

# **Report**

## **Growing our Next-Gen membership**

### Securing Established IMCs' futures

## **ICMCI Established IMCs 2019 Young Consultants Survey**

### **Outline**

- 1. Objectives of this initiative**
- 2. Methodology and sample characteristics**
- 3. Key insights and recommended next steps**
- 4. Summary of detailed results**

## 1. Objectives of this initiative

The objectives of the Established IMC Community (EIC) were identified to include:

- Sharing of best practices related to:
  - Realizing the ICMCI vision of becoming the voice of the management consulting profession;
  - Recruiting / attracting members;
  - Creating value for the CMC designation and accredited consulting practices; and
  - Other IMC offerings.
- Focus the resources of the member IMCs on mutually beneficial initiatives including but not limited to:
  - Consulting readiness index and the working taskforce;
  - Increasing outreach to large firms in each IMC's jurisdiction; and
  - Other initiatives to be identified in the future.

The first major really important membership-building initiative identified for the EIC at the last annual meeting in Milan was to close a major information gap that is facing many IMCs:

- Many IMCs are experiencing a drop in membership, and experiencing difficulty in attracting new, younger members.
- We must understand what the next generation of consultants want and need from a professional body/community.
- “Membership” as we practice it today is a concept of our parents and grandparents – over 50 years old. It needs reinvigoration and new relevance for consultants of the future who likely belong to many virtual communities through social media platforms.

A survey tool to fill this information need was launched early this year with surveys conducted during the summer and fall of 2019.

## 2. Methodology and sample characteristics

This survey was undertaken by seven members of the Established Institutes Community (EIC) including Austria, Canada, Japan, Netherlands, Thailand, United Kingdom and USA

Surveys were conducted during the summer of 2019 and were targeted at consultants under age 45

### **Survey components:**

#### Demographic Qualifiers:

- Gender (M/F/other) – 3 tick/click boxes for easy completion and tabulation
- Age (under 25, 26-35, 36-45) – 3 tick/click boxes for easy completion and tabulation
- Country – not required if you are circulating the survey to consultants in only one country

#### Questions:

- What attracted you to consulting as a career option?
- What are the biggest challenges you face in your work as a consultant?
- What are your main priorities in future development as a consultant?
- If the consulting sector had a professional body/ consulting community, how could such an organization help you and be valuable to you, in your career as a consultant?
- Is there anything else you think a professional body/consulting community for the consulting sector should focus on?

### Sample characteristics

ICM	# of responses < age 46	Male	Female	Other	< 26	26-35	36-45	>45
Austria	16	62.5%	37.5%			<45 (mostly 30-40)		
Canada	47	76.6%	23.4%		6 (13%)	33 (70%)	8 (17%)	
Japan	2 < 35 26 > 35				< 35: 2 (7%) from sample of 119		> 35: 26 (93%)	
Netherlands	45	64.4%	33.6%	4.4%	1 (2%)	10 (22%)	34 (76%)	
Thailand	42	65.8%	44.7%		4 (9.5%)	9 (21.5%)	25 (59.5%)	4 (9.5%)
United Kingdom	17 (mostly in-person)	41.2%	58.8%		4 (23.5%)	11 (64.7%)	2 (11.7%)	
United States	5	80.0%	20.0%			1 (20%)	4 (80%)	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>111 (64.5%)</b>	<b>59 (34.3%)</b>	<b>2 (1.2%)</b>	<b>&gt; 15 (8.2%)</b>	<b>&gt; 66 (35.9%)</b>	<b>&gt; 73 (39.7%)</b>	<b>4 to 30 (&lt;16.3%)</b>

### 3. Key insights and recommended next steps

The key insights that were identified from summarizing the results from all seven EIC participants are shown below under each of the questions that were asked.

