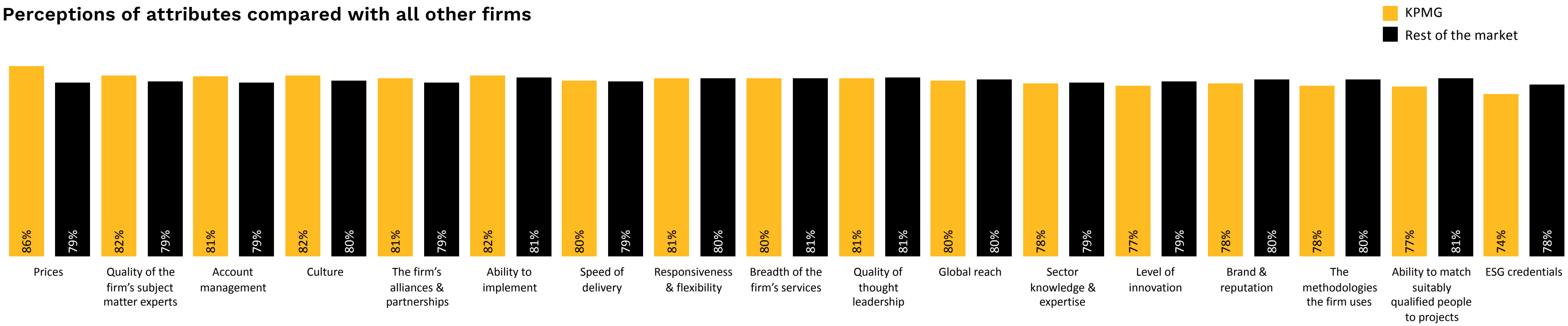
KPMG threatens to take firm's clients

Firm threatens to take KPMG's clients

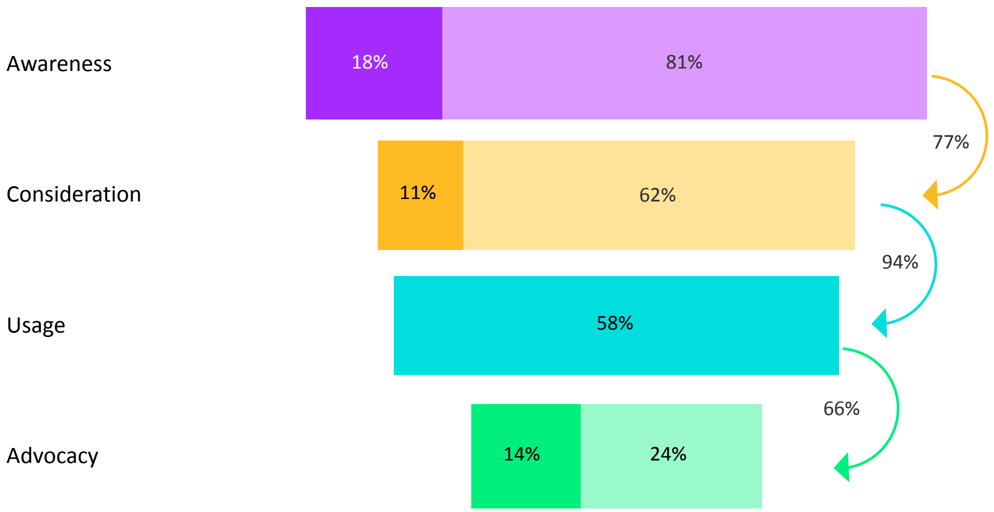
Relative importance and strength of attributes according to clients



Perceptions of attributes compared with all other firms



Buyer funnel of KPMG



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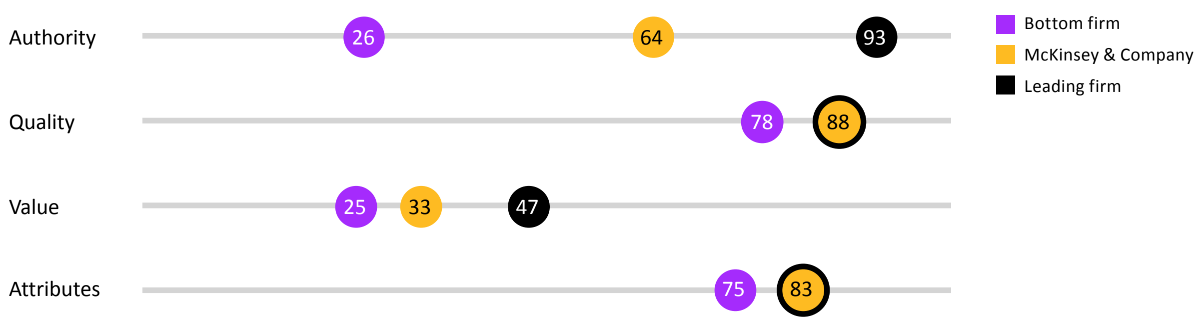
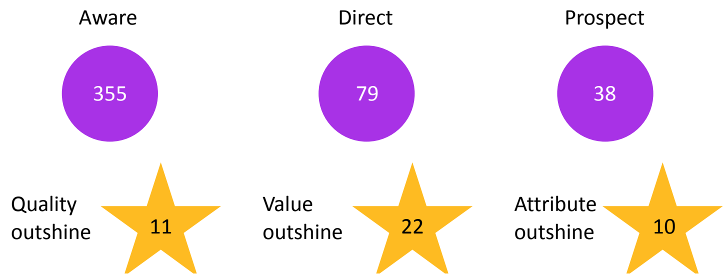
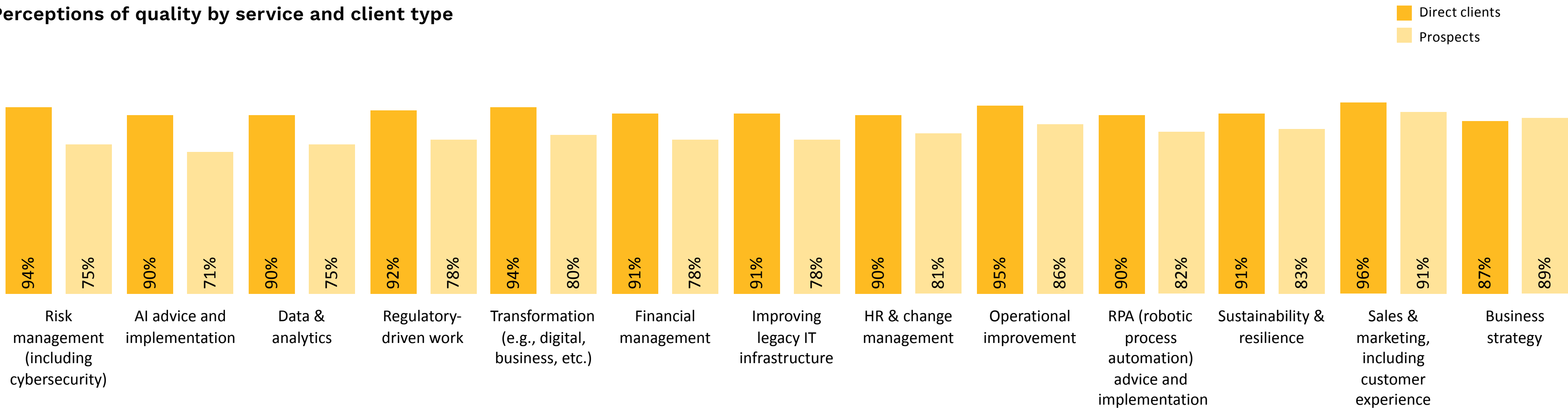
McKinsey & Company

