Hochschule Furtwangen University

Business School

Medical Devices and Healthcare Management (MBA)

Master Thesis

How should small/micro consultancies market their services?

An exemplary case for a German medical micro consultancy

Submitted on 20/09/2019

By Maxime Cerulus

Matriculation no. 257055

maxime.cerulus@hs-furtwangen.de

First supervisor: Prof. Dr. Michael Lederer

Second supervisor: Dr. Volker Klügl

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors, Prof. Dr. Michael Lederer and Dr. Volker Klügl, for helping make this a successful project. Their input throughout this six-month project was crucial to fulfilling the achievements of this thesis.

The client survey was created with the help of several employee's from IPP and Dr. Volker Klügl. I would like to acknowledge the time they spent helping test the client survey before it went live. In addition to providing feedback regarding the general structure and specific questions. I would also like to thank Dr. Volker Klügl, IPP employees and course colleagues for sharing the client survey with all their contacts in the medical industry. Without them the achieved number of participants would not have been possible. Furthermore, I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Ted Azarmi for all the help he provided regarding the statistical analysis of the results of the client survey. Specifically, in understanding how to use Minitab to statistically analyse the ordinal data.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their uninterrupted support throughout my project.

Abstract

In the past small/micro consultancies have neglected marketing due to many reasons, such as limited resources or success with one major client. This is why an in-depth analysis on this topic of interest was performed. Special areas of interest were, what services should be focused on, how to market them successfully and feasibly and what clients perceive as most important for the final selection of a consultancy. IPP a German micro consultancy was used as the focal point of the study, to answer these research questions.

Along with the secondary data obtained from the literature review, primary data was obtained by analysing marketing tools, consultancies and their clients in the German medical industry. A client survey with 49 participants from European medical companies, which covered a wide spectrum of clients, was conducted. Relevant statistical analyses were carried out to identify the significance of the results. Additional questionnaires with IPP employees and interviews with experts were conducted to supplement the data.

Results show that consultancies should focus on several service sectors, as well as offering industry content and trainings to their clients. They should also use several marketing tools and not solely rely on referral marketing. A list of tools was identified that can be implemented with a limited marketing budget. Examples are speaking/presenting and networking at events, content marketing and online marketing. These tools were found to help successfully find clients and build trust.

Consultancies should also develop as many relationships as possible with different clients and build on their knowledge in their field of business, as this will develop their reputation. These points should be focused on, instead of trying to offer too many services. If this is achieved, consultancies will improve their success in the final selection process carried out by clients.

It is important that consultancies are prepared to invest the necessary time and make marketing a whole company obsession. To achieve this, the starting point should involve consultancies assessing their situation and developing a marketing plan. This will help them identify all the necessary aspects to successfully market their services in a systematic format.

Table of Content

List of Figures

List of Tables

Abbreviations

SME	Small to medium enterprise
MC	Management Consulting
DS	Dentsply Sirona
IPP	The case company: German medical micro consultancy
HIPP	Hipp & Sohn GmbH
WOM	Word of Mouth
MDR	Medical Device Regulation
USP	Unique Selling Point
PMS	Post Market Surveillance
SEM	Search Engine Marketing
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
QMR	Quality Management Representative
V&V	Verification and Validation
QM	Quality Management
BU	Business Unit
IQR	Interquartile Range (IQR = Q3 – Q1)
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HFU	Hochschule Furtwangen University

1. Introduction

Research has found that 40.2% of small to medium enterprises (SME) face problems with sales and marketing, specifically with promotion and market research (Huang and Brown, 2000, p. 76). Yet it has been acknowledged to be the most important of all business activities and essential for the survival and growth of SMEs (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 2). In Europe, in 2016 it was found that typically less than half of the businesses survived past five years of starting-up (Eurostat, 2018). When looking at the highly competitive market of Germany the survival of businesses past five years, was less than 40% (Eurostat, 2018).

In terms of consulting, a 2019 study of over 32,000 consultancies found that 83% of consultants stated that they struggle with marketing and sales. When looking at consultants who only work with one to three clients per year it was found that 45% of them struggle with marketing and sales. It was also identified that 33% of consultants market their business daily, 35% weekly, 11% monthly, 14% only when they need a new client and 6% don't do any marketing. The number of clients worked with was found to have a positive correlation with the frequency of marketing (Zipursky, 2019). Furthermore, it found that consultants do not invest much money into marketing. The following results were obtained; 40% invested less than $1,000 a year, 38% invested between $1,000 and $5,000 a year, and 20% invested $5,000 or more a year. The latter tended to be the higher-earning consultants (Zipursky, 2019).

According to Biech (2003, p. 2), marketing in consulting is "everything that the company needs to do to find or keep clients". Clark and Nixon (2015, p. 2) stated that "marketing is about seeing the world through the eyes of your client, first understanding and then acting on what they need and want, and everything else should then flow from there.

This thesis will look to research and analyse marketing in small/micro consultancies, by obtaining both primary and secondary data. Firstly, it is important to gain an understanding of what consulting and SMEs are, and their impacts on the European market. Followed by looking at the marketing challenges they face and why this is the case.

1.1 Industry overview

1.1.1 SME

According to the European Union, an enterprise is "any entity engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of its legal form" (European Commission, 2005, p. 12). There are three different categories of SME, which are explained below in Table 1.

Enterprise category	Headcount	Annual turnover	Balance Sheet
Medium-sized	< 250 employees	≤ €50 million	≤ €43 million
Small	< 50 employees	≤ €10 million	≤ €10 million
Micro	< 10 employees	≤ €2 million	≤ €2 million

Table 1: The three different categories of SMEs (European Commission, 2005, p. 14)

If the company satisfies any of these three categories than according to the European Union, it is an SME.

In 2016, SMEs accounted for 99.8% of the European non-financial business sector and 66.6% of employment (Muller *et al.*, 2017, p. 11). In total 93% were classed as micro SMEs, 5.8% as small SMEs and 0.9% as medium SMEs. However, their contribution to the European economy was relatively equal, equating to a total of 56.8% of value-added (Muller *et al.*, 2017, p. 12). Therefore, it is fair to say that SMEs play an essential role in the European economy. They are considered a major source of entrepreneurial skills, innovation and employment (European Commission, 2005, p. 5).

1.1.2 Consulting

A service has been defined as, "an activity which typically has some element of intangibility associated with it and involves some interaction with customers or property in their possession, and does not result in a transfer of ownership" (McDonald, Frow and Payne, 2011, p. 27). Consulting is a subset of services (professional services) that is different from other services by being mainly advisory and being operated by skilled professionals (Gummesson, 1979, p. 308)(McDonald, Frow and Payne, 2011, p. 27). It has been around as early as the eighteenth-century but since then many changes have occurred.

The consulting market has been steadily changing over the last years, primarily because clients are asking for more than previously (Clark and Nixon, 2015, p. 1). Clients are looking to build relationships with their advisors covering all points such as technical excellence, service provision and client experience. Meaning they want consultants that care as much about their business outcomes as they do (Clark and Nixon, 2015, p. 2).

The growth of the service sector over the last two decades has been substantial. It has been referred to as the "second industrial revolution" and as Jim Spohrer (director of IBM Almaden Services Research Centre) stated, "This shift to services represents the single largest labour force migration in human history" (McDonald, Frow and Payne, 2011, p. 1). In 2017, the European management consulting (MC) turnover grew by 7.8% and employment by 5.2% (Cerruti *et al.*, 2018, p. 5). Over the last three years, MC turnover has been growing on average by 7.7% per year compared to the European GDP growing by 2.4% per year (Cerruti *et al.*, 2018, p. 6). Therefore, this industry is a major driver for the overall European economy. This growth is being primarily driven by France, Spain, Germany and Hungary (Cerruti *et al.*, 2018, p. 9). The MC recovery from the recession that effected Europe has been largely driven by consulting in digital transformation, as since 2014 most countries have highlighted that clients are asking for more advice and support in this area. This has been primarily driven by consultancies with 50 plus employees due to the new skills required and availability to invest in this area (Cerruti *et al.*, 2018, p. 10).

In consulting, an increase in turnover typically means an increase in billed hours if the price remains constant. However, the employment trend does not always match turnover growth because of the time it typically takes to develop consultants (Cerruti *et al.*, 2018, p. 12).

