

# CLIENT AND BRAND INSIGHTS



How Source Global Research  
can help

# What Source can do for you

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Understanding what your clients think about your firm is critical in today's fast-changing and highly competitive market.

Our customers use us because:

- **We help them to understand how their firm measures up against its competitors in the minds of clients and prospects;**

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- **We help them to understand how they can communicate more effectively with their prospects, as well as their existing client base;**

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- **We're independent—so we get to hear what clients really think; and**

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- **They can use Source's [marketing licence](#) to publish their rankings in our research to be one of the most effective things on which to spend marketing budget.**

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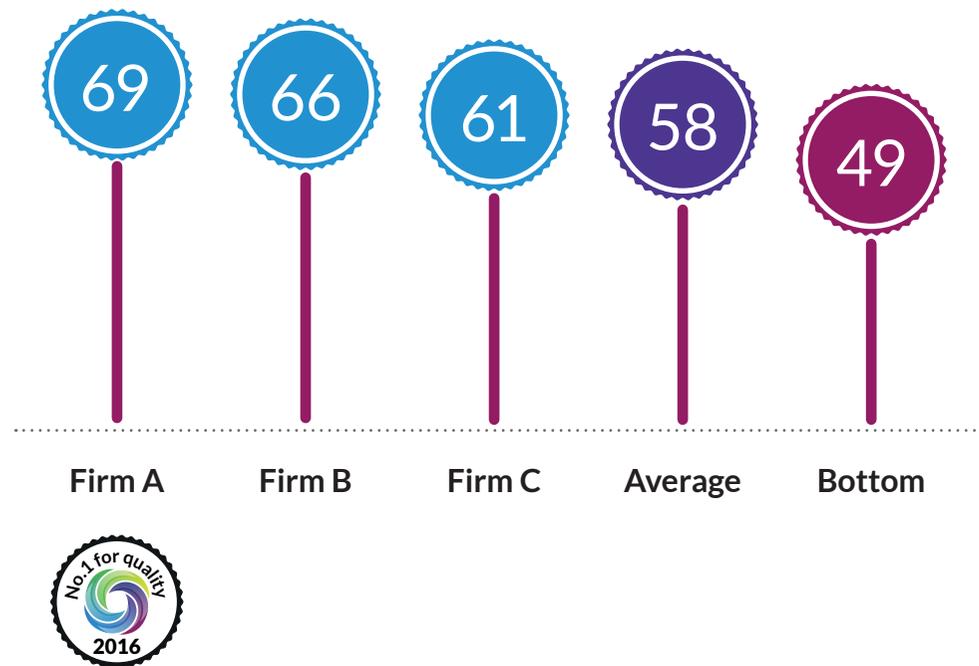
# Our off the shelf products on client perceptions

1. At the heart of our work in this area is our **client perception programme**—a suite of reports based on our extensive client survey, which reveals what clients think about the world’s leading consulting firms in a number of geographies and sectors. We rank the leading consulting firms in terms of clients’ perceptions of things like quality and value.
2. Our **brand perception summaries**—also based on our client survey—take each of the world’s leading consulting firms in turn, offering insights at a global level that go far beyond traditional brand impact surveys to reveal not only how well recognised a brand is, but what it’s known for and which other firms it competes with for the attention of its clients and prospects. These reports help leadership and people in marketing departments understand how their firm measures up against its competitors in the minds of clients and prospects; and how they can communicate more effectively with these people.



