

Showcase Virtual consulting- How you can make it work for your consulting business

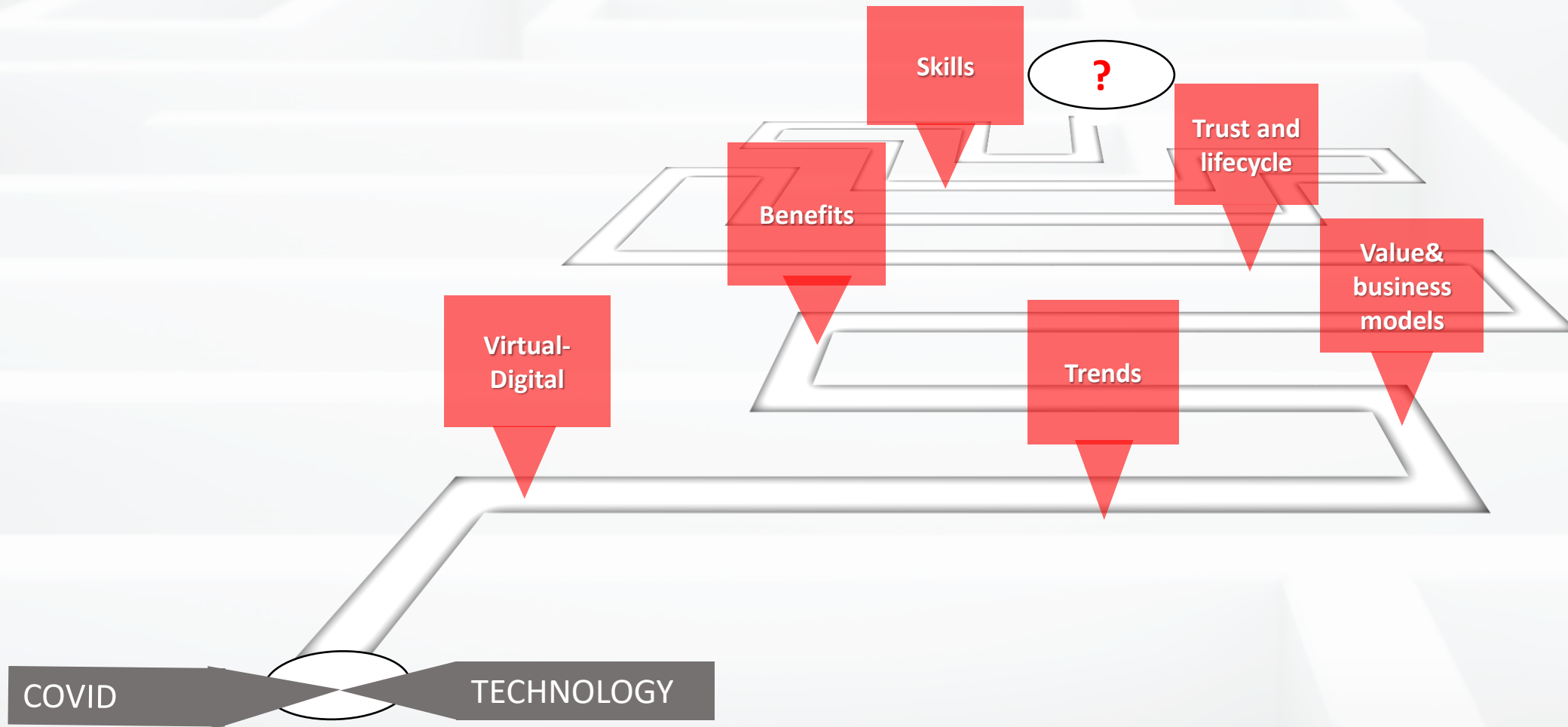
Luca Collina-MBA

- International Transformational and Growth Consultant with a background as a management consultant, project and change manager .Founder of Transforage TCA, a member of WCoMC.
- MBA in Consulting achieved in 2021 with the grade of distinction and awarded the Business-Postgraduate Programme Prize, from York St John University.
- Dedicated to adopt academic research which can bring benefits to the sector on managing consulting and clients.
 - The original research published in the Management Consulting Journal can be found [here](#). The presentation is based on its most meaningful results , updated since June 2021.
 - Currently engaged in a new transnational research UK and Germany about “Consulting after Corona” as team leader for the UK.



**The maze of Virtualisation :
finding the right paths for delivering
Virtual Management Consulting**

Outline of the webinar





Virtualisation

What is virtualisation? And Digitalisation?

Virtual

We define ‘virtual’ as lacking physical interaction therefore, online and virtualisation will be used synonymously.

The shift from a F2F process to virtual is called the “**process of virtualisation**”.

