

# Building a Consultancy career out of your dissertation

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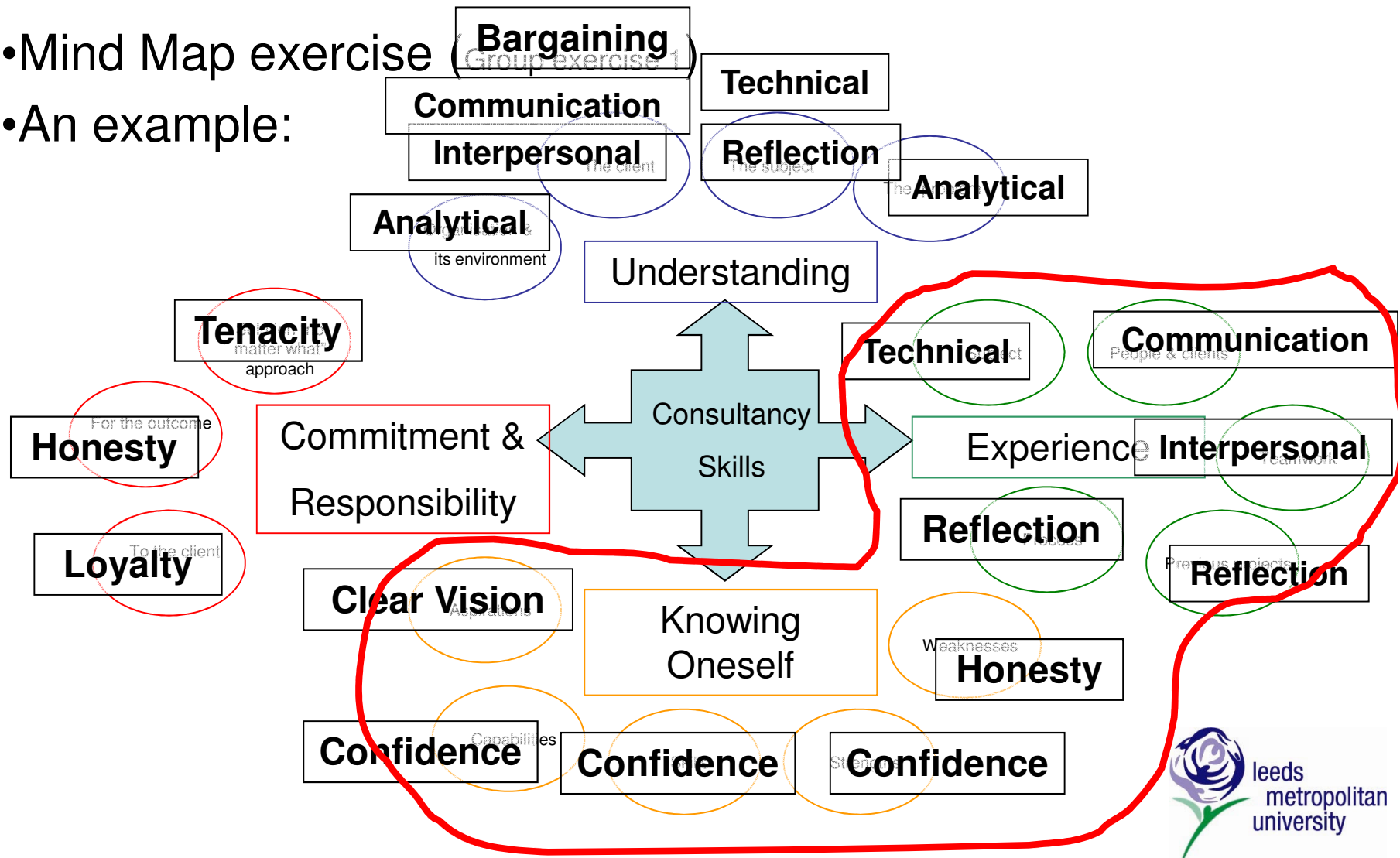


# Overview

- Intro & Objectives
- What is consultancy and the consultant ?
- The consultancy process
- Understanding clients
- conclusion

# Intro & Objectives

- Mind Map exercise (Group exercise 1)
- An example:



# What is consulting?

- An approach anyone can use
- Helping people gain more choices
- Helping people make excellent decisions
- Giving people control
- The client owns the solution

# Consulting isn't...

- ...being the expert, having all the answers
- ...persuading people to do things your way
- ...making people's decisions for them
- ...having the crystal ball!

