**EXTRACT** 

# The Japan Consulting Market in 2021

Market Trends Programme





## What's included in this report

Our reports offer a wealth of market sizing, growth, and forecast data alongside engaging, in-depth analysis of the trends that matter. Using our highly flexible, multidimensional model we provide firms with robust, trusted data to make informed decisions about strategic investments and plan for the future.



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Explores the key trends that were front of mind for consulting firms in this market in 2020.

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#### About this report

Our report draws on four main sources:

- Our Global Data Model covering the professional services market
- Our annual global client perception survey of senior end-users of consulting firms
- Our interviews with senior management consultants from a range of consulting firms
- Our in-depth desk research on the market

A detailed view of our methodology and more information about Source can be found below:

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## The Japan consulting market in 2020

The consulting market in Japan has been a unique combination of being remarkably small, conservative, and often challenging for firms, while also being one of the fastest growing mature markets in recent years. Indeed, between 2016 and 2019, consulting market growth in Japan was only surpassed by developing markets such as India, South East Asia, and the top growers in Africa. That positive trajectory consultants have enjoyed in Japan in recent years, however, came to a shuddering halt in 2020.

While clients in Japan have traditionally been on the more reserved side of consulting use even before the pandemic, the arrival of COVID-19, the imposition of lockdowns, and the resulting rise in uncertainty in the market, sparked a shift into an even more conservative mentality; clients paused or outright cancelled projects. The limited work that was undertaken in the early days of the pandemic was typically focused around ensuring survivability, such as assessing and mitigating risk or rapidly rolling out or upgrading remote working solutions. And while in markets such as the US and UK demand started to pick up over the summer, ongoing uncertainty over the Olympics-a notable driver of demand in recent years-and the aforementioned tendency to be more cautious ensured that the lull lasted slightly longer in Japan. While clients started to re-engage with consultants, much of this remained in the discussion phase over the summer, with consultants not seeing a significant return until the autumn. When clients did finally come back to consultants though, they came back in a strong way.

Pharma & biotech was the fastest growing sector for Japan's consultants last year. With digitisation already on the rise in the run up to the pandemic, the arrival of COVID-19 spurred a surge of investment in automation, AI, and data & analytics. Much of this work was focused in the R&D function as companies looked to rapidly accelerate their efforts to identify vaccines and treatments for COVID-19. There was an uptick in digital investment in the production of drugs too, with clients seeking to boost productivity and efficiency to get products to market quicker.

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## The client perspective

#### Methodology

Details of our survey methodology are <u>here</u>. Please note that we had a relatively small number of respondents from the pharma and energy, natural resources & utilities sectors, both of which are highly consolidated markets dominated by a small number of large organisations, and from the government and public sector. We included data from these sectors in the charts in this section as a point of comparison, but it should be regarded as directional only.

### Introduction

As part of our research for this report, we surveyed 100 senior executives in Japan, asking for their views on the priorities and challenges their organisations face and the role consultants may play in dealing with these in the future.

This data reveals a generation of business leaders that, more than any in other geography we've looked at so far this year, appears to have been disorientated by the pandemic, which remains very present in Japan. As we write, the Tokyo Olympics may be demonstrating to the rest of the world that a semblance of normalcy can return, but it's been a contentious topic domestically as cases of the Delta variant surge in a largely unvaccinated population.

As this is the first time that we've surveyed the Japanese consulting market, we don't have historic data to go back to, making it hard to untangle what we're seeing now from underlying trends. Our report highlights the opportunities here-54% of clients expect to maintain their expenditure on consultants at last year's level, and 40% think their use of consulting services will grow, with demand around productivity improvement and digital transformation looking especially strong.

But there are also significant challenges: The way leadership teams interact with their direct reports; the need to make better use of data and analytics; the slow pace of change and execution in many organisations. Some consulting firms are thriving—as the interviews we carried out for this report attest—but they do so because they have understood and adapted the way they work to this unique market. Not every firm will be so successful.