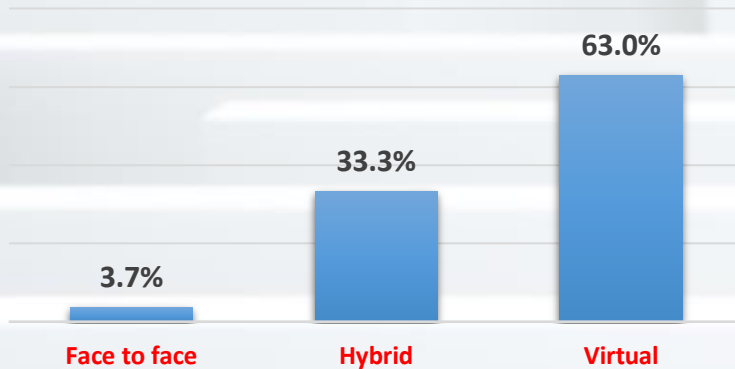
Digital

Digitalization is the use of **digital technologies**

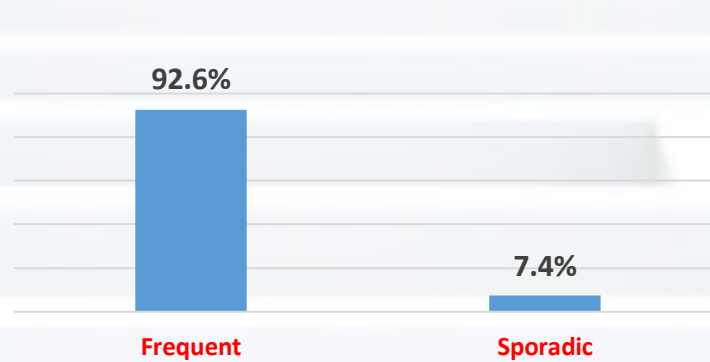
The shift from analogic to digital is called the “**process of digitalization**”: to change a business model and provide new revenues and value-producing opportunities

Poll 1 – what has been your virtualisation level during CORONA-19? -Results

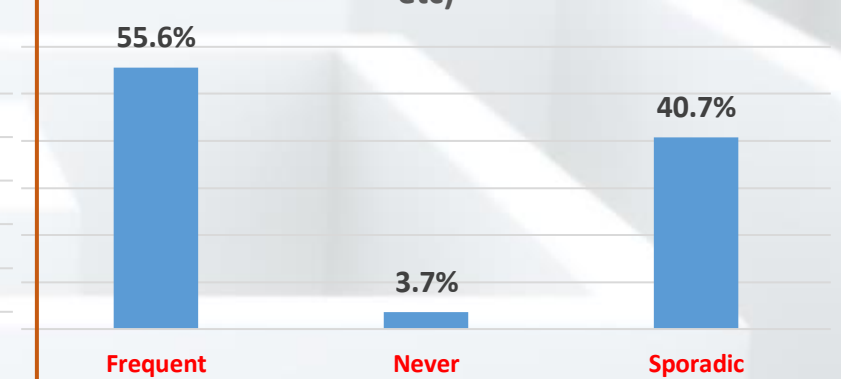
1.How would you describe your interaction with your clients?



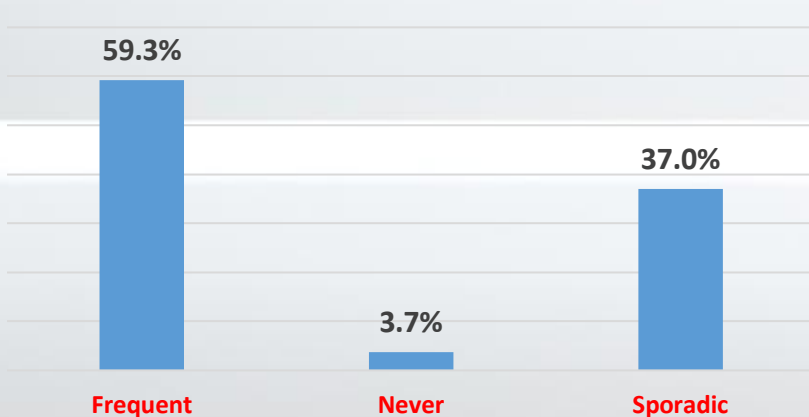
2.How would you describe your level of virtual communications?



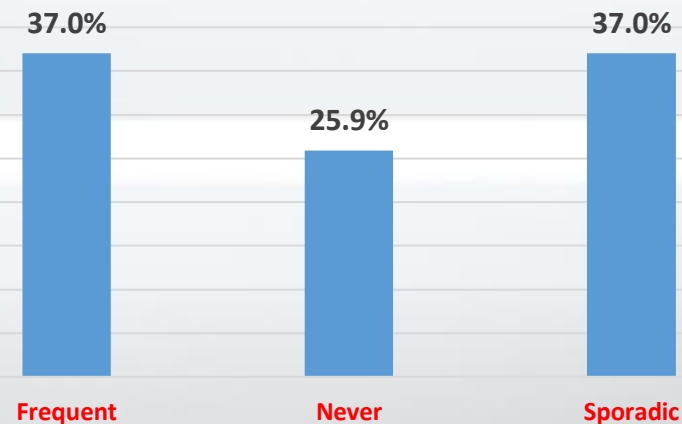
3.Use of collaboration tools - document sharing (Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive etc)



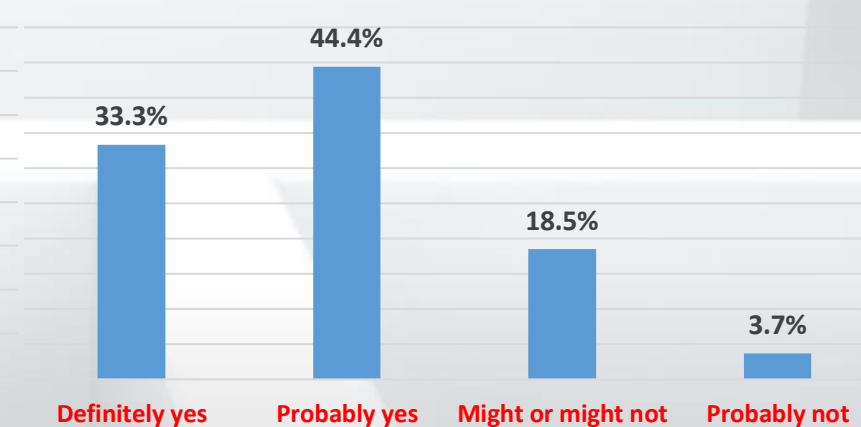
4.Use of collaboration tools - project management (Asana, Trello, MS Teams etc)



5.Use of collaboration tools - virtual whiteboard



6.Will you increase the utilisation of virtual tools?

