

Emerging Trends

EXTRACT



EMERGING

**The 2026 consulting outlook:
Our expert predictions**

Report

Dec 2025

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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We look back on 2025 and forward to 2026.

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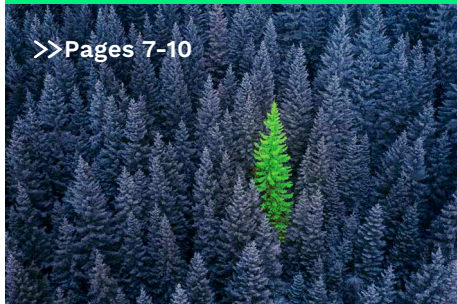


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What really matters

We identify the things that really matter for firms—a snapshot of the most important dynamics in the market.

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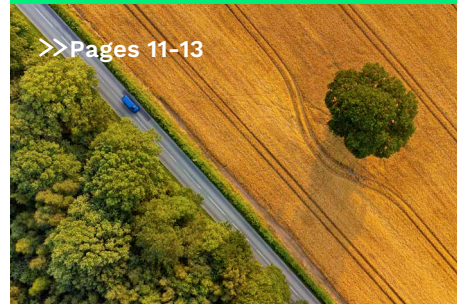


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Our experts' big bets for 2026

We introduce our experts and their big bets for the consulting world in 2026.

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Our take on the trends

In a series of interviews, Source's experts share their thoughts and predictions for the major trends that will shape consulting in 2026.

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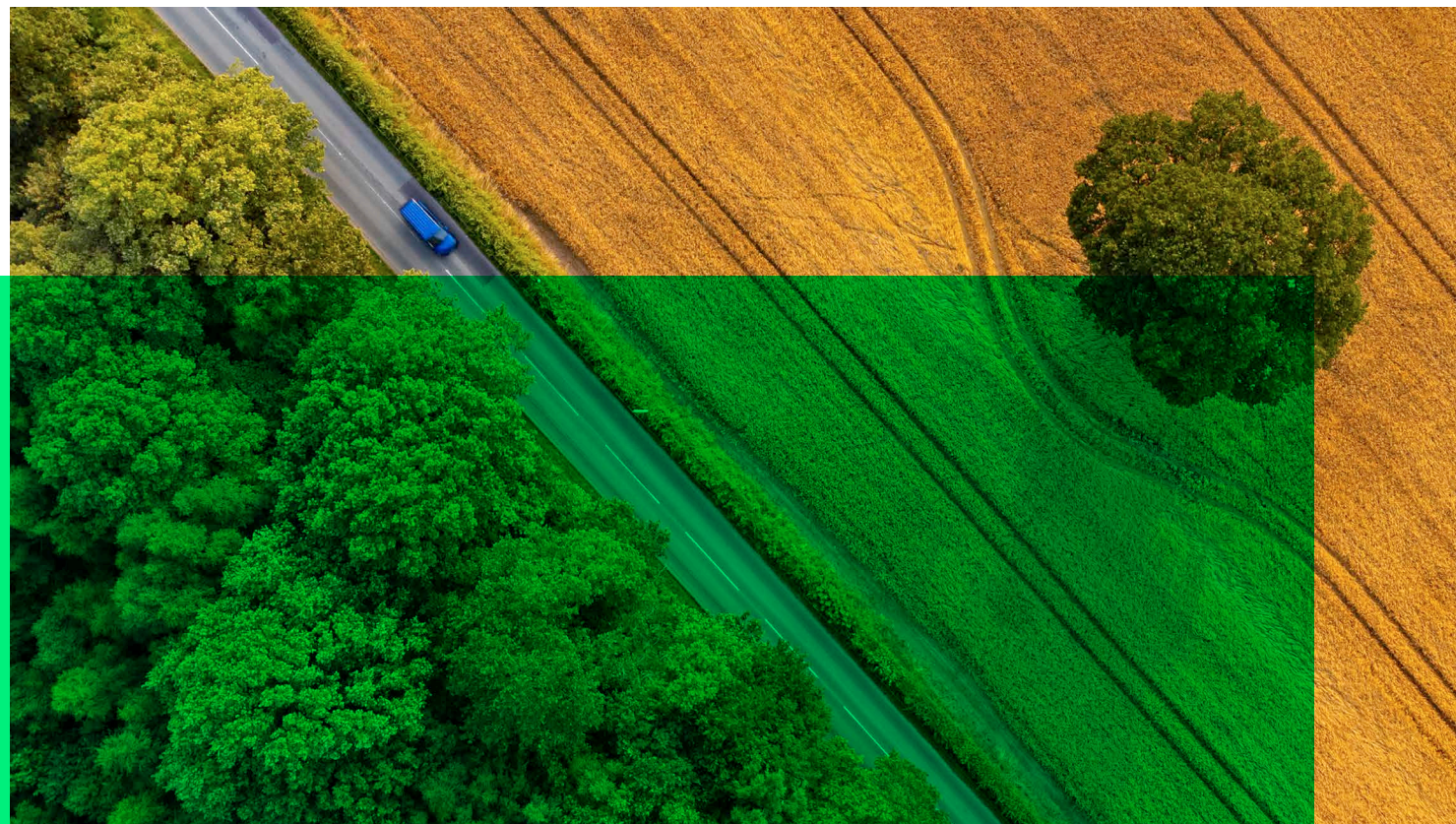
What really matters