# Consulting for real

- Who do you think of when I talk of consultants?
- What do they actually do?
- Do they really earn as much as the rumours claim?

# What is consultancy ?

## Examples of issues addressed

### Examples of Categories

#### Strategy

e.g. McKinsey, Bain, BCG

**Which markets to compete**  
**How to grow our company**  
**How to improve our profits**

#### Operations

e.g. Accenture, Deloitte

**How to streamline the purchasing process**  
**How to make the organisation more effective**  
**How to invest & allocate resources (money, people etc)**

#### Human Resources

e.g. Mercer HR, Watson Wyatt, Hay Group, Hewitt

**How to comply with labour laws**  
**How to establish a performance pay framework**  
**How to administer health benefit plans**

#### Information Technology

e.g. IBM, EDS, Xerox

**How to choose among mainframe systems**  
**How to create a secure customer database**  
**How to choose IT systems that serve business needs**

# What is consultancy ?

A \$ 125bn global business with the majority of revenues coming from few large industries:

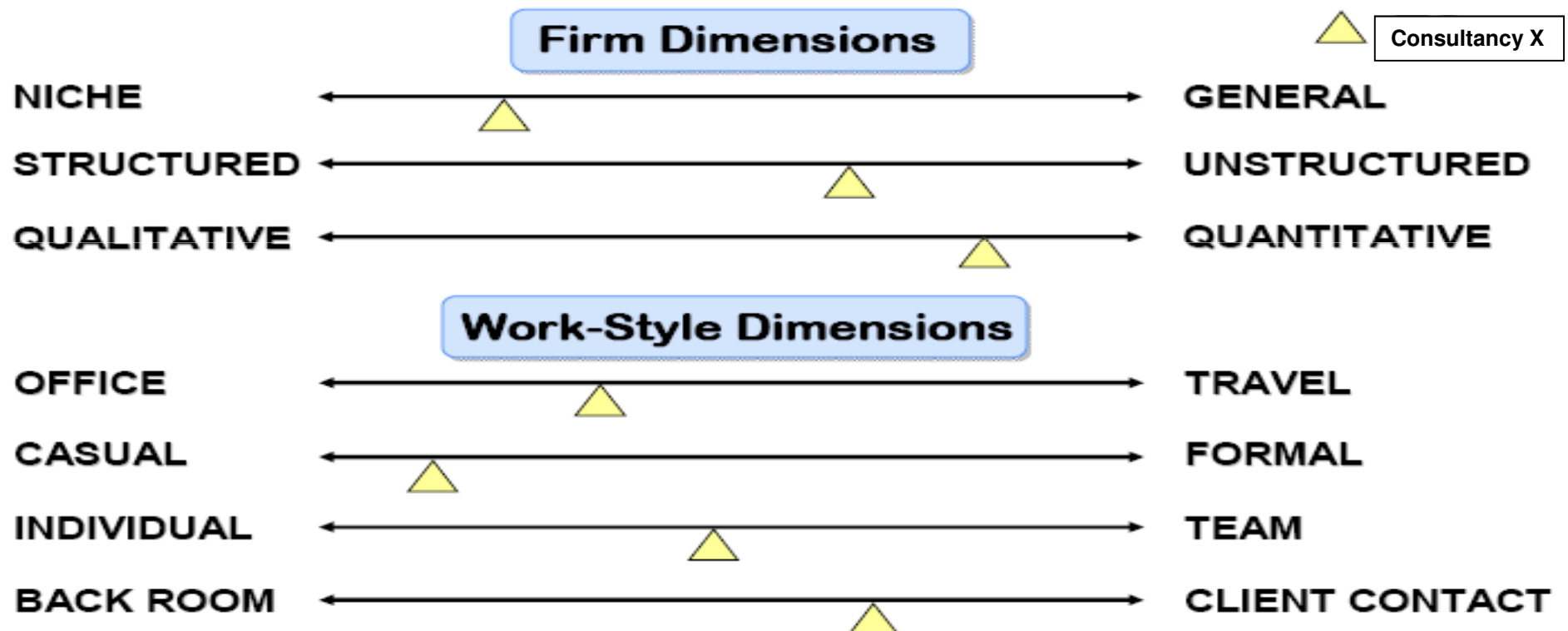
1. Public Sector \*
2. Financial Services\*
3. Communications & Media
4. Retail
5. Healthcare \*