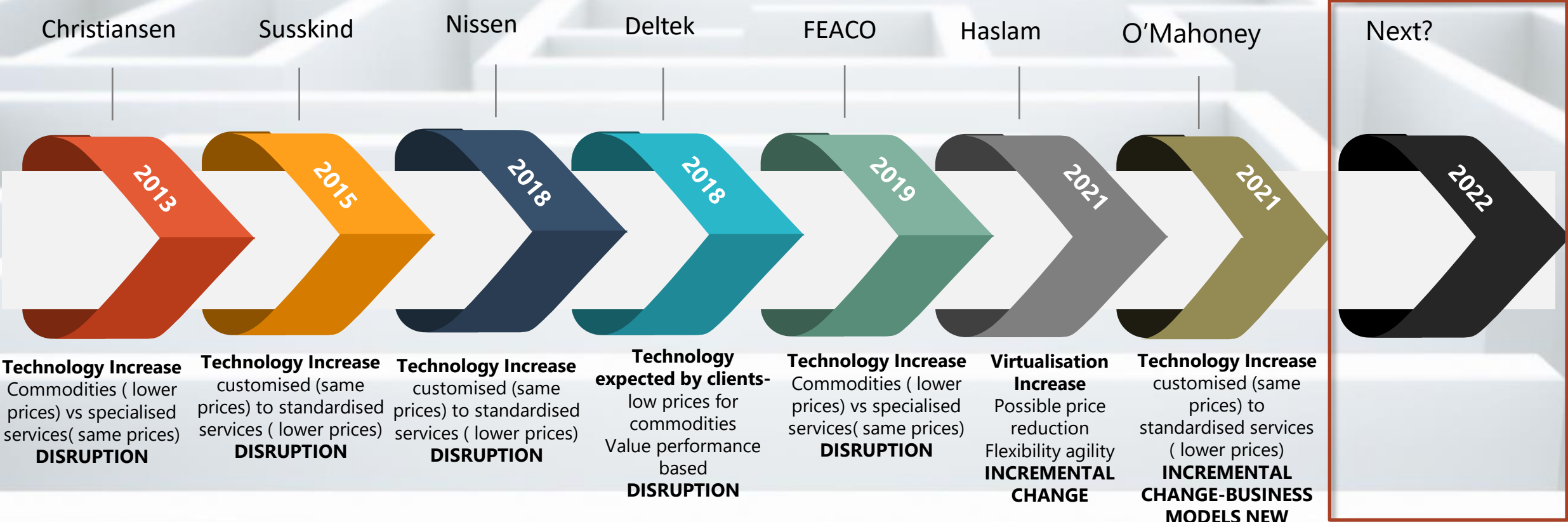




Trends based on virtualisation and digital development

They felt it was coming...

The Managing Consultancy trends with virtualization



Technology has been seen , since 2013 a factor that could change : **the value perceived by clients , the pricing and a further services segmentation: Commodities and Personalised serviced. And business models too. However the perspectives changed: from disruption to incremental change.**

The Management Consulting Virtualisation – Trends' takeaways

Technology development

The provisions of technology development made during the years (before COVID) **has been confirmed in 2021**(with COVID)

Clients' expectations for consultants to use technology

Sooner than later....clients will expect that consultants use/bring technology to facilitate and ease their work and that of the resources

Clients' increased knowledge of technology

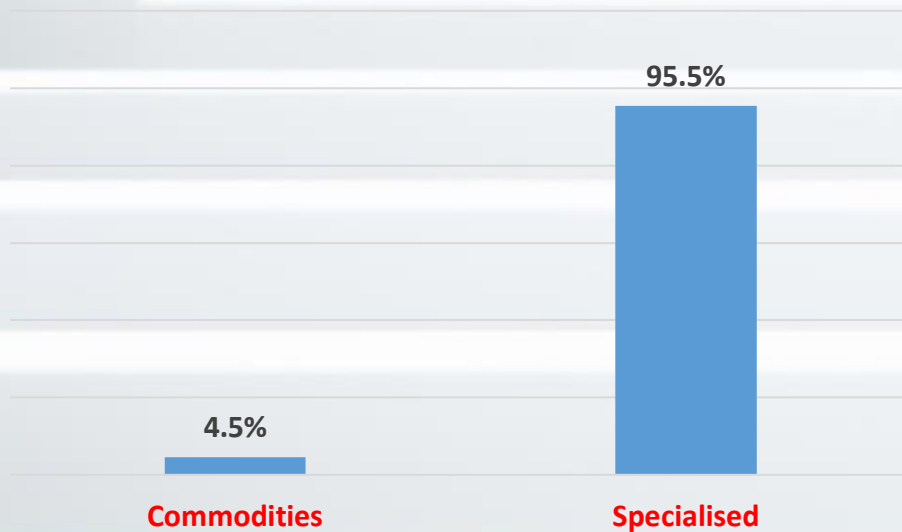
Clients are more knowledgeable in using technology There is an increased maturity level from clients, limited for Consulting

Different value perceived by clients (commodities vs specialized)