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Our experts' big bets for 2026

Catherine Anderson | Director of Market Trends and Analysis**What's your big bet for 2026?**

“ *Managed services—clients don't necessarily understand this offering, or know that they need it, but it's going to be a big battleground for firms, with huge potential.* ”

Margaret Cameron-Waller | Associate**What's your big bet for 2026?**

“ *Our interviews with clients all point to one thing in the alliances & partnerships space: AI is only going to become more significant.* ”

Joel Bradbury | Senior Consultant**What's your big bet for 2026?**

“ *For sustainability, it'll be all about data—there's an increasing focus on getting the right data in smarter and smarter ways.* ”

Emma Carroll | Head of Content**What's your big bet for 2026?**

“ *The big and obvious bet remains technology. It's been a client priority for every single quarter over the past two years, with ongoing focus on tech infrastructure, digital transformation, and more recently, the opportunities surrounding AI.* ”

Fiona Czerniawska | CEO**What's your big bet for 2026?**

“Clients are trying to reconcile two almost irreconcilable things: They face these terrible threats to their business, but they still have to grow, so they have to be able to find opportunities in all of that. My big bet is that this imperative is going to fundamentally shape the type of consulting needs that they want.”

Tony Maroulis | Principal Consultant**What's your big bet for 2026?**

“There's a lot of concern about a bubble around AI, but my feeling is that the AI bubble won't burst in 2026.”

Nick Jotischky | Head of Market Trends**What's your big bet for 2026?**

“Although technology remains a strategic priority for most clients, be it about improving existing infrastructure or taking advantage of advanced technologies, people and cultural issues are rising up the boardroom agenda for clients.”

Martin White | Principal Consultant**What's your big bet for 2026?**

“Value's increasing entanglement with risk.”

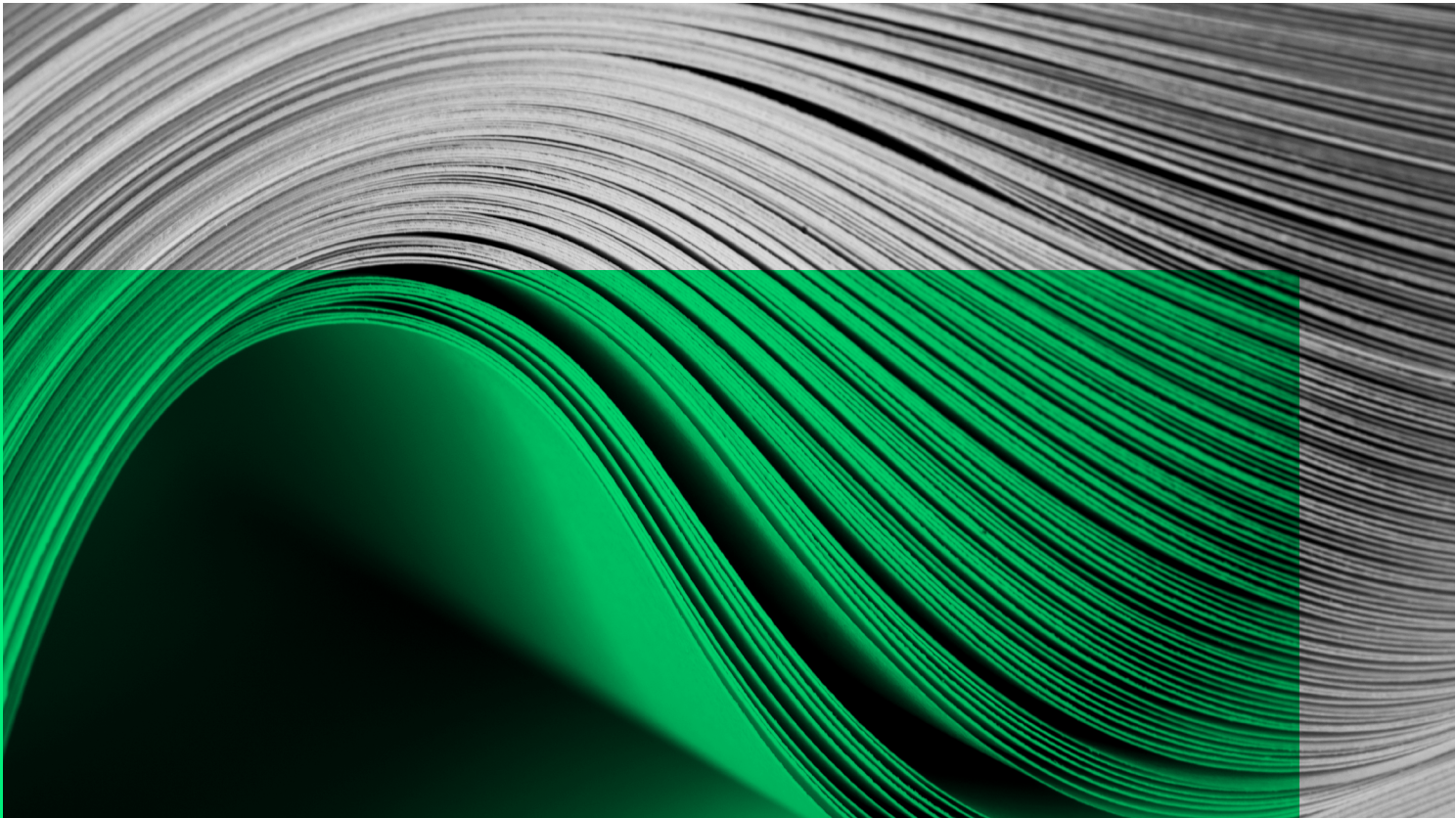
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Methodology