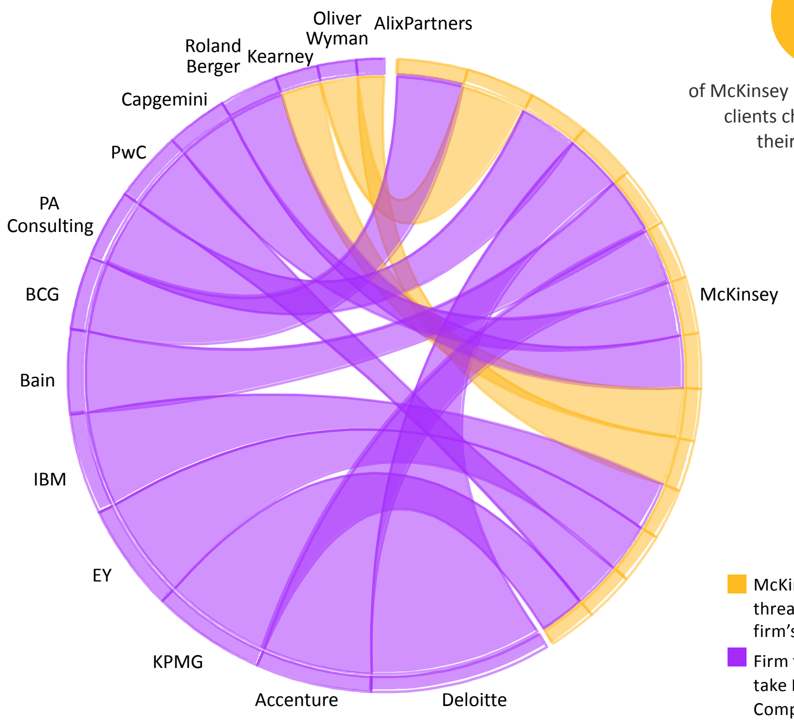




Perceptions of quality by service and client type



First choice firm of direct clients



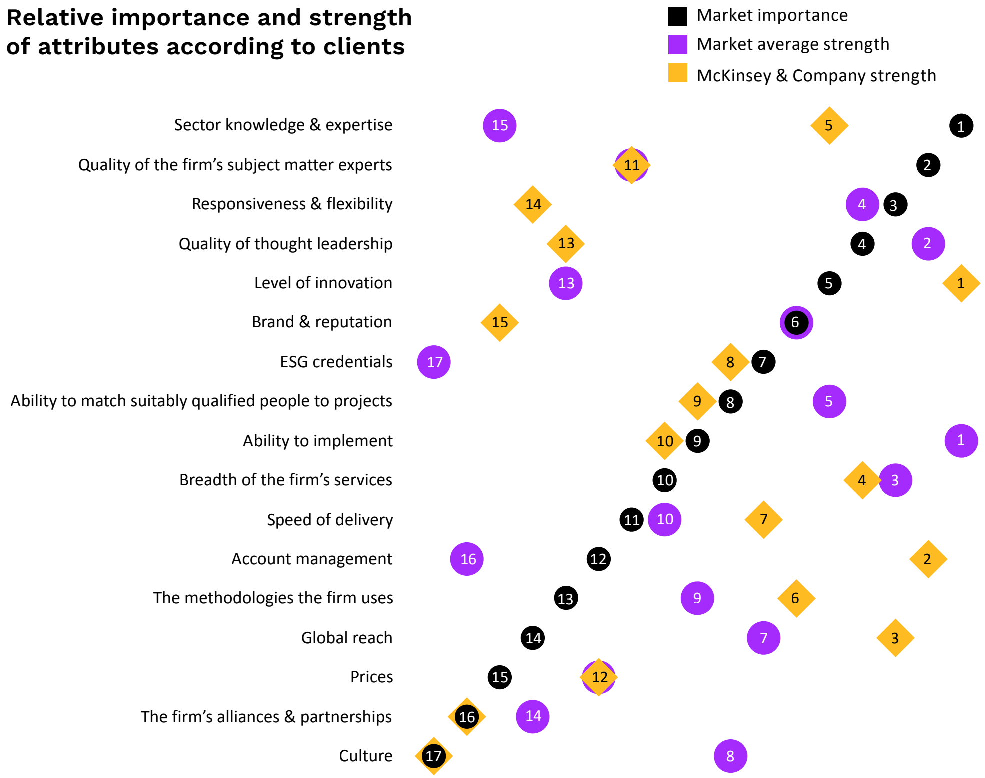
11%

of McKinsey & Company's direct clients chose the firm as their first choice

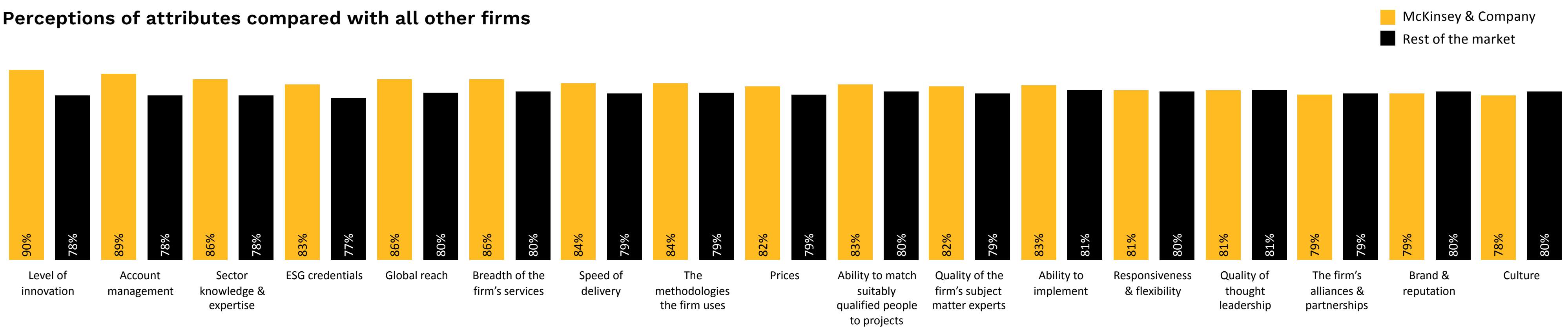
McKinsey & Company threatens to take firm's clients

Firm threatens to take McKinsey & Company's clients

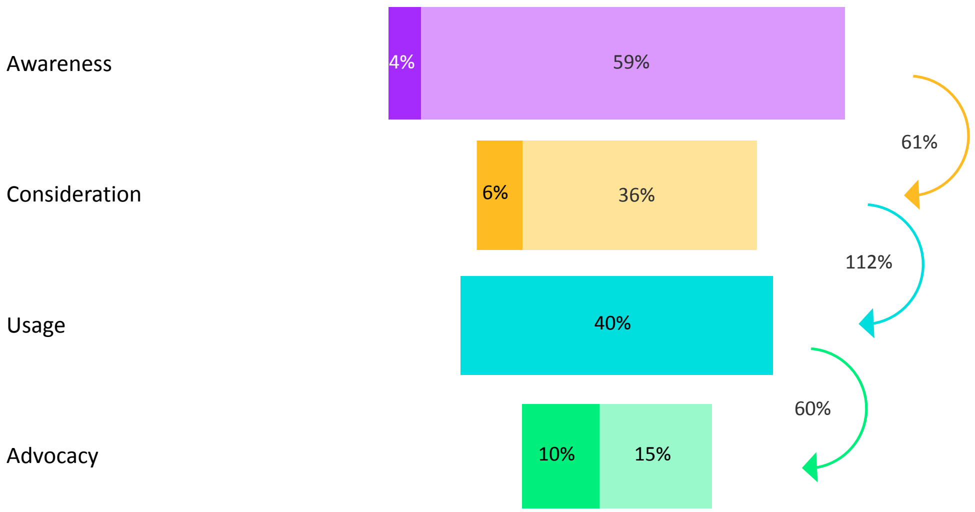
Relative importance and strength of attributes according to clients



Perceptions of attributes compared with all other firms



Buyer funnel of McKinsey & Company



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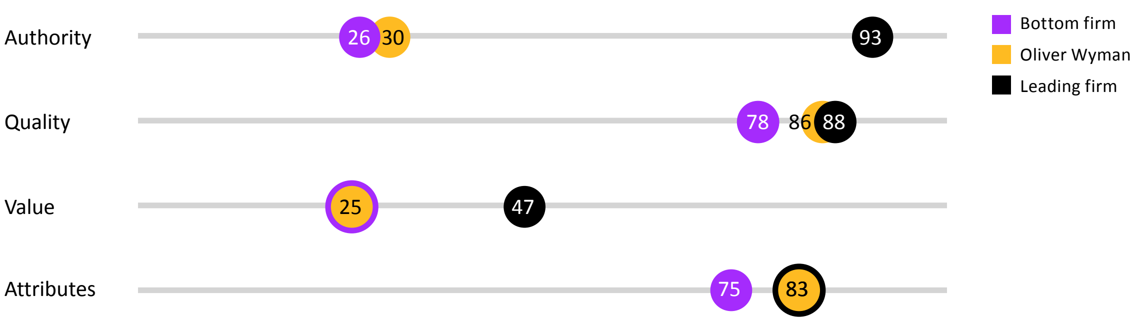
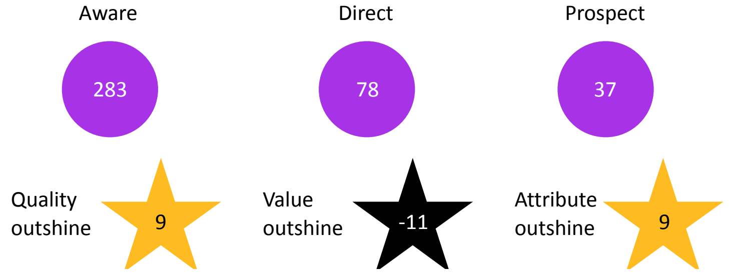
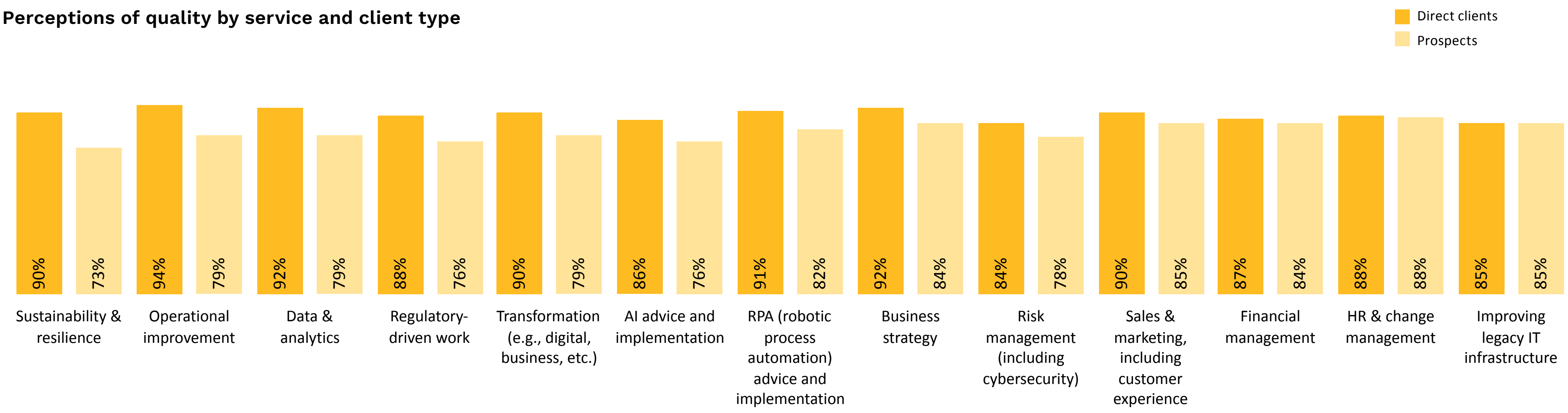
Oliver Wyman

