

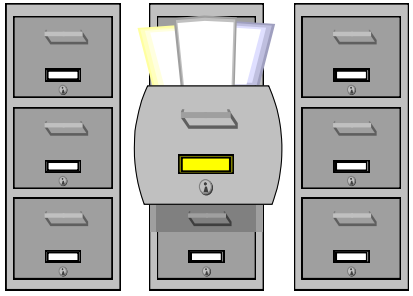
Consulting Services— Capability Assessment Tool

A tool to help assess the consulting/advisory capabilities of your organization.

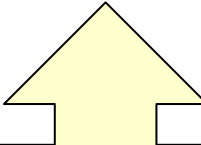
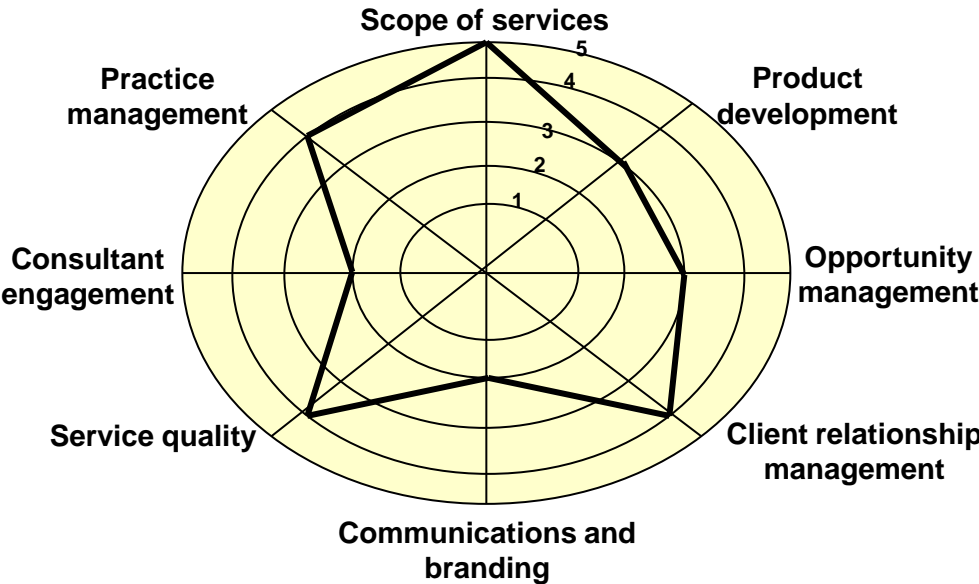
Objectives



- ❑ A **capability assessment** evaluates the delivery and management capabilities needed to support the organization going forward
- ❑ **Capabilities** includes people, skills, processes, technology, policy, commitment, management framework and resources



Key consulting capabilities



- Key questions**
- *What key strategic capabilities are critical to the success of your consulting organization?*
 - *How does your organization rate on each of these capabilities on a scale of 1 (low effectiveness) to 5 (high effectiveness)?*
 - *What improvement opportunities should be pursued in the way ahead?*

How the capability assessment tool works

Capability descriptions are shown for each of the key capabilities identified.

The "to be" capabilities described represent different states or plateaus that the consulting organization may strive to achieve. The descriptions are incremental.

CAPABILITY	Limited	Developing	Norm	Best Practice	World Class
Service offerings	Services are poorly defined and ad hoc, and often changing.	Services vary by practice area. No consistent approach to the market. Practices are often in conflict regarding ownership of services.	Services are clearly defined and known to clients, tailored to client needs, and reflect the organization's expertise and experience.	Organization is known as a leader for specific service offerings. Services are continuously updated to reflect sector trends.	Consultants are renowned for their expertise in the services provided, and are frequently in demand.

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Capability descriptions are developed based on generally recognized common/best practices.

The current capabilities of the consulting organization are assessed relative to the maturity scale.