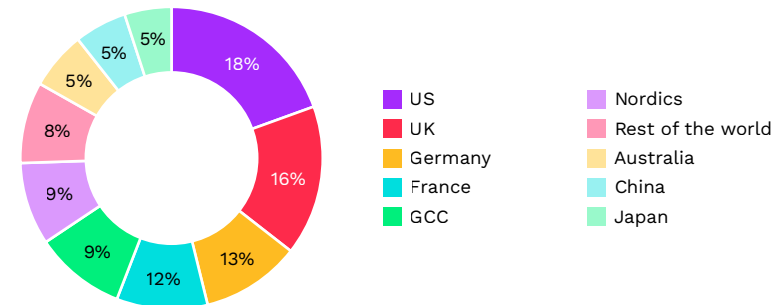
Throughout this report, our experts draw on insights from the interviews with clients and consulting leaders they've conducted in 2025, as well as messages from our wider research.

The data from this report is taken from surveys conducted for our Emerging Trends, Market Trends, and Client Perceptions programmes. To read more about our reports, [click here](#) for Source's website. We also draw on our Quarterly Client Survey, which takes a regular pulse of the market. The global consulting market growth quoted in the introduction is based on Source's MegaModel.

Client Perceptions survey 2025

We surveyed 3,868 senior buyers of consulting services in November and December 2024. The respondents are drawn from the C-suite (1,305), their direct reports (1,033), heads of departments (970), or senior managers (564), and are from a range of major markets (including the US, UK, Germany, France, GCC, Nordics, Australia, China, and Japan).

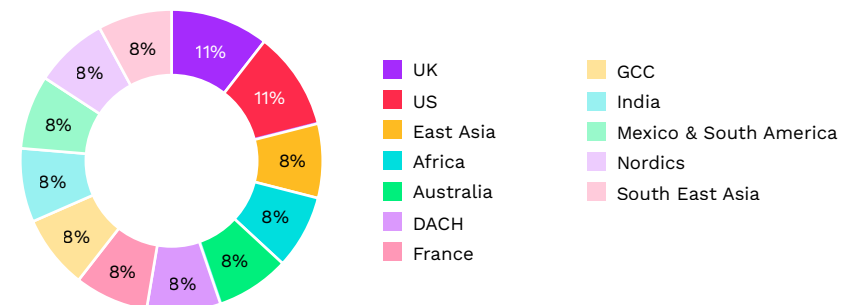
**Respondents
by geography**



Market Trends survey 2025

We surveyed 1,900 senior buyers of consulting in Q1 and Q2 2025. The respondents are drawn from the C-suite (640), their direct reports (628), or heads of department (633), are from a range of major markets, and come from a representative range of industries and functions.