### The pandemic casts a long shadow

Across all the geographies that we've been surveying since the start of the year, 36% of organisations view their experience of the crisis positively. That doesn't necessarily mean that their revenues grew: Client interviews we've carried out in recent months have highlighted the extent to which the process of forced innovation—adapting rapidly to the challenges of the pandemic—has taught many organisations valuable lessons. What had been thought impossible has become possible.

But that's not the case in Japan, where just 16% of organisations had a positive view, vastly outnumbered by the 64% with a negative view. Large organisations, which we might have expected to better shoulder the burden of the last 18 months, were even more

negative. When we asked why this minority of organisations think that they fared well, two-thirds sited the fact that demand for their products and services had increased, and the gap between that and the next two most cited reasons—greater innovation and more streamlined operations—was much wider than it was on average across all countries. The same pattern holds true when we look at the main reasons for a negative perspective: 61% attributed their view to falling sales, two and a half times the proportion who pointed to difficulties in adapting to remote working.

Japanese executives, it appears, see the impact of the crisis in economic terms. Unlike their peers in other parts of the world, they see few, if any, silver linings.

#### Figure 4

The main reasons why the crisis had a positive impact on Japanese clients

Note: Respondents were asked to select all the statements they agreed with



#### Figure 5

The main reasons why the crisis had a negative impact on US clients Note: Respondents were asked to select all the statements they agreed with



## Insights from consultants

### Interviews with consulting leaders

At Source, we have always believed that the only way to truly understand a consulting market is to have real conversations with the consultants who are on the ground working in that market, serving their clients day in and day out. Below, you'll find condensed versions of our most recent discussions with Japan's consultants, as they reflect on 2020, telling us how the previously unimaginable events of 2020 are reshaping the market, and in the case of a few brave souls, venturing a guess as to what comes next.

### Shuji Miyasaka, Partner, Head of Management Consulting, KPMG, Japan

## Thinking about 2020, how did the consulting market in Japan perform?

Some projects were suspended as a result of COVID, but after that, Japan quickly recovered. Regardless of the struggles of some other sectors, the consulting industry is in a kind of bubble. It's growing very strongly at the moment. There are some estimates that it will grow to nearly \$10bn by 2024, so I think in 2022 it will be something like \$8bn.

#### So far this year, how has the market performed? Are there particular sectors or services driving demand?

The consulting market has recovered very strongly, and it's very active in Japan. All things to do with digital transformation have been big drivers. We call it DX in Japan, and it's kind of a buzzword, but most work is related to this in some way. In terms of sectors, financial services and the manufacturing industries have been very dynamic.

Over the last few years, some consultants told us they expected the Olympics to be a driver of work. Did the postponement of the games have an impact on consulting last year, and will it have a positive impact this year now that the games are going ahead?

We haven't seen any relationship between the Olympics and the consulting market. However, both the fact that the games are going ahead and the levels of activity in the consulting market are indicators of a strong recovery from COVID.

#### Have you seen a change in the type of capabilities clients are seeking from you as a consulting firm? Are they looking for different skills?

In Japan, it's commonly said that companies have a labour-intensive working style, so digitisation has not been as advanced in terms of RPA, AI, etc. However, largely due to the COVID situation, Japan has had to catch up. RPA, AI, OCR, e-signatures—all those digitalrelated things are happening at once, and clients are asking us to support their digital transformation with specific software, knowledge, or solutions. COVID has strongly accelerated this trend.

#### Are you changing the way you offer solutions to the market—for example, the way projects are priced or managed?

Our local governments have regulations for COVID, which make it very hard to move across Japan. For example, to move from one prefecture to another requires a negative COVID test according to local clients' policy, so it restricts travel. As a result, we have to perform most projects remotely using Microsoft Teams or other technology, which has forced us to change the way we deliver projects. Clients have also become used to doing business in this way. Things like seminars and marketing activities only happened face to face, but now we're doing those things through webinars as well. We are trying to change how we deliver to increase productivity, for example, by trying to use more internal automation or Al tools. So, yes, things are changing.

#### Have clients reacted well to the need for remote working? Do you think it's something that will continue after the pandemic?