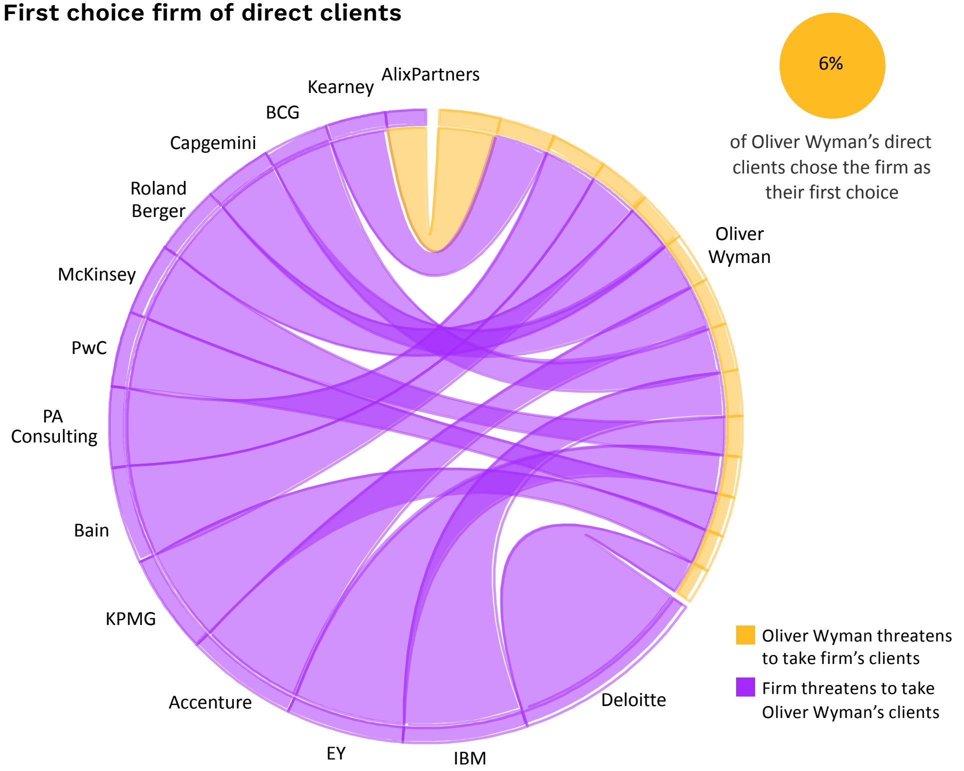




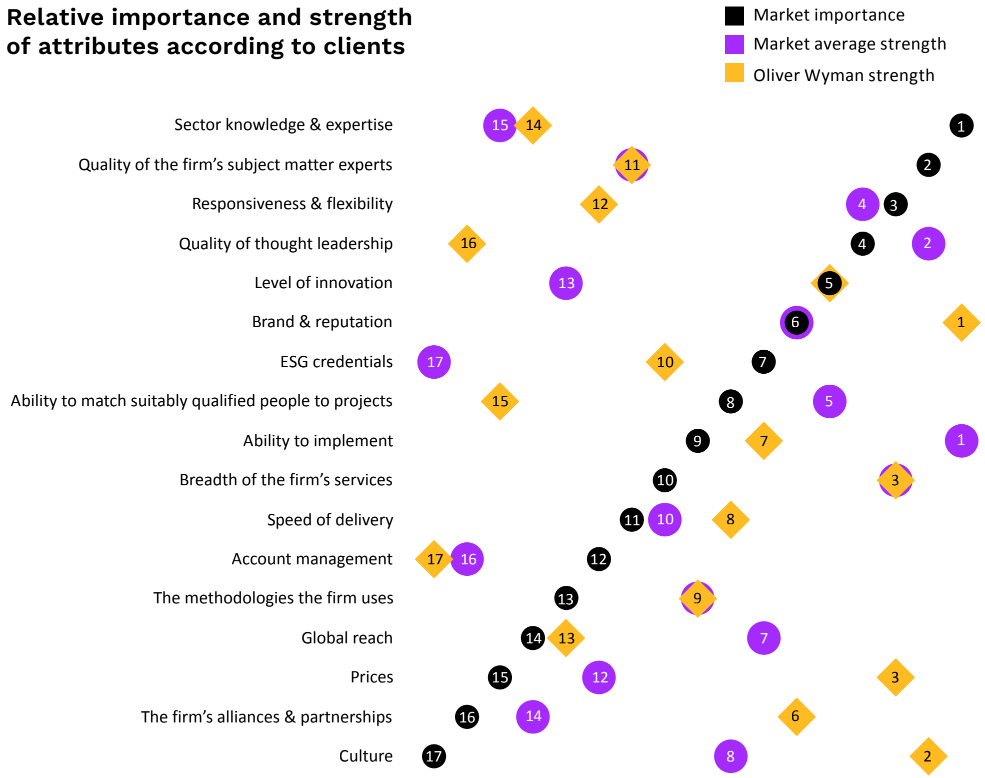
Perceptions of quality by service and client type



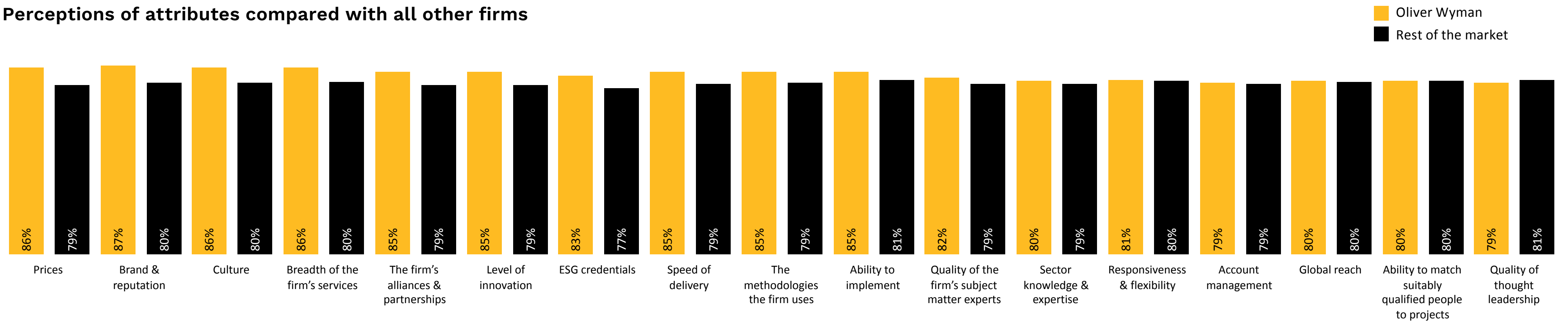
First choice firm of direct clients



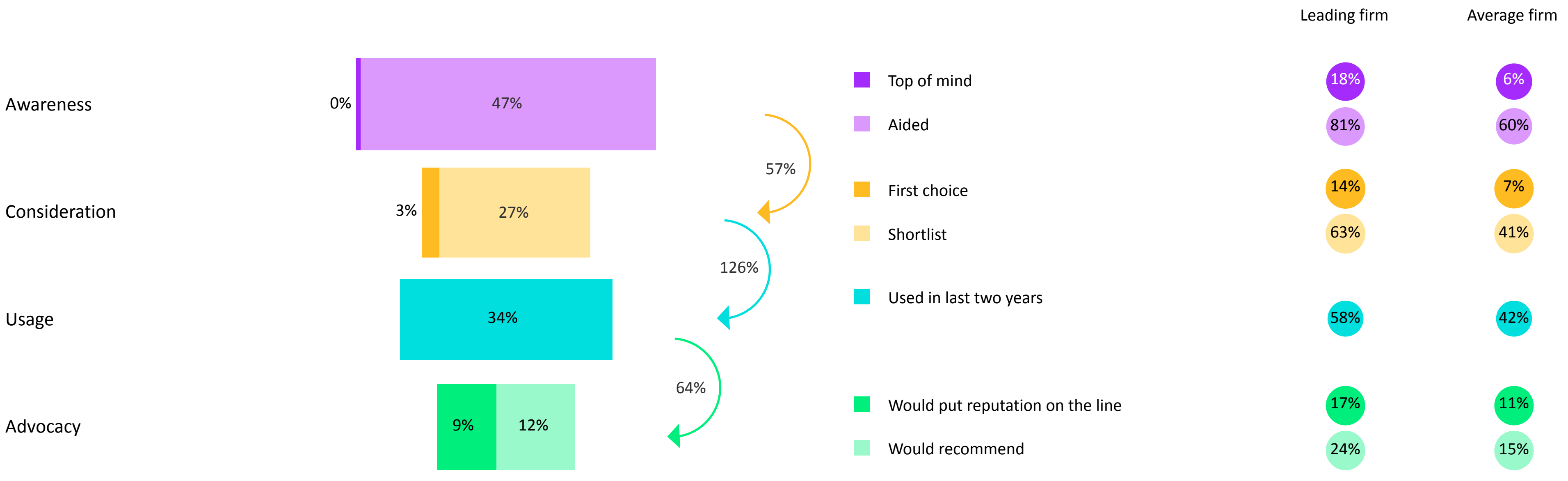
Relative importance and strength of attributes according to clients