Consulting capability maturity model—Scope of services and product management

Capability	Level of organizational capability				
	Limited	Developing	Norm	Best practice	World class
Service offerings	Services are poorly defined and ad hoc, and often changing.	Services vary by practice area. No consistent approach to the market. Practices are often in conflict regarding ownership of services.	Services are clearly defined and known to clients, tailored to client needs, and reflect the organization's expertise and experience.	Organization is known as a leader for specific service offerings. Services are continuously updated to reflect sector trends.	Consultants are renowned for their expertise in the services provided, and are frequently in demand.
Product management	Limited product development. Product development is dependent on consultant initiative.	Products are developed at a local practice level on an ad hoc basis. Products are available to all consultants, and are provided on request.	Product development priorities are clear. Champions lead each key product. Product management plan has been developed for each product.	Methodologies, training, and marketing packages are available for each key product. Information is readily available and shared.	Clear processes exist for rolling out new products. Staff are engaged in the development of new tools and guides.
Sharing of best practices	Best practice information is maintained by individual consultants.	Best practice information is maintained at the practice level. Requests for best practice information must be requested from each practice area.	Best practice information is easily accessed centrally by product and client type. Best practice guides summarize lessons learned from past engagements.	Best practice information is circulated widely. Guides are made available to clients. Products are regularly updated to reflect best practices.	Best practices are readily available on each key product. Organization is well known for quality information on best practices.



Key questions

- Are capabilities at the targeted level? Which capabilities need to be improved?

Consulting capability maturity model—Opportunity management

Capability	Level of organizational capability				
	Limited	Developing	Norm	Best practice	World class
Opportunity management	Opportunities are pursued on an ad hoc basis at a local level.	New opportunities and proposals are identified and pursued by each practice. Process for handling major opportunities level is not clear.	New opportunities are updated on a regular basis, and directed to practice leaders. Clear process for identifying the lead for new opportunities.	All opportunities are qualified based on probability of success, fit and level of risk. Opportunities are directed to most qualified staff.	Opportunities can be readily linked to expert resources, services provided, and client and project qualifications.
Risk management	Limited or no project risk assessment done. Concept of risk assessment is not well understood.	Risk assessment is done informally at the project level. Unwritten policies and guidelines help assess whether to pursue high risk projects.	Risk assessment is done for all major client/engagement opportunities using a rigorous methodology. Risk management policies are communicated to all staff.	Risk management framework is in place to assess new projects. Major risks are identified and measures taken (e.g., peer review) to minimize risks.	Systems are in place to monitor ongoing risks. Action plans are in place to mitigate risks. Controls are evaluated on a regular basis.
Proposal/ presentation development	Proposals/presentations are prepared using different methodologies and formats depending on consultant. Proposals are of varying quality.	Proposals/presentations are prepared on a consistent basis within each practice area, but vary between practice areas. Time is lost reconciling different methodologies used between practice areas.	Process is in place for developing major proposals. Proposals are prepared in a consistent format. Methodologies are well understood by staff. Qualifications are readily available.	Resources are available to assist with the preparation of major proposals. Experts provide peer review. Tools are readily available to improve proposal quality and formatting.	Templates, icons, graphics, text samples, qualifications, pricing models, value propositions, why examples, are readily available using latest publishing technology.
Management of qualifications	Organization and consultant qualifications are maintained at the individual consultant level. Variety of formats in place.	Qualifications are maintained at the practice level. Requests for qualifications must be circulated electronically to staff. Bios and resumes are requested from each practice area.	Qualifications are available across the organization in a consistent format, and are easily accessible. Staff are committed to updating qualifications information on an ongoing basis.	Staff are able to access qualifications through central data sources. Qualifications are provided to clients in a standardized format, and are easily customized to suit client requirements.	Linkages are easily made electronically between project qualifications, consultant resumes and standard methodologies.