Individuals at the manager-level are very comfortable working remotely, however many people at the senior level prefer working face to face. I think the willingness of the manager-level workforce to work remotely is a good sign for the Japanese economy and will hopefully lead to improved productivity in Japan.

# Looking beyond digital transformation, are there any other particularly hot topics at the moment?

One topic is SAP S/4HANA migration, because SAP ECC will expire in two or three years, so most Japanese companies that use SAP are trying to migrate. That's not just changing their ERP tools but also changing their thinking about how to leverage and actively use their ERP assets. That requires skills in big data analysis and financial accounting data analysis, so that area is hot.

Regarding the resilience space, COVID and climate change impacts—such as typhoons and heavy rain—have forced companies to think about the resilience of their supply chain. Supply chain change isn't easy, and clients haven't taken much action yet, but they are thinking about how they can build resilience and are having conversations with us about that. They're also looking at the impact of tax incentives on the supply chain, for example now that the RCEP is active.

#### We've seen some political pressure for companies to move their supply chain away from China and to Japan. Has that also been a factor?

The Japanese government has been keen to get some of its industry back from China. We assumed that clients would think about that, too, but we haven't seen much in reality. We still have big demand from China, and there haven't been many active moves or projects around this, but some companies are thinking about where it's best to be located.

## Has the competitive landscape in Japan changed in the last year or so?

The market is very active, and the competition is also growing very rapidly. It's a very competitive market, but the pie is growing. As a result of this growth, we've struggled to hire all the skilled people we need. We don't see many highly skilled ex-consultants in the market, so we've hired people from industry and trained them, integrating them into projects. We're open to a wider market of talent from different business backgrounds, which has been a change. We're looking at investment bankers who have experience with corporate planning, project initiatives, or technology specialists. The talent war is beginning, and acquiring the right talent is a key challenge.

## Could the talent challenge constrain growth in the consulting market?

It definitely could. The market is very hot, and all of our competitors have the same problem.

## Will the upcoming elections have any impact on the consulting market?

I don't think so. Since the advent of Abenomics, we've had sustainable growth in Japan, but compared to other countries in the region, growth is not that high. I don't see elections or politics having much of an impact on this.

## Aside from talent, what other challenges do you see for KPMG in Japan?

One of the challenges is that we want to grow rapidly. To do that, we're trying to focus our resources on technology enablement, including SAP implementation, Workday implementation, and other IT implementation. Again, competition in this market is severe, and it's very challenging to acquire high-quality resources. To what extent has remote working changed how you deliver project in Japan? Are you better able to use expertise and consultants from outside of Japan, or does Japan remain a separate market because of language or other reasons?

Some of our Japanese clients have an important presence globally, so while some projects still require Japanese speaking support, others—such as IT implementation or digital transformation—can be done in English or a local language. We've seen more opportunities to work closely with local KPMG resources, and we're also setting up a global delivery network for specified solutions.

#### In the past, we've heard that Japanese clients are more reluctant to use consulting support than clients in Europe or North America. Have you seen this changing?

I do think Japanese clients have started to see more value in consulting after COVID. Opinions changed radically, and more clients are considering consulting because they're trying to utilise more digital technologies and doing those transformation-types of projects. Companies are not in a business-as-usual situation, and they have to adapt to rapid change, so they're asking people like us to support them. Traditional Japanese companies are doing this, as well as multinational companies.

### About this report

### Methodology

### Sources

#### MegaModel: our Global Data Model

The quantitative market data in this report comes from our unique model of the global professional services market.

Rather than making high-level assumptions, this model has been built from the bottom up, sizing the market capability by capability—assessing how much work a firm earns delivering each professional capability within each sector and country. This results in a robust view of the size of the supply-side market, which can then be broken down to view the size of the market by country, sector, line of business, capabilities, and market segments.