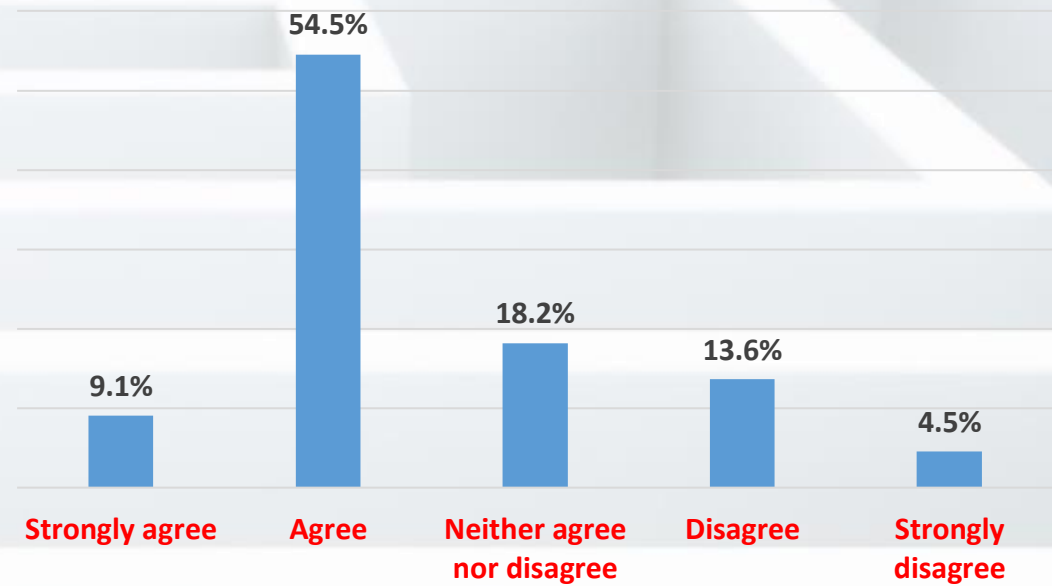
However, using technology can create a different value perception of the services by the clients between commodities and personalized services.

Poll 2 – What do you think about the future of virtualisation based on trends?

1. Will your services be considered commodities or specialised?



2. Commodities can help to leverage my business model within my services (hybrid)





**Value perceived by customers and
possible business models**

Commodities and high specialized services : new opportunities for hybrid business models?

Commodities

Technology **reduces the consultant intervention and relationships** with the client

The knowledge is

Codified: presentations, assessment,, simulations, templates and more)

Generalisable : adaptable to different contexts

Specialised services

Even if technology is available, consultants use their **specialized knowledge with a high interaction with the customer**

The knowledge is **utilised as personalised /bespoke service** focusing on strategy, people and organisational change and culture work

Hybrid ? (*) (**)

It is a form of leveraging both virtual and digital solutions.

The virtual ones has been already used: communications (Zoom, Teams) sharing and collaboration (Miro), Project management (Asana).

The digital tools are those that belong to the so called Commodities:

- Video training
- Assessments
- Simulations
- Templates and more

(*) Nissen-2019 -

(**) O'Mahoney-2022

Differences between Commodities and Specialised Services from the trends

	Commodities	Specialised services	Hybrid? (*) (**)
Client expectations about technology	Technology taken for granted		<i>Technology to reduce analysis, consultants engagement, facilitation</i>
Value perception	Low value	High-value due to specialisation	High-value due to specialisation and technology
Prices rising	No	No	Differentiation based on how the technology will be employed The choice of using technology for
Same prices	No	Yes	* Substitution of man work * Products and sub-products which will help the customer in storing Knowledge
Prices down	Yes	No	*empowering training
Competitive advantages	Cost reductions, higher margins, prices reduced for the clients	Efficiency , higher margins, price maintained	Efficiency , higher margins extended services, facilitation price justified, New market segmentation= NEW BUSINESS MODEL

(*) Nissen-2019 -

(**) O'Mahoney-2022

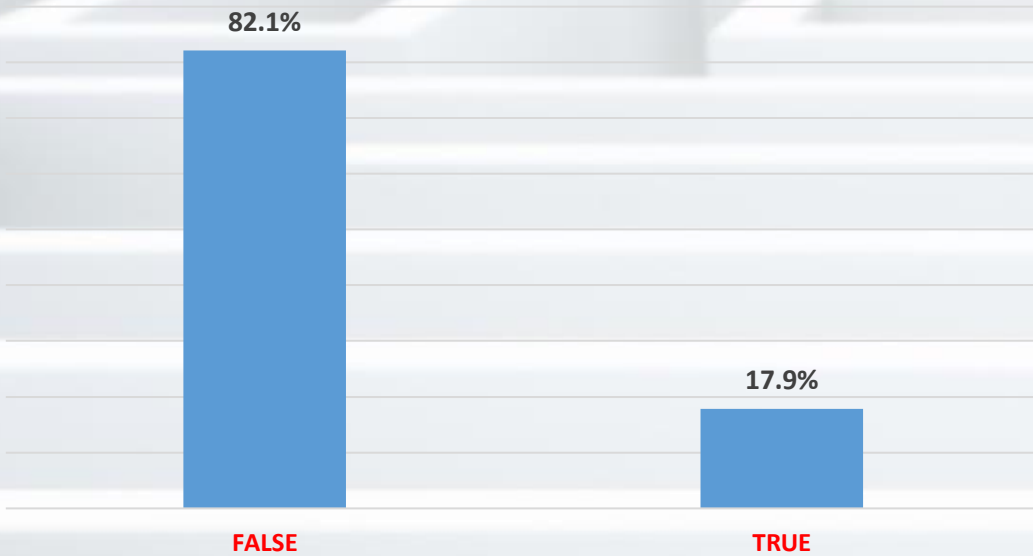
And what about niche?