Consulting capability maturity model—Client relationship management and communications and branding

Capability	Level of organizational capability				
	Limited	Developing	Norm	Best practice	World class
Client relationship management	Client relationships are informal and maintained by individual consultants. High turnover impedes long term relationships.	Ongoing close contact with clients at the individual consultant level. Client relationships revolve mainly around project delivery.	Client input is sought on an ongoing basis. Consultants regularly consult with clients regarding priorities, and assess options with clients.	In-depth understanding of the client's business. Mechanisms exist for clients to provide input on new services and products.	New service innovations are shared with clients. Consulting organization is seen as a strategic partner by clients/ stakeholders.
Client account management	Client contacts are at the consultant level. Client service is provided on a reactive basis, with many points of contact with clients. Client information is held by consultants.	Key clients are known locally. Knowledge of these clients and collaboration across practice areas is limited. Staff have access to client information through project qualifications.	Key clients have been identified at the organization level. Clear client lead. Ongoing relations with the client. Integrated service plans and offerings are prepared for key clients.	Proactively manage relationships and interactions with clients. All staff are aware of key clients. Client information is easily retrievable via knowledge-based system.	Staff actively support client relationships through referrals. Clients have a clear point of contact with the consulting organization.
Communications and branding	Communications tend to be ad hoc and project related. Approach to communications is informal and ad hoc.	Clear lead for external communications. Mechanisms are in place to coordinate external communications at the organization-wide level.	Organization is visible through outreach activities. Web site is regularly updated, and has strong usability and SEO ranking. Various promotion activities.	Positive image in the marketplace. Organization is recognized as a leader in specific service offerings. Strong community engagement.	Organization is often sited in the press. Communication methods are constantly being revamped with a high level of innovation.

Consulting capability maturity model—Service quality

Capability	Level of organizational capability				
	Limited	Developing	Norm	Best practice	World class
Managing service quality	No formal engagement management practices exist. Quality of service varies by project, depending on individuals involved. Some client complaints.	Engagement management practices vary between practice areas. Results from practice reviews are inconsistent. Quality is based mainly on client feedback.	Engagement conclusions and recommendations are supported by quality analysis. Appropriate use is made of consulting methodologies. Strong peer review and discussion.	Range of service quality measures (e.g., delivery on time and budget, peer review, client feedback, audits). Systems to collect and maintain service quality information are in place.	Service quality results are consolidated, tracked and analyzed over time. Results are used to identify service improvements. Key consideration in planning.
Project management and delivery	Differences exist in the way projects are delivered. Delivery processes are not well defined and understood by clients. Inconsistent service levels.	Processes are defined to varying degrees depending on practice area. Process improvements are initiated on an ad hoc basis. Lessons learnt are shared informally.	Project delivery processes are well documented and understood across the organization. Key processes are monitored to ensure consistency in project delivery. Most consultants are certified.	Delivery processes are improved on an ongoing basis. Analytical techniques are used to support process improvement. Technology is used to streamline processes. External accreditation.	Organization is recognized for innovation and success in project delivery. Processes are assessed with client involvement. Consultants and organization have multiple certifications/awards.
Ethics, independence and conflict of interest	No code of ethics. Ethics and values are applied informally. Consultants work individually with minimal monitoring.	Consultants are made aware of consulting code of ethics and professional standards. Consultants comply with industry ethical and independence standards.	Consultants adhere to clear standards, and maintain their independence in relationships with clients. Work is declined when an irresolvable conflict of interest exists. Strict confidentiality of client affairs.	Ethics, independence, conflict of interest, values, etc. are discussed openly by staff. Staff training provided. Consultants are certified and adhere to professional standards.	Ethics and conflict of interest values are communicated regularly. Action plans are established to address emerging issues.
Monitoring client satisfaction	Feedback is obtained on an informal and ad hoc basis.	Approaches to collecting client satisfaction vary across practices, and from year to year depending on priorities. Limited monitoring and analysis of results.	Client survey program in place. Responsibility for program is clearly defined. Engagement manager and staff are informed of client feedback. Actions are undertaken to rectify client issues.	Client satisfaction information is collected through a range of methods. Results are consolidated, overall trends analyzed and communicated to all staff. Actions are taken to address systemic issues.	Client satisfaction measures are well known to clients and staff. Client satisfaction is a key driver of planning. Techniques used to monitor client satisfaction are constantly being improved.