# Client perception summary sample data:

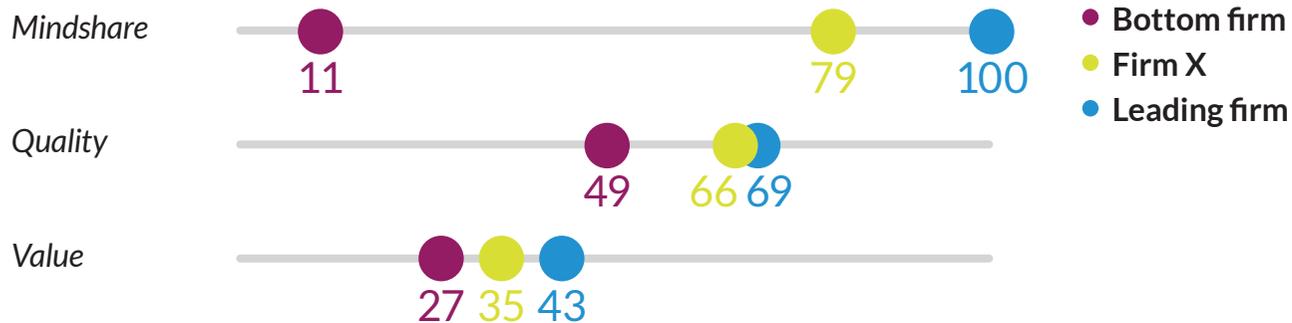
## Top rated firms for overall quality



When we examine clients' perceptions of quality, their views put **Firm A** ahead of the pack, both in terms of overall quality and across a number of service lines. Indeed, clients ranked Firm A as the top firm for quality in five of the 10 consulting services we asked about. The firm's digital service line is obviously making an impression on clients in this country, with Firm A viewed as the highest-quality provider of digital technology & transformation work. It is also perceived as a leader in a number of other areas, including sales & marketing and customer experience, and clients in the services industry are more positive about Firm A than any other firm.

# Firm by firm analysis

## Firm X



Outshine score:



### Top attributes:

- Methodologies used
- Breadth of services
- Brand and reputation

### Area for improvement?

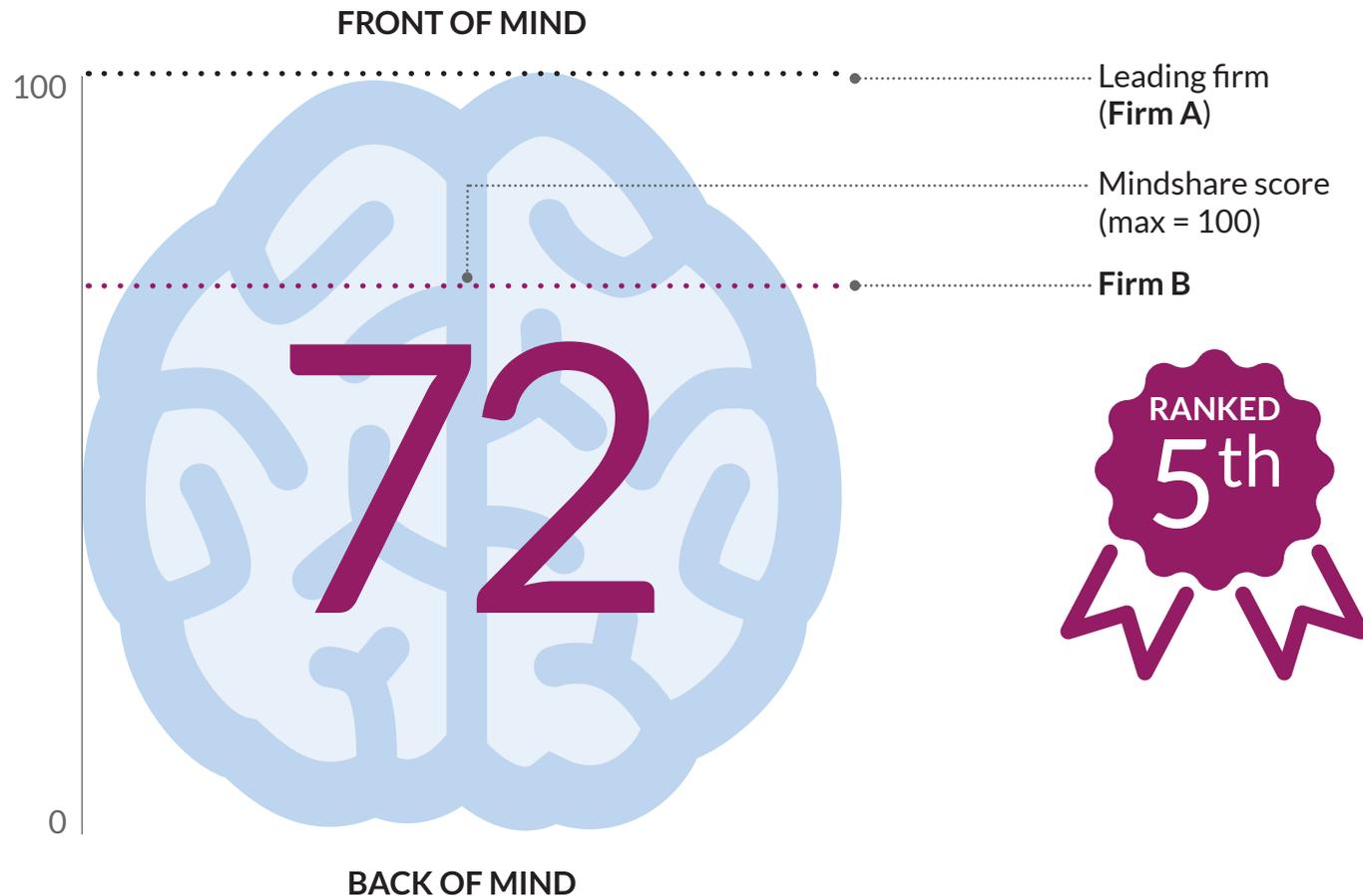
- Prices

### Analyst notes:

Firm X is firmly on clients' minds, as it's the third most likely to be mentioned by those we surveyed. What might trouble it, however, is that the two firms more likely to be mentioned are its peers: Firm Y and Firm Z. Still, when it comes to quality, Firm X is rated second of all firms, and it's the leader among this firm type. It is very highly regarded for its business strategy and operational improvement services, and clients in the HR function say it does the best work of any firm in our survey. Clients aren't wowed by the value Firm X returns, but this could be explained by the type of work it tends to do—especially if we assume a good share of its business continues to come from fairly traditional technology engagements that are heavy on implementation. As we've already discussed, clients don't always expect a big return on this type of work—just a job well done.

# Brand perception summary sample data: mindshare

One of the most instructive pieces of data from our survey is also one of the simplest: Given the chance to tell us about any consulting firm, which firm do clients choose to tell us about? We choose to express this in terms of mindshare, though the term is used more for its familiarity than anything else and our chart actually illustrates something subtly different: How close to the front of clients' minds a firm is.



# Brand perception summary sample data: customer ownership

The other firms on the minds of Firm B's clients



The thicker the line, the greater the share of mind. Based on the proportion of people who talk about Firm B who go on to talk about other firms.