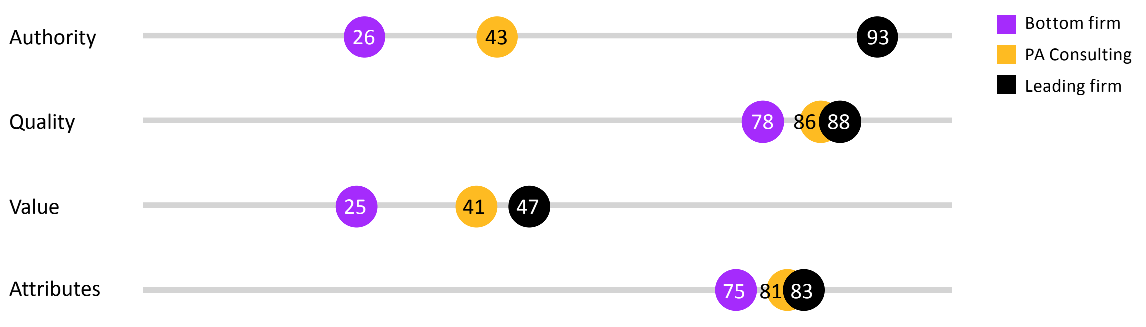
Perceptions of attributes compared with all other firms

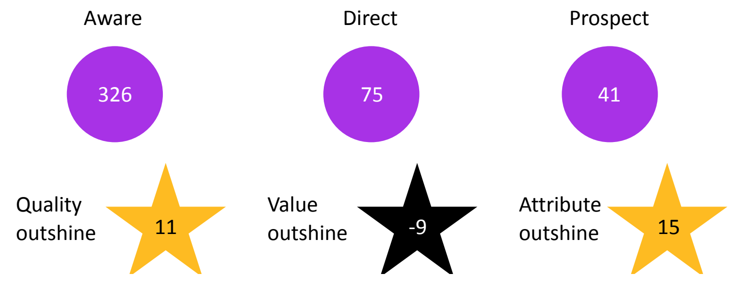


Buyer funnel of Oliver Wyman

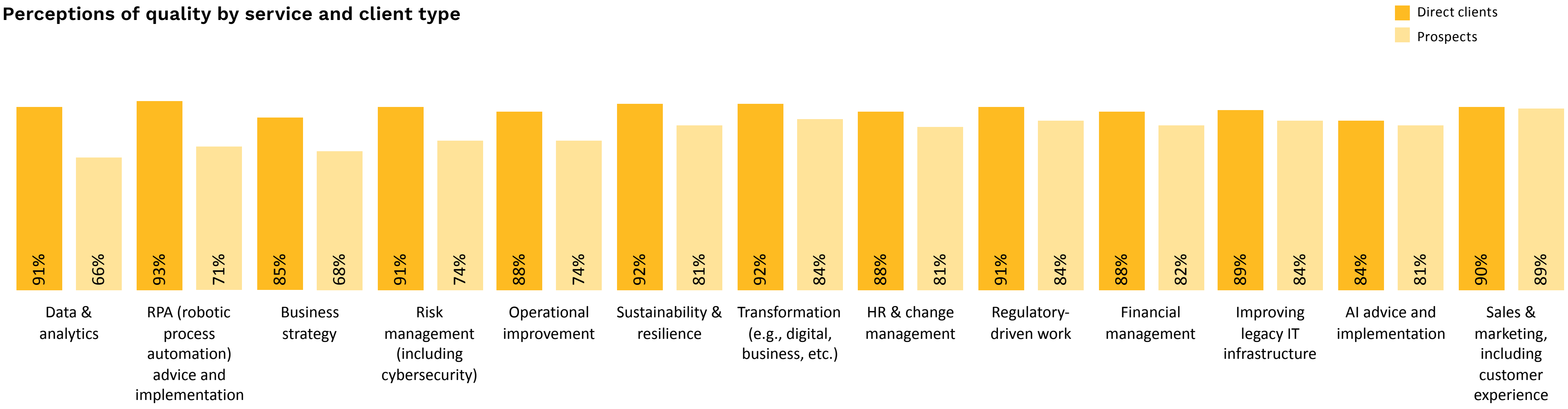


PA Consulting

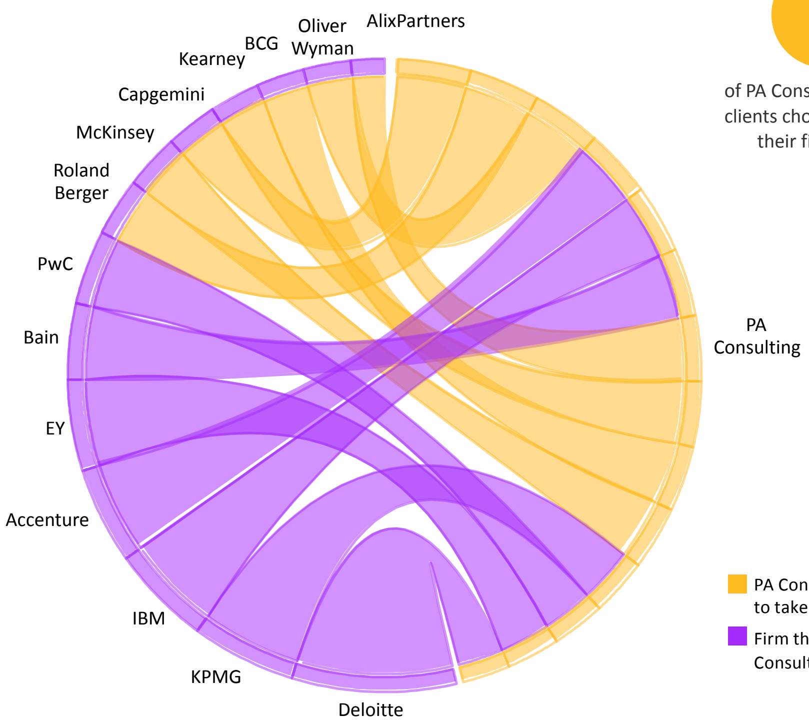




Perceptions of quality by service and client type



First choice firm of direct clients



9%

of PA Consulting's direct clients chose the firm as their first choice

PA Consulting threatens to take firm's clients

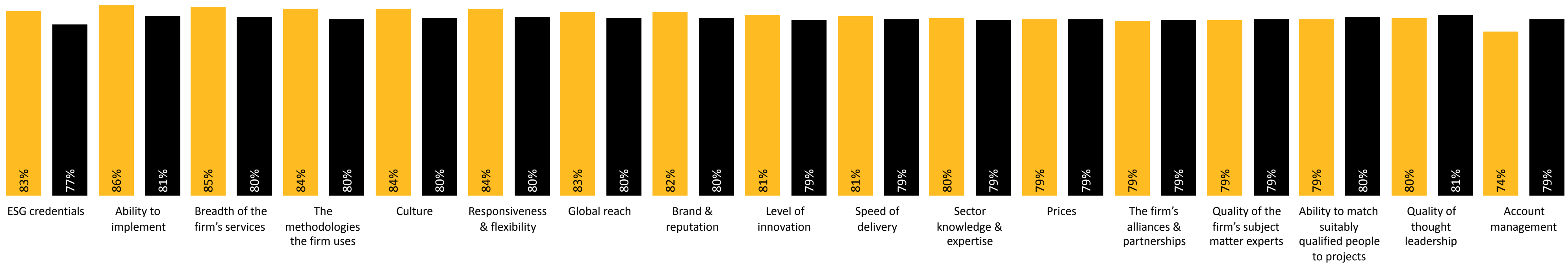
Firm threatens to take PA Consulting's clients

Relative importance and strength of attributes according to clients

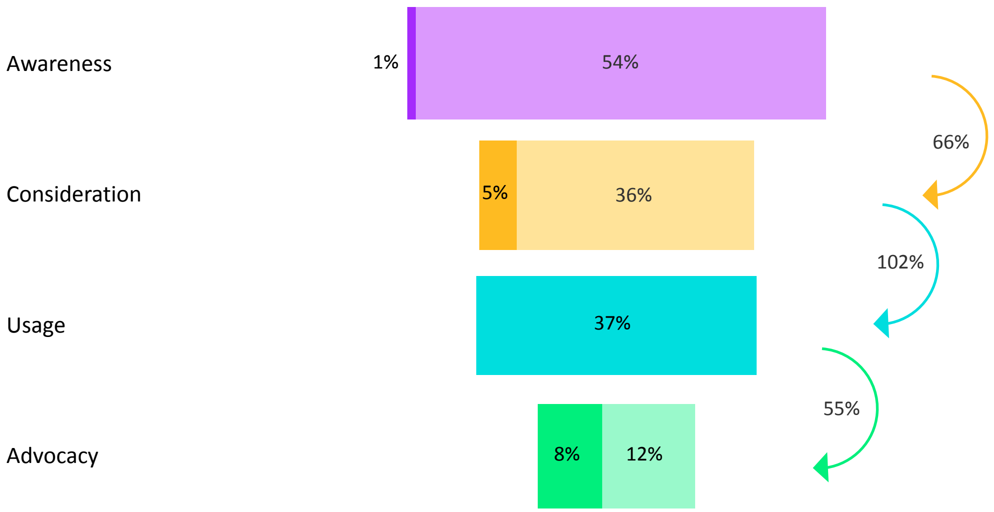
Market importance
Market average strength
PA Consulting strength