Consulting capability maturity model—Consultant engagement

Capability	Level of organizational capability				
	Limited	Developing	Norm	Best practice	World class
Recruitment and retention of professional consulting staff	Staffing practices vary by practice area. Screening and selection processes are ad hoc. Short term focus on quickly filling positions with staff who can deliver projects at hand.	Hiring is driven by expected project requirements. Staff needs are established by each practice area. No organization competency model exists.	Both long term and short term staffing needs are considered. Competencies required are clearly established and organization gaps are well known. Managers are well trained in staffing techniques.	Competencies are clearly defined. Staffing strategies are developed at an organization-wide level. Competency models are used for selection and development with a focus on long term retention.	Organization has attracted high quality staff. Strong focus on long term development. High staff retention. Succession plans are in place for all key positions.
Consulting staff training and development	Training is provided on an ad hoc basis. Information on staff skill levels is inconsistent. No overall vision exists of the training priorities of the organization. Staff pursue own development opportunities.	Mainly on-the-job training and mentoring. Staff identify individual training requirements, and practice areas identify annual training priorities. Training budgets are adjusted incrementally from year to year.	Organization is committed to staff development. Competency gaps are known. New employees receive extensive orientation. Training needs of staff are reviewed on a regular basis. All staff receive training linked to core competencies.	Major investment in staff development organization-wide. Staff learn new skills. High focus on technology. Development plans are closely linked to core competencies. Career pathways are clearly defined.	Learning culture is fostered throughout organization. Organization is continuously renewing competencies required to meet future client needs for consulting expertise and advice.
Consulting staff satisfaction and engagement	No formal consultant satisfaction surveys are carried out. Consultant feedback is obtained on an informal and ad hoc basis	Different arrangements for surveying consultant satisfaction exist across practice areas. Limited monitoring and analysis of results.	Consultant satisfaction surveys are carried out on a regular basis, and results are tracked over time. Results are communicated to staff. Improvement teams address high priority issues.	Consultant satisfaction is a key consideration. Ongoing efforts are made to address issues. Staff satisfaction survey tools are regularly reviewed and improved.	New programs are constantly being introduced to improve consultant satisfaction. Multiple mechanisms to obtain consultant input.

Consulting capability maturity model—Practice management

Capability	Level of organizational capability				
	Limited	Developing	Norm	Best practice	World class
Contractual arrangements	Proposals and contracts are general in nature. Consultants often operate by verbal agreement.	Proposals and contracts are in place, and/or written client acceptance. Fees and deliverables are clearly stated. Work changes are accepted by clients. Associate arrangements are documented.	Deliverables correspond to proposal work plan and commitments. Written client acceptance of proposals is received before beginning engagements. Standard terms and conditions are in place for most engagements.	Engagement managers understand the standard terms and conditions, and are able to identify anomalies in client contracts. Standard client terms and conditions are pre-approved in advance.	Few or no cases of litigation. Standard terms and conditions are understood and accepted in the marketplace.
Project documentation	Formal working papers for projects are limited or non-existent. Each professional maintains their own working papers.	Engagement documentation is maintained by each practice area as per legal requirements. Approaches vary. Documentation is sometimes incomplete.	All important engagement documentation is easily accessible centrally. Engagement documentation is complete and easy to review. All major milestones are documented.	Engagement documentation is maintained in a consistent format from one practice to another. Engagement documentation can be accessed electronically at an organization-wide level.	Engagement documentation is used to document organization qualifications and help identify best practices and lessons learned. Use of case studies.
Practice management technology	Consultants keep extensive physical files. Tools vary between practice areas. Limited interconnectivity.	Generic desktop tools. Mix of paper and digital documents. Mainly use of local shared drives. Standard financial system.	Standardized tools (timekeeping, costing, project management). Consistent project file management practices across organization. Automated templates.	Integrated practice management tools for multiple functions such as risk mgmt, timekeeping, costing, invoicing, electronic document management, templates, etc.	Information and knowledge sharing tools (e.g., access to electronic portals, methodologies and best practices; sharing of documents). Use of analytics tools.