- a. What attracts younger consultants to consulting as a career option?
  - Independence, use of knowledge and skills to improve performance and sustainability of clients
  - Variety of projects, industry sectors, clients and issues
  - Personal development and self-enlightenment
  - Lack of other career choices
  
- b. What are the biggest challenges younger consultants face?
  - Having and keeping up with knowledge and tools to meet clients' challenges
  - Finding clients and gaining / maintain their trust / respect; avoiding youth and gender bias
  - Dealing with aggressive workplace environments in firms
  - Balancing all tasks and focus points
  
- c. What are younger consultants' main priorities for future development?
  - Finding consulting peers and project partners
  - Improving knowledge and technical skills including coaching, change management, future issues, new insights, project management, brand building
  - Futureproofing against economic downturns
  
- d. How could a professional body/ consulting community help younger consultants and create value for them?
  - Networking events; not just to see and be seen, but to speak about special topics, fears and opportunities
  - Speed dating for potential project partners
  - Elevate the standards and credibility of consultants; differentiate between professionals and those that just call themselves consultants; code of conduct
  - Learning including new trends / tools, professional development, conferences, coaching and mentoring, online forums and regional meet-ups
  - Sharing best practices and experiences; inter-collegial consultations
  - Platforms for finding talented and relevant colleagues
  
- e. What other things should a professional body/ consulting community focus on?
  - Invite younger consultants to speak about their consulting approach and experiences
  - Research key reasons why clients hire consultants
  - Create partnerships with firms to stream new consultants into the CMC designation
  - Spot future trends and share insights
  - Member protection and benefit programs

## **Recommended next steps**

We recommend that, based on the key insights shown above, the Established IMC Community consider the following factors when designing attraction and retention strategies for younger consultants:

- Younger consultants value independence and variety – let's feature those aspects of the consulting profession when launching marketing targeted at that segment.
- Younger consultants face a common challenge to stay on top of the knowledge needed to stay competitive (repeated as a main priority). Again, there is a market need here that our organizations should be able to address.
- Networking and credibility / reputation of the profession are consistently identified as ways in which the Institutes can help younger consultants.

#### 4. Summary of detailed results

The detailed responses for each question and for each of the participating EIC members are shown below. Responses were combined and duplicates were removed as much as possible.

<b>Question 1 – What attracted you to consulting as a career option?</b>	
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-fulfillment, self-realization</li> <li>• The lack of opportunities to work at a company</li> <li>• Method for authentic engagement for a sustainable world</li> <li>• Various facilitation jobs that led to an entrepreneurial approach</li> <li>• Increased income opportunities</li> <li>• Independence, flexibility</li> </ul>
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breadth of knowledge required including problem-solving and the use of my analytical and strategic skill-sets</li> <li>• Adding value to businesses including seeing tangible changes in client performance over a short time period; gratification of satisfied clients; and helping businesses improve and maximize their potential</li> <li>• Variety of projects, tasks; never the same day twice; breadth of experiences, and exposure to various industries; and diversity of clients and client needs</li> <li>• Entrepreneurial environment; learning from clients; observing clients turn ideas into businesses; and learning / helping clients do more with less</li> </ul>
Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity: diversity in assignment, work in multiple organizations, diversity of topics, several projects at the same time</li> <li>• Making a difference: in public matters, improving the Netherlands, contributing to change</li> <li>• Personal and professional development: the challenge of working with different organizations forces you to develop yourself, lots of opportunities to learn and grow, incredibly fast learning curve</li> <li>• Personal talent: my talent for it, expressing myself</li> <li>• Freedom/independence: professional freedom, own clients, autonomy, independence</li> <li>• Helping others: being able to help with wicked problem solving, helping different organizations in realizing their objectives</li> </ul>
Japan (based on responses from the total membership)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helpful to self-enlightenment</li> <li>• Can enter various industries or enterprises with own consulting method / know-how</li> <li>• Pleasure to support directly for clients' management</li> <li>• High salary</li> </ul>
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freelance opportunity</li> <li>• A profession that uses knowledge and ability of one's self</li> <li>• A profession that has a good income</li> <li>• A stable career</li> <li>• A respected profession</li> <li>• Other</li> <li>• Provide knowledge and experience for helping others to achieve better results</li> </ul>