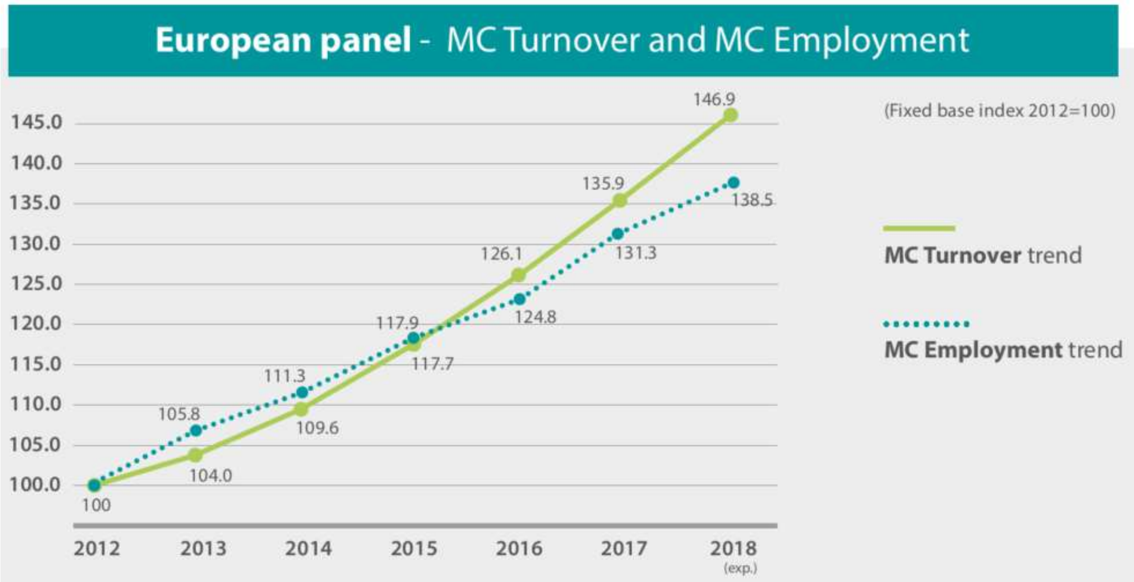

Figure 1: Management consulting turnover vs. employment in Europe (Cerruti et al., 2018, p. 13)

From Figure 1 an interesting trend can be observed. From 2012 – 2015 employment rate was higher than the turnover rate. From 2015 onwards turnover rate became larger, this means there has been a recovery or increase in chargeability (Cerruti *et al.*, 2018, p. 13).

The MC market can be split into several major service segments. In 2017 the following market distributions were experienced.

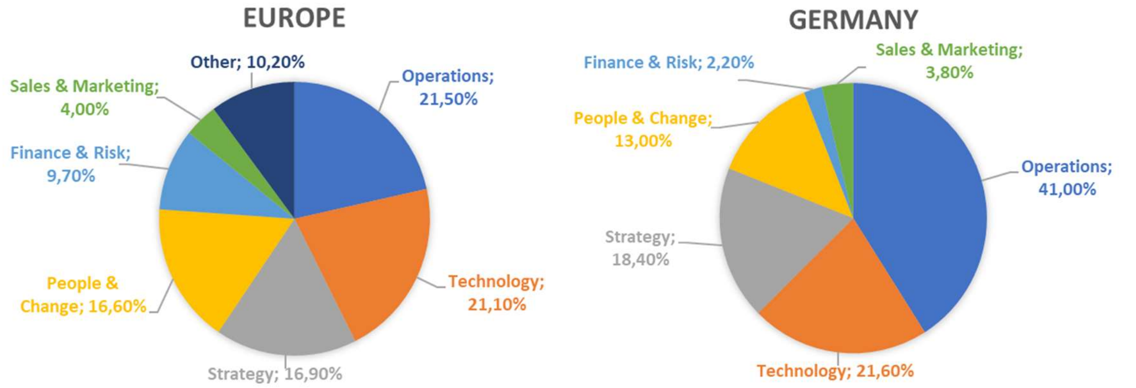

Figure 2: Management consulting turnover distribution split into service segments for Europe and Germany in 2017 (Cerruti et al., 2018, p. 21)

In 2017, the two main service segments were in technology and operations. An explanation of the service segments can be found in Appendix A. Additionally, the turnover can be split into spending from different economic sectors. Figure 3 shows the results from 2017 and it is clear to see that consumer & industrial products and financial services provided over 50% of the overall turnover. When this data was compared to data obtained prior to the financial crisis in 2009, only minor changes were observed (Cerruti *et al.*, 2018, p. 26). Meaning the economic sectors are relatively stable in terms of which ones seek the majority of consulting services.

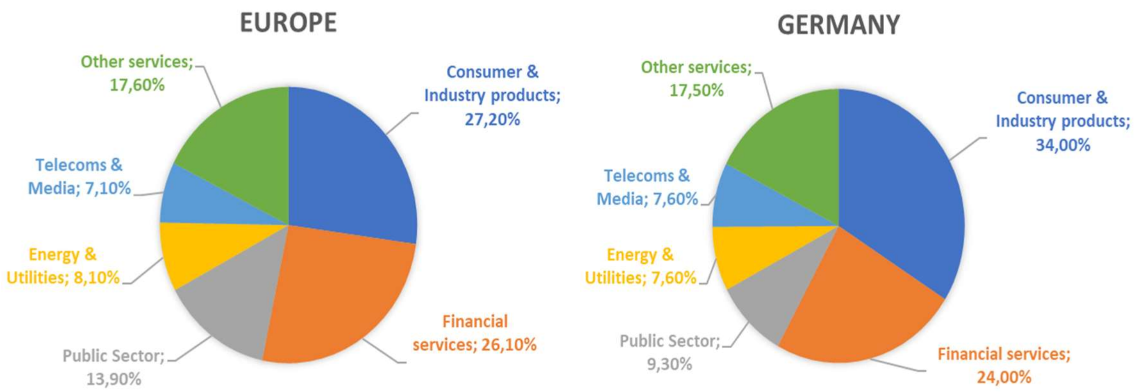

Figure 3: Management consulting turnover distribution split into economic sectors for Europe and Germany in 2017 (Cerruti et al., 2018, p. 25)

The German MC industry has continued its growth path and experienced an increase in turnover of 8.6% in 2017 and an average growth of 7.5% from 2010 – 2017 (Cerruti *et al.*, 2018, p. 36). Similarly, it experienced an increase in employment of 1.9% in 2017 (Cerruti *et al.*, 2018, p. 12). This means the market is experiencing a strong increase in chargeability for its consultants. In Germany, the average (2016 – 2018) turnover per professional per year was € 265,000 (Cerruti *et al.*, 2018, p. 36). If 190 annual project days are taken as the typical value, based on information from IPP, a micro consultancy in the medical industry. In addition to 8 hour working days, then the average hourly rate for German management consultants from 2016 – 2018 was calculated to be approximately € 170 per hour.

When comparing the distribution of turnover from the different service segments with Europe, see Figure 2, there are some differences. Operations segment provided by far the highest percentage of turnover, almost double that of Europe. This could be due to the amount of support clients are looking for with regards to digital change, the new Data Protection Law (GDPR) and the fact that it has a huge automobile industry. Whereas finance & risk and other provided much lower values in Germany. In terms of turnover distribution based on economic sectors, both Europe and Germany were very similar, with slight differences between the public sector and consumer & industry products. Similarly to Europe, the growth of consulting in Germany is being pushed by digital change. In 2018 it was forecasted that there would be a high demand in the fields of change management, customer relationship management/sales, business development/innovation and data security due to the new GDPR (Cerruti et al., 2018, p. 37).

1.2 Marketing challenges for small consultancies

A 2004 study published by Jessie Hagen of the U.S. Bank analysed the factors causing small businesses to fail. In terms of marketing the following factors were found (Hagen, 2004):

1. Minimizing the importance of promoting the business properly (64%)
2. Not understanding who competition is or ignoring competition (55%)
3. Too much focus and reliance on one client (47%)

For consultants who advise clients in strategy and marketing this brings about an interesting dilemma. It's questions their credibility especially if clients are aware that the consultants are not concerned with their own strategy and marketing.

In 2011, academic research seemed to still be unable to resolve a number of questions about SMEs and marketing (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 3). The majority of research has looked at factors that are missing or act as barriers in SMEs, explaining why they are unable to apply marketing ideas and concepts that are most often developed for large companies (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 3).

According to Grant et al. (2001, p. 6), SME marketing is likely to be haphazard, informal, loose, unstructured, spontaneous, reactive, built upon and conforming to industry norms. This is due to issues such as limited resources (finance, time, marketing knowledge), lack of specialist expertise, and limited impact on the marketplace. Due to the fact that typically there is a lack of marketing expertise in SMEs, they often struggle with implementing strategic planning, marketing plan, and other elements necessary for success (Day, 2000).

Nwankow and Gbadamosi (2011, p. 2) found that SMEs struggle with sales and marketing for several reasons. Firstly, the lack of financial resources limits their ability to employ specialists' staff. Additionally, the resource constraints make it difficult to search for information and a lack of a management information system limits the use of data already in the company. They also found that SMEs typically concentrate on current performance rather than taking a strategic focus.

Research into the marketing of professional services only really started in the late nineteenth-century by Evert Gummesson. He found that there was very little marketing research that had been carried out relating to professional services. This was because in the majority of marketing literature services were not covered at all, but instead, authors accepted that goods marketing could apply to services (Gummesson, 1979, p. 308). One of the main dilemmas he found was that in consulting companies the person who markets a service must also be prepared to take part in the operation of assignments. This is different from goods-producing companies as usually, it is easy to separate marketing from production (Gummesson, 1979, p. 309).

This research was further backed by Clark and Nixon (2015, p. 2) who identified that “it has been clear since many years that success in consulting is only possible if technical ability is paired with strong client relationship skills”. However, recently consultancies are realizing that there is a limit to how far this can take them. They suggested that in the current market it has to be a whole-firm obsession that embraces and influences companywide concerns such as strategy, structure, systems and skills (Clark and Nixon, 2015, p. 2).

McDonald et al. (2011, pp. 68–78) found that there are a number of barriers which prevent consulting companies from having successful marketing planning, see the list below. Several of them are more specific to large service companies and are therefore not mentioned.