The firms whose clients have Firm B on their mind



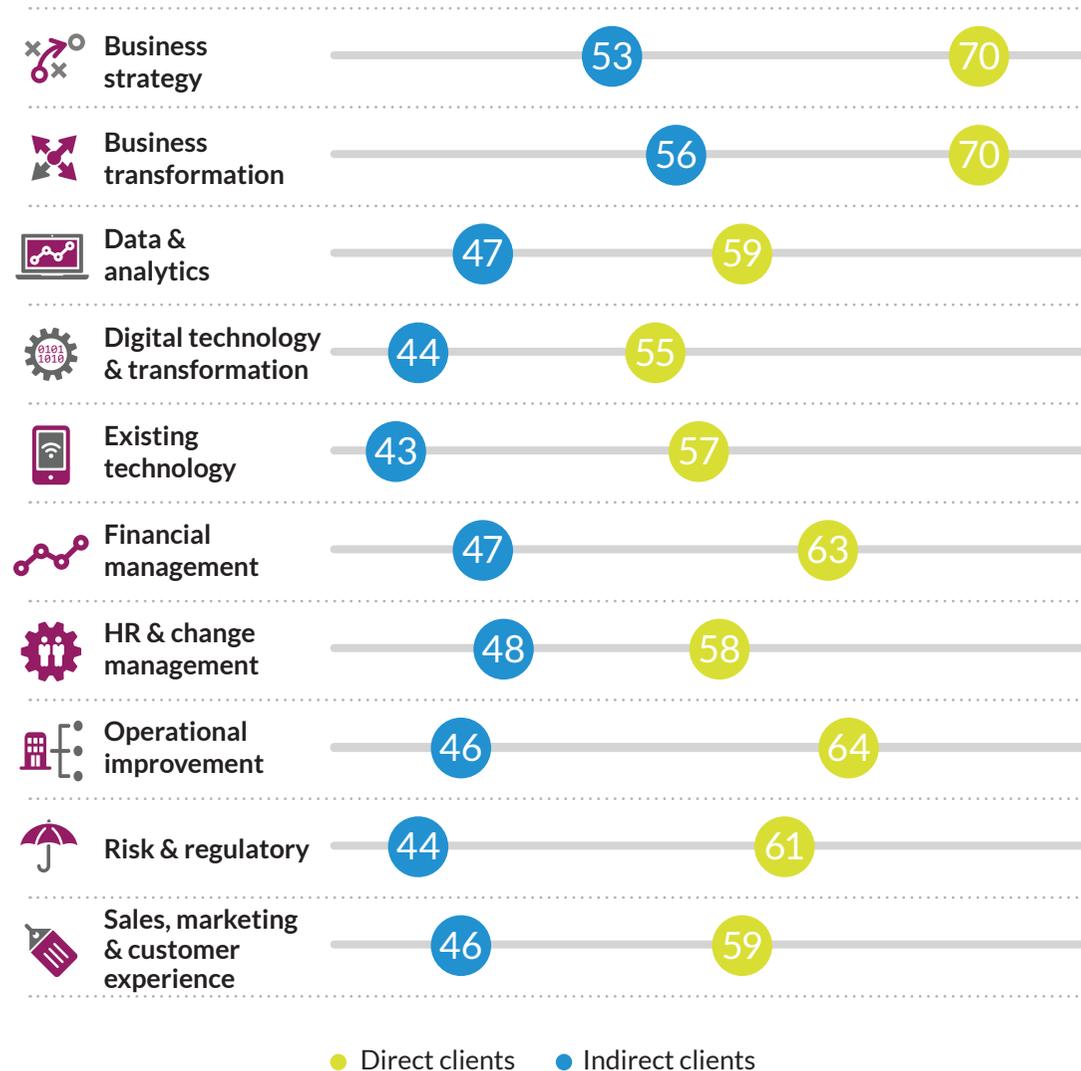
The thicker the line, the greater the share of mind. Based on the proportion of people who talk about each firm who then go on to talk about Firm B.

By looking at the relationship between the firms that respondents comment on, we can start to understand something about the extent to which a firm shares space in the minds of its customers with other firms, and vice versa. There are two levels at which we can interpret that relationship: (1) In terms of the overall extent to which the firm has to share space with other firms in the minds of its clients at all, and vice versa, and (2) In terms of the actual firms it share space with (who they are, what type of firm they are). Both can be interpreted in terms of customer "ownership" or the extent to which a firm's clients are really its clients, to the exclusion of other firms.