This year's model has been expanded, with a new capability taxonomy and a much broader range of professional services firms included-all of which reflects convergence and other changes we see in the industry. For the purposes of this report we've focused on types of firm and market segments that broadly equate to traditional definitions of consulting. As a result of these changes to our methodology, there are changes to our market sizing data, which take into account that conventional consulting firms now compete in many non-consulting markets-in essence that their addressable market is larger. Historic data has been restated to match our new definitions. but the inclusion of new types of firm and additional services may also have an impact on growth rates.

Alongside this market segmentation, we also limit our market sizing and analysis to what we at Source call "big consulting"—work done by mid and large-sized firms (those with more than 50 people). Please note that we don't track the long, thin tail of work done by contractors and very small firms, as most readers of this report would not seek or be able to compete in this part of the market.

All of the data in the model is calibrated through extensive interviews with, and surveys of, professional services firms and their clients, allowing us to discuss broader trends in the market alongside detailed dimensions such as headcount. These interviews and surveys are supplemented with desk research, which allows us to assess the impact of wider macroeconomic trends on professional services. This, combined with our detailed modelling, results in a long-term view of the market that is able to support both historic and forecast data.

All figures given in this report are in US dollars. For reference, Source is using the following exchange rates in its reports this year:

US dollar to British pound US\$1 = £0.78

US dollar to euro US\$1 = €0.87

#### **Client perspective**

We carry out a client survey to help us build a rich picture of how different trends in the Japan are affecting clients' organisations and their use of consulting. One survey focuses on trends in Japan, providing detailed insights into the nuances of the market. For this, we surveyed 100 senior clients of consulting firms from across the Japan, all of whom work in organisations with more than 500 employees. This survey focuses on the following areas:

- How they expect to use consultants during 2021 and the first half of 2022
- Factors that affect the way clients work with consulting firms
- The ways consulting firms market themselves to clients and the impact this has on client decision-making

#### Figure 27

Respondents by sector







#### Interviews with senior consultants

In addition to our quantitative research, we interviewed six very senior consultants in Japan, representing most of the leading consulting firms in the geography and many smaller local specialists to understand more about how the consulting market is performing and the major trends, changes, and challenges consultants and their clients face. Throughout the year, Source analysts remain plugged in to the global consulting market through our bespoke research and consulting projects, adding further depth to our understanding of the consulting industry.

#### In-depth desk research

We also conducted a thorough PEST analysis in the Japan that drills down into finer macroeconomic details on a holistic and sectorby-sector basis and allows us to fit our research into a wider macroeconomic picture.

#### Definitions of sectors and market segments

Our definition of management consulting includes a broad range of business advisory services, but excludes:

- tax advisory
- audit
- the implementation of IT systems
- the delivery of outsourced/offshored services
- HR compensation/benefits administration and technology

Where mergers and acquisitions work is concerned, consulting on deals is included (under strategy), but corporate finance fees on deals themselves are generally not included, although it is not always straightforward to separate the two.

For more information about how we classify consulting services and sectors, please see "Definitions of sectors and market segments".

### **Sectors**



### Energy & resources

Energy Includes the exploration and production of energy, including oil, gas, coal, and renewables.

#### Utilities

Includes the delivery of electricity, gas, water, sanitation, and other related services.

#### **Primary resources**

Includes agriculture, chemicals and chemical products, commodities, forestry, fishing, metals, mining, and plastics.



#### **Financial services**

Banking

Includes retail banking, commercial banking, and lending.

#### Insurance

Includes general insurance (e.g., motor, home, pets, health-anything on an annual contract), life insurance, pension products, and retirement planning.

#### Private equity

Includes both consulting work for private equity firms and consulting work with private equity portfolio businesses.

#### **Capital markets**

Includes investment banking, trading of stocks and financial products, corporate finance, and broking.

Investment and wealth management Includes private banking, high net-worth banking, investment management, trust funds, the management of pension funds, and asset management.

### Manufacturing

Aerospace

Includes space research and technology, the manufacture of aircraft, aircraft parts, rockets and other space equipment, and tanks and ammunition.

#### Automotive

Includes the manufacture of motor vehicles, industrial vehicles, and vehicle supplies and parts.