1. Too much focus on the present situation and neglecting the future of the company
2. Weak support from top management meaning necessary resources are not provided and importance is not acknowledged
3. None existence of a plan of how to introduce the new system in a way that it becomes part of the company’s DNA
4. The use of marketing terminology by specialists which is not understood by the whole company
5. Lack of experience of marketing from managers means they are unable to isolate the key marketing issues and therefore too many problems and opportunities are identified
6. Marketing planning occurs once a year and once complete plans are filed away never to be referred to again
7. Uncertainty of what should be in the marketing plan due to a lack of marketing knowledge

One of the major problems consultants face is that they only do reactive marketing, meaning they only start to think about it once something goes wrong (Biech, 2003, p. 1). Over 50% of consultants who do this get most of their business from referrals, as opposed to proactive consultants who have been found to not rely on referrals nearly as much. These consultants often also work with fewer clients as it has been found that there is a correlation between the number of clients and reliance on referrals. This is a dangerous position to be in as it can lead to an over-reliance on one client as the sole source of income (Zipursky, 2019). Biech (2003, p. xxv) also suggested that marketing planning will save time and money but will not guarantee success. For this to be achieved the company needs a mindset of "marketing all the time". Another issue is that a lot of the available marketing information is highly theoretical and lacks practicality (Biech, 2003, p. xxv). As previously mentioned most consultants are paid on hourly rates and if they have to spend hours deciphering complex marketing theories this will not add any value. Furthermore, time spent on marketing is viewed as a reduction in billable hours, hence why the more time they have to spend on it the less likely they are to (Sweeney, Soutar and McColl-Kennedy, 2011, p. 293). Biech (2003, pp. 8–9) recognized that the following thoughts often cause consultants to stay away from marketing:

1. The only thing that is important is doing the best for the clients
2. The marketing plan is only for large companies
3. Marketing is expensive and takes too much time to do it right
4. The company has too much work than it can handle, so marketing would be a waste of my time
5. Clients already know what the company does, so there is no reason to market
6. Marketing on the web is only for big consultancies
7. It is best to hire an outside firm to develop a marketing plan
8. Word-of-mouth marketing is the only thing a consultant must do

All which she claims are false. Although it must be said that small consultancies can't tackle marketing in the same fashion as large consultancies, but marketing is a critical value-adding activity that they should carry out proactively.

Essentially consultants are always marketing whether they like it or not. This is primarily due to the nature of consulting which means they have a lot of contact with potential clients (Biech, 2003, p. 6). A recurring theme of why small consultancies struggle with marketing is the lack of resources and employees with knowledge in marketing. However, the majority are carrying out research, marketing and selling. Therefore, they should organize it in a way that allows them to extract lessons learned, make decisions based on data, and plan the most efficient path to success (Biech, 2003, p. 6).

1.3 Case company: IPP

IPP is a consultancy in the medical industry and was founded by Dr. Volker Klügl in 2005 (Dr. Klügl, 2018b, p. 2). The company was fully self-financed due to the business model, being difficult to explain to potential investors (Dr. Klügl, 2018b, p. 6). As a freelancer, Dr. Volker Klügl is liable with all of his private assets, as IPP is not a registered company.

The company offers services in Germany under the category of management consulting. According to the classification from Table 1, IPP is most likely a micro consultancy. It has 20 years of professional experience in the medical industry, in project management regarding the development of medical devices. Typical business opportunities involve change that must be implemented for market access but is suppressed by the customer for different reasons. The company identifies these opportunities and tries to place itself strategically with its expert knowledge to obtain high-margin orders, due to the urgency and importance of the project (Dr. Klügl, 2018b, p. 3).

1.3.1 Existing marketing strategy

Similarly, too many small consultancies, IPP has not focused much on marketing in the past. Hence why the traditional style of marketing has never been part of IPP's strategy. Instead sufficient amount of projects where obtained by managing their existing business relationships (Dr. Klügl, 2018b, p. 5). This was primarily because of the strong connection with Dentsply Sirona (DS), IPP's biggest client. Additionally, with the size of IPP over the last years, it was not seen as necessary to market their services elsewhere (Dr. Klügl, 2018b, p. 5). Recently DS has been restructuring to reduce costs. Part of this process has involved reducing external contracts by 50%. This has not included IPP so far, instead it has increased the market share of IPP at DS, but it has also increased the risk of being affected by further cuts. With some of IPP's clients at DS, this has already been experienced, as there have been some suggestions that IPP's contracts might not be extended, which is a cause for concern.

IPP has been aware of the risk of having one main client responsible for 90% of its revenues over the last four years. Nonetheless, they have not developed a strong marketing plan and strategy, for reasons such as insufficient resources and success with one big client. Over the years IPP has sponsored sport and social events, as well as individuals. In 2018, a total of €30,000 was invested in these marketing channels (Dr. Klügl, 2018a, p. 2). These channels allow them to network with new and old clients in casual environments (Dr. Klügl, 2018b, p. 5). Furthermore, a strategy to have more activity on their website is to have elite athletes write blogs. This leads to an increase in website traffic and has attracted several job portal companies in the past (Dr. Klügl, 2018b, p. 7). Although it is questionable as to how many new opportunities these strategies are bringing.

An issue that has been made clear to IPP was that their communication on their website was not up to date (May 2019). The unique selling point (USP) communicated on their website at that point in time was:

"As specialists in management services, we help companies to implement technically complex projects to success. In project execution, we provide you with security and transparency for your decisions and, provide you with time to focus on day-to-day business as an operational project manager"

Furthermore, the website communicated that IPP offered the following services:

- Interim project manager
- Personal coaching
- In-house training with high practical value
- External auditing of projects
- Conceptual or operational support in infrastructure or test management
- Improvement of services

As will be shown later in this thesis, the information was outdated and did not accurately describe to current or potential customers exactly what IPP does. Nor did it communicate IPP's strengths and was not easy to understand.

These are some of the examples as to areas related to marketing that need to improve in IPP. Therefore, this thesis will use IPP as a case study by analysing them and suggesting ways for consultancies similar to IPP to improve on their marketing. More in-depth analysis of IPP can be found in chapter "5. Analysis: IPP".

2. Aims and objectives

This thesis aims to research and analyse the marketing of consulting services using IPP, a German micro consultancy in the medical industry, and its services as a case study. This research project will look to contribute to the existing knowledge related to the marketing of consulting services. Using a combination of primary data (client survey, IPP employee questionnaires and expert interviews) and secondary data (literature review) the following research questions will be attempted to be answered:

1. What types of services should small/micro consultancies in the German medical industry focus on to obtain new clients?
2. How should small/micro consultancies in the medical industry market their services feasibly and successfully in the current German market?
3. What do clients in the European medical industry perceive as most important for the final selection of a consultancy?

3. Method

Several methods were used in this research paper to obtain primary and secondary data. The first step involved a thematic organizational literature review method to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data. The next step involved carrying out surveys and questionnaires with the relevant parties to once again obtain both qualitative and quantitative data. This process is illustrated below.

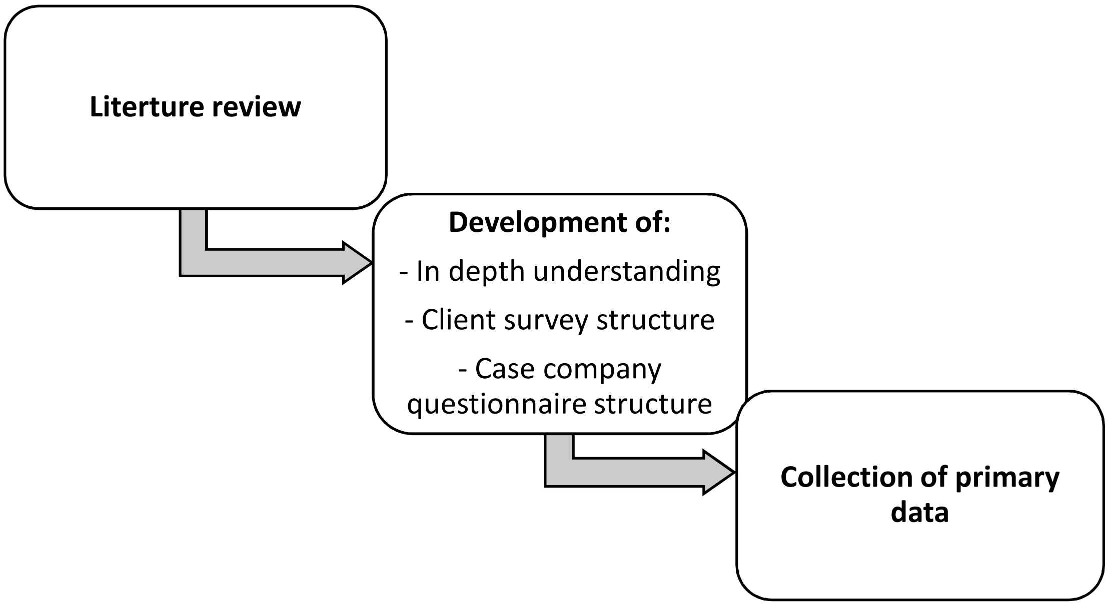

Figure 4: Flowchart of the overall process of gaining the necessary information to answer the research questions

The literature review serves two purposes:

1. To gain an understanding of the current knowledge and consensus of marketing in the consulting industry, specifically for SMEs.
2. To form the basis of the surveys and questionnaires used to collect primary data.