■ Technology firms   ■ Big Four firms   ■ HR firms   ■ Strategy firms

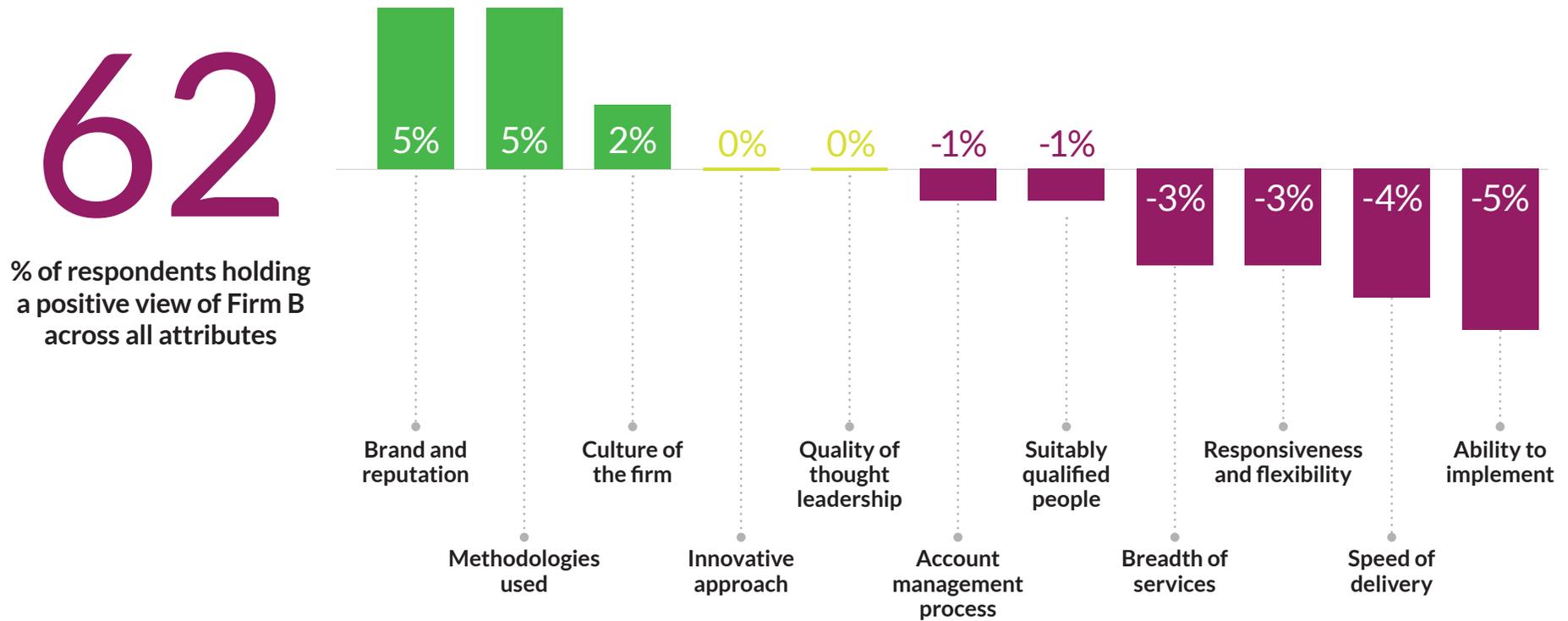
# Brand perception summary sample data: outshine

We show how views about the quality of a firm's work vary between indirect clients (prospects) and direct clients. That shows us the extent to which a firm is managing to outshine its reputation overall and by individual service lines.



# Brand perception summary sample data: attributes

We ask clients to rate how positively (or negatively) they feel about a set of attributes in relation to a firm. Our chart shows the variance in the scores from the average, showing which attributes clients perceive to be strongest and weakest.



# Custom insights

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Custom insights help where our published research in this area raises as many questions as it provides answers, or doesn't cover a firm because not enough people talk about it. It allows consulting firms to measure how they're currently viewed in the market, to find real points of differentiation, and to build marketing activity and propositions around those.

## Qualitative insights

- We speak to clients from all over the world, asking them to tell us how their experience was with a certain firm. This helps us gain a true understanding on how clients have experienced working with a firm. We build trust and from experience, can ask questions that many companies don't think to ask.
- We tailor each project, adapting to different needs, and then provide strategic advice based on our findings.

## Quantitative insights

- We have a range of quantitative projects running at any one time. Consulting firms can get direct comparable information about their competitors, thus assessing where they're positioned in the market and basing their strategy around this.
- These projects provide real points of differentiation, and help build marketing and propositions as a result of those.

## Qualitative and quantitative insights

- The most in-depth of our custom insights—allowing a firm to get a real sense of how they are perceived in the market whilst also assessing where they benchmark, against their competitors.
- This valuable information helps firms answer those questions that really matter, enabling them to plan for the future.

# Custom insights: Example of qualitative work

## What makes Firm X stand out against its competitors (Firm Type Y)

### Key messages:

- Every person we spoke to would both use *Firm X* again and would recommend them to others—and indeed in many cases had already done so.
- This positive view is reinforced by the survey of around 130 senior executives in the region. Both Firm X and Firm Type Y scored well when we asked about overall quality of service delivered with respectively 57% and 63% of respondents describing the quality as “high” or “very high”, compared to just 9% and 6% who said it was “very low” or “low”.
- Quizzed about value, executives’ views about Firm Type Y are quite polarised: 10% said the firm type added at least five times the value of its fees, but 19% said it added less value than they’d paid. Perceptions of Firm X are the most positive overall: no one thought the firm’s work cost more than it added in value terms and 13% said it added at least five times as much value—but a larger proportion (50% compared to 21% with Firm Type Y) saw value added around the same as the amount paid.
- It’s worth stressing that the key point of reference here is always the rest of the Firm Type Y—we didn’t hear a single client compare Firm X to its other competitor types (Firm Type Z) Indeed, Firm X is often benefiting from mistakes made by the other Firm Y and Z types.