Perceptions of attributes compared with all other firms

PA Consulting
Rest of the market



Buyer funnel of PA Consulting



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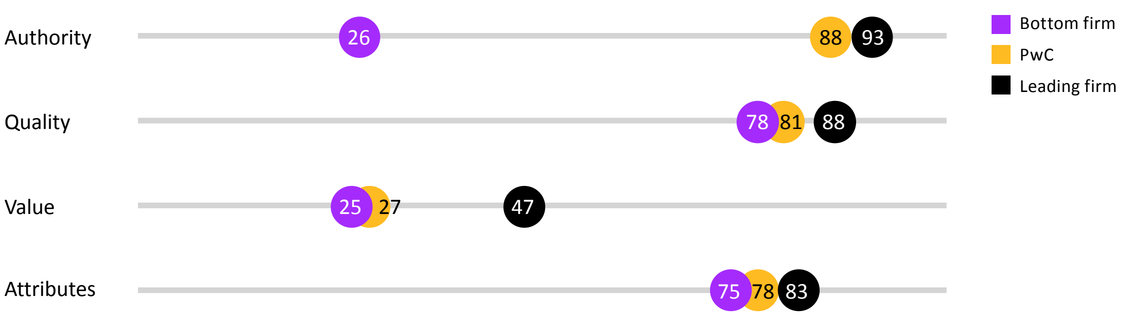
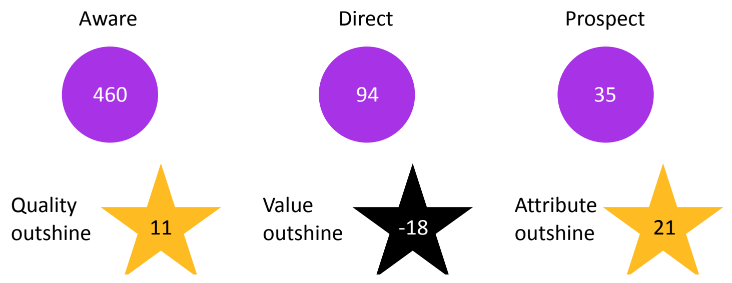
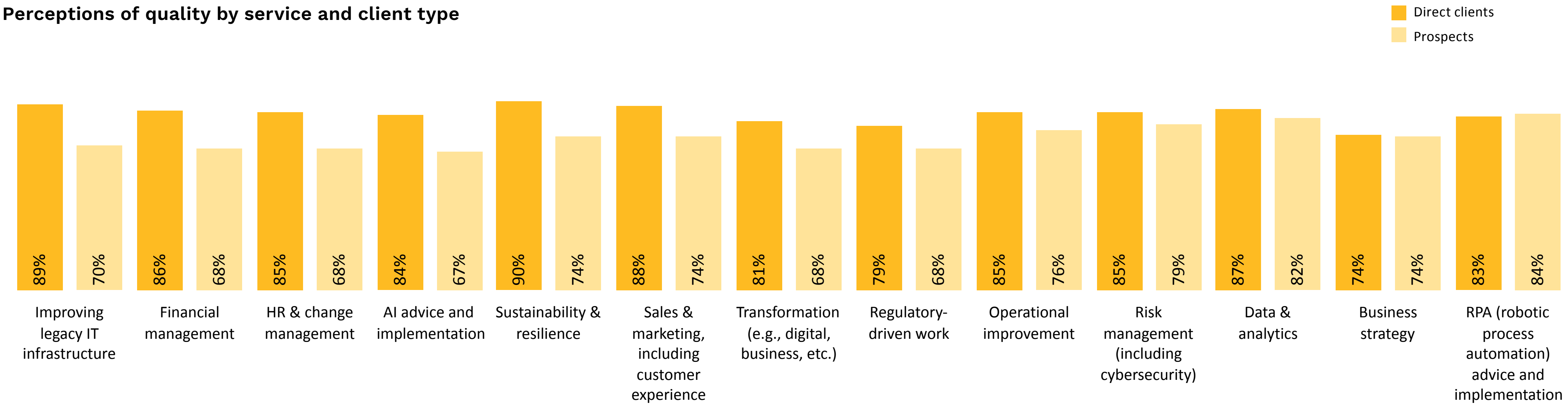
PwC

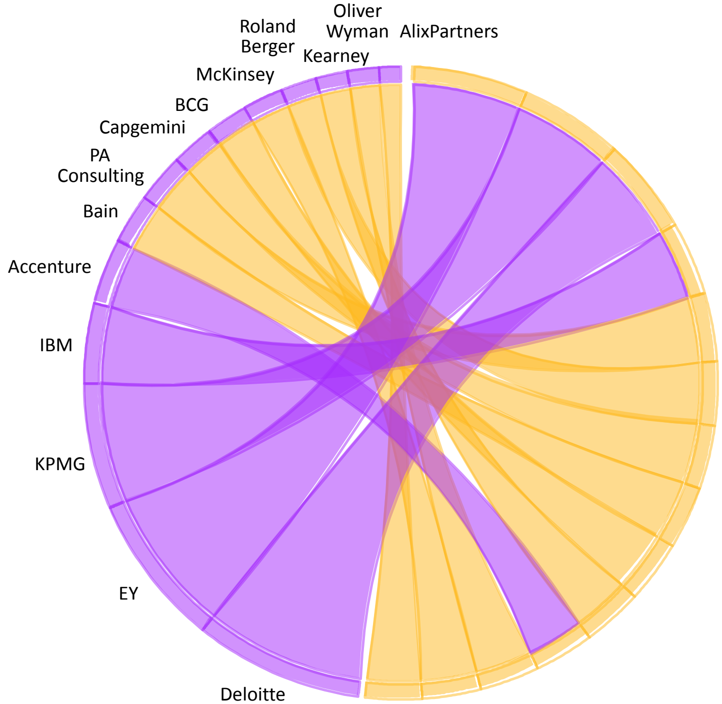




Perceptions of quality by service and client type



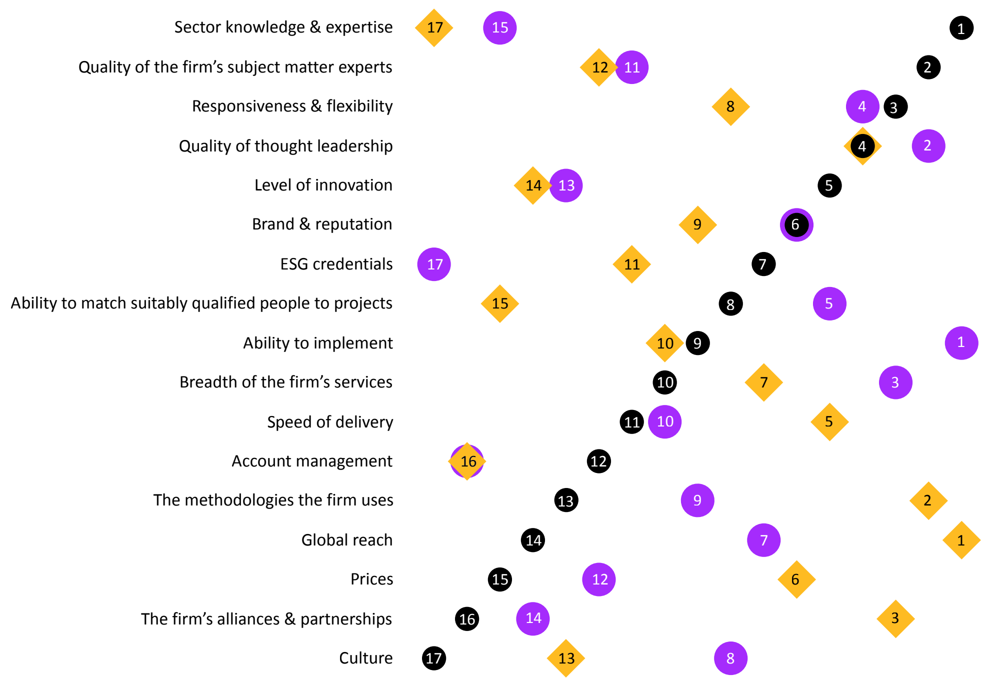
First choice firm of direct clients



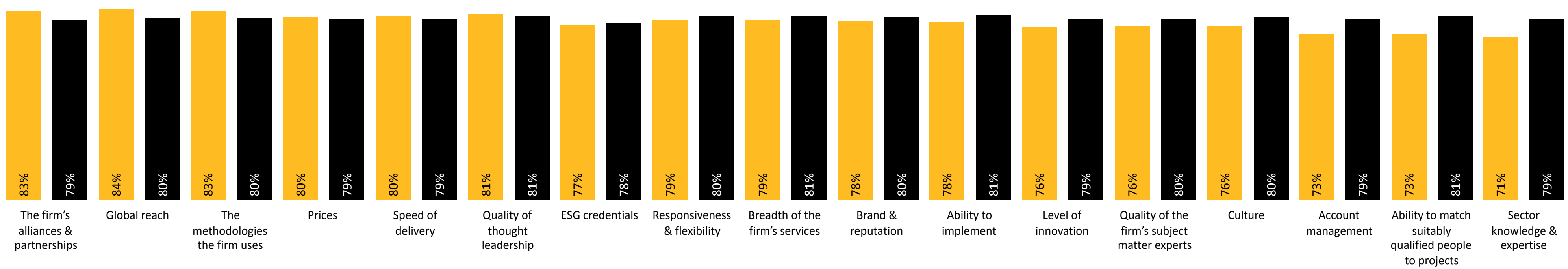
12%

of PwC's direct clients chose the firm as their first choice

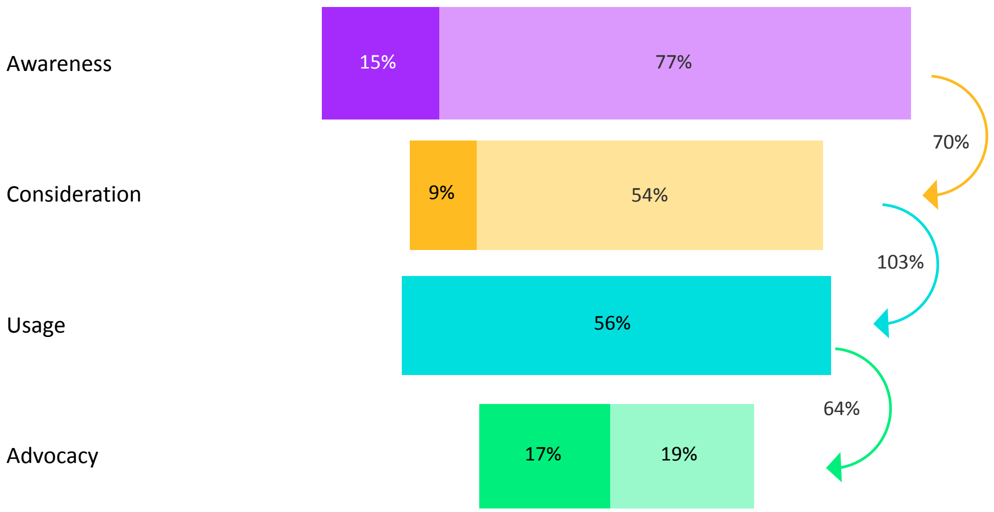
Relative importance and strength of attributes according to clients