Accounting for 2/3 of the industry revenue

- Consumer Packaged Goods
- Energy
- Manufacturing
- Utilities
- High Technology
- Business Services
- Transport



# What is consultancy ?: Cultures and Lifestyles



No perfect answer but a definitive impact on activities, firm culture and people.

# What is Consultancy?:

Group exercise 2

Companies hire a consultant because ...

- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...

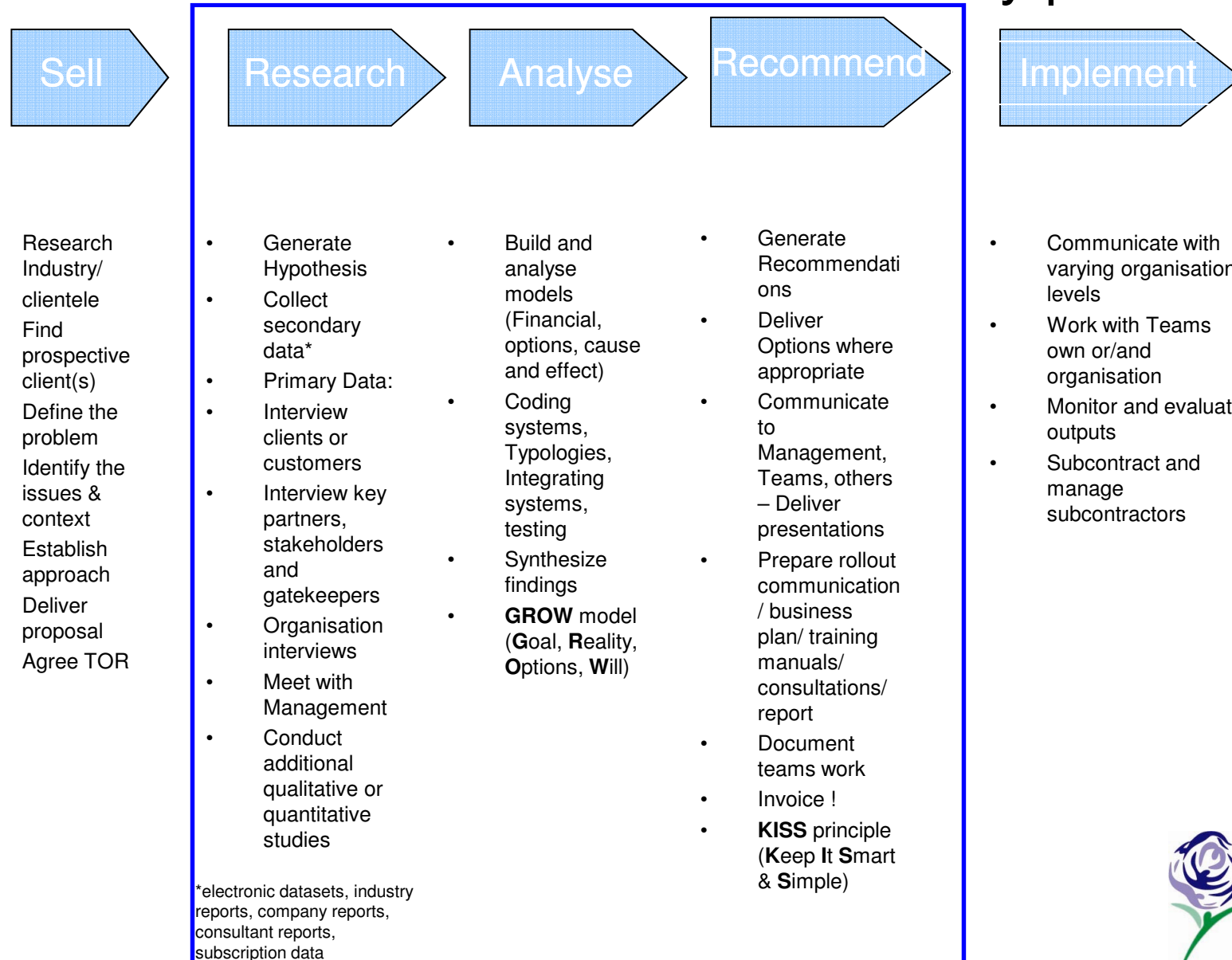
# What is Consultancy?:

Companies hire a consultant because ...

- **They need an expert**
  - Specialised knowledge (industry or functional)
  - Unique tools and approaches
  - Information about the latest innovations
- **They need an outsider**
  - Objectivity (bypasses internal politics)
  - Fresh perspective
  - Credibility
- **They need more capacity**
  - Short term intensive work
  - Cheaper than creating the equivalent full-time positions
  - Infrequently performed work
  - Cheaper and more immediate than investing in people (capacity development)
- **They need guidance in project management**
  - Ensuring tasks accomplished on time and within budget
  - Bring people together and improve team spirit
- **They need to achieve change !**

**UNDERSTANDING WHY A CLIENT HIRED YOU IS ESSENTIAL**

# A basic framework for the consultancy process



# The consultant

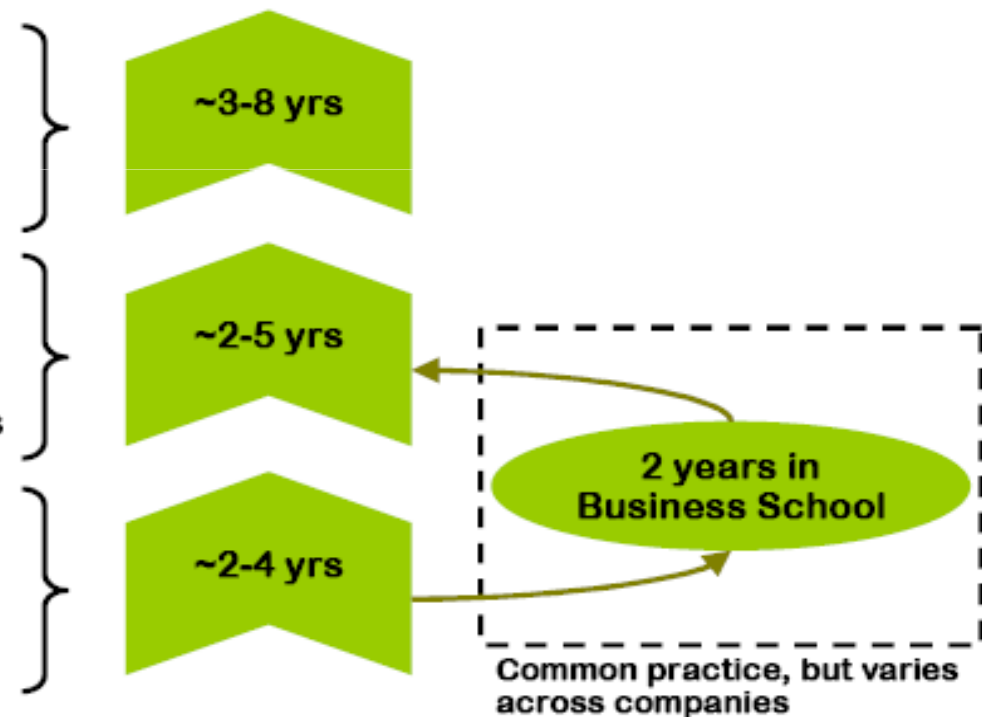
- **Partner/Principal/Director**
  - Often primarily a selling role
  - Equity owner in the firm
  - Thought leadership in the industry