- Many have found difficult to create a niche and link it to the debate commodities-specialisation.
- The criterium to be considered is: consider that **technology is expected by the clients.**
- However depending on the choice of using it, can still be a strategic element to be competitive due to the dichotomy between commodities and specialised services **and its combinations.**

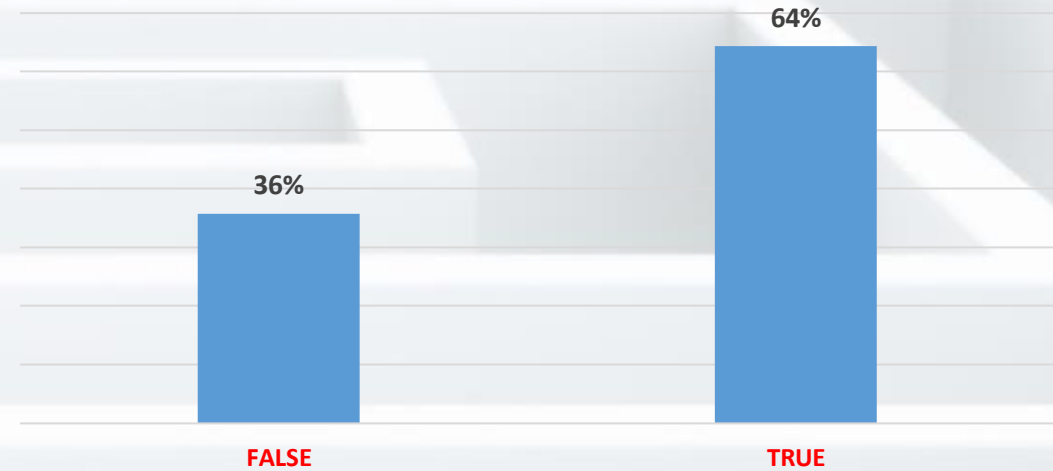
It is a game changing which requires agility and flexibility in adapting business models following technology trends.

Poll 3: Commodities, specialised, hybrid consultancy and business models with the increase of technology

1. Technology will not change the delivery of consulting



2. Technology will not disrupt the industry but will require an adaptation of business models and delivery mode

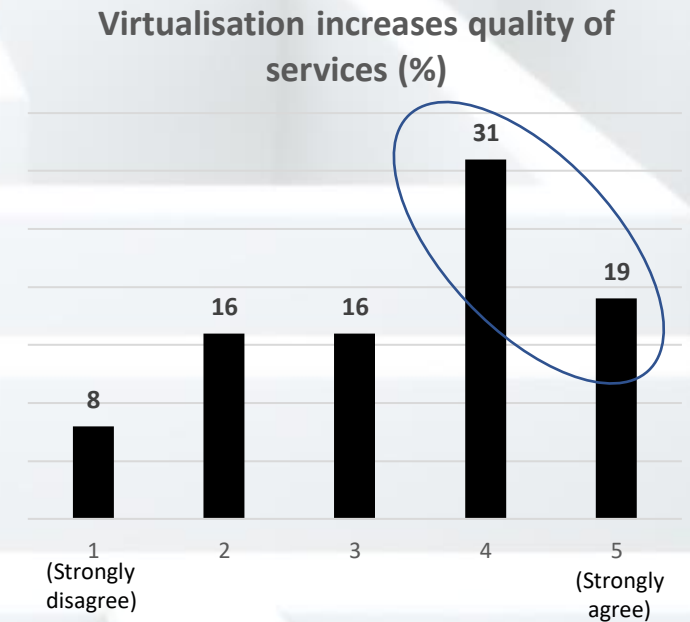
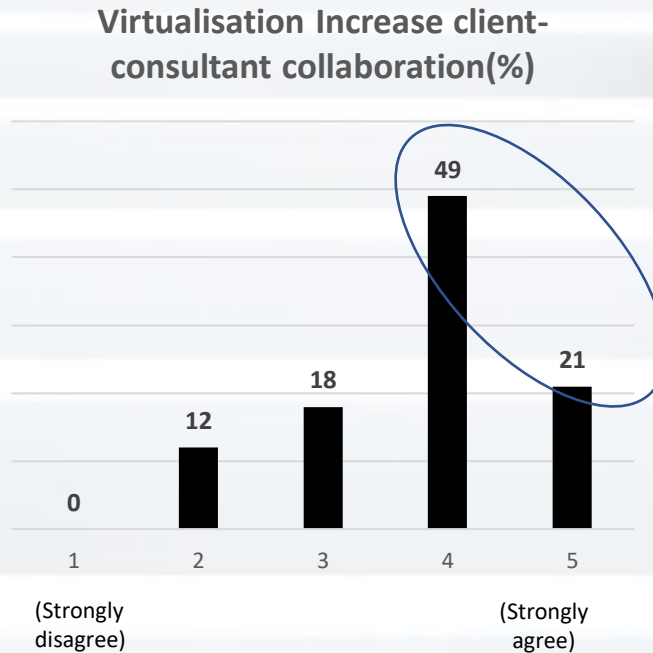
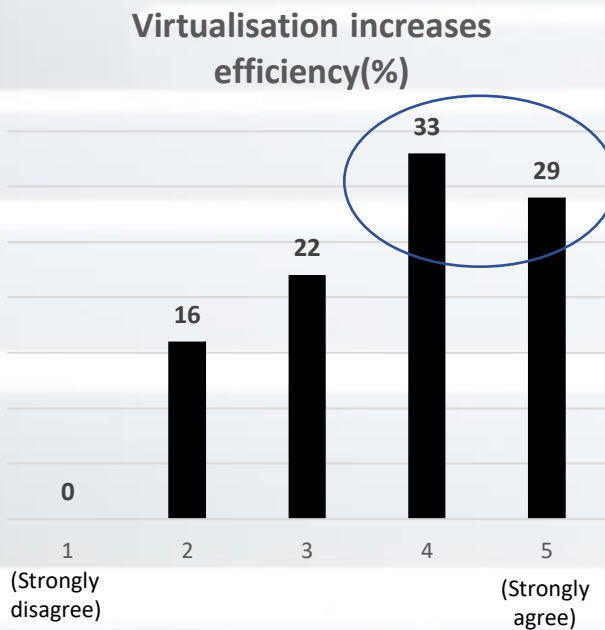