Perceptions of attributes compared with all other firms

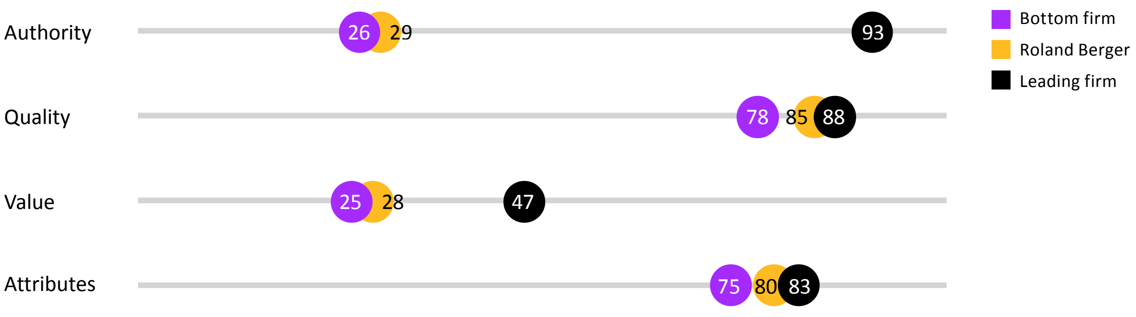


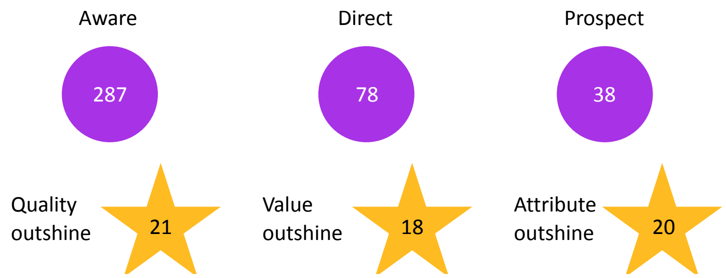
Buyer funnel of PwC



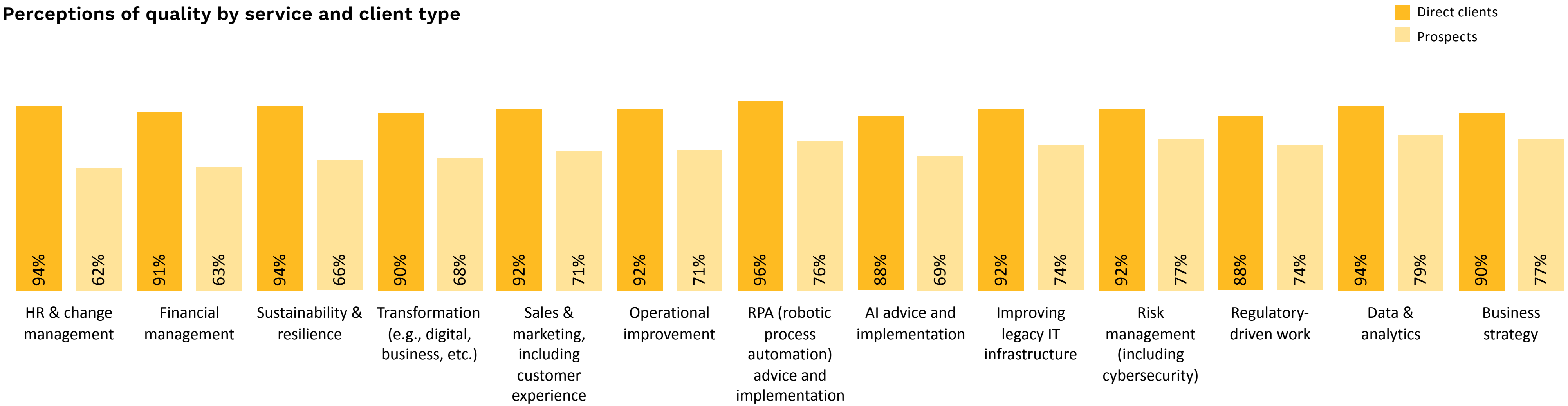
	Leading firm	Average firm
Top of mind	18%	6%
Aided	81%	60%
First choice	14%	7%
Shortlist	63%	41%
Used in last two years	58%	42%
Would put reputation on the line	17%	11%
Would recommend	24%	15%

Roland Berger

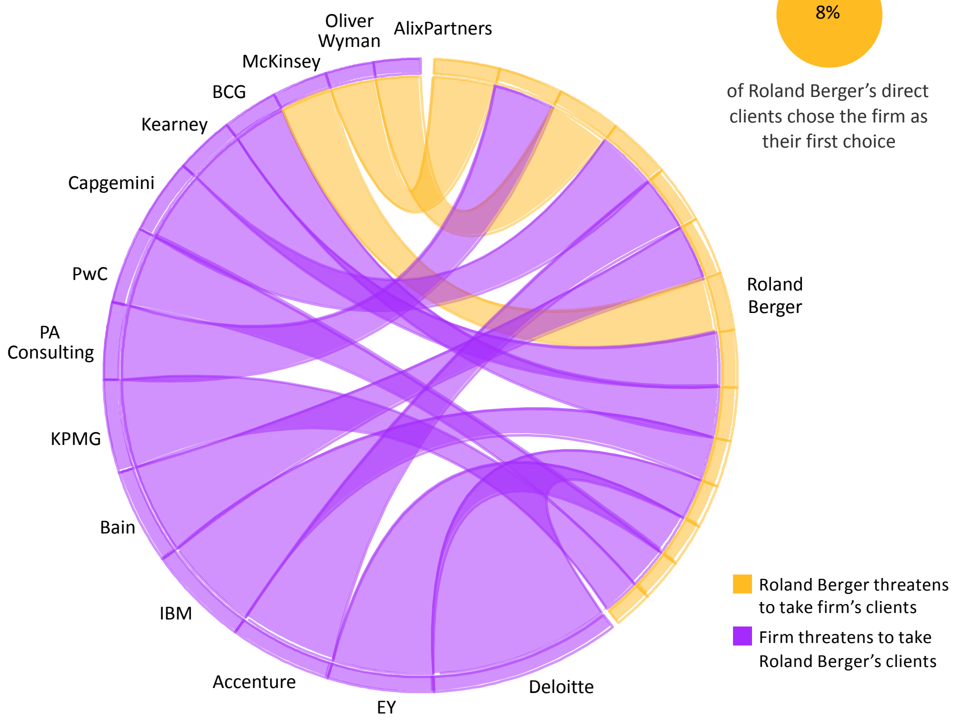




Perceptions of quality by service and client type



First choice firm of direct clients

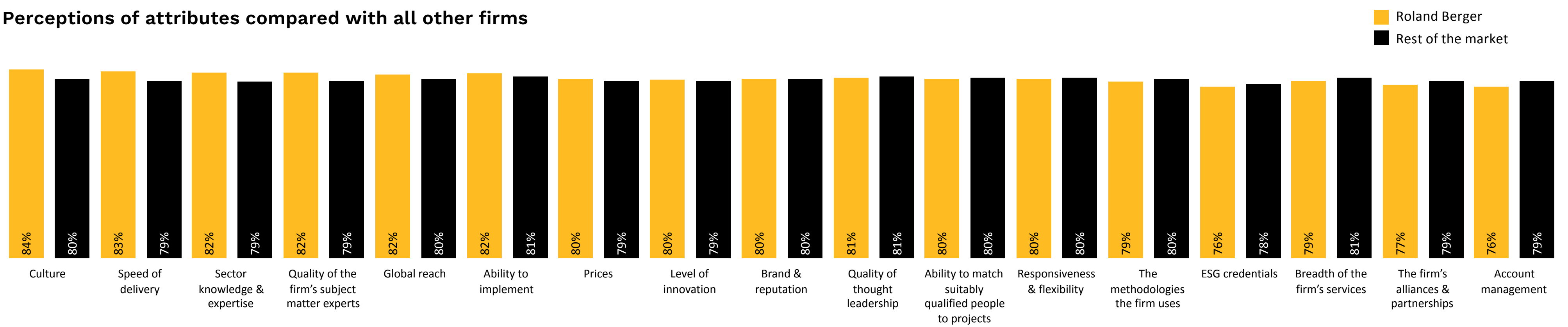


8%

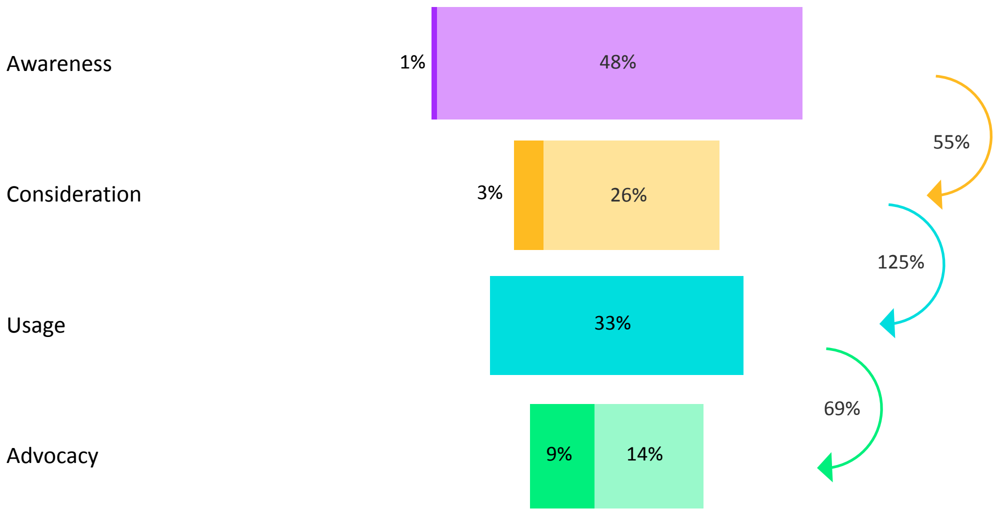
of Roland Berger's direct clients chose the firm as their first choice