- **Manager/Senior Manager**
  - Responsible for delivering projects
  - Manages client relationships
  - Delivers client presentations

- **Consultant/Associate (typically MBAs)**
  - Manages teams
  - Analyzes data
  - Draws conclusions
  - Manages day-to-day client interactions

- **Analyst (typically college graduates)**
  - Gathers data
  - Analyzes data
  - Draws conclusions

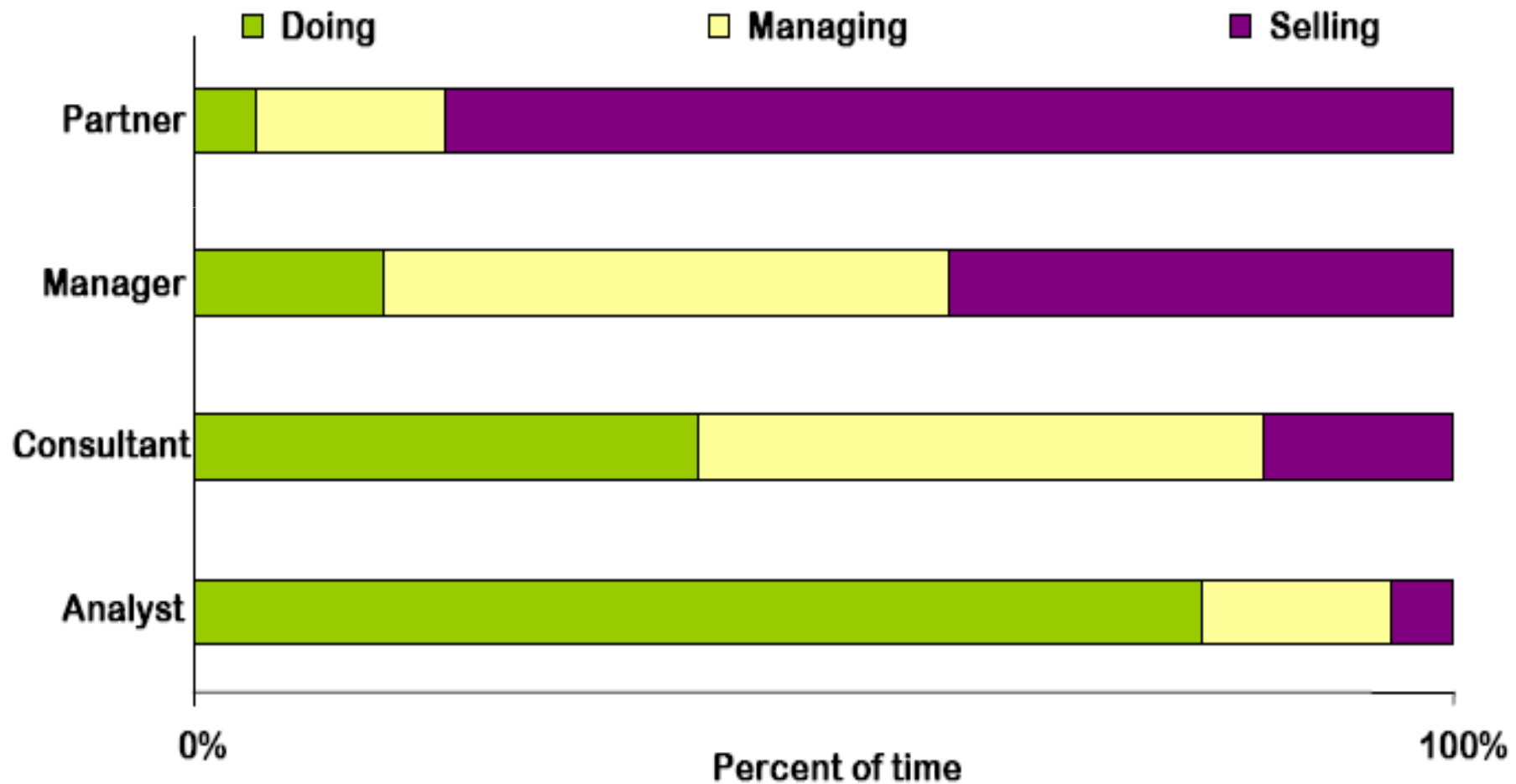
## Career Advancement



\*Titles vary by firm but typically follow this general structure

# The consultant:

## Time allocation by position and activity



# The consultant: Intellectually challenging and diverse

**Lifestyle balance (Total hours, travel, unpredictability of schedule, stress, etc.)**



**Job quality (Diversity of tasks, intellectual challenge, responsibility etc.)**



# What is it really like?

- Meet lots of new and interesting people
- See how lots of organisations really work
- Job uncertainty every few weeks
- Travel, work away from home
- Paid by the day – long hours
- Independence and adrenalin!



# Understanding clients

## Terms of Reference (TOR)

- Your contract with client
  - Aim and objectives
  - Shared expectations
  - Clear and shared understanding of deliverables
  - Allows for some iterative flexibility
- 
- A strong evidenced based process akin to the research process – but some differences

# The contract

## Inception/ scoping phase

### Client

- Statement of the problem
- Scope of work (statement of work)
- Expected outcomes, deliverables and timetable
- Expected cost or level of effort (e.g. budget limit)
- Other Parameters

### Your Response

- Your understanding of the problem
- Planning assumptions (e.g., what won't change)
- Access & Method
- Work plan (tasks, schedule, data sources)
- Deliverables
- Price
- Other terms (e.g., must you be on site)

# Some typical possible challenges: Inception/ scoping phase

- You are unclear as to the real motivation behind the client's desire to hire a consultant (e.g. blame the consultants scenario)
- The client has told you what the problem is. Your initial findings indicate that this may not be the case
- Unrealistic client expectations (e.g. scope, tasks, costs, time)
- Client requirements change or fluctuations
- Client doesn't seem to really know what they want
- **Differences and similarities with research process**

