EXTRACT

**SOURCE** 

Market Trends

# MARKER

The UK Consulting Market in 2025

Report

### 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.

India

Israel

Japan

Kenya

#### Geography model

#### Countries covered

Albania Algeria China Angola Colombia Argentina Côte d'Ivoire Croatia Austria Cyprus Bahrain Czech Republic Iraq Belarus Denmark Belgium Egypt Ethiopia Bosnia Brazil Finland Bulgaria Cameroon Ghana Canada

Greece Libya Pakistan Hong Kong Luxembourg Hungary Malaysia Guinea Mexico Indonesia Myanmar Portugal Ireland Netherlands Oatar New Zealand Romania Nigeria Russia North Rwanda Macedonia Norway Serbia Lebanon Oman

Slovakia Papua New Slovenia South Africa South Korea Philippines Spain Sri Lanka Sudan Sweden Switzerland Tanzania Saudi Arabia Thailand Singapore Turkey

Ukraine United Kingdom United States Venezuela Zambia

#### Sector model



- 1 Energy & resources
- 2 Financial services
- 3 Healthcare
- 4 Manufacturing
- 5 Pharma & life
- sciences
- 6 Public sector
- 7 Retail
- 8 Services
- 9 Technology, media & telecoms

	Sub-sectors
2 3	1 A Energy 1 B Primary reso 1 C Utilities
	<ol> <li>A Banking</li> <li>B Capital mark</li> <li>C Insurance</li> <li>D Investment a</li> </ol>
9 8 7 6	management 2 E Private equit 3 A Healthcare

gy ary resources ies	4 A Aerospace 4 B Automotive 4 C Construction
ing al markets ance	<ul> <li>4 D Consumer electronics</li> <li>4 E Consumer packaged good</li> <li>4 F Industrial products</li> </ul>
tment and wealth	5 A Pharma
agement	6 A Defence
te equity	6 B Education
chcare	6 C Not-for-profit
	6 D Public sector
	7 A Retail