Relative importance and strength of attributes according to clients

Perceptions of attributes compared with all other firms



Buyer funnel of Roland Berger



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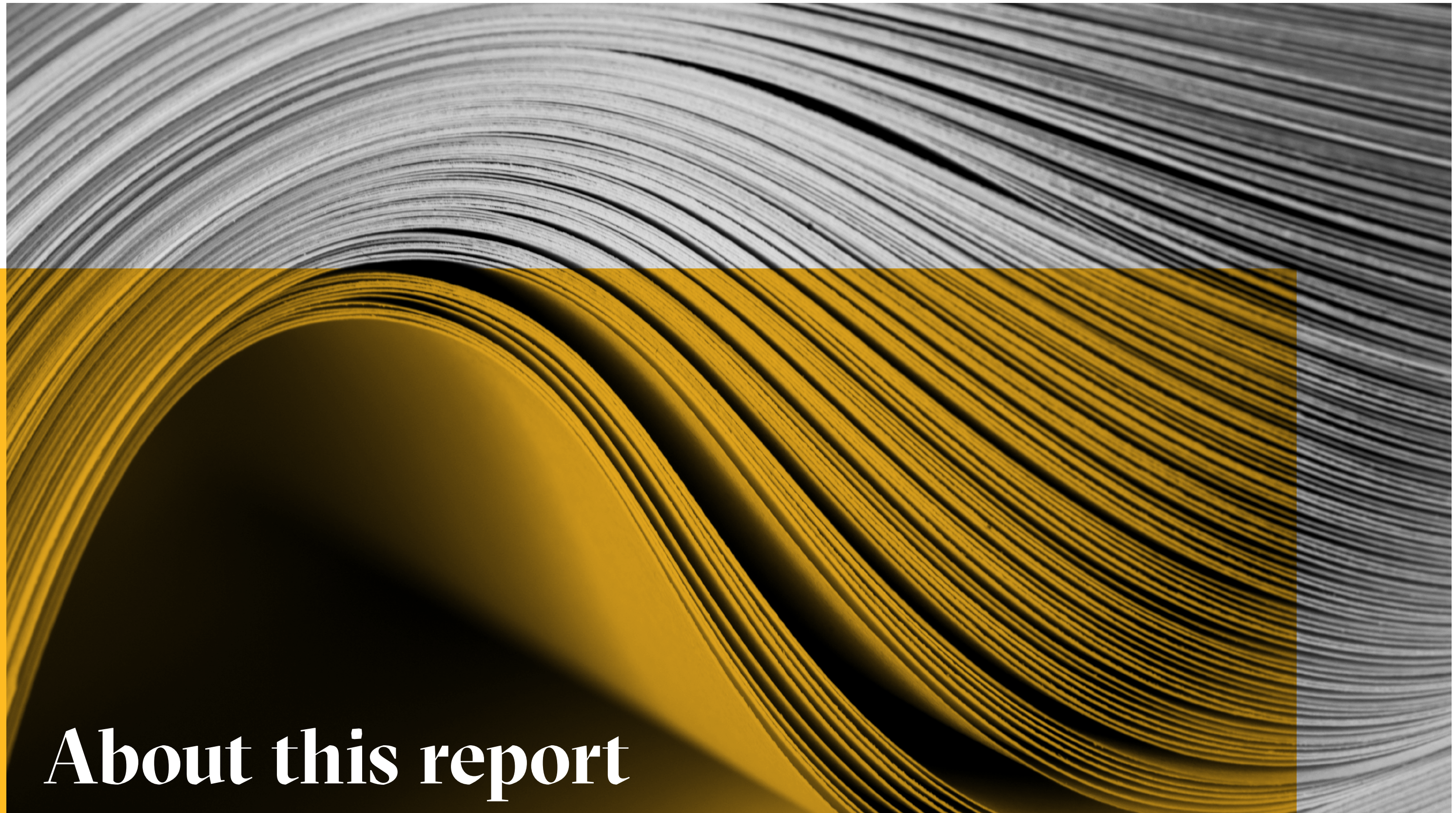


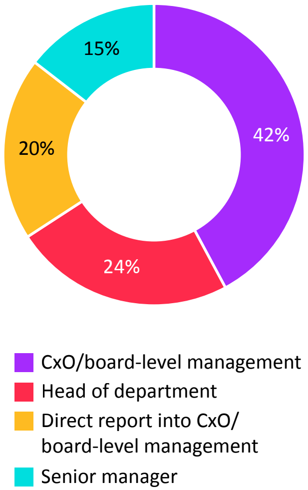
About this report

Methodology in full

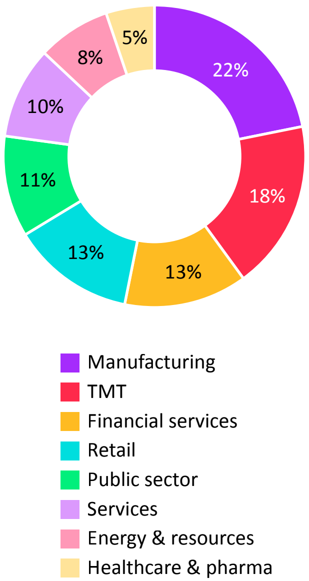
We surveyed 600 senior buyers of consulting services in the UK in November to December 2024, all of whom have personally taken decisions to bring in consultants.

Who did we talk to?

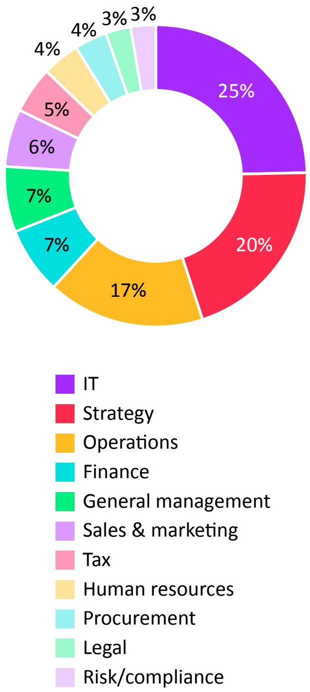
By seniority



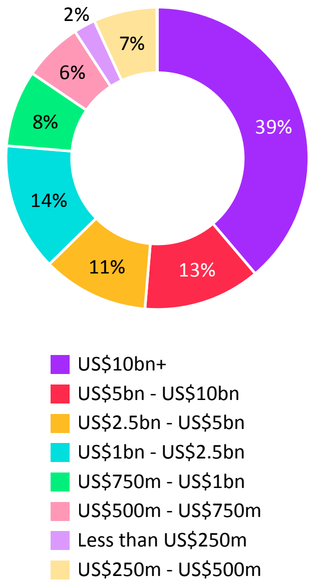
By sector



By function



By revenue



What did we ask them?

Buyer funnel

To create the buyer funnel we asked respondents questions about the buyer journey as it relates to consulting, focusing on the following areas:

- **Unaided awareness**: Before presenting them with the names of any consulting firms, we ask respondents to name the first firm that comes to mind when they think of firms providing consulting services. It is "unaided" in the sense that respondents aren't prompted to mention any particular firms.
- **Aided awareness**: We ask respondents which firms they're aware of from a list of 15 leading firms in the UK. It is "aided" in the sense that the names of firms are presented to respondents. Scores are based on the percentage of respondents who say they are aware of each firm. Respondents aware of fewer than three firms are excluded from the survey.
- **Familiarity (capabilities)**: For firms they're aware of, we ask respondents to describe how familiar they are with a firm's capabilities in general terms. Respondents can answer that they are not familiar at all with the firm's capabilities; know a little bit; know a fair amount; or know the firm's capabilities very well. Scores are based on the percentage of those who say they know the firm's capabilities very well.
- **Familiarity (people)**: For firms they're aware of, we ask respondents to describe their relationship with consultants at each firm. Respondents can answer that they don't know anyone at this firm; are aware of some consultants at this firm but have no relationship with them; have a reasonable relationship with some experts at this firm; or have a good relationship with experts at this firm. Scores are calculated as the percentage of those who say they have a good relationship with experts at a firm.
- **Favourability**: For firms they're aware of, we ask respondents to describe their overall attitude towards each firm. Respondents can answer that they would be critical without being asked; they would be critical if asked; they would be neutral if asked; they would speak highly of the firm if asked; or they would speak highly of the firm without being asked. Scores are calculated as the percentage of those who answer that they'd speak highly of a firm without being asked.
- **Relevance**: For firms they're aware of, we ask respondents which firm has the most relevant offering and positioning to helping solve the business issues their organisation faces, and which firm has the least relevant offering and positioning.
- **Shortlist**: For firms they're aware of, we ask respondents which firms they would shortlist if they had a need in each of 13 service areas. When calculating an overall shortlist score, we take the percentage of respondents who would shortlist that firm for at least one service.
- **First choice**: Out of the firms that respondents say they would shortlist in each of 13 service areas, we ask which firm would be their first choice to work with. If respondents would only shortlist one firm, we assume this would be their first choice. When calculating an overall first choice score, we take an average of the percentage of respondents who would select that firm as their first choice across all service areas.
- **Used**: For firms respondents are aware of, we ask if they're aware of the firm, but have not shortlisted or used it in the last two years; if they've shortlisted the firm for work, but not used it in the past two years; if they've bought a small number of services from the firm; or if they've bought multiple services. For those in the last two categories, we ask what consulting services they've bought from the firm in the last two years from the list of 13 consulting services we ask about, or if they've bought "other consulting services" from firms.
- **Use again**: For those that have bought work from firms in the last two years, we ask if they would work with the firm again, and if that would be in broadly the same areas, or if they would be willing to work with the firm in new areas.