The primary data serves two purposes:

1. To challenge and complement what was found in the literature.
2. To obtain information related to the specific situation of the case company to provide recommendations on what to focus on regarding marketing.

3.1 Literature review strategy

The literature search was conducted using a pre-established search plan. The plan includes the definition of search sources, keywords, and searching tools:

- The sources included in the search plan were inter alia: reports by government agencies and task forces, reports by NGOs, published books, review papers, journal articles, reports and theses.
- Examples of the keywords used single or in a reasonable combination for the search were: marketing principals, consulting, marketing strategy, professional services, medical device manufacturers, marketing consulting services, consulting industry, marketing channels, entrepreneurship marketing, Small and Medium Enterprises, consultant selection criteria.
- Searching tools included were inter alia: books and internet search engines like Google Scholar, HFU databases.

A simplified schematic overview of the literature review process is given in the flowchart indicated in the figure below (Hart, 1998, p. 4):

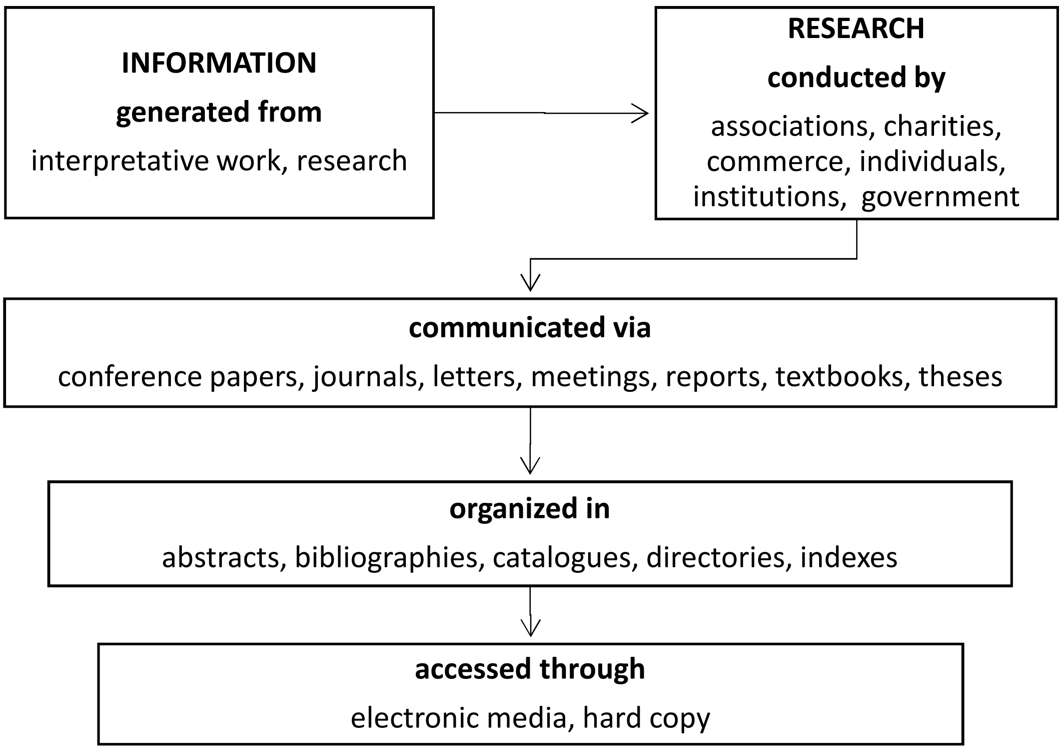

Figure 5: The generation and communication of information

In terms of information on the current market data, if possible, literature from the last five years was considered as relevant. For all other topics, the most up to date literature was used. For detailed information about documents and literature that have been the basis for this research, please see the list of References.

The literature search process was organised in three continuous steps based on the literature sources used:

Phase one – Published Books

Keywords were used in internet search engines to identify relevant books on the topic of interest; an initial bibliographic list was prepared; relevant books, journals and articles were extracted from bibliographies.

Phase two – Articles and Reports

The bibliographic list created in phase one was used as a basis for the search of relevant articles and reports; new, relevant items were included as updates to the existing bibliographical list.

Phase three – Theses

Bibliographical list of theses found in phase one and phase two were checked for relevance; the list was again updated; any books, articles or other relevant publications that were not already identified in the earlier phases were added to the list.

Using this three-phase process allows a very systematic vertical screening of the applicable literature and therefore limits the risk of missing relevant publications by crosschecking the search sources and adding relevant new findings in each step. Below is a schematic outlining the literature review screening process that was used:

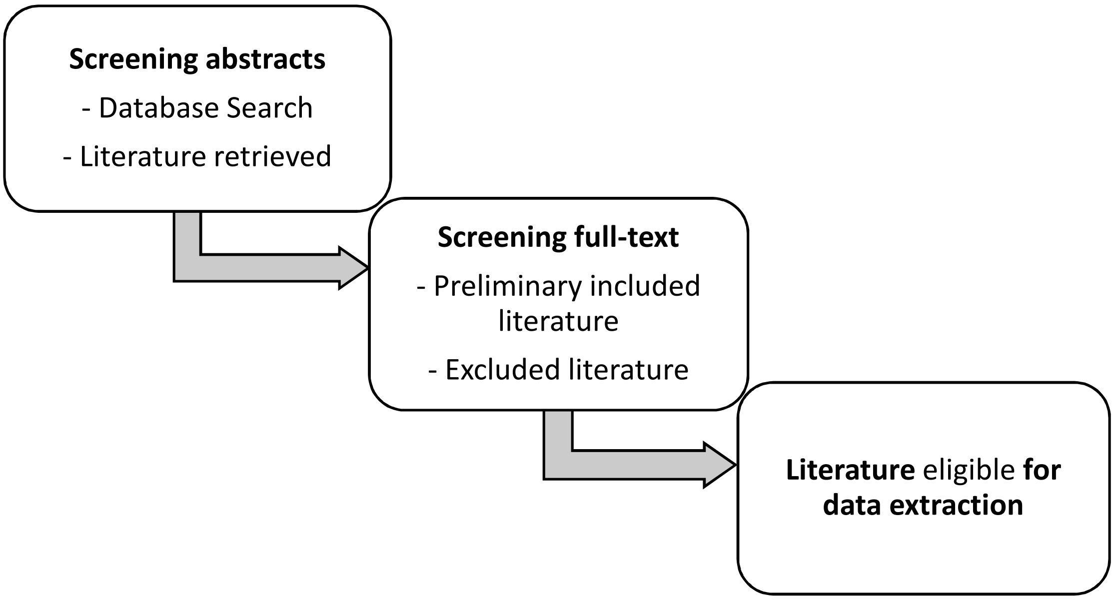

Figure 6: Flowchart of the literature review process

3.1.1 Assessment criteria

All of the identified literature was screened to verify their “scientific credibility” to the abilities of the researcher. To achieve this the following considerations were made.

- The relevancy of the publication.
- The competence of the authors (Author’s credentials).
- Publication source.
- Scientific methodology (if the author’s arguments are supported by evidence).
- Whether or not the author’s arguments and conclusions were convincing.
- Whether or not the work contributed to a clear understanding of the subject.
- Whether or not the perspective presented is even-handed or prejudicial (Is contrary data considered).

3.2 Client survey strategy

The stages suggested by Hackett (1981, p. 602) of a survey research process were used to answer the necessary questions to successfully obtain and analyse the relevant data.

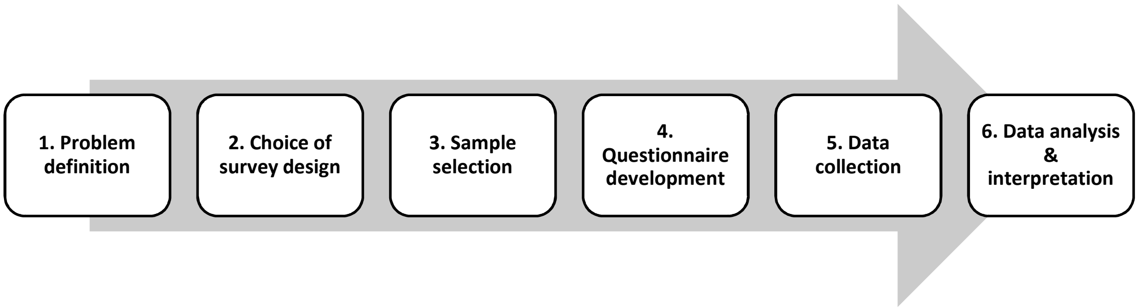

Figure 7: Overview of the Stages of the Survey Research Process (Hackett, 1981, p. 602)

Firstly, it was identified that a survey would be able to help provide answers to the research questions stated in chapter “2. Aims and objectives”. Due to the nature of the research, it was acknowledged that the survey would have a cross-sectional design because of how it was necessary to obtain data regarding a certain population at that moment in time (Hackett, 1981, p. 601). In terms of sample selection, it was recognized that non-probability sampling would be used. This was because all current and some potential future clients of IPP would be targeted, meaning it would not be a random selection. Although that whole population of IPP’s current clients would be covered, providing they all took part.