Benefits for Efficiency, Collaboration And Services' Quality

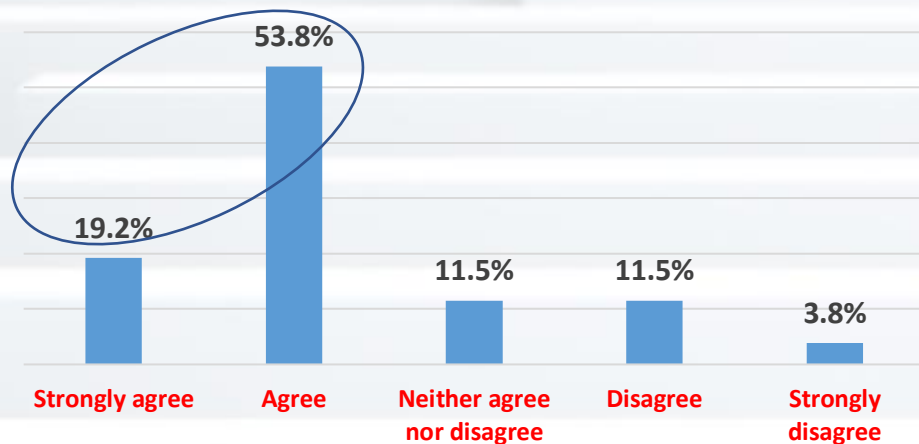
Advantages of Virtualisation for operations

Results from the analysis show that the benefits of virtualisation are **increased Efficiency, Consultant-Client Collaboration** and the **level of services-(quality)**

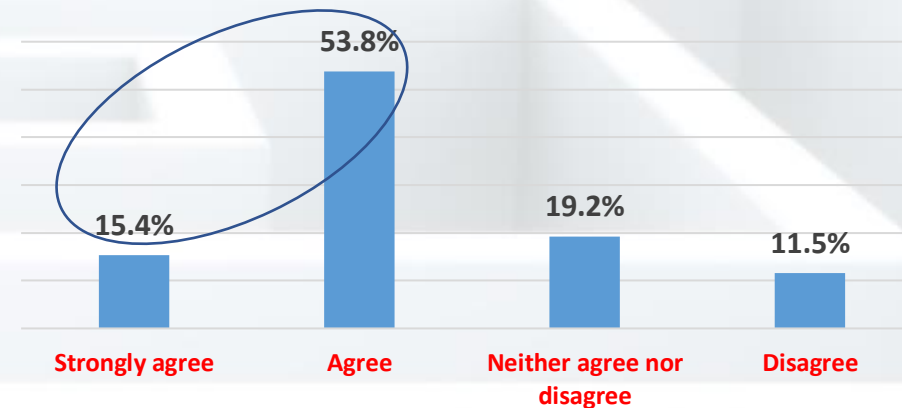


Poll 4th PART- BENEFITS OF VIRTUALISATION

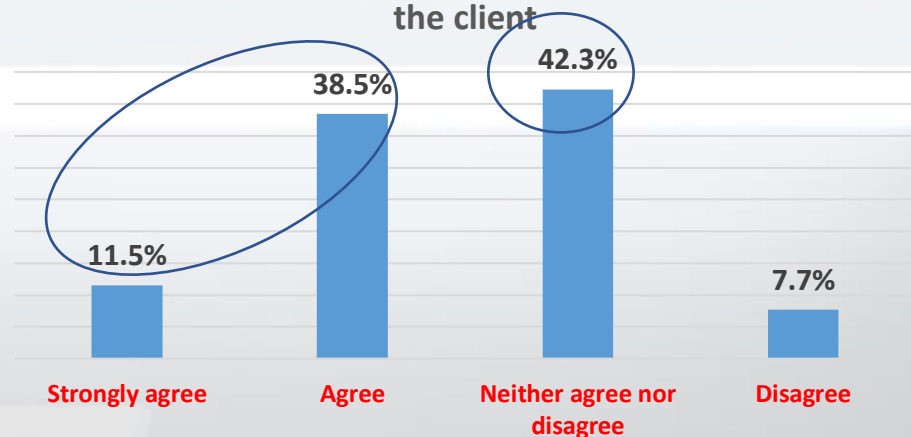
1.Virtualisation increases the efficiency of delivery



2.Virtual applications and collaboration tools improve collaboration between client and consultant



3.Virtual applications and collaboration tools increase the level of service quality offered to the client





Building Trust Using Virtualisation Across The Consulting Stages

Poll 5th : where the 4 trust pillars have more impact along the consulting lifecycle?

Event's poll (average)

	Sales	Analysis	Proposal	Implementation	Exit
1. Signalling expertise and competence	1	2	1	3	3
2. Demonstrating personal commitment and caring	2	3	2	3	3
3. Demonstrating integrity and consistency	3	2	2	2	4
4. Establishing emotional connection	1	2	1	3	4

Previous research (98 participants)

	Sales	Analysis	Proposal	Implementation	Exit
1. Signalling expertise and competence	1	2	3		4
2. Demonstrating personal commitment and caring		1	1	3	
3. Demonstrating integrity and consistency			1	2	3
4. Establishing emotional connection	1	4	1	1	5

Differences are based on

- Diverse consultancy types,
- Diverse virtual maturity levels (at the time of surveys)
- Personal attitudes can change the approach.

