

What do management consultants want from academics?

The latest CMCE research report shares insights on the role of academic research in the management consulting practice.

In 2021 CMCE carried out some exploratory research into how consultants access and use outputs of academic research in their work and how academic work contributes to the knowledge base that consultants draw on. What type of academic outputs do management consultants use? What are the most frequently used sources and what are the key benefits of using academic findings in the management consulting practice? These are some of the questions that the report addresses and uses as a starting point to reflect on the future relationship between management consulting and academia.

Thanks to a combination of desk research, an online survey, telephone and face to face interviews, and two focus groups, the report presents the insights and reflections of a representative sample of experienced consultants (79% of them has over 10 years' experience), from all sizes of consulting businesses, and included consultants who had held senior positions in major international consulting firms.

In occasion of its launch, Dr Karol Szlichcinski, author of the report, said: "Our research provided some useful insights into how consultants use the products of academic research. Consultancies, like other businesses, are customer and demand led. Consultants will reach for research outputs if, and only if, they help solve clients' problems." In particular, the report identifies three key ways in which academic work contribute to widening the knowledge base and improving the of management consulting practice:

1. it is a source of ideas underlying major types of consulting interventions and of widely used consulting tools;
2. outputs of academic work provide information for use on a specific project;
3. academic outputs can contribute to consultants' continuing professional development.

Commenting on the launch of the report, CMCE Director, Nick Bush said: " 'Academic' is a bit of a dirty word in management consulting circles as it implies something that's divorced from reality but, in fact, really good academic work can underpin management consultants' advice to their clients as it's based on extensive research and rigorous analysis – something that client timescales or budgets may not allow for." He also added that "The challenge for academics is to make their findings more readily

available to those involved in business change and the challenge for consultants is to open up the dialogue with academics to make this happen. I believe our report contributes significantly to this dialogue.”

The report also shares recommendations on how consultants can make better use of the findings of academic research and how academics can increase the impact of their research by disseminating it more effectively to consultants, and through consultants to their clients.

The ‘*What do management consultants want from academics*’ report is available on the CMCE website [here](#) .

Notes for editors

About the Author of this Report

Dr Karol Szlichcinski has 30 years’ experience as a management consultant, with expertise in strategy, market analysis, business planning, change management and the exploitation of IT. In 2013 he was appointed professor at the University of Silesia School of Management, Katowice, Poland, and held senior academic posts at the university for five years. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Consulting, Chartered Marketer and Chartered Psychologist, and has published a book, Financial Network Services, and numerous reports and articles for business and academic readerships

About the Centre for Management Consulting Excellence

The Centre for Management Consulting Excellence (CMCE) helps consultants deliver increased value to their clients by sharing know-how and promoting research of value to the practice of consultancy. The Centre serves the community of all who are interested in management consultancy – including not only practitioners but also clients, academics and students – through a programme of events, an on-line knowledge exchange, and by undertaking research, usually in collaboration with business schools, into topics of interest in consultancy. The Centre for Management Consulting Excellence is currently run by volunteers drawn from the Worshipful Company of Management Consultants (WCoMC).

About the Worshipful Company of Management Consultants

Livery Companies are the modern successors to the ancient guilds based in the City of London. Traditionally they have had charitable and educational objectives with, for example, many founding schools. The Worshipful Company of Management Consultants, CMCE’S parent organisation, was founded in 1992 and is number 105 on the list of Companies in the City. It is a closed company – i.e. only those involved with management consultancy are eligible to become members.