“By and large Firm X are practical and very helpful. Their service quality is excellent and they are only a phone call away.”

### Rating of overall quality of service, % of executives

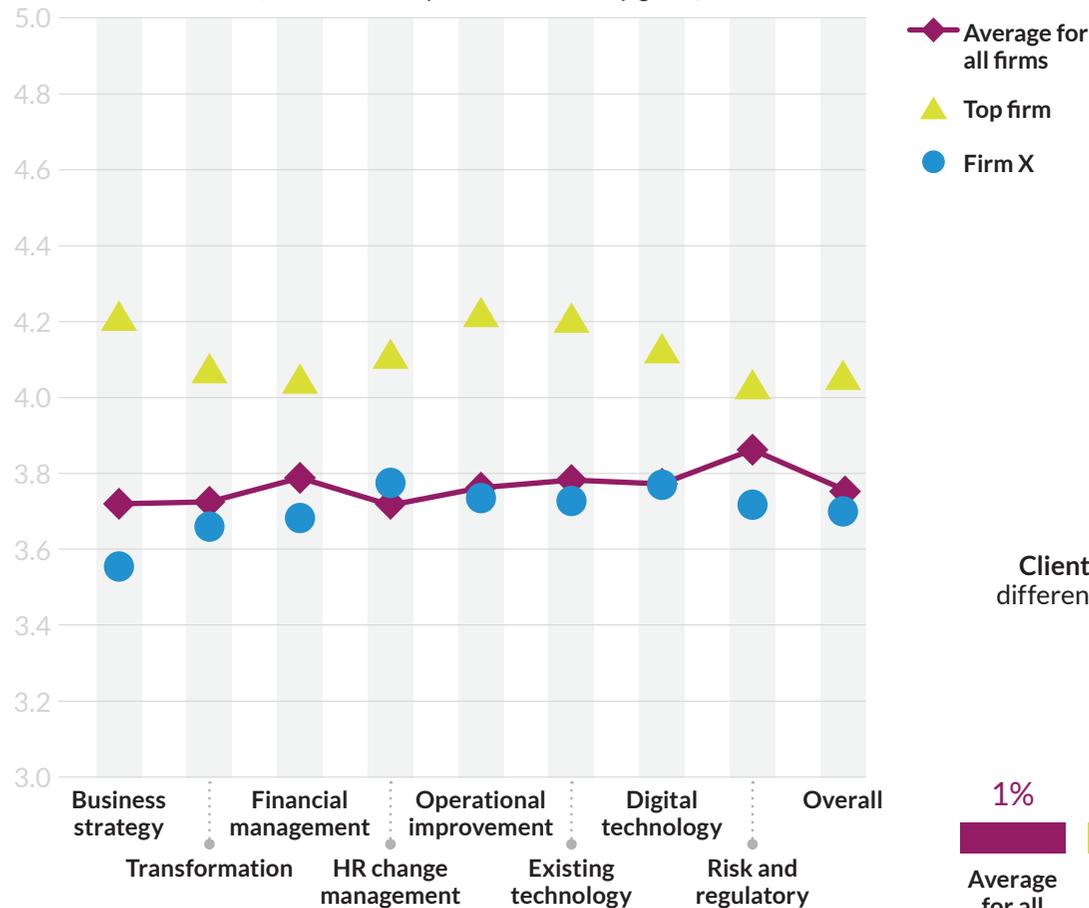
	Very low or low	Average	High or very high
Firm X	9%	34%	57%
Firm Y type	6%	29%	63%

### Rating of overall value, % of executives

	Less than the amount paid	About the same as the amount paid	Twice the amount paid	Five or more times the amount paid
Firm X	0%	50%	38%	13%
Firm Y type	19%	21%	48%	10%

# Custom insights: Example of quantitative work

Client and prospect perceptions of Firm X's strength by service (where 1 = very low and 5 = very good)

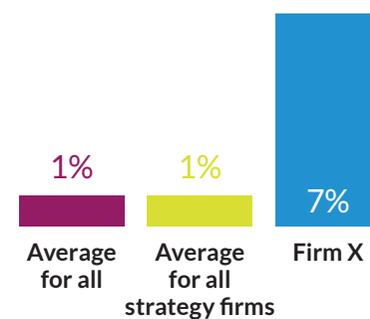


- Clients were asked to score the quality of firms' services where 5 = very high and 1 = very low
- Chart shows the scores obtained by a specific firm in each service area and compares these scores with the average for Big Four/strategy firms as appropriate; the chart also shows the average scores for all firms and the top firm in each service; the higher the score, the better
- The chart also includes the overall scores—these are the average scores of all service areas

Firm X shows all the classic signs (we've observed in other countries/firms) where a firm that's diversified loses ground in its core services more quickly than it gains them in new areas.