1. Signalling expertise and competence

Referrals, references, reputation, past experiences and possession of specialised expertise

2. Demonstrating personal commitment and caring

Empathy, humility, objectivity, self-disclosure, alignment to clients' expectations

3. Demonstrating integrity and consistency

Coherent behaviour and communications, full knowledge sharing, keeping word

4. Establishing emotional connection

Chemistry, vibe, positiveness, first impression, compatible personalities

A 3D rendering of a white maze with a central path leading towards the viewer. The maze is composed of white rectangular walls and paths, creating a complex, winding structure. The perspective is from a low angle, looking down the central path. The lighting is soft and even, highlighting the geometric forms of the maze.

Skills in the virtual environment

What are the skills required for Virtual and Digital Consulting .

Soft Skills

Social skills (*) (verbal, nonverbal, written or visual)

Emotional connection(*)

Transmitting positivity and Vibe(*)

Interpreting facial expression (*)

Visual engagement(*)

Experiential training(role play) ()**

Hard Skills

Technical Skills for virtual tools(*)

AI (***)

Big data → Analytics (***)

Automation /Robotics (***)

Data science (**)

Cybersecurity (***)

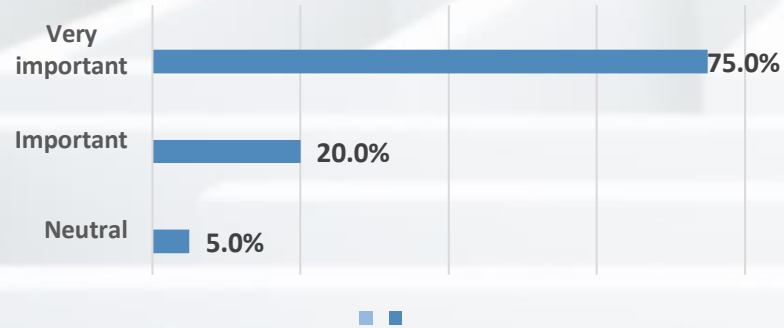
Levels of knowledge

Teach Savvy
(***)

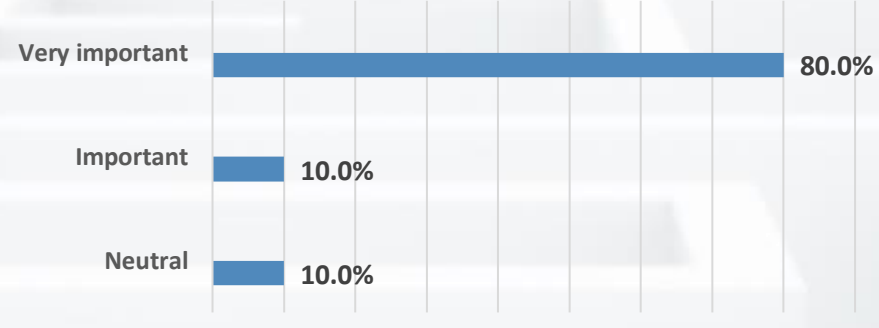
High Specialisation
(**)