#### Construction

Includes surveying, architectural, and engineering services, heavy construction, house building, and the building of infrastructure

#### Consumer packaged goods

Includes the manufacture of clothes. foods, alcohol, tobacco, furniture, home furnishings, cleaning products, small arms, children's toys, and sports equipment.

Consumer and industrial electronics Includes electrical components, household and industrial appliances, commercial and professional equipment.

#### Industrial products

Includes industrial machinery, steel and metal products, and plastic products.



#### Pharma & biotech

Includes research into and the production of drugs, biological products, medicinal chemicals, and life sciences.

#### Healthcare

Includes private and publicly-funded healthcare, hospitals, laboratories, and medical equipment.



#### Public sector Government

Includes federal/national, state/regional, local government, emergency services, justice, social services, public transport, and conservation.

#### Education

Includes public and private schools, universities, and libraries.

#### Defence

Includes national security and consulting around defence issues.

#### Not for profit

Includes non-commercial research organisations, religious, political and professional membership organisations, trusts, labour unions, and business associations.



#### Retail

Includes the selling of clothes, food, consumer goods, and automobiles.



#### Services

Logistics

Includes warehousing, storage, packing and crating, and distribution including cargo, freight, and haulage.

#### **Business services**

Includes services relating to law, accountancy, IT maintenance, security systems, advertising, employment agencies, and vehicle leasing.

#### Leisure

Includes museums, art galleries, theatre, golf courses, hotels, hospitality, travel agencies, restaurants, and bars.

#### Real estate

Includes estate agencies and operators of residential and commercial buildings.

#### Transportation

Includes private and people-related transportation, including airlines, airport management, train operators, rail infrastructure management, water transportation, courier services, and private bus services.

#### Technology, media & telecoms Telecoms

Includes telephone, mobile, digital, and other communication services.

#### High-tech

Includes IT-related devices, computer and computerrelated devices, audio and video equipment, broadcasting and communication equipment.

#### Media

Includes radio, television, and digital broadcasting stations and services as well as printing and publishing of newspapers, periodicals, and books.

#### Market segments

We've taken the lines of business and capabilities from our taxonomy that broadly align with traditional definitions of consulting and divided them into market segments that include the following. Please note that for some lines of business, for example, forensics, we've taken a subset of the relevant capabilities and excluded others.



#### Technology & innovation

Ideation, Innovation management, Innovation strategy, Strategies for growth from innovation, Cloud advice, ERP consulting, IT strategy, planning & review, IT training, Programme management, Vendor selection, Clean technology, Green IT, Corporate identity, Graphic & UI design, UX & service design, Customer journey & UX benchmarking, Data visualisation, business intelligence & semantic layer.



#### • Strategy

Capital allocation strategy, Commercial due diligence & valuation, Financial due diligence, M&A transaction strategy, Operational due diligence, Portfolio & investment strategy, Public-private partnerships, Technology due diligence, Business & financial modelling, Category management, Channel management, Corporate recovery & turnaround, Corporate restructuring, Corporate strategy, Market analysis & strategy, Policy formulation, Pricing, Strategic sourcing/offshoring services, Real estate strategy, Environmental & social impact research, Macro/microeconomic research, Market research. Customer feedback. Customer segmentation, Employee feedback, Advanced analytics, Sustainable investment.



#### Cybersecurity consulting

Cybersecurity advice, Cybersecurity incident response, Penetration testing & wargaming, Technology & security risk services.



#### HR. change & people strategy

Benefits, compensation & pensions, excluding actuarial & investment advice, Change management, Diversity & inclusion, Employee engagement, Governance & board effectiveness, HR strategy & effectiveness, Leadership, Organisational design & culture, Organisational training & development, Outplacement, Pension fund evaluation & advice, Performance management, Stakeholder management, Talent management, Team effectiveness & collaboration, Resourceefficiency strategy, Purpose-led strategy & change, Resource-efficiency implementation, Social impact & trust.