- **Advocacy**: For respondents who would be willing to work with a firm again (in either the same or new areas), we ask which statement most closely applies to their sentiment toward each firm. Respondents can choose either that they trust individuals at the firm rather than the firm itself; overall they trust this firm; they would recommend the firm to senior colleagues without hesitation; or that they would put their personal reputation on the line for this firm. We calculate an advocacy score based on the percentage who say they would put their personal reputation on the line for the firm—in other words, that they're very strong advocates for the firm.

Questions from these areas form the complete buyer funnel. However, we also present a condensed buyer funnel in this report, showing awareness, consideration, usage, and advocacy. In those charts, the **awareness bar** shows the percentage of respondents who named that firm unaided and, additionally, the percentage of respondents who selected that firm when asked the aided awareness question.

The **consideration bar** shows the percentage of all respondents who select that firm as their first choice on average across all services and the percentage of all respondents who would shortlist that for at least one service (minus the percentage who consider the firm first choice on average across all services). In other words, the total bar includes everyone who would shortlist the firm. The arrow to the right indicates the conversion rate from awareness to consideration, and shows the percentage of those aware of the firm who would shortlist it.

The **usage bar** shows the percentage of all respondents who have used that firm in the last two years. The arrow to the right indicates the conversion rate from consideration to usage. Note it is possible for this to be over 100%—if this is the case, it indicates that there are some clients who have recently bought services from the firm, but nevertheless wouldn't want to consider the firm for work in the future.

The **advocacy bar** shows the percentage of all respondents who would put their personal reputation on the line for this firm and the percentage of all respondents who would recommend the firm to senior colleagues without hesitation. The arrow to the right indicates the conversation rate from usage to advocacy, and shows the percentage who have used the firm who would advocate for it.

Perceptions of firms

Perceptions of a consulting brand are impacted by what clients think about the quality of firms' work, what it's like to work with them, the value they add, and whether they see them as leading authorities in their field. For some of these issues (perceptions of quality, attributes, and value) we have data back as far as 2016, allowing us to observe long-term trends in clients' perceptions of firms. The number of direct clients and prospects of each firm stated in the firm-by-firm section reflects the number of each type of client asked questions about the quality, value, and attribute strength of that particular firm. This is lower than the number aware of the firm because respondents were asked these questions about three of the firms they were aware of, rather than all firms they were aware of, in order to reduce the length of the survey.

- **Quality**: For three firms a respondent is aware of, we ask them to rate the quality of work in each of 13 different consulting services. If the respondent says they are aware of more than three firms, they're asked about the three firms with the smallest number of responses overall at that point in time. Where we have an equal number of responses, firms are chosen at random out of those with the fewest responses overall. Respondents are asked to rate quality on a five-point scale where 1 is very low quality and 5 is very high quality. They're also given the option to answer "don't know". We calculate a quality score based on the percentage of respondents (excluding those who say "don't know") describing quality as either "high" or "very high". To calculate an overall quality score, we take an average across all service areas.

  We calculate a **quality outshine score** as the difference between the proportion of direct clients (those currently buying consulting services from a firm) describing quality as "high" or "very high" and the proportion of prospects (those aware of a firm, but not recent buyers of consulting services) describing quality as "high" or "very high". A positive score means direct clients hold more favourable views than prospects, while a negative score means prospects think more highly of a firm's quality than its direct clients.

- **Value**: For the same three firms, we ask respondents for their view of approximately how much value they add in relation to fees paid, or if they haven't worked with the firm, how much they would expect the typical value to be. Respondents are presented with five options: less than the amount paid; around the same as the amount paid; twice the amount paid; five times the amount paid; or 10 times or more the amount paid. We calculate a value score based on the proportion of respondents that say value is in excess of fees to any extent (i.e., it is twice, five, or 10 times or more the amount paid).

  We calculate a **value outshine score** as the difference between the proportion of direct clients and the proportion of prospects describing the value added by a firm as worth twice, five, or 10 times or more the fees paid. A positive score means direct clients hold more favourable views than prospects, while a negative score means prospects think more highly of a firm's value than its direct clients.

- **Attribute strength**: For the same three firms, we ask respondents to rate each across a range of 17 attributes of what it's like to work with consulting firms. The full list of attributes is as follows (note that in many cases we shorten these for the sake of brevity):
  - Overall culture of the firm
  - The methodologies the firm uses
  - The firm's level of innovation
  - The firm's account management process
  - The breadth of the firm's services
  - The firm's ability to implement
  - The firm's brand and reputation
  - The firm's prices
  - The firm's overall speed of delivery
  - The firm's responsiveness and flexibility
  - The quality of the firm's thought leadership
  - The extent to which the firm puts suitably qualified people on your projects
  - The firm's environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) credentials
  - The firm's global reach
  - The quality of the firm's subject matter experts
  - The quality of the firm's sector knowledge and expertise

Respondents are asked to rate attribute strength on a five-point scale where 1 is very poor and 5 is very good. They're also given the option to answer "don't know". We calculate a score for an individual attribute based on the proportion of respondents (excluding those who say don't know) describing the strength of the firm as either "good" or "very good". The attribute score overall is calculated as the average across all attributes of working with a firm.

We calculate an **attribute outshine score** as the difference between the proportion of direct clients and the proportion of prospects describing the strength of attributes of working with a firm as “good” or “very good”. A positive score means direct clients hold more favourable views than prospects, while a negative score means prospects think more highly of a firm’s attributes than its direct clients.

- **Attribute importance**: From the same list of 17 attributes, respondents are presented with a random list of five attributes and asked to select the most and least important when choosing a firm to work with. This is cycled through 13 times with a different random set of five attributes each time. A score is calculated using the following formula:

  Score = 50 + (50 * (B-W)) /N.

  B: The number of times the attribute was selected as “matter most” by participants.

  W: The number of times the attribute was selected as “matter least” by participants.

  N: The number of times the attribute was shown to participants across the exercise.

  A score of 100 means the attribute is always selected as the most important, while a score of zero means the attribute is always selected as the least important.

- **Authority**: We ask respondents which two topics are most pressing to their organisation over the next two years, from a list of 11 broad areas. We go on to ask, for each of these 11 broad areas, out of the firms the respondent is aware of, who is the leading authority or thinker on that issue. To calculate an authority score, we first divide the count of respondents that said each firm was an authority on a topic, by the count of the highest scoring firm for that topic. This is then weighted by the importance of the topic according to clients (see calculation below). A firm’s total authority score is the sum of its score for each topic. The score firms are given is out of 100, with a score of 100 indicating that a firm is the leading thinker across all topics.

  (count of firm authority/count of the highest scoring firm for that topic) * (count of topic importance /total count) * 100

- **Traits**: For each firm respondents are aware of, we ask to what extent they agree or disagree that various statements apply to that firm. Respondents can answer that they strongly disagree; disagree; neither agree or disagree; agree; strongly agree; or don’t know. The statements they are asked about are:
  - It’s a leading intellectual authority on the issues that matter to my organisation
  - It’s a leading firm for information about emerging topics
  - Most senior stakeholders in my organisation would be comfortable hiring this firm
  - The firm’s price point is reasonable
  - The firm understands my organisation’s needs
  - This firm has a collaborative working style
  - It has a strong ecosystem/partnerships with third parties

  We also ask respondents if they associate any of the following with each firm they’re aware of:

  - Arrogant/overconfident people
  - Poor at implementation
  - Swaps team members too frequently
  - Inconsistent quality of people
  - Weak technology expertise
  - Aggressively sells to me/my organisation
  - Too expensive
  - Inflexible/uncooperative
  - Hierarchical/elitist

Meet the expert

Sophie Gunn

Sophie is a Senior Consultant in our Client and Brand Insights team, looking after our Client Perceptions Studies programme. As an author of many of our client perceptions reports, Sophie helps professional services firms understand how they are perceived in the market, and provides insights on client preferences when it comes to choosing firms to work with.

Sophie also works across many of our bespoke pieces of work. This includes leading on brand benchmarking exercises, message testing projects, thought leadership ratings and reviews, and analysing the results of client surveys and interviews to provide firms with the answers to their most pressing questions.

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Publication schedule for 2025

2025		Market Trends Reports	Market Trends Briefings	Client Perceptions Studies	Emerging Trends Programme	White Space Reports	White Space Insights
Q1	January	Forecasts for 2025 UK US GCC France		UK US GCC France			Featured thought leadership (monthly) Quarterly webinar series
	February				ET1		
	March					Quality Ratings Report (QRR)	
Q2	April	Nordics DACH Australia East Asia South East Asia Africa	India South America	Germany Australia China Japan Retail Energy & Resources Financial Services Technology, Media & Telecoms	ET2		Featured thought leadership (monthly) Quarterly webinar series
	May						
	June				ET3	Client Perceptions of Thought Leadership	
Q3	July	Energy & Resources Financial Services Technology, Media & Telecoms Sustainability	Healthcare & Pharma	Risk Tax			Featured thought leadership (monthly) Quarterly webinar series
	August				ET4		
	September					Thought Leadership Innovation	
Q4	October	Tax Risk Technology Planning for Growth in 2026	Public Sector	Audit Technology	ET5		Featured thought leadership (monthly) Quarterly webinar series
	November						
	December				ET6	Hot Topic Report	

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