Poll :6th PART- Skills required for Virtualisation

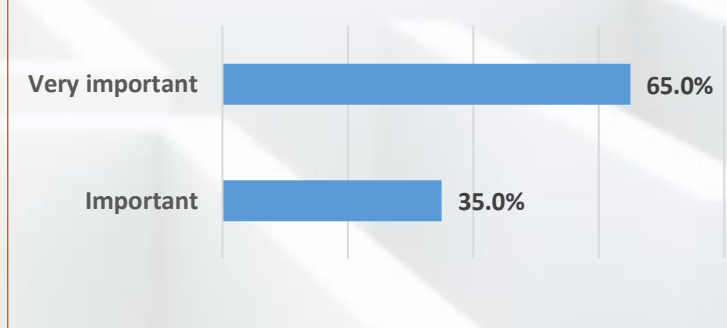
Social skills



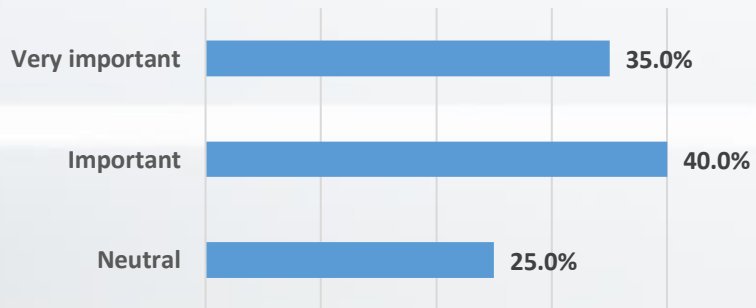
Emotional connection



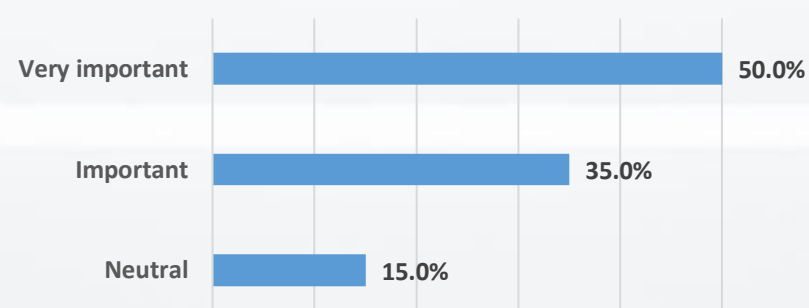
Transmitting positivity and vibe



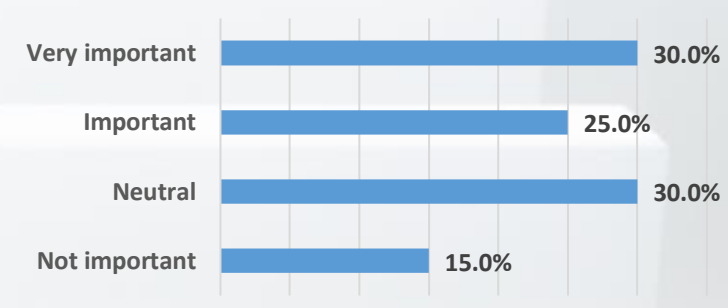
Interpreting facial expressions



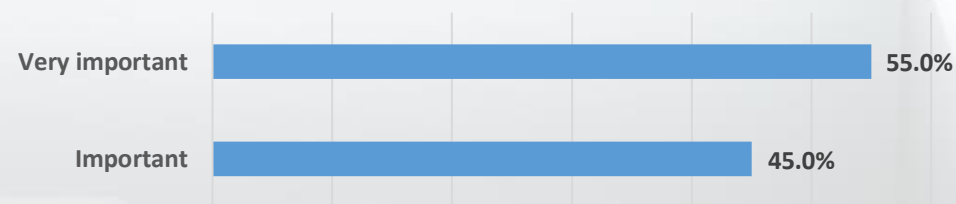
Visual engagement



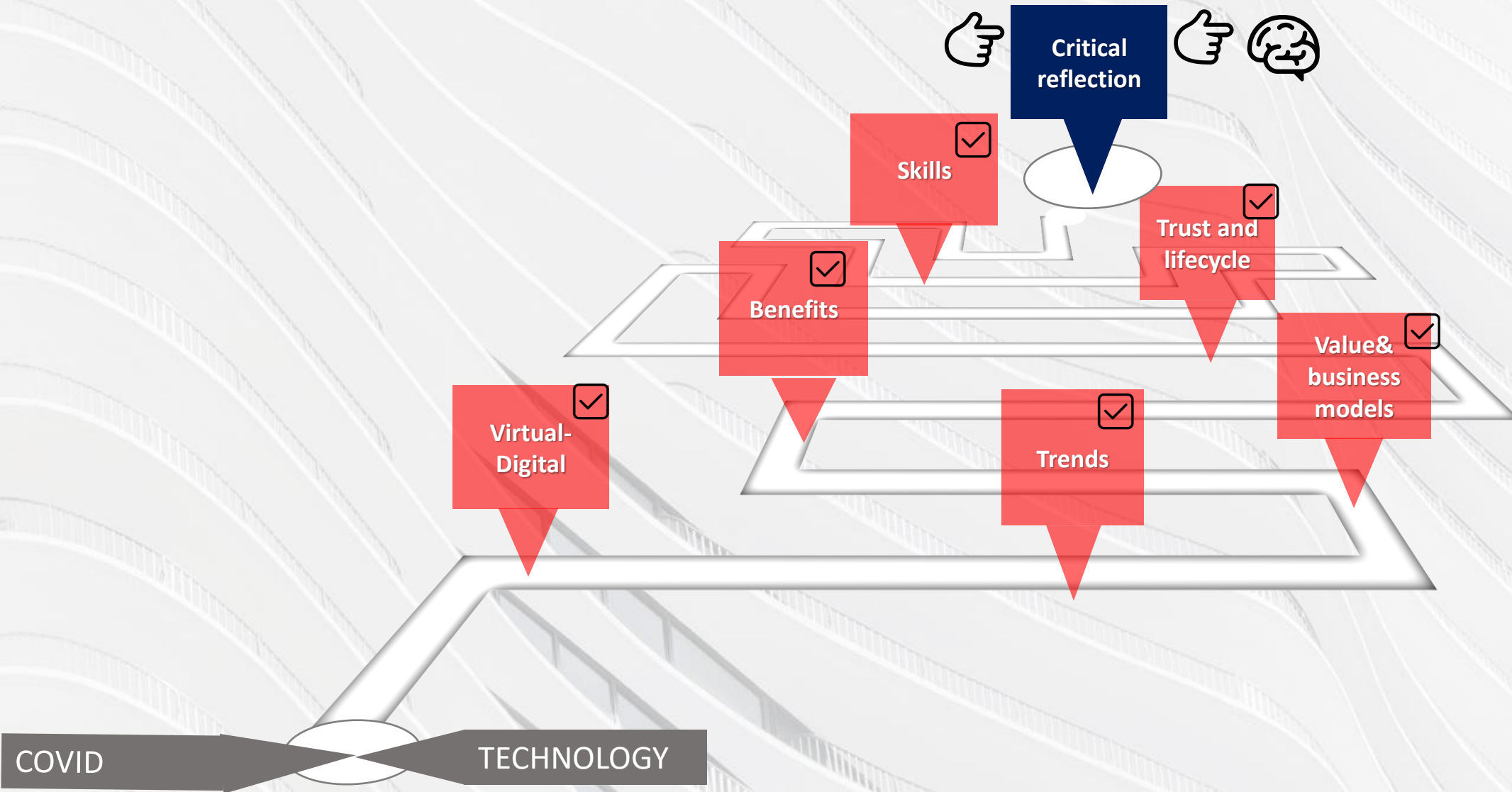
Experiential training (role play)



Technical skills to master virtual tools



Today's journey & Critical reflection



Useful readings

1. How to manage virtual distance? [Blog post](#) (book's comment point 2).
2. Book [*"The Power of Virtual Distance: A Guide to Productivity and Happiness in the Age of Remote Work"*](#) - 2020
3. [*Influencing Virtual Teams: 17 Tactics That Get Things Done with Your Remote Employees*](#) by Hassan Osman-2016

I suggest to follow the order above (1,2) : the post gives a view of what is virtual distance (VD) in a nutshell' to understand if you want to buy the book.

The third point has been my personal choice outside the academic materials. You are free to choose other books or visiting other webpages available on the web, obviously according to your personal and professional preferences.