

PRESS RELEASE

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Armies of consultants to march before the robots

- *Corporates call on consultants for AI developments*
- *Improving process efficiency, better customer engagement and the development of new products the three key reasons for deployment of AI*

A new report finds today (13th July 2017) the vast majority of U.S. corporates (80 per cent) have started investing time and money into robotic process automation (RPA) and artificial intelligence (AI), with a staggering 81 per cent saying they will turn to consultants to help develop these new technologies.

The report by Source Global Research, the leading research and strategy firm for the global management consulting industry, is based on a survey¹ of U.S. corporates, two thirds of which employed over 5,000 people.

The reasons why corporates are deploying RPA/AI included improving process efficiency (60 per cent), better customer engagement (57 per cent) and to develop new products (48 per cent).

The Source report says that corporates are most likely to use consulting advice around how best to take advantage of these technologies at a strategic level – with two thirds (64 per cent) saying this will be the case.

Fiona Czerniawska from Source Global Research, said:

“Corporates are still in planning mode, so the challenge for consulting firms is to ensure that the practical applications of RPA and AI outside the technology function are recognised right across the board. All the money that’s clearly going into thought leadership on this subject will have been well-spent if it achieves this objective.”

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¹ Source Global Research surveyed 150 clients in May 2017. More than half of the respondents (62 per cent) were at Director/C-Level and two thirds (68 per cent) were from firms that employed more than 5,000 employees. This survey formed part of Source’s 2017 annual global client perception survey – which received 3,000 responses.

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Jonatan Matsson, a Partner at A.T. Kearney added:

“From an AI perspective, what we’ve seen today is that clients need advice to understand the technology and its potential implications on their business models: What approach should they take; should they invest in pilots; what are the threats and what are the opportunities? For the moment, it’s less about implementation in this space.”

When it comes to the type of consulting firms corporates will turn to for support, the Source report found that technology firms are leading the way – with a quarter (26 per cent) of corporates expecting to use a technology firm. This compares with 16 per cent choosing a Big Four firm, and 17 per cent that would use a strategy firm.

Mike Hobday, Vice President, Cognitive Process Transformation Practise Leader for IBM concluded:

“Once AI starts branching out across a client organisation, you suddenly have a whole new set of challenges to face. Do your chatbots have the same voice across departments and sub-brands? Does the bot respond differently depending on whether it’s talking to a customer or an employee? Who will maintain the corpus of knowledge and do you centralise it or does each division manage its own? We’re starting to see requests around figuring those big questions out.”

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About Source Global Research:

Source Global Research (Source) is a leading provider of information about the market for management consulting. Set up in 2007 and with offices in London and Dubai, Source serves both consulting firms and their clients with expert analysis, research and reporting. Source draw not only on our extensive in-house experience, but also on the breadth of our relationships with both suppliers and buyers. All of our work is underpinned by our core values of intelligence, integrity, efficiency and transparency.

Source was founded by Fiona Czerniawska. Fiona is one of the world's leading experts on the consulting industry. She has written [numerous books](#) on the industry including: [The Intelligent Client](#) and *The Economist* books, [Business Consulting: A Guide to How it Works and How to Make it Work](#) and [Buying Professional Services](#). For further information, please visit: www.sourceglobalresearch.com

About the research

Source Global Research surveyed 150 clients in U.S. firms involved with artificial intelligence, robotic process automation etc. in May 2017. Over two thirds (68 per cent) were from firms that employed more than 5,000 employees.

Respondents came from a range of different sectors, although Source skewed the sample towards retail (27 per cent) and financial services (24 per cent) as these are crucial markets for the professional services sector. Almost two thirds of respondents (62 per cent) were at Director/C-Level. Sixty-six per cent of the sample came from the technology function.