8 A Business services

8 B Leisure

8 C Logistics

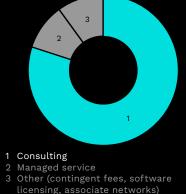
8 D Real estate

9 A High-tech

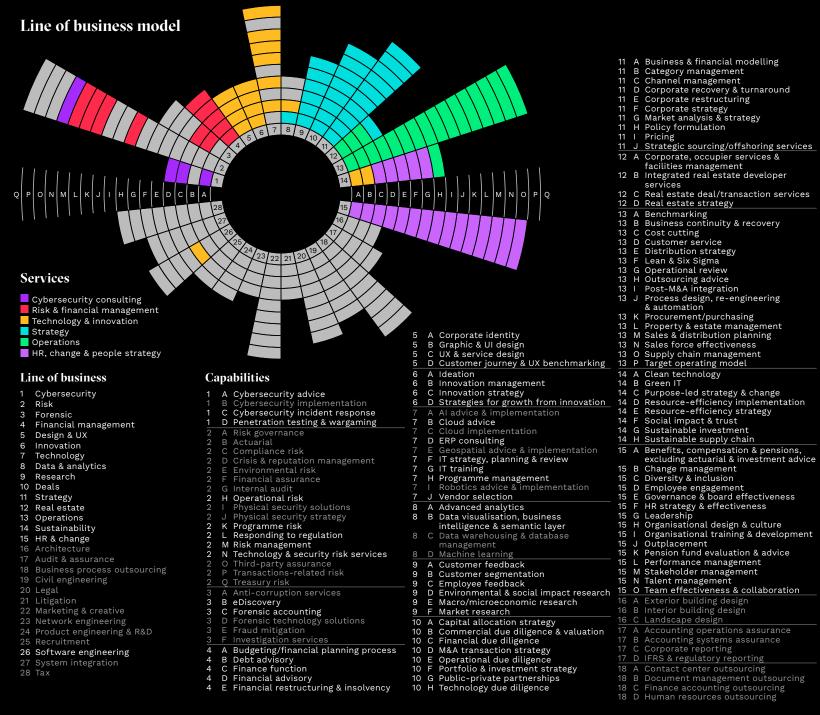
9 C Telecoms

9 B Media

8 E Transportation



The revenue-earning model



18 I Supply chain management & distribution outsourcing 19 A Building & engineering analytics
 19 B Engineering project management
 19 C Infrastructure design 19 E Transport infrastructure, planning & engineering 19 F Urban design & planning 20 A Corporate & transaction law 20 B Criminal law 20 C Digital & technology law 20 D Domestic & family law 20 E Intellectual property law 20 F International trade, regulatory & government law 21 A Dispute advisory services 21 B Expert witness 21 C Trial services 22 A Brand activation 22 B Brand strategy 22 C Creative production 22 D Customer relationship management 22 E Marketing & communication production 22 F Marketing & communication strategy 22 G Marketing mix optimisation 22 H Public relations & affairs 23 A Network installation 23 B Network optimisation 23 C Network strategy & architecture 24 A Physical product guality assurance & testing 24 B Physical product R&D 24 C Product & industrial design 24 D Technical feasibility assessment, prototyping & mock-ups 25 A Contract staffing supply 25 B Executive interim 25 C Executive search 25 D Talent sourcing 26 A Application development 26 B Digital product quality assurance & testing 26 C DevOps 26 D Digital product R&D 26 E IoT and connected devices 26 F Solution architecture 26 G Virtual, augmented, and mixed reality 27 A Functional & industry application integration 27 B Microsoft 27 D Salesforce 27 E SAP 27 F Workday 28 A Corporate tax 28 B Global employer/mobility services 28 C Indirect tax 28 E Private wealth tax 28 G Transaction tax 28 H Transfer pricing

18 E IT outsourcing

18 G Payroll outsourcing18 H Regulation & remediation outsourcing

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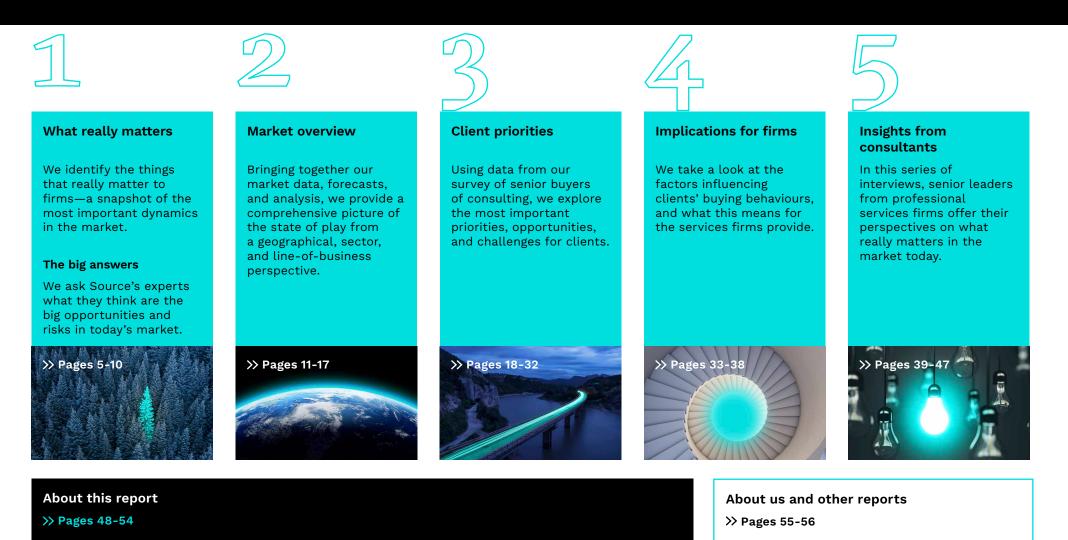
The UK

**Market Trends** 

### SOURCE 🌀

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Underpinned by our MegaModel, our reports deliver an independent and objective understanding of the markets that matter most; including everything from key trends and growth opportunities to the latest views of consulting leaders and a detailed analysis of the buyer's voice.



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"Clients are increasingly focused on understanding the practical deployment of AI and how to realise value. They recognise its huge potential to upskill their people, and to drive efficiency and productivity gains."

Tamas Wood, KPMG

### What really matters

Three things for a firm to act on	6
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Clients will spend more on external consulting support in 2025, but they expect a more clearly defined return on investment based on concrete results.



of clients will use consultants more in the next 12 months and just 1% will turn to external support less It is very likely that clients will continue the trend from 2024 of engaging firms for smaller projects. And clients are in a pragmatic mood: They don't necessarily want radical solutions, but they want the right solution for their specific needs, which must provide concrete results. Furthermore, although they always value expertise, what worries many clients is their lack of internal resources and in many cases experience. This is why managed services will continue to be popular in 2025.