	<p>than teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A profession that needs to develop itself all the time</li> <li>• A profession that can help and solve others' problems</li> </ul>
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety, diversity of work and of projects; it was the ability to work across organizations, industries and specializations.</li> <li>• Saw consulting as a stepping stone to working in industry</li> <li>• Training and developing skills (both hard and soft consulting skills) and the speed of learning</li> <li>• Complete lack of career choices</li> <li>• Use of existing ability as 'problem solvers'; how the consulting profession embraces this</li> <li>• The "way of thinking" and the "prestige" around the profession</li> <li>• Higher salary and the opportunity to work / travel overseas.</li> <li>• Natural progression to move from accountancy into consultancy or from academia undertaking an MBA into consultancy</li> <li>• Opportunity to meet lots of people</li> <li>• Good to be able to fast track skills</li> </ul>
United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independence, learning, flexibility, no geographic link</li> <li>• Flexibility, Learning, industry diversity, no link to a geographical location, meeting people, travelling</li> <li>• A way to help more people innovatively.</li> <li>• Business, making a difference and variety of challenges</li> <li>• Independence and the ability to do what I do my way</li> </ul>
<b>Question 2 – What are the biggest challenges you face in your work as a consultant?</b>	
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being able to have the knowledge and tools to meet clients' challenges in a holistic manner</li> <li>• Having an area of expertise but still having the skills to address other needs too</li> <li>• Finding clients</li> <li>• Gaining clients' trust as a young female consultant</li> <li>• Being paid for all the effort of the consulting job</li> </ul>
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding and using the right methodology for a given problem</li> <li>• Learning the right questions to ask, knowing what to do at each moment</li> <li>• Keeping up-to-date with technology</li> <li>• Youth Bias including commanding respect in a room; bias against recommendations from young consultants; and the constant need to secure internal support for my client solution</li> <li>• Lack of research support</li> <li>• Aggressive internal workplace environment including workplace infighting for recognition and advancement and "You are either moving up or moving out"</li> <li>• Responsiveness of the Client including resistance to change; resistance to recommendations; and keeping the client focused on transformation while day to day problems arise</li> <li>• Breadth of Industries including needs are varied; always a steep learning curve;</li> </ul>

	<p>and rapid pace of change – industry knowledge is out of date quickly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sourcing new projects and business development; a constant distraction; and RFP process is arduous and often heartbreaking</li> </ul>
Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being/keeping up to date: innovation, to be up to date on issues of the future, creating new forms of consultancy</li> <li>• Work-life balance: long days, managing multiple deadlines, impact on personal life</li> <li>• Personal/professional development: creating time for more in dept know how of own working field, development of skills as a change agent</li> <li>• Getting customer focus right: quality has a price, more integral approach for organizational development</li> <li>• Time versus quality: delivering in time with high quality, measure of quality, spreadsheet management</li> <li>• Acquisition/sales: acquisition development of myself, having enough clients and how can I communicate the value of my services</li> <li>• Effectiveness of advice: balancing between quality and acceptance of client</li> <li>• Balancing all tasks/focus points: focus on more than one; combining assignments, innovation and sales, lots of different clients and assignments, rapidly changing environments</li> <li>• Implementation/change processes: big change processes, getting things implemented</li> </ul>
Japan (based on responses from the total membership)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to provide consultation for un-specialized area</li> <li>• Winning projects constantly</li> <li>• Sometimes treated as “shady” business/no trust</li> <li>• Low recognition of CMC in industries</li> </ul>
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting trust from clients</li> <li>• Continuous employment</li> <li>• Being known in the target audience</li> <li>• Have the opportunity to create value from knowledge, ability and experience to benefit others</li> <li>• Clearly understanding work with clients</li> <li>• Get to know and learn others’ experience from different group of clients</li> <li>• Brand building</li> </ul>
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need to be constantly changing, keeping pace, keeping ahead of clients to hit the ground running in their area with the need to be knowledgeable of new methodologies and technologies</li> <li>• Meeting client expectations, agreeing with them and managing them throughout the project life cycle</li> <li>• Working across very different organizational cultures (i.e. consultancy and client) and how they needed to adapt to this</li> <li>• Competing methodologies whilst working for a large consultancy and working on client site and how this can lead to duplication of effort and reporting</li> <li>• The challenge of maintaining high utilization rate and maintaining a work life balance</li> <li>• Communications, competition, ability to build a reputation, maintaining a pipeline and lack of the right support whilst working</li> <li>• Having the breadth as well as the depth, building a reputation and maintaining a</li> </ul>