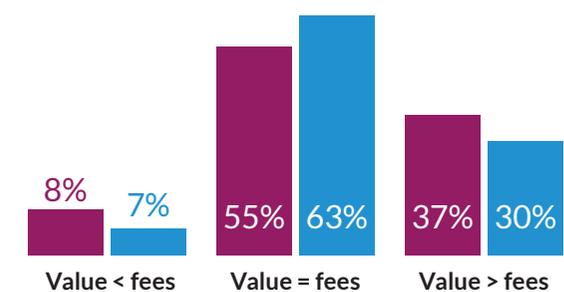
- The firm is generally perceived by clients as being either on a par with, or slightly below, the other firm types. The lag is greatest for strategy, risk and regulatory work, with the former being especially weak (suggesting that clients have been disappointed in the quality of the firm's work). Only with HR and change is the firm even marginally ahead.
- Another worrying sign for the firm is that current clients are less positive about the firm than prospects—something that's true for all firms from this consulting type but more marked for Firm X. Also, a smaller proportion think that the value the firm adds outweighs its fees (30% vs 37% as an average for all firms).

Clients vs. prospects difference in perceptions



The difference between the proportion of clients who rate the firm's overall performance as 'high' or 'very high', and the proportion of prospects who do so (a positive figure means that clients rate a firm higher than prospects)

Value (clients only)



● Average for all firms ● Firm X

## About Source

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Source is the leading provider of research about the management consulting market. Founded in 2007, and with offices in London and Dubai, Source serves both consulting firms and their clients with expert analysis, research and reporting.

At the heart of our research is a model of the consulting industry containing data on several thousand firms around the world. Data in the model comes from extensive desk research and more than 1,000 interviews with senior partners in consulting firms since the start of 2014. All of the data we gather is mapped against publicly available information.

We also carry out large-scale surveys of CXOs and their direct reports, asking for their views of consulting firms. Since November 2015 we've surveyed over 2,500 senior users of consulting services. 48% of people were from firms with more than 5,000 employees (the fact that we surveyed mid-sized businesses as well was a function of the mix of mature and emerging markets we looked at—the latter tend to have more, smaller enterprises).

Independent and influential, Source's research is used by all the world's major consulting firms as well as major media organisations including Bloomberg, the *Financial Times*, and *The Economist*.

# The Team

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## Edward Haigh

Ed is a Director of Source, and he is particularly focused on HR, strategic marketing, and new product development. He is a key member of the Source research team and spends much of his time interviewing consultants and their clients around the world in order to identify and explore major market trends.

Ed regularly speaks about the consulting market to leadership teams around the world, has lectured at Columbia University (New York), Imperial College (London), and Vrije Universiteit (Amsterdam), and he is regularly quoted by media including the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, the Financial Times, Bloomberg, and the trade press. Prior to joining Source in 2008, Ed spent seven years in various marketing roles for Sony Europe.



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## Alison Huntington

Alison is a Senior Analyst at Source. She specialises in client & brand insights and is responsible for all the reports we write on this subject. She's an experienced writer, analyst, and interviewer, and has worked on bespoke projects around brand benchmarking, helping consulting firms to understand how they are perceived in the market and what they can do to improve perceptions. Alison earned her stripes as a consultant at Deloitte, working on a wide range of projects across many industries.



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## David Lawton

David is an Analyst in the data team, working closely with Joseph Hamer to deliver the quantitative components of Source's research programme. He is particularly focused on client perception data and brand benchmarking work. He previously spent two years as a Research Executive at BVCA where he produced reports and benchmarks for the private equity industry. David has a strong background in statistics and holds an MSc in Economics and Public Policy.



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# Contact us

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