Although two thirds of clients think the prices charged by firms will decrease or remain the same over the next 12 months, those that think prices will increase put it down to firms using proprietary tools or bringing specialist expertise to the table. Proprietary tools could refer to using emerging technology in a project, most likely GenAI, which could lead to a better or faster solution.

Firms should also be aware that clients want regular formal conversations to discuss specific challenges that they face. These are important as it is on the back of understanding what these challenges are that firms will be able to propose the best solution and the most qualified project team. It is this, clients tell us, that is most likely to influence their selection in shortlisting the winning firm for a new project.







"We expect to see a surge in client demand in the pharma space. Energy and infrastructure are also well placed to grow, particularly in the UK, as there are lots of investments."

Alan Frost, Forvis Mazars

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"Clients are eager to restructure their businesses and improve their operating models. They also continue to improve customer, channel partner, and employee experience."

Brandon Bichler, Elixirr

### **Client priorities**

Despite a return to certainty, business confidence in 2025 remains shaky among UK clients	
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Client boardroom discussions are most likely to feature technology infrastructure, but this depends on the sector	
Workforce skills shortages revolve around the pressing need for emerging technology capabilities; people issues are also a concern as clients face concerns over employee reform legislation	
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# Client boardroom discussions are most likely to feature technology infrastructure, but this depends on the sector

Clients in the UK are most likely to select improving technology infrastructure as one of the three most important issues being discussed at boardroom level. They want to invest in their technology for internal and external reasons: On one hand, companies know they need to become more efficient and productive, and they recognise that emerging technologies such as AI and automation tools can support these aims, while on the other, they also know that the use of emerging technology can help them in their growth aims by offering a competitive advantage and greater agility. Other internal areas of concern for UK clients are being prepared to deal with risk, assessing future deals, addressing ESG issues, and building resilience.

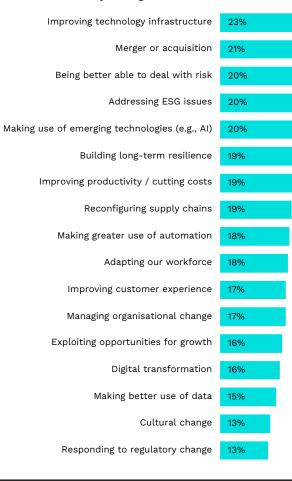
There are notable differences in client priorities depending on the sector. In the more customer-facing worlds of TMT and retail & services, we see clients more likely to have a focus on growth potential, either by engaging in M&A activity (especially in the case of the retail sector), or by improving products and services that will enhance the customer experience in the TMT industry.

Clients have different concerns in the heavy industries (energy & resources and manufacturing) and in financial services, where boardrooms are far more likely to be discussing internal matters around investing in technology, conducting digital transformation programmes, or using emerging technologies (such as automation, especially in the manufacturing and energy & resources sectors). Meanwhile in the public sector, clients are under threat to be more productive and to be prepared for risks, so it is little surprise that improving their technology infrastructure is also high on the list of business concerns.

gg	est issues discus	sed in UK boardroc	oms			
	Financial services	Industrials	Pharma & healthcare	Public sector	Retail & services	тмт
	Digital transformation	Improving tech infrastructure	M&A	Improving productivity	M&A	ESG issues
1	Improving tech infrastructure	Using automation	Dealing with risk	Dealing with risk	Long-term resilience	Improving tech infrastructure
1	Managing organisational change	Dealing with risk	Long-term resilience	Improving tech infrastructure	Exploiting growth opportunities	Improving customer experience

#### Figure 9

Which three of the following do you think are currently the most relevant and important issues being discussed at senior levels in your organisation?



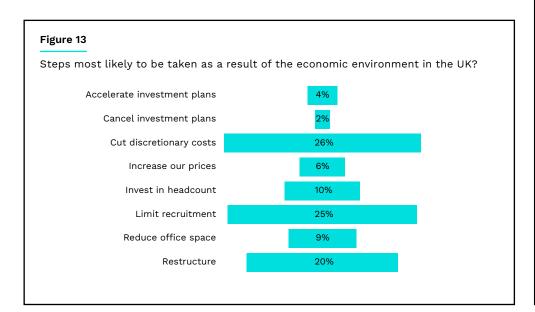
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### Where are clients set to invest?

## The economic environment will have short-term impact on investment decisions, but longer-term strategy will be around capitalising on digital technology

Many clients in our survey are concerned about the state of the country's current macroeconomic environment. We also know there are worries about the fiscal landscape. As a result, just over a quarter of UK's organisations think they will need to cut their discretionary costs in the next 12 months and one in five expect to go through some restructuring. A further quarter tell us they will likely need to limit recruitment. No wonder that change management came out so highly as a capability in which it will be important for UK clients to have expertise.

