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Shortage of Brexit consultants will hit British business

- **Big Four firms have the most Brexit experts—but are unlikely to meet the demand**
- **Without consultants, UK companies will struggle to adapt to post-Brexit world**

British business is expected to suffer in the lead-up to Brexit as a new report has found that the number of consultants required to deal with the expected wave of Brexit-related demand is woefully insufficient.

The report from [Source Global Research](#), the leading research and strategy firm for the global management consulting industry, found that less than 1% of the consultants (just 328) from the top 20 UK firms by revenue are dedicated Brexit specialists.

The report says that with the March 29th 2019 departure date fast approaching, the Brexit contingency planning to date will have to quickly shift gear as clients kick off a variety of projects aimed at making necessary changes—to location, restructuring supply chains and operations, managing talent issues, or dealing with relationships with customers.

However, while consulting firms could benefit from this flood of work, Source's research shows that these firms are just as unprepared as clients are to respond to the huge impact on businesses—whatever the final Brexit deal will be.

Fiona Czerniawska, director of Source Global Research, said:

“The shortage of Brexit specialists is not just an issue for those consulting firms in danger of missing out on an opportunity; the bigger issue is for UK businesses in general. Most large organisations only have the resources needed to deal with their existing workload, and therefore rely on consultants to deal with the unexpected. Without consultants with the right expertise to support them, there is a real danger that UK companies will struggle to address the complex and wide-ranging challenges of Brexit.”

Source's research also reveals that the vast majority (85%) of Brexit specialists in the UK's consulting industry work at accounting firms—a category that includes the Big Four. This is partly because these firms have undertaken recruitment drives to bolster expertise in critical areas such as regulatory compliance and international trade. Of the Big Four, Source found that EY and KPMG are most strongly positioned for Brexit-related work, with the largest proportion of Brexit specialists.

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However, while the Big Four firms are set to benefit most from Brexit because of their cross-disciplinary expertise and strong presence in financial services, Source's report warns that even they will not be able to meet the expected volume of demand—particularly from the financial services sector.

Elsewhere, the volume of consulting work arising from manufacturing clients is expected to be considerable, but there are fewer than 20 manufacturing Brexit specialists in the UK, and other sectors appear to have no Brexit specialists whatsoever focused on their specific issues.

Fiona Czerniawska added:

“Despite doing relatively more than other types of firms, accounting firms could be working harder to develop dedicated Brexit specialists who understand not only this topic but how it interacts with other issues clients are facing. Doing so will increase the chances of firms getting a seat at the table when senior executive conversations about how to respond to the impact of Brexit are going on, which will place them front of mind for future initiatives.

Such an opportunity is too big to miss. The critical success factor here is being able to advise clients on the impact of Brexit in the broader context of their industry and providing unique insights.”

For more information on Source reports contact ella-sian.jolley@sourceglobalresearch.com or telephone +44 (0)20 3478 1204 or visit www.sourceglobalresearch.com.

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For further information about this press release, please contact:

David Pippett, ProServ PR
Tel: +44 (0)1225 335675/+44 (0)7899 798197
Email: david@proservpr.com

Edward Haigh, Director, Source Global Research
Tel: +44 (0)7912 516913
Email: edward.haigh@sourceglobalresearch.com

Notes to the editors:

About Source Global Research

Source Global Research (Source) is a leading provider of information about the market for management consulting. Set up in 2007, Source serves both consulting firms and their clients with expert analysis, research, and reporting. Source draws not only on its extensive in-house experience, but also on the breadth of its relationships with both suppliers and buyers.

The Source [global consulting data model](#) is the biggest and most sophisticated model of the consulting industry ever created, and the model on which many of the world's leading consulting firms now base their

understanding of the size and shape of the consulting industry. It provides data on market size, growth rates, and forecasts across 29 sectors, six service lines, 84 countries and five firm types.

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](#).

All of Source's work is underpinned by its core values of intelligence, integrity, efficiency, and transparency. For further information, please visit: www.sourceglobalresearch.com.

This Source Global Research Report:

Methodology

Source has researched the consultant population of the top consulting firms in the UK to identify the number of consultants across firms, levels and industries that have the word "Brexit" in the description of their current role, which may or may not be in their actual job title. Source uses the term "Brexit specialist" throughout the report to refer to these consultants who are currently specialising in work that is directly related to Brexit.

When the data was gathered, it was not always possible to identify the career level or industry focus for each Brexit specialist. Therefore, Source considers the specialists at a certain career level as a proportion of the total number that had a defined career level (as opposed to the total number of specialists it found). Similarly, for industry focus, Source considers the specialists with a particular industry focus as a proportion of all specialists who had a defined industry focus (rather than all the specialists it found). The total figures used in each instance do not change significantly.

When Source looked at the proportion of specialists in each firm type, this considered the total number of specialists it identified because all had information on the firm they work for available.