Benchmarking, Business continuity & recovery, Cost cutting, Customer service, DevOps, Distribution strategy, Lean & Six Sigma, Operational review, Outsourcing advice, Post-M&A integration, Process design, reengineering & automation, Procurement/ purchasing, Property & estate management, Sales & distribution planning, Sales force effectiveness, Supply chain management, Target operating model, Sustainable supply chain, Corporate, occupier services & facilities management, Integrated real estate developer services, Real estate deal/transaction services.

**Risk & financial management** Operational risk, Programme risk, Responding to regulation, Risk management, Budgeting/ financial planning process, Debt advisory, Finance function, Financial advisory, Financial restructuring & insolvency, eDiscovery, Forensic accounting.

### Contributors

We are extremely grateful to all the people we spoke to for making this report possible. Below is a list of individuals who have contributed (excluding those consultants who wished to remain anonymous).

Name	Job title	Organisation
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Nobuaki Otake	Chief Executive Officer	PwC Consulting LLC
Hiroyuki Sadotomo	Managing Director	Protiviti
Yasumi Taniguchi	Managing Director, Japan Country Market Leader	Protiviti

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Ashok is a writer and editor at Source in our Market Trends team. He is an experienced writer, editor, and analyst, providing insights into the latest trends and developments across the professional services market. He has been quoted by a variety of trade publications and has previous experience in Source's Client Perception Programme. Prior to joining Source, Ashok was an editor and consultant in the commodities market, as well as working in the UK automotive industry.

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#### Fiona Czerniawska

A Co-founder and Managing Director of Source, Fiona is one of the world's leading commentators on the management consulting industry. Since founding Source in 2007, she has been bringing this expertise to bear on our clients' most pressing strategic projects and business issues. Fiona has published a dozen books on consulting topics, including two for The Economist: Business Consulting: A Guide to How it Works and How to Make it Work and Buying Professional Services.

She has more than 20 years' experience as a management consultant, working primarily in the areas of marketing and strategy. She was previously in charge of strategic planning for EY in the UK and has worked in the consulting practice of PwC. Fiona also has a PhD in 17th-century French art and lives in hope that it will be of practical use in business someday.

#### Fiona Czerniawska ➤ fionacz@sourceglobalresearch.com





### Programme schedule for 2021

Rep 202	orts 1	Market Trends Programme	Client Perception Studies	Emerging Trends Programme
	January	Forecasts for 2021	UK US	
Q1	February	US GCC UK	Germany Financial Services	
	March	Nordics Canada	Healthcare & Pharma GCC France	Buying and Selling
	April	France DACH	Nordics Energy & Resources Technology, Media & Telecoms	
Q2	May	Australia Southern Europe	China Japan	Digital, Transformed?
	June			
	July	China Benelux South America		
Q3	August	South East Asia India Japan Eastern Europe & Russia	Perceptions of Risk Firms Perceptions of Tax Firms	Consulting's New Talent Crisis
	Africa September Energy & Resources Financial Services	Africa Energy & Resources	Perceptions of Audit Firms	
	October	The Global Tax Advisory Market The Global Risk & Cybersecurity		Building a Trusted Brand
Q4	November	Services Market Healthcare & Pharma Technology, Media & Telecoms		
	Consumer Products & RetailDecemberPlanning for Growth in 2022			

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	leadership are published throughout the year.



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Source analyses the way in which economic, business, behavioural, and technology change drives how organisations use professional services, and the implications that has for professional services firms.

Since its inception in 2007, Source has invested in sophisticated, proprietary research techniques that not only provide unique insights on current and future trends in the market, but also provide a better and faster solution than you would be able to reach yourself.

Our analysis and recommendations are derived from data and experience, and we use our team's extensive knowledge of the industry to provide actionable and clear conclusions on the best course of action for you and your firm. Our insights have underpinned some of the biggest strategic investment decisions made by professional services firms around the world.

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Among other things, our work includes:

- Deep market and competitor analysis
- Acquisition strategy
- Proposition strategy and development
- Brand and client sentiment analysis
- Thought leadership and content strategy, development, and review

For more information about any of these, please visit our website or get in touch.