# The consulting process

1. Initial Contact

2. Decision to work together

3. Preliminary analysis

4. Formal Proposal

5. Project charter

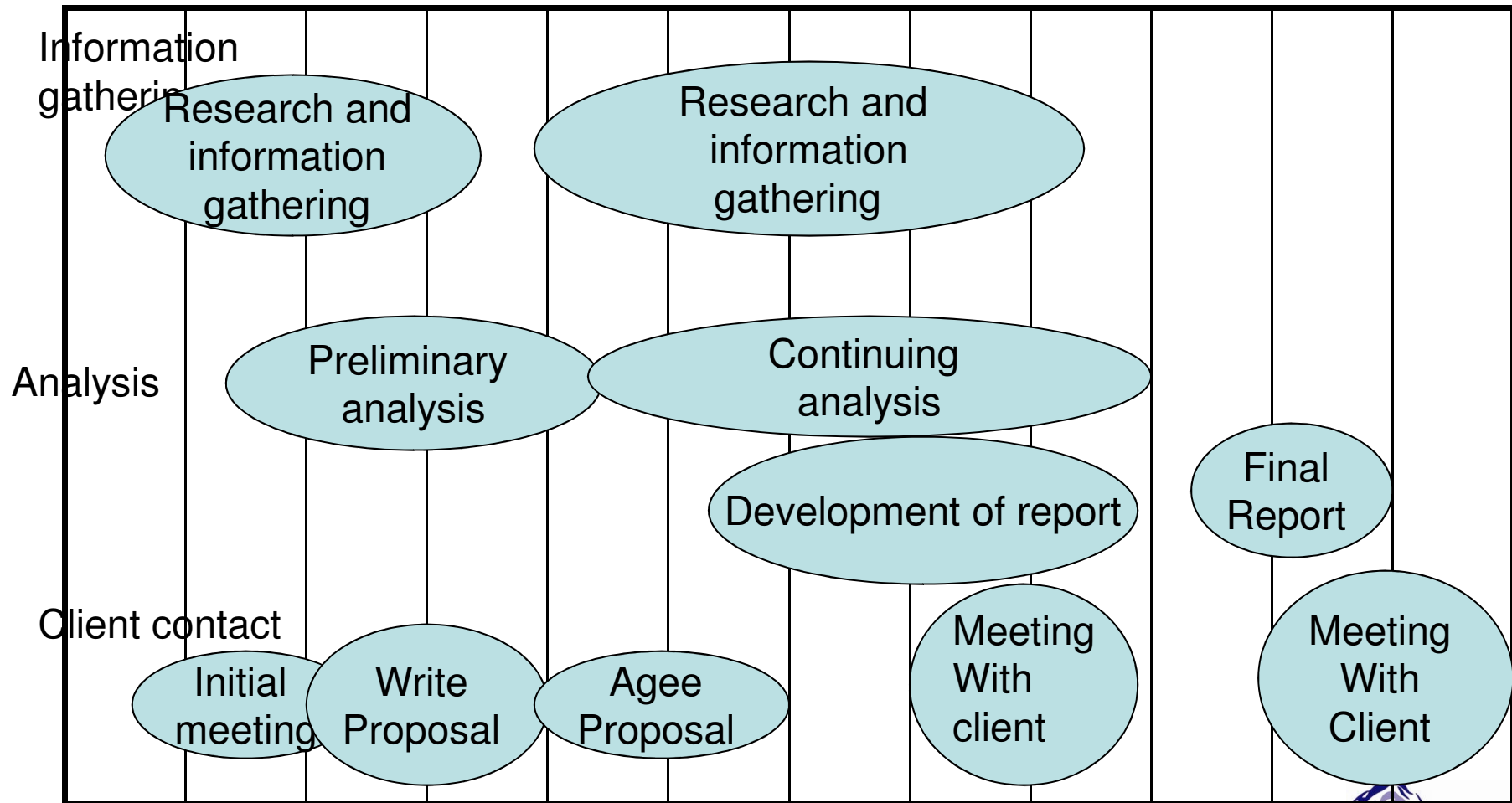
6. In depth analysis

7. Implementation

8. Delivery

9. Follow up

# Critical path analysis



# Understanding the client

The successful consultant knows how to:

- Analysis & Data gathering - The ability to draw on information and analyse it
- Work with Clients - The skills to work with and manage clients and their expectations.
- Deliver Projects - The skills to manage consultancy projects to the clients requirements.
- Deal with People - The interpersonal skills to work with and deal with people both within his team and his client's teams.

# Working with Clients

To really work effectively with a client the consultant has to invest time and effort in:

- **understanding the clients world** - their business and organisation, and the pressures they face,
- **understanding how it feels to be the client** dependant on the consultants efforts
- **keeping in touch with the changing dynamics** of the clients situation and environment
- **keeping the client informed re. project progress**
- **Prioritise attention** - sorting out those things that need to be brought to the clients attention from those which would only confuse and distract.

# Understanding clients

- Serving clients is different to serving customers.
- Each client is unique with particular needs and the consultant needs to invest time and effort in building and maintaining the relationship.

In particular:

- in understanding their clients situation,
- in building trust and a relationship with them,
- in ensuring that their client is up-to-date with progress
- in ensuring their client keeps them up-to-date on relevant developments
- in ensuring that their client understands sufficiently the professional or technical options available - even at times coaching or training their client in this.