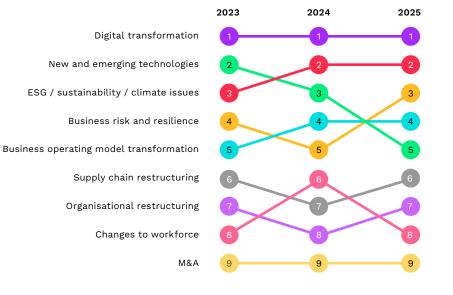
However, UK clients still tell us that digital transformation is the most important short-term investment priority; this has been the case for the last three years. These programmes will allow organisations to plan for the adoption of emerging technologies, which is still seen as a slightly longer-term investment plan. Meanwhile, ESG and climate issues remain the second largest priority, with



clients still aware that they need to fulfil regulatory commitments, as well as being seen to meet the needs of investors, customers, partners, and employees. It is interesting that new and emerging technologies have moved down the rankings of the most important short-term investment (to fifth place). It is not that it has lost its significance, but organisations are aware they need to prepare for the adoption of these new technologies, which will come from a successful digital transformation programme.

#### Figure 14

Clients' short-term investment priorities 2023-25 (intend to invest in the next 18 months)





What really matters

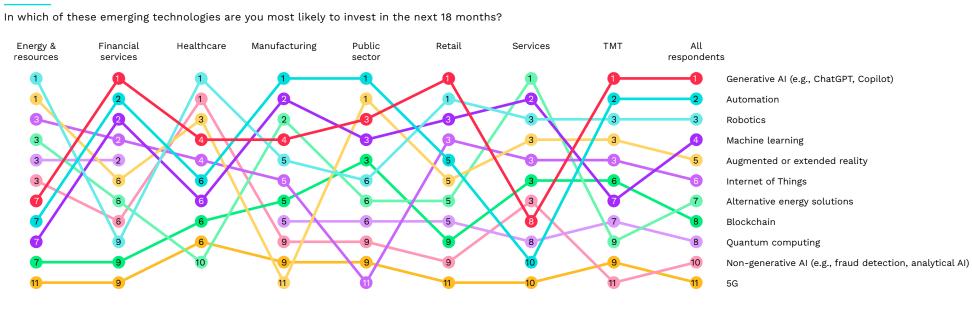
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When clients are asked more specifically about which emerging technologies they are most likely to invest in, generative AI, automation, and robotics feature at the top. There is a slight difference when comparing how companies from different sectors respond, with, for example, energy & resources clients more likely to invest in robotics, augmented reality, IoT, or alternative energy solutions than GenAI. Similarly, manufacturing clients will focus more on automation and machine learning, and healthcare companies will also prioritise robotics to GenAI. Meanwhile, clients in the financial services sector also ranked GenAI as the emerging technology for which they are most likely to use consulting support, just ahead of machine learning. Interestingly, the adoption of quantum computing is ranked third; this is more likely to be down to a lack of expertise rather than the importance of its adoption.

#### Figure 16



Note: Pharma sector was excluded from this chart as sample sizes are relatively small.

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"Some firms have done well, but others have had to pivot to new offerings or different elements in the market due to a lack of dealflow and restructuring activity."

Mark Veldon, AlixPartners

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"Instead of simply launching an AI project, it's valuable to ask yourself, what are you aiming to achieve? By focusing on your objectives, you can tap into a range of levers to achieve your goals—whether it's improving processes, transforming people, or advancing technology."

Jonathan House, PwC

### **Insights from consultants**

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"The UK consulting market last year showed resilience and adaptability, with promising

adaptability, with promising signs of recovery towards the end of the year. December saw a positive shift, and January has started well."

Jonathan House, PwC

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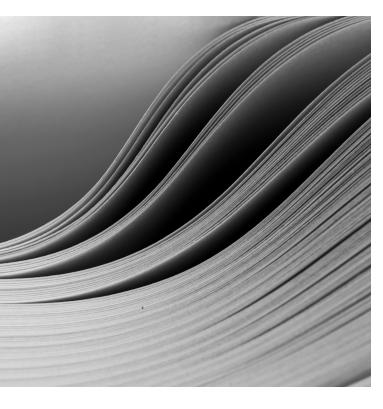
**SOURCE** 



### Our approach to gathering data

The market for professional services is vast and highly dynamic, with deep roots spread out across the business world. The Source MegaModel helps you get to grips with the facts.