	<p>pipeline of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making new relationships</li> <li>• Internal work in addition to client work</li> </ul>
United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquiring business</li> <li>• I am a current student not yet a full consultant</li> <li>• Lead and customer development</li> <li>• Steady flow of new business (the old 'if-you-are-delivering-you-are-not-marketing-and-selling' problem)</li> </ul>
<b>Question 3 – What are your main priorities in future development as a consultant?</b>	
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding consulting-peers and project partners</li> <li>• Finding and maintaining clients</li> <li>• Maintaining work-life balance</li> </ul>
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become a more effective coach/mentor including integration of coaching and change management approaches to better guide my clients through transformational journey</li> <li>• Increase capabilities, knowledge, and technical skills including development of soft skills and long-term relationships; enhanced business modelling; and enhanced research skills</li> <li>• Develop industry specific expertise</li> <li>• Increased confidence with clients including accurately and quickly diagnosing problems</li> <li>• Too many to list: the challenge comes when being looked at as an expert in many fields.</li> <li>• The need to develop in many areas from finance to HR</li> </ul>
Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovations: knowledge of future issues, keeping up with new insights</li> <li>• Developing professional profile: learning on specific themes, growth in seniority</li> <li>• Continual learning: keep learning – on the job and through education</li> <li>• Leadership: learning to lead others in a friendly manner</li> <li>• Research: doing research on the topics I want to advise on</li> <li>• Specific knowledge or skills: learning to work systemically, learning new roles. E-learning</li> <li>• Impact/added value: proving added value, keep growing in making impact</li> <li>• Personal development: Do more of what I find fun, stay in contact with my true and inner self</li> <li>• Work-life balance: managing a work-life balance</li> </ul>
Japan (based on responses from the total membership)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rebuild self consulting method/know-how/scheme catching up for the market trend and/or technology in a timely manner</li> <li>• Network</li> </ul>
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working process</li> <li>• Selling skills</li> <li>• Project management skills</li> <li>• Client relationship management skills</li> <li>• Expertise in consulting work</li> <li>• Mindset</li> <li>• Brand building</li> </ul>

United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing skills, including mediation, qualitative skill data analytics, business analysis, skills where there is a market need, sales and networking, communication skills</li> <li>• Gaining more experience, building confidence, sharpening their brand as a consultant, working in specific industries or areas</li> <li>• Continue as is or try to find out where they fit in determining what their area of specialization is and take specific courses in that area</li> <li>• Not being in control of his career</li> <li>• Considering moving away from consulting including to future proof against any downturn</li> <li>• Building confidence and developing a specialism</li> <li>• Clearer sense of direction</li> </ul>
United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build and consolidate my intellectual property</li> <li>• To become a consultant is the first goal</li> <li>• I would like to be able to work at home but travel to different locations</li> <li>• Business development and market growth</li> <li>• To build a solo practice for change management in the process manufacturing (food, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, etc.) industries</li> </ul>
<b>Question 4 - If the consulting sector had a professional body/consulting community, how could such an organization help you and be valuable to you, in your career as a consultant?</b>	
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize networking events where it's not only about "see and be seen" but an opportunity to speak about special topics, fears, opportunities</li> <li>• Speed dating for project partners</li> <li>• Giving an overview about the different support opportunities around financial support and funding</li> <li>• Peer groups, mentor programs</li> <li>• ADR/mediation procedures</li> </ul>
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide credibility for my profession / designation including validation of my experience as a consultant; screening to ensure competence within the profession; differentiation between professionals and those who simply call themselves consultants; uniformity and credibility of the profession; and maintenance of a code of professional conduct</li> <li>• Learning including keeping me up-to-date on new trends and tools; professional development; conferences; coaching / mentorship training; career development and advancement training; and teaching industry trends that I can pass on to clients</li> <li>• Networking with peers; access / exposure to industry experts</li> </ul>
Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network: networking, meeting peers, connecting (on specific themes/cases)</li> <li>• The OOA way: the way the OOA does it</li> <li>• Quality standard/certificate: convincing potential customers what quality is and that quality comes with a price, being a real quality 'brand'</li> <li>• Knowledge development: education programs, providing information about the latest developments in the professional field</li> <li>• Inter-vision: sharing best practices, inter collegial consultation</li> <li>• Inspiration: low cost not traditional meetings with experts and colleagues</li> <li>• Skill development: trainings in sales and other consulting skills, treating current</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>topics by means of workshops</li> <li>Hiring/finding talent: a platform which helps me to find talent and relevant people</li> <li>Can't help: cannot, too much diversification, why should I need help?</li> </ul>
Japan (based on responses from the total membership)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See below. Answers for questions 4 and 5 were combined.</li> </ul>
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A source of knowledge</li> <li>A center for exchanging experiences</li> <li>A center for developing professional skills</li> <li>A recognized brand</li> <li>A well-known brand</li> <li>A center for finding various fields of consultants</li> <li>A certified body to build credibility</li> </ul>
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The two main areas that were strongest were networking and knowledge sharing</li> <li>Networking suggestions were wide ranging from online forums and yearly conferences to regional meet ups</li> <li>Other areas mentioned included codes of practice, career development, certification, qualifications, development of CPD courses/materials, discounts for supplies, support with future pipeline, and job offerings</li> <li>Interested in case studies, industry knowledge and one participant highlighted the need for impartial third-party advice</li> <li>Some of the participants in this group said 'nothing'</li> <li>The ones that did answer mentioned training and discussion forums as beneficial.</li> </ul>
United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Networking, learning</li> <li>I would like to use it to learn consulting skills and networking, perhaps even gain that first consulting job</li> <li>Educate business executives on the value of external services</li> </ul>
<b>Question 5 - Is there anything else you think a professional body/consulting community for the consulting sector should focus on?</b>	
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>invite (young) consultants to speak about their consulting approach</li> </ul>
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a sustainable and high-quality mentorship program</li> <li>Address the 'House of Lies' stigma of the consulting profession</li> <li>Differentiation: Designation holders should have a higher level of credibility than a B4/MBB consultant without it</li> <li>Research the key reasons why clients hire management consultants, what factors affect</li> <li>Implement an international qualifying exam</li> <li>Create partnerships with consulting firms to stream new consultants towards their CMC</li> <li>Designation</li> </ul>
Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future challenges/trends: spotting new trends and new research, technology</li> <li>Quality: developing standards/frameworks, developing professional guidelines, recognized label</li> <li>Education/academy: an academy or other education</li> <li>Professionalism of profession: society has a negative view of. The role of</li> </ul>

	<p>professional consultants, let people know consultants can make a difference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of members: insurance and other measures to protect members</li> <li>• Network/ bring people together: connect people, bring people together</li> <li>• Development of skills: helping to improve my skills</li> <li>• Informal learning community: it should be a network or learning community, not a top down organization for members</li> </ul>
Japan (based on responses from the total membership)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve recognition/visibility of CMC</li> <li>• Introduce the latest consulting method</li> <li>• Create a “market database” to be shared and updated</li> <li>• Set up opportunities for networking</li> <li>• Share best practices of other consultants</li> <li>• Hold events to obtain projects</li> <li>• Provide an educational seminar for young consultants</li> </ul>
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main body for proposing consulting project to government sectors or large businesses</li> <li>• Provide employment services for consultants</li> <li>• Provide job opportunities for consultants</li> <li>• A good reputation</li> </ul>
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career development</li> <li>• Value for money / clear benefits</li> <li>• Better marketing</li> <li>• Work life balance</li> <li>• Qualification on specialized areas in consulting</li> <li>• Salary Information</li> <li>• Social responsibility / role in community</li> <li>• Self-assessment</li> <li>• Specific training in specialized consulting</li> <li>• Diversity / inclusion</li> <li>• Ethical Standards</li> <li>• Under 25s were unaware of the professional body for consulting but were very eager to find out more and provide suggestions on how that could work</li> <li>• Also keen to see the professional body providing a career pathway for the profession</li> </ul>
United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the management consulting profession</li> <li>• Skills and networking should be the main focus</li> <li>• Protection from labor and tax laws that increase our costs or reduce our ability to serve enterprise customers</li> <li>• Marketing that sets the organization and its membership apart as a superior solution to prospects and clients</li> </ul>