

Client and Brand Insights





Your challenge

Our research consistently shows that brand and reputation are the most important things in clients' minds when they're selecting a professional services firm to work with. Under pressure to get critical decisions right, they turn to a trusted firm for help.

Against that backdrop, trusting your instinct about your own brand starts to look like a risky strategy. How sure are you that the way you see your brand is the way your clients and the wider market see it?

What's more, many brand surveys only focus on existing loyal clients—those that know a firm best and are most likely to speak positively about it. That means many firms are looking at their brand through rose-tinted glasses.

Without intelligent measurement of brand, it's hard for firms to know how to improve. Which marketing investments will position you as leaders? Are your consultants living up to your brand promise with clients? Are you going to be able to keep attracting the talent you'll need to grow in the future? Is your brand helping you to win the work you want to be known for?

Answering those questions requires a different approach.



Our approach

We bring our independence and deep industry knowledge to bear to conduct research that offers unique insights into perceptions of your brand—insights that help you understand, track, and measure your brand more intelligently, and make decisions about your future brand strategy.

- We have the experience and knowledge to not only ask the right question, but to listen to the response and ask the right follow-up question.
- Because we're independent we get to hear what clients *really* think, and although we do so constructively and respectfully, we don't attempt to shield you from bad news.
- We set what we hear from clients against the wider market context, drawing on our other data sources and our knowledge of the market to deliver recommendations that actually work.



How we can help

We work with leadership teams, partners responsible for brand, and CMOs and their teams to help them understand perceptions of their brands more broadly. We offer:

- **Brand benchmarking.** From off-the-shelf research to fully customised studies, we provide our customers with the data and analysis they need to understand their brands—and those of their competitors—more intelligently.
- **Client feedback.** We interview firms' clients and prospects to deliver highly nuanced insights about everything from brand strategy and current performance to how firms can offer something more appealing to them.
- **Proposition and message testing.** We test propositions with buyers to see if they resonate with them, if the messages and ideas are differentiated, and if they are a credible positioning for the firm in question.



Brand benchmarking

Anyone can conduct a survey or run through a series of interview questions; not everyone can contextualise results in your industry or have truly meaningful conversations with your clients. We're able to offer you a uniquely insightful view into perceptions of your brand.

Leveraging our proprietary data, we can analyse perceptions of your firm against a specified competitor set. We deliver a tailored report addressing any aspect of your brand that you need to understand.

But sometimes you need the questions asked and profile of clients to fit your needs exactly. Here we work with you to create the quantitative metrics you need, and to capture the opinions of clients and prospects most relevant to your business.

What underpins all our work is our independence, our analysis, and our commitment to delivering insights that are actionable.



Client feedback

Understanding what your clients think about your firm is critical in today's fast-changing and highly competitive market. We're regularly asked to interview firms' clients to gain more nuanced insights into how clients experience a firm and what they think about firms' brands and capabilities.

Clients' words are often extremely powerful, and we work to distil hours of interview material until we arrive at the most important messages that firms need to hear. These deep insights are invaluable when informing a firm's strategy.

We have a team of experienced interviewers who are experts in the professional services industry and used to speaking to the most senior of clients across the world. Because we're independent, clients often tell us the really good stuff—the things they might not tell a professional services firm itself, and probably won't get asked by a generic market research agency.

“*The project was a quality bit of work, very thorough, and provided the information we needed. One of the recommendations made at the end was particularly interesting—it has now been positioned as a challenge to overcome throughout the company.*

Consulting Head, management consulting firm



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Proposition and message testing

Clients are bombarded with content from consulting firms, so it's extremely important for a professional services firm to have compelling messages and propositions that cut through the noise.

Either quantitatively or qualitatively, we work with our customers to test their propositions and marketing messages with senior end-users of professional services. From their insights, we make recommendations about what words to use, the best channels to use to get through to clients, and the proof points clients need to see to believe in a campaign or proposition.