The MegaModel is the largest and most comprehensive database of its kind, anywhere in the world. It's used by the world's leading firms to identify where growth is coming from, which markets to invest in, and which sectors are driving demand.



### Methodology—The MegaModel

#### 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 supplyside 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 largesized 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 long-term view of the market that is able to support both historic and forecast data.

All figures given in this report are in British pounds.

US dollar to British pound US\$1 = £0.78

US dollar to euro US\$1 = €0.92

The data in this report is rounded to the nearest whole number or stated decimal place. As a result, totals may display small discrepancies.

**Respondents by function** 

### **SOURCE**

### Who did we speak to

#### **Client perspective**

We carry out a client survey to help us build a rich picture of how different trends in the UK are affecting clients' organisations and their use of consulting. Our survey focuses on trends in the UK, providing detailed insights into the nuances of the market. For this, we surveyed 200 senior clients of consulting firms from across the UK, all of whom work in organisations with more than 1,000 employees. This survey focuses on the following areas:

- How they expect to use consultants during 2025 and the first half of 2026
- 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.

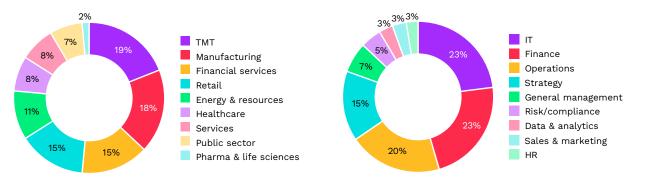
#### Insights from consultants

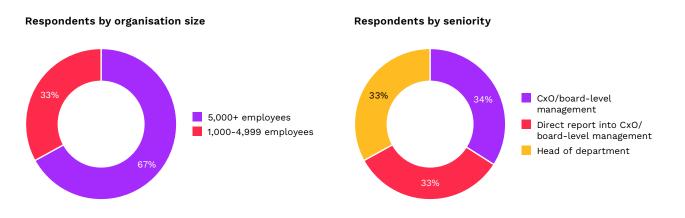
Throughout the year, Source analysts remain plugged in to the global consulting market through our bespoke research and consulting projects, adding further depth to our understanding of the consulting industry.

#### In-depth desk research

We also conducted a thorough PEST analysis in the UK 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

#### 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 & life sciences

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.

#### 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, Resource-efficiency strategy, Purpose-led strategy & change, Resource-efficiency implementation, Social impact & trust.

#### Operations

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.

#### **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.

#### 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.

About this report

#### Technology & innovation

Ideation, Innovation management, Innovation strategy, Strategies for growth from innovation, Cloud advice, ERP consulting, IT strategy, planning & review, IT training, Program 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.

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About this report

### Contributors

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

Name	Job title	Organisation
Brandon Bichler	Partner	Elixirr
Alan Frost	Partner	Forvis Mazars
Jonathan House	UK Head of Consulting	PwC
Alex Slater	Managing Director	Capgemini Invent UK
Luca Stoppino	Managing Director UK and Executive Vice President West Europe	EFESO
Tamas Wood	Partner & UK Head of Advisory – Infrastructure, Government & Healthcare	KPMG
Mark Veldon	Partner & Managing Director	AlixPartners
Fiz Yazdi	Managing Director	Sopra Steria Next

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About this report



### Meet the expert

#### Nick Jotischky

Nick is Head of Market Trends at Source. Drawing on over 20 years of experience in B2B research centred on macroeconomic and geopolitical risk, Nick leads the Market Trends programme, with a focus on assessing the landscape of the professional services market by region and sector and putting meaningful insights into the hands of firms.

#### Nick Jotischky

≤ nick.jotischky@sourceglobalresearch.com



### About us

# We help professional services firms understand what really matters when facing decisions of vital importance.

The best decisions are based on evidence, objectivity, and a willingness to change. That's why, at Source, we tell you what you need to hear, rather than what you want to hear.

We draw upon our deep roots within the professional services sector to provide firms with a clear picture of their clients' worlds. Through comprehensive research and meticulous analysis, we pinpoint what truly matters and deliver actionable insights that help firms map out the right way forward.

We believe in thriving individually and succeeding together. And we would love to help your firm crack its latest conundrum.

Source Information Services Ltd 20 Little Britain | London | EC1A 7DH UK +44 (0) 20 3743 3934 US +1 800 767 8058 info@sourceglobalresearch.com www.sourceglobalresearch.com

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