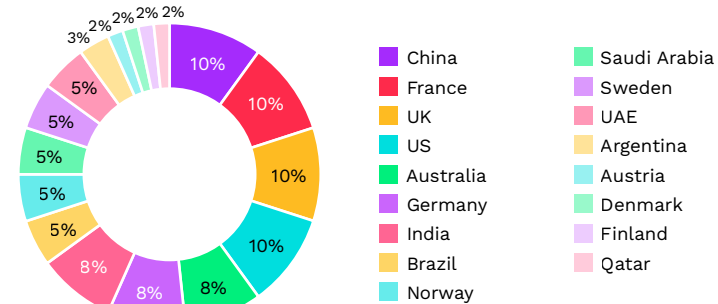
**Respondents
by geography**



Market Trends sustainability survey 2025

We surveyed 300 senior buyers of consulting in Q2 2025. The respondents are drawn from the C-suite (100), their direct reports (100), or heads of department (100), are from a range of major markets, and come from a representative range of industries and functions.

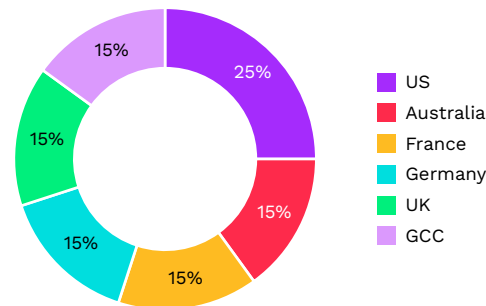
Respondents
by geography



Quarterly client surveys

Every quarter we take a pulse of the market, surveying buyers of consulting about a number of pressing issues. This report mainly pulls upon the results of our Q3 2025 (200 respondents) survey, although we also reference other surveys (all 200 respondents). The respondents are all C-suite and direct reports into the C-suite, from a range of major markets (US, UK, France, Germany, GCC, and Australia) and drawn from a representative range of industries and functions.

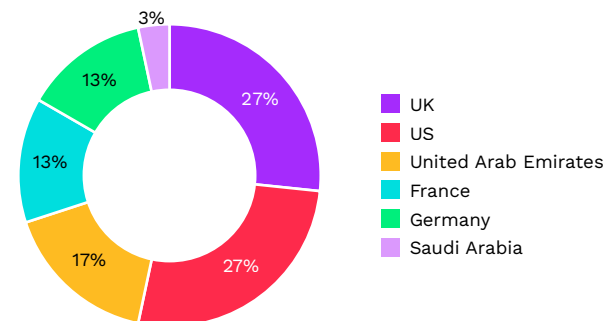
Respondents
by geography
(Q3 2025)



Emerging Trends survey 2025, *How to talk to your clients about value*

We surveyed 150 senior buyers of consulting in June 2025. Respondents worked in five geographies, all of which are important in terms of scale and/or growth potential—the US, UK, Germany, France, and the GCC. They were also drawn from a representative mix of sectors and functions. Approximately two thirds came from organisations with more than 5,000 people.

Respondents
by geography




Meet the authors

Joel Bradbury

Joel authors many reports for our Market Trends and Future Trends research programmes. He has written extensively on sustainability, energy, and regional consulting markets in Europe, with a particular focus on how these areas are evolving amid a rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape.

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Alice oversees the editorial quality of Source's content. She manages a high-volume report programme—producing over 50 publications a year—that covers everything from market trends and client perceptions of firms to emerging topics like AI and in-depth analysis of thought leadership.

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Hannah edits Source's content to ensure that every piece is clear, compelling, and grounded in robust data. Her work spans the full editorial lifecycle—from managing the collation of interviews for our Market Trends programme to writing promotional materials for our reports and podcasts.

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Publication schedule for 2026

2026		Market Trends Reports	Market Trends Briefings	Client Perceptions Studies	Future Trends Programme	White Space Reports	White Space Insights
Q1	January	Forecasts for 2026 UK US GCC France		UK US GCC France			Featured Thought Leadership Quality Ratings Webinar
	February				Future Trends in... 1		
	March					Quality Ratings Report (QRR)	
Q2	April	Nordics DACH Australia East Asia South East Asia Financial Services	India South America	Germany Australia China Japan Healthcare & Pharma Energy & Resources Financial Services Technology, Media & Telecoms	Future Trends in... 2		Featured Thought Leadership Client Perceptions of Thought Leadership Webinar
	May						
	June				Future Trends in... 3	Client Perceptions of Thought Leadership	
Q3	July	Africa Energy & Resources Technology, Media & Telecoms Sustainability	Healthcare & Pharma	Risk Tax Audit	The Future of Audit 2026		Featured Thought Leadership
	August						
	September				Future Trends in... 4	Thought Leadership Innovation	
Q4	October	Tax Risk Technology Planning for Growth in 2027	Public Sector	Technology	Future Trends in... 5		Featured Thought Leadership Thought Leadership Innovation Webinar
	November				Future Trends in... 6		
	December						