Case study: Brand benchmarking

In 2018 we worked with a global firm that owned numerous consulting, creative, and technology capabilities under many different brands. Our brief was to benchmark the brands and advise on what the firm should do next.

To do this, we interviewed numerous stakeholders—from current clients, to prospects, to industry analysts and journalists—to understand:

- Brand awareness of the full range of legacy brands.
- Perceptions of the firm’s strengths, weaknesses, and what makes it special.
- Insights about how this firm could beat its competitors and offer something different in the market.
- Analysis of how brand fragmentation was making it harder to buy from the firm, and advice on what to do with its suite of brands. The client then decided to consolidate the legacy brands into one overarching parent brand.

“*The Source team were extremely flexible, helpful, and professional, and the insights they delivered were great. We had a number of aha moments and the themes that emerged from the research helped us to shape our messaging. We really appreciate the rigour they applied to each element of the study, and the findings were really useful to support our strategic decisions.*

Marketing Director, management consulting firm



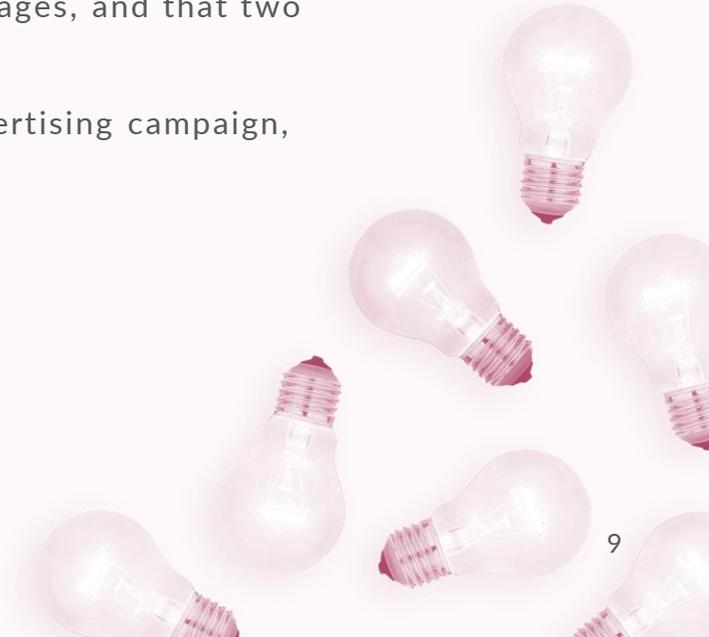


Case study: Message testing

A global consulting and accountancy firm had three advertising campaign ideas that it wanted to test with senior buyers of consulting services. Specifically, it wanted to compare how business-led and technology-led messages resonated, and whether the campaigns sounded future-focused.

We interviewed 20 buyers in the UK to deliver:

- Analysis about what good marketing material is—the types of messages that cut through the noise, and the channels clients are most likely to engage with.
- Analysis of one existing and three proposed advertising campaigns. We found clear evidence that the firm should lead with business-related messages, and that two slogans resonated far better than the third.
- Insights about proof points that are needed to support an advertising campaign, testing each for relevance, reassurance, and realism.





Case study: Client feedback

We interviewed 24 clients of a strategy firm in the Middle East to understand how satisfied they were with the firm's performance and what it was that made the firm special. Our interviews were in-depth, intelligent conversations with their most senior clients, rather than a survey.

Our conversations revealed that:

- Clients saw the quality of the firm's pitches, its ability to bridge strategy and execution, and its attentive account management as true differentiators when compared with its competitors. When the firm got all those ingredients right, it created trusting and strong client relationships.
- However, the firm was delivering inconsistently. It had let down clients in one particular sector with poorer-quality work and failures to deliver projects fully. For some clients, this shattered trust in the firm.
- The root cause was that the firm had grown rapidly in the region, and that partners were overstretched and unable to give some clients the attention they needed. It led to a sometimes chaotic client experience, and ultimately some brand damage that impacted clients' views of what the firm's price point should be.



Contact us

**For more details on how we
might be able to help,
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