3.2.1 Survey development

It was decided that a structured questionnaire would be developed online. This was because typically structured questionnaires lead to higher responses, due to the lower amount of thinking required from the respondent to complete the task. Furthermore, it makes the results more comparable and easier to analyse (Hackett, 1981, p. 600). A mixture of the following types of questions were used in the survey; single response, multiple responses and scaled questions. All the scaled questions used a seven-point Likert-Type scale developed by Vagia (2006).

The first step included creating an English draft in Microsoft Word of all relevant questions based on information obtained from the literature review. The questions were then screened together with Dr. Volker Klügl and their quality was improved by making them more industry specific. The survey was then split into three main sections:

1. Introduction questions
2. General client research questions
3. Marketing questions

The aim of section one was to get an idea of the general background from the overall sample. The next set of questions would be to identify if they had experience with consultants, if they were in a position to hire consultants and in what sectors they typically require consulting services. The final section was purely related to marketing, to try and find out what are important factors relating to the finding and selection of consultants.

The next phase involved identifying which online survey platform to use. After comparing several of them such as SurveyMonkey, Typeform and SoGoSurvey it was decided to move forward with SoGoSurvey. This was because even though all the paid packages from the three platforms were similar. SoGoSurvey provided it for free (for students) which had all the necessary features to successfully create the survey (SoGoSurvey, 2019).

All the questions were then imported into the SoGoSurvey tool and it was initially designed with assistance from the article published by Sing et al. (2009, pp. 209–210). The logo of the university and university colours were used in the survey to help improve its credibility. However, a simplistic and clean style was used to avoid creating a clutter (see Appendix B). The survey questions were given a font size of 12 and the Arial standard font was used. The decision was made to have all questions on a single page as this has been found in the past to reduce the time it takes to complete the survey (Sing, Taneja and Mangalaraj, 2009, p. 209). Each section was clearly divided, and questions were numbered to make sure the correct sequence was carried out.

Once the English version was created on the online tool the whole survey was translated to German. This was one of the great features provided by SoGoSurvey. This was deemed important as it was viewed that providing both English and German version would maximize the total number of participants. The client survey was then sent to several test subjects who were not part of the actual sample. They were asked to provide feedback on the type, style and understandability of questions, as well as the overall layout of the survey. Then all the relevant changes were made and the final steps in testing the client survey were carried out. This involved trying it out on various operating systems (iOS and Windows) and several different browsers (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Microsoft Edge and Google Chrome), as recommended by Sing et al. (2009, p. 210). From here it was identified that Firefox and Google Chrome performed the best with the survey (loaded the survey fastest), and this was mentioned to all participants. The survey was then made live and was ready to be sent to all relevant participants. The final English and German versions of the client survey are visible in Appendix B.

3.2.2 Data collection & analysis

The advantages of using an online survey are; they are quick to carry out, data does not need to be entered manually into analysis software's and it is much easier to send to a larger pool of participants (Sing, Taneja and Mangalaraj, 2009, p. 199).

The majority of the participants were contacted via E-mail using multi usable links and were politely asked if they would take part in the survey for the master thesis. The multi usable links meant, upon completion, the participants could forward the survey to their colleagues or other potential participants. As previously mentioned all current clients of IPP were sent an E-mail invitation. The survey was also posted on LinkedIn and shared in several different communities. This was important to maximize the total number of participants.

To comply with the data security laws in Germany all results from the survey were kept anonymous. All the data collected by SoGoSurvey was than exported to excel and Minitab for further data processing and statistical analysis. The results were made up of categorical data, which can be split into both nominal and ordinal data. All the nominal data was processed to obtain frequencies and percentages. Then visualization methods such as tables and graphs were used, to help identify trends and explain the data.

Ordinal data was obtained for all the questions (10, 11-29, 32, 34), which included a Liker-Type scale. Often these types of questions are considered to provide interval data. If the scales are designed in a way that the participants can perceive the difference between each point in the same way, then this is a fair consideration. As this is difficult to assess, it is better to assume the data as being ordinal (Field, 2009, pp. 8–9). Therefore measuring the mean is rather meaningless, instead, the median should be used to calculate the centre of the distribution (Field, 2009, pp. 21, 22, 703).

Therefore, the non-parametric, one-sample Wilcoxon signed-rank test, was used to test the medians. This test enables to check if there is enough evidence for the null hypothesis median being different from the sample median using $\alpha = 0.05$ (95% confidence). It provides confidence intervals based on the sample obtained, which creates an idea of the spread of the data

(Minitab, 2007). For questions 10, 32 and 35, null hypothesis tests were carried out and, in each case, the null hypothesis median was equal to 4. These were all two-tailed tests, as it was of interest to find out if the medians were significantly larger or smaller than the neutral point (4). Confidence intervals (95% achieved confidence) and boxplots were created to analyse the spread of the data and spot any outliers (marked as stars). For questions 11-29, one-tailed null hypothesis tests were carried out. In this case, the null hypothesis median was once again 4 however all the criteria were tested to see if they were significantly larger. This was because in this situation it was only interesting to find out which criteria are important to clients. All the criteria were ranked in level of importance based on the median and confidence intervals. In addition to the confidence intervals (95% achieved confidence), boxplots were created to analyse the spread of the data and spot any outliers.

3.3 IPP employee questionnaire strategy

To supplement the available information on the case company, a questionnaire was developed for its employees. A combination of what was found in literature and Dr. Volker Klügl's knowledge was used to create the general structure.

The questionnaire was split into two sections (see Appendix C). The first was made up of two introduction questions to gain information on the academic qualifications and work experience at IPP. In addition to the number of years that each employee had currently worked for IPP. To keep the results anonymous, the qualifications and working experience were not included in this thesis (see Appendix D). Furthermore, the years of employment at IPP was split into more than five years (> 5 years) and less than five years (< 5 years).

This helped set the scene for the next section which was made up of eight marketing related questions. The aim of this section was to gain a general understanding of the employee's marketing experience and understanding. As well as their knowledge regarding IPP's marketing strategy and willingness to partake in future activities for IPP in this sector.

Once the questionnaire was complete it was sent out to ten employees. The results were then collected and an excel table was created to help with the analysis.

4. Literature review

4.1 Service marketing principles

A lot of research over the years has suggested that marketing of services and products is completely different. According to Clark and Nixon (2015, pp. 6–8) this is somewhat overplayed and there is a lot that can be learnt from core theories and models of marketing. Hence why contrary to many consultant's belief the marketing mix can be applied to the consulting business. For example, when looking at the 4P's its definition needs to be expanded for consulting, see below:

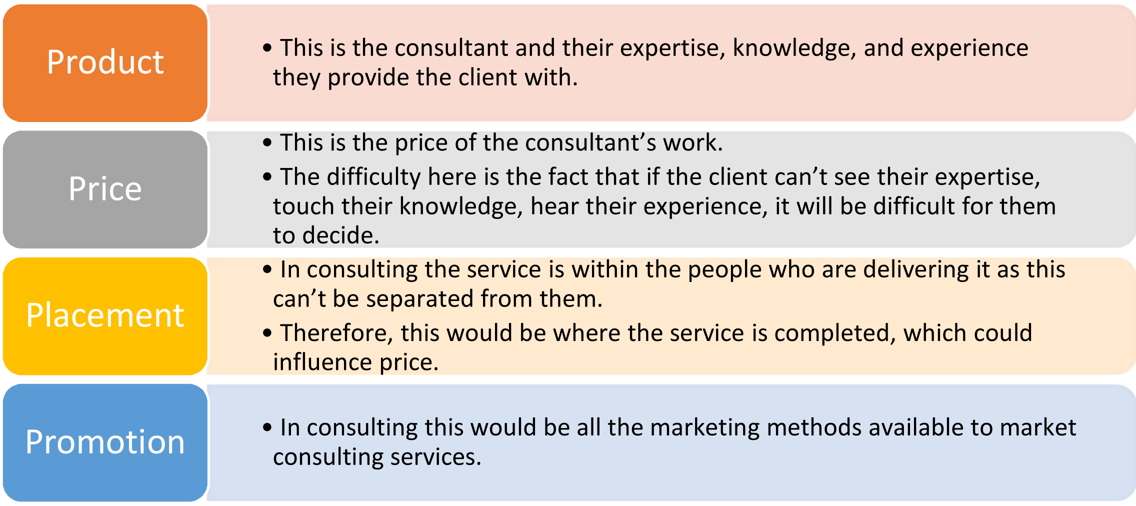

Figure 8: The marketing mix definition expanded for the consulting industry (Biech, 2003, pp. 4–5)

Essentially people always buy solutions and not products. If somebody buys a drill, what they are actually buying is holes in a wall in a particular location (Biech, 2003, p. 4). However, some characteristics of the professional service sector differ from the product sector. These are listed in the table below:

Characteristic	Definition
1. Perishability	Most consultancies sell time, and time expires.
2. Professional pyramid	At the top of the company, there are the owners and directors who set the agenda and manage most of the clients. Below them are those looking to make the top tier, they might not run the client relationships, but they deliver the most important projects.
3. Intellect and challenge	The product being sold is highly intelligent, very professional and passionate. It will have its doubts and uncertainties on certain

	activities; in particular, marketing and business development, because the natural role of a professional is to advise or tell, not enquire and understand.
4. Consistency	People are different, and clients want the job delivered as planned and would like the experience to be like their last project.
5. Intangibility	It is possible to meet the consultant, but the client can't see what they will advise or design before they sign the contract.
6. Project risk	Generally, the cost of professional advice is not the client's largest project outlay.
7. Client concentration	All clients are equal, but some are more important than others, in terms of profit and revenue.
8. Switching costs	Clients are looking for a company to work with over a period of time. This is because switching costs for professional advisors is high, due to trust and investment to bring them up the curve of knowledge regarding their business.
9. Purchase complexity	Formal and informal purchasing procedures dominate decision processes in professional adviser appointment. Therefore, the process has become highly complex and can no longer be completed in a single meeting.
10. Brand	In consulting companies, brands are very difficult to define due to factors like consistency and intangibility.

Table 2: Top 10 characteristics of professional service companies (Clark and Nixon, 2015, pp. 9–13)

The consulting company should identify the characteristics of their specific services and be prepared to be flexible and adaptable to find solutions that best fit them. These characteristics should not be used as an excuse of "that will never work here", but instead should be seen as an opportunity (Clark and Nixon, 2015, pp. 14–15).

4.2 The process

Biech (2003, p. 11) developed a simple process of what consultants should do to successfully market their services. This process is visible in Figure 9 and in her eyes, there are three critical factors that must be completed to be successful.

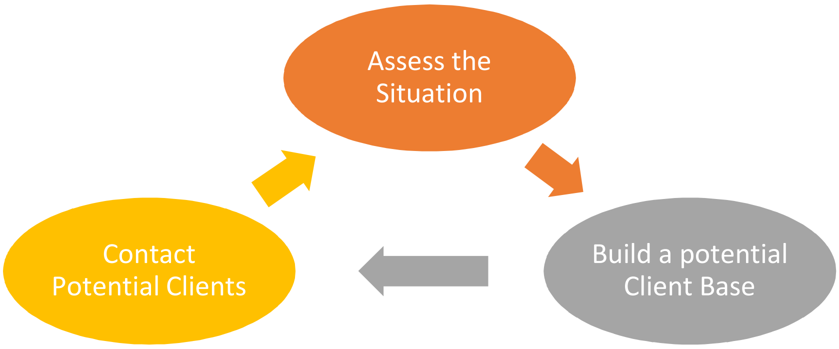

Figure 9: The ABC of marketing (Biech, 2003, p. 11)

The first phase, assessing the situation is all about reviewing the situation from an internal and an external perspective. Internally involves examining the consultancy and externally involves examining their competition and clients. These examinations are important as a solid marketing plan is based on where the company currently is and where the company wants to be in the future (Biech, 2003, p. 12).

The next phase, building a potential client base involves firstly analysing all the data gathered from phase one. From that information, a marketing plan can be developed. Then specific clients and groups must be identified and targeted (Biech, 2003, p. 13).

The final phase is essentially the sales part of the marketing process. This involves clients being contacted or contacting the consultants due to the company's marketing and being convinced to use the consultancies services. Therefore marketing and sales are very dependent on one another and if consultants understand this they will realize the importance of marketing (Biech, 2003, pp. 14–15).

4.3 The marketing plan

Creating the marketing plan is part of phase two as mentioned in the previous section. As this thesis involves carrying out parts of phase one and two, for the case company, it is important to gain an understanding of what the marketing plan is and have a look at how it is put together.

A marketing plan is a series of activities that are carried out in a logical procedure so that it leads to the setting of marketing objectives and programs to meet them (McDonald, Frow and Payne, 2011, p. 50). However, it is easy for marketing plans to become relatively complex due to the terms used and the amount of analysis required, as visible in the book written by McDonald et al. (2011). Therefore for small consultancies, it is imperative for them to focus enough on the implementing phase and not too much on the planning phase (Biech, 2003, p. 113). Having said this many plans have the following main sections; situation review, strategy formulation and resource allocation & monitoring (McDonald, Frow and Payne, 2011, p. 49)(Biech, 2003, pp. 114–115). Biech (2003) further broke down these main sections into subsections, so that it could be used and understood by small consulting companies, visible in Table 3.

1. Situation review	Assess the situation	• Assess the consulting company • Assess the competition • Assess the clients
2. Strategy formulation	Build a potential client base	• Clarify the strategy: ○ Competitive position ○ Niche ○ Describe the targeted client base and what they will be offered ○ Decide on what will be communicated to the clients regarding the services
	Set six- to twelve-month goals	• Goals should be measurable, and time-bound • They should focus on building the company
	Select marketing tools to accomplish the goals	• Identify tools to reach new, current and past clients

		• Make sure they fit the company's clients, budget and personality
3. Resource allocation & monitoring	Identify resources	• What employees are responsible • Time that is required • How much it will cost
	Develop an annual marketing planning calendar	• Layout a plan for the year
	Implement and monitor the plan	• Identify how: ○ Results will be tracked ○ The company will find out if they need to adjust the plan

Table 3: The marketing planning process for small consulting companies (McDonald, Frow and Payne, 2011, p. 49)(Biech, 2003, pp. 114–115)

It is vital that the steps are followed in chronological order otherwise important information might be left out when making critical decisions.

4.4 Marketing tools

A study looking at "Marketing for Consultants" from Zipursky (2019) involved sending a survey to 34,000 consultants. The majority of which were in North America (57%) and were management consultants (30%). From the sample that took part, 70% of the consultants were independent consultants (have no employees).

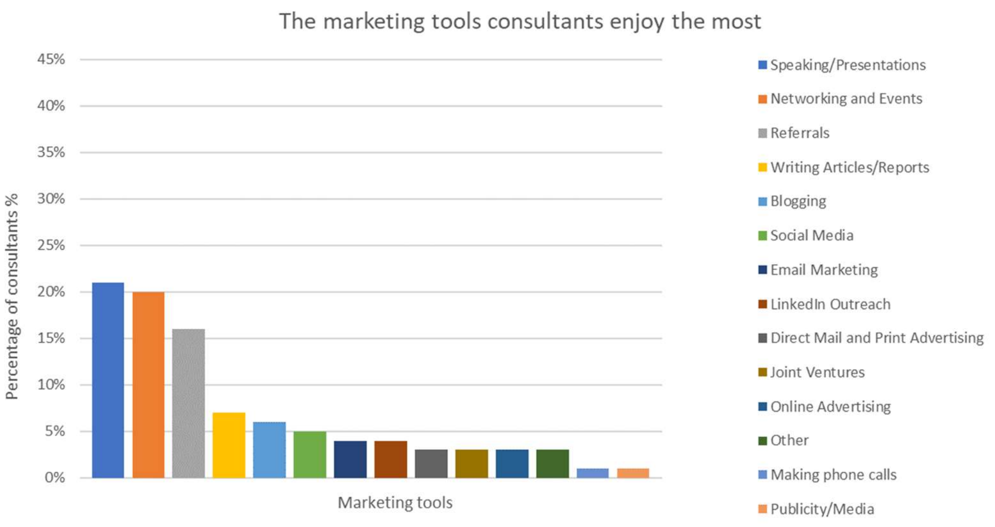

Figure 10: The marketing tools that consultants were found to enjoy the most (Zipursky, 2019)

Consultants were found to enjoy speaking and presenting (21%) the most. This was closely followed by networking and events (20%), and referrals (16%). These are all tools that provide a nice mix of relationship-building and demonstration of the consultant's expertise, which are seen as two critical aspects in the marketing of consulting services (Zipursky, 2019).

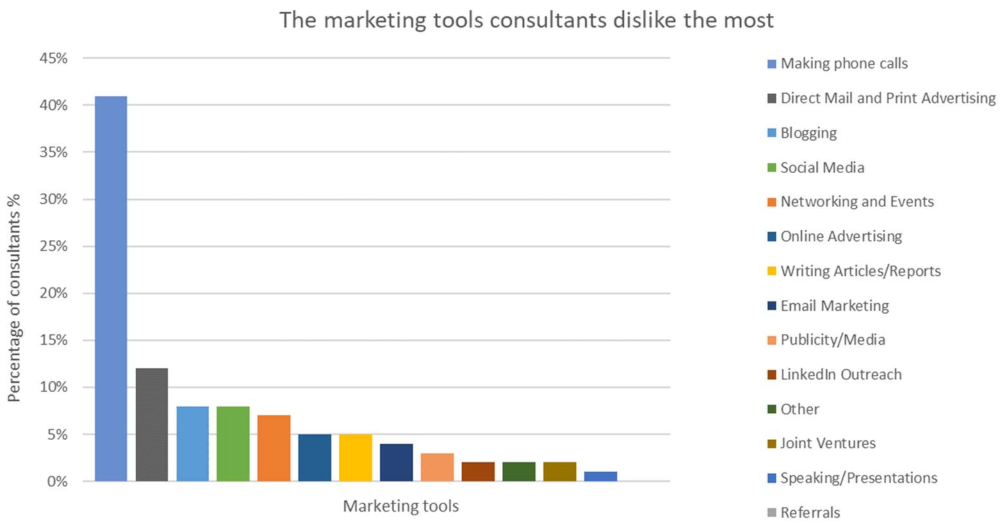

Figure 11: The marketing tools that consultants were found to dislike the most (Zipursky, 2019)

Typically, it would be expected that Figure 11 is a mirror image of Figure 10. This is not completely the case. Consultants listed making phone calls (41%) as their most disliked marketing tool. A potential explanation as to why making phone calls is so disliked could be because it makes consultants feel uncomfortable and it is time-consuming (Zipursky, 2019). This was then followed by direct mail and print advertising (12%). An interesting observation is the fact that blogging and, networking and events are found to be enjoyed by most consultants in Figure 10. However, in Figure 11 they are also found to be ranked highly on the dislike list.

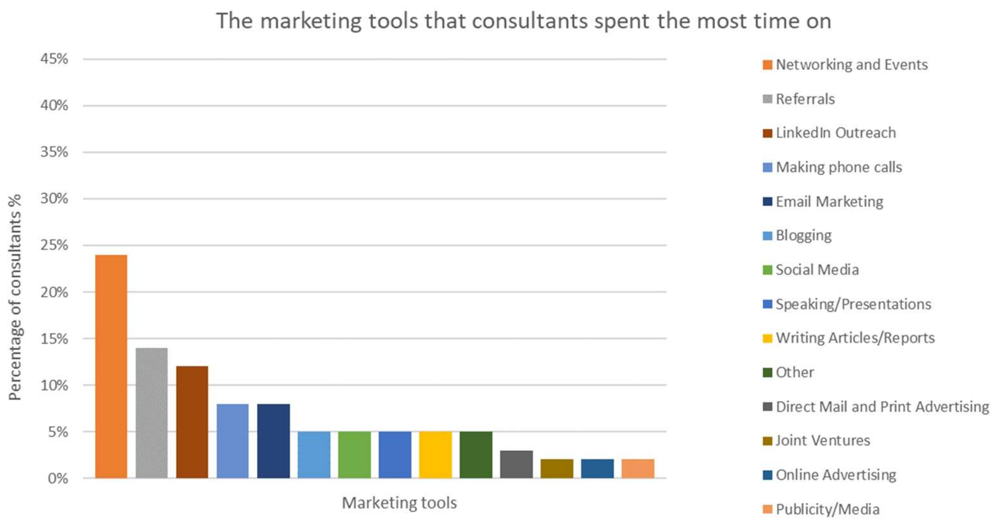

Figure 12: The marketing tools that consultants were found to spend the most time on (Zipursky, 2019)

Overall it was found that consultants spent most of their time on networking and events (24%). This was followed by referrals (14%) and then LinkedIn outreach (12%).

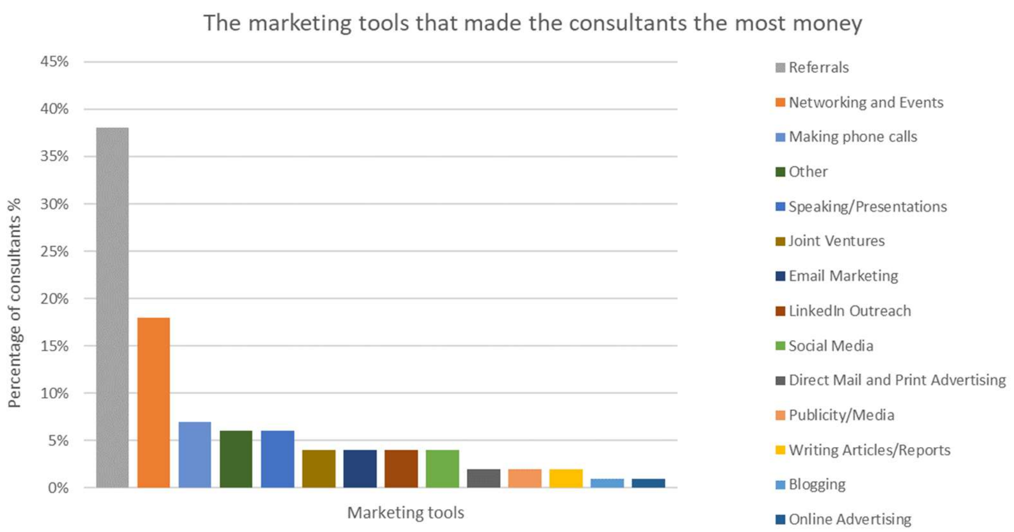

Figure 13: The marketing tools that consultants made the most money using (Zipursky, 2019)

Referrals (38%) was found to be by far the marketing tool that made the most money for consultants. With over 55% stating they obtained 60% or more of their new business via referrals (Zipursky, 2019). This was followed by networking and events (18%), with the rest being evenly distributed. This either means that consulting companies have become very good at networking/referral marketing or they are struggling to obtain new business outside of close relationships (Zipursky, 2019).

When comparing Figure 12 and Figure 13, consultants spent the most amount of time using tools that also brought them the most money such as referrals and, networking & events. The time spent using the majority of the tools also seems to be proportionate to the amount of money it brought them. This is obvious but suggests that it might not be that other tools don't successfully attract customers, but instead the fact that consultants need to spend time using them, for these tools to be successful. An interesting exception is blogging, which seems to not attract many customers. Although 5% of consultants said they spent the most amount of their time marketing using this tool. A potential explanation here, as shown later in this thesis, might be as a result of the nature of blogging, which in some cases is not about selling services but more about providing clients with relevant information. Therefore, customers might not view it as the direct reason why they purchased particular services.

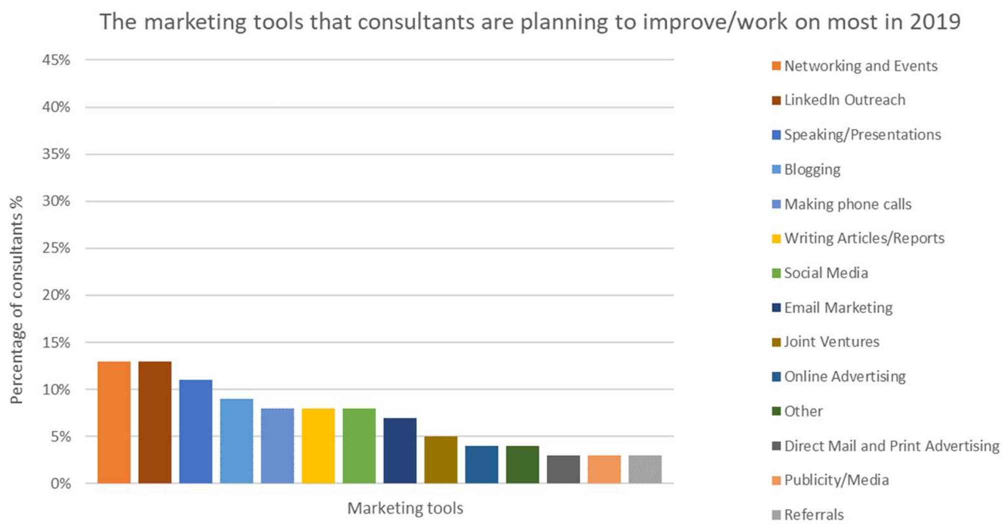

Figure 14: The marketing tools that consultants are planning to improve/work on the most in 2019 (Zipursky, 2019)

In comparison to the other Figures in this subchapter, Figure 14 is more evenly distributed. Therefore, it is fair to say that consultants are interested in improving many areas of their marketing. The most popular answers were networking and events, and LinkedIn outreach (both 13%). With all the others varying between 9% and 3% of interest.

When comparing the findings from this study with the previous study from Zipursky (2018), some differences can be spotted. The main difference being the fact that the 2018 study found that the majority of consultants (22%) spent most of their time on the marketing tool referrals. In 2019 it is clear to see that networking and events was the marketing tool most used. This is potentially a trend due to the realization from consultants that they need to explore other marketing tools, not only rely on referrals, to improve their chances for success.

In the next subchapters several of these tools, that have been suggested to be most interesting for consultancies, will be analysed to identify what the advantages and disadvantages of using them are. It is important to know this before trying to decide which tools would be more beneficial in certain environments.

4.4.1 Blogging

A blog is an informational website that is always updated with the latest content, which is published on the world wide web (Kaur and Singh, 2017, p. 257). They are often described as online journals or diaries where individuals can publish company news and their opinion about concepts, issues, brands, etc. Blogging is starting to be used by more and more business owners and is known as a public relations tool (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 184). Blogging is also a part of digital content marketing, which is covered later in this thesis. The table below highlights some of the advantages and disadvantages of blog marketing.

Advantages
• It provides customers with an insight into the business (Singh, Veron-Jackson and Cullinane, 2008, p. 288). • It also provides companies with an insight into the customer and his or her thinking (uncensored) due to how blogs are anonymous (Singh, Veron-Jackson and Cullinane, 2008, p. 288). • Due to its interactive nature, companies can perform their own market research and respond to feedback or comments from customers (Singh, Veron-Jackson and Cullinane, 2008, p. 288) (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 184). • It engages customers through on-going communications, which can help support brand loyalty (Singh, Veron-Jackson and Cullinane, 2008, p. 288). • It can be used for targeting, as customers have already been segmented or have already shown an interest in the product/service (Singh, Veron-Jackson and Cullinane, 2008, p. 288).

• Companies can use it to fine-tune their services or communication messages (Singh, Veron-Jackson and Cullinane, 2008, p. 288). • Creating and managing a blog is relatively easy as many software companies facilitate the process and provide extensive monitoring of blogs and its content (Singh, Veron-Jackson and Cullinane, 2008, p. 289). • There are free professional blogging platforms such as Blogger and Wordpress.com available (Kaur and Singh, 2017, p. 257).
Disadvantages

• The lack of control and boundaries can be viewed as a challenge. For example, due to the speed at which information is transmitted, companies might feel they are losing control of the message (Singh, Veron-Jackson and Cullinane, 2008, p. 289).
• The company needs to provide on-going resources to (Singh, Veron-Jackson and Cullinane, 2008, p. 289):
  ○ Provide timely responses once a customer has made a comment or provided feedback.
  ○ Update the blog regularly and provide information that is of interest to the target audience.
• There is a risk of creating negative publicity if it is not done properly (Singh, Veron-Jackson and Cullinane, 2008, p. 289).

Table 4: The advantages and disadvantages of using blog marketing

4.4.2 Referral marketing

Referral marketing is related to spreading the word about a product or service through current and past clients, competition, colleagues or other professionals (Biech, 2003, p. 85). In the market of services, referrals are sought for due to how they are typically intangible and variable (Biyalogorsky, Gerstner and Libai, 2001, p. 93). One of the most important types of referral marketing is Word of Mouth (WOM). Here there are two types; organic WOM and firm-stimulated WOM. Organic WOM is self-motivated, therefore referrals are provided by clients only due to their satisfaction with the product or service. The latter is typically stimulated by a reward, which can be in the form of lower price or monetary reward received for referring buyers (Schmitt, Skiera and Van den Bulte, 2011, p. 46)(Biyalogorsky, Gerstner and Libai, 2001, p. 92). Therefore, the company will have to decide if they need to stimulate it or not depending on the delight threshold level of the clients (Biyalogorsky, Gerstner and Libai, 2001, p. 92). The table below highlights some of the advantages and disadvantages of referral marketing.

Advantages
• It involves a very small amount of investment of resources, such as time, especially if it is organic WOM (see Appendix E). • Communication is typically very easy as often the referral will come from somebody who has a close relationship with the company, in consulting (see Appendix E). • The customers who contact the company due to a referral have typically already made their mind up that the company provides services they require to solve their issues. Therefore, it is very close to the final stage of obtaining a new project (see Appendix E). • Studies linking WOM to new customer acquisition (in an Internet social network setting), have found that WOM can have larger and longer-lasting effects than traditional marketing activities (Trusov, Bucklin and Pauwels, 2009, p. 99). • It can overcome consumer resistance at significantly lower costs and faster delivery, through new technology such as the internet (Trusov, Bucklin and Pauwels, 2009, p. 90). • Firm-stimulated WOM is designed to motivate consumers to spread positive thoughts about products or services. Therefore, it can be a cost-effective way to recruit new customers if done properly (Biyalogorsky, Gerstner and Libai, 2001, p. 83).
Disadvantages
• Organic WOM is difficult to actively encourage (see Appendix E). • For it to be effective it requires people from outside the companies bubble to be involved. This is sometimes difficult to achieve especially in consulting (see Appendix E). • Firm-stimulated WOM is prone to abuse from opportunistic referrers (Schmitt, Skiera and Van den Bulte, 2011, p. 46). For example, consumers might enjoy receiving lower prices but don't recommend (Biyalogorsky, Gerstner and Libai, 2001, p. 92). • There are concerns as too how effective firm-stimulated WOM is. This is because they might be seen as less trustworthy if it is known that they are receiving rewards to recommend the product or service (Schmitt, Skiera and Van den Bulte, 2011, p. 46)(see Appendix E). • Firm-Stimulated WOM might not be appropriate for every industry and could be wasteful if it is not designed correctly (Biyalogorsky, Gerstner and Libai, 2001, p. 83).

Table 5: The advantages and disadvantages of using referral marketing

4.4.3 Email marketing

Email marketing is the promoting of products and services via electronic messages transmitted from and to internet host computers (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 182). It is a popular way for businesses to reach customers and clients directly via electronic mail (Kaur and Singh, 2017, p. 256)(Zhang, Kumar and Cosguner, 2017, p. 851). The table below highlights some of the advantages and disadvantages of email marketing.

Advantages
• They enable marketers to send messages to their customers at a very low cost (Zhang, Kumar and Cosguner, 2017, p. 853)(Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 182). • It requires less preparation and execution time than other marketing tools such as direct mail. It has been found that a campaign for 50,000 customers only requires six hours to prepare and run, compared to 17 days with direct mail (Zhang, Kumar and Cosguner, 2017, p. 853). • They generate quick responses and provide opportunities for interactive communication with customers (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 182). For example, they can reply as soon as they click on the hyperlink that directs them to the company’s website, on their computers or mobile devices (Zhang, Kumar and Cosguner, 2017, p. 853). • It is easier and cheaper to personalize emails than using physical media or even on a website (Chaffey *et al.*, 2009, p. 550)(Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 182).
Disadvantages
• Difficult to get all messages delivered through different internet service providers, corporate firewalls and webmail systems (Chaffey *et al.*, 2009, p. 550). • The email might not be displayed as it was designed because of the different email reading systems, which might make it unreadable (Chaffey *et al.*, 2009, p. 550). • The recipients are typically more responsive after they have just subscribed for the emails, therefore it is difficult to maintain their interest in the emails (Chaffey *et al.*, 2009, p. 550). • Additional resources (people and technology) are typically required to deliver and maintain the whole system (Chaffey *et al.*, 2009, p. 551). • It is only possible to send emails to customers who subscribe to receiving them due to laws and regulations, therefore limiting the number of customers that can be targeted (Biech, 2003, p. 90)(Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 182)(see Appendix E). • Long and very professional newsletters sent via email are typically ignored, due to the number of them which are typically received (see Appendix E).

Table 6: The advantages and disadvantages of using email marketing

4.4.4 Social media marketing

Social media marketing is a type of internet marketing, where platforms and websites are provided for companies to promote their products or services, to achieve their marketing communication and branding goals. It has become more important as a result of the increasing popularity of websites such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube (Kaur and Singh, 2017, p. 256). There are many types of platforms available with some which look more at creating formal contact networks (LinkedIn) and others informal contact networks (Facebook) (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 184). The table below highlights some of the advantages and disadvantages of social media marketing.

Advantages
• The majority of social media websites are free to access, create a profile and post information, even for business use. Therefore businesses can run successful social media campaigns on a limited budget (Nadaraja and Yazdanifard, 2013, p. 4). • Social media has become the most popular internet destination. Therefore it has increased the amount by which people communicate online and enlarged the pool of individuals they communicate with, which has created new forms of social interaction (Nadaraja and Yazdanifard, 2013, p. 4). • Social media enables consumers to participate in their own social networking by selecting the content, timing and communication in specific applications, so that they can take active control and perform two-way communication (Nadaraja and Yazdanifard, 2013, p. 4). This allows them to become more than just passive recipients of stimulation, which has been found to increase source credibility (Hill and Moran, 2011, p. 820). • Social media provides companies with the opportunity to target audiences and consumers based on their interests. This allows them to effectively reach the people who are most interested in what they have to offer (Nadaraja and Yazdanifard, 2013, p. 4).
Disadvantages
• Social media is interactive and for a successful two-way communication to take place, it requires the commitment of resources, especially time (Nadaraja and Yazdanifard, 2013, p. 5). Therefore if time is money, it will cost money to be successful (Barefoot and Szabo, 2010, p. 18). • As a result of how information about the company and its products or services are accessible to a huge pool of social media users, third-parties can steal important information (Barefoot and Szabo, 2010, p. 5). • When companies use social media to promote their brand, products, or services they have to consider trust, privacy and data security issues. Therefore they need to take the necessary measures

to minimize their exposure to being liable for personal data collection and usage (Nadaraja and Yazdanifard, 2013, p. 6). • Social media promotes user-generated content, which companies might want to use in their marketing strategy. However, they must be aware of the legal issues this could cause and need to take the necessary steps to minimize the risks of legal problems occurring (Nadaraja and Yazdanifard, 2013, p. 6). • There is a possibility that users post negative or non-constructive feedback on social media about the company, this can't be ignored. Therefore the social network has to be managed efficiently to respond and neutralize harmful posts, which can take time (Nadaraja and Yazdanifard, 2013, p. 7).

Table 7: The advantages and disadvantages of using social media marketing

4.4.5 Networking and attending events

This relates to networking with other professionals, competition, community leaders, mentors and potential clients by attending professional meetings, social events and conferences. It is all about being in contact with the relevant professionals to give them leads as well as gathering them for the company (Biech, 2003, p. 78). The table below highlights some of the advantages and disadvantages of networking and attending events.

Advantages
• It provides the company with a feeling for the general needs of current and potential customers (see Appendix E). • It is a good way to test run the company's business proposal with other professionals, in a situation with no pressure (see Appendix E). • The company can meet its competition and benchmark against them in a neutral situation (see Appendix E).
Disadvantages
• It can take several years to build