# Perception of client needs

Accountancy Services - Suppliers versus Clients Perceptions						
Perceptions of :	UK		Canada		Sweden	
	Supplier	Clients	Supplier	Clients	Supplier	Clients
Peace of mind & confidence	4	7	2	10	1	12
Problem Solving	2	2	0	6	1	6
Ideas testing	0	0	0	0	5	0
Financial advice	12	5	5	6	3	4
Technical expertise	4	2	4	4	5	4
Taxation advice	8	9	1	10	0	8
Statutory	8	12	2	9	2	9
Prestige	0	1	0	1	0	2
N=	14	12	10	12	9	1

- In all cases the professionals providing the service rated the core technical elements as being the features that the client valued most (financial advice, technical expertise),

- whereas the actual clients placed much more emphasis on the softer peripheral elements (peace of mind, confidence, statutory, tax advice).

## Active listening is key

- Clients value the softer "helpful" peripheral elements.

- Successful professionals recognise this and adapt their style to suit

Source: I&S, Guide to consultancy skills

# What Clients Want

## **The client's world:**

### **They are representatives of Others**

Often, a representative for others in the customers organisation, nominated or appointed to represent them in terms of what they want and expect from you.

Clients have to respond to and manage the pressures and wishes of these others - perhaps why they often change their minds frequently. They may need the professionals help in doing so.

### **The project to them is - "Just another brick in the wall"**

To the professional the project is very important, vital. It is their main if not sole task. To the client it is only a small part of a larger scheme. When professionals get angry at clients e.g. for changing the wording in the booklet, they forget that to the client it is not just another booklet but a Government White Paper committing the country to a new tax. Delays or weaknesses in the service provided often have a ricochet effect on the larger scheme and then on the clients career.

### **Their future career depends on Your performance**

For many clients the project is only a part of their working world. They have bosses, colleagues, peers, and perhaps aspirations of a career. Yet their performance in that world often depends upon the professional.

So what they invariably want from their consultant is:

- **Understand my world, my problems**
- **Treat me as an individual**
- **No unpleasant surprises**
- **Help me look good with my bosses and my colleagues**
- **Understand the impact your are having on individuals, processes and organisations**



# Client needs: Conclusion

- **Output** - Does our output provide the elements that clients want (& need)?
- **The Performance** – Are we O.K. for Quality, Delivery Reliability, Reaction Times, etc.?
- **The Experience** - Are we easy to work with? - Was the Client's Journey with us to the solutions a good experience for them?

# The GROW model

## Goal

- What is the **positive** outcome?

## Reality

- What is happening now? What are the side effects?

## Options

- What are the actual possibilities for change?

## Will

- What are you prepared to commit to changing?

# In summary

key skills and attributes:

- the ability to work in a team;
- interpersonal and communication (both oral and written) skills;
- creativity and innovation;
- problem-solving ability;
- analytical skills;
- flexibility;
- the ability to cope with pressure and challenges.
- Consider an MBA or PhD at a later stage for higher level associate positions

# The consultant's skills: some common attributes

- IT consultant

[http://www.prospects.ac.uk/p/types\\_of\\_job/it\\_consultant\\_entry\\_requirements.jsp](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/p/types_of_job/it_consultant_entry_requirements.jsp)

- Management Consultant

[http://www.prospects.ac.uk/p/types\\_of\\_job/management\\_consultant\\_entry\\_requirements.jsp](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/p/types_of_job/management_consultant_entry_requirements.jsp)

- Recruitment consultant

[http://www.prospects.ac.uk/p/types\\_of\\_job/recruitment\\_consultant\\_entry\\_requirements.jsp](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/p/types_of_job/recruitment_consultant_entry_requirements.jsp)

- Public affairs consultant

[http://www.prospects.ac.uk/p/types\\_of\\_job/public\\_affairs\\_consultant\\_entry\\_requirements.jsp](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/p/types_of_job/public_affairs_consultant_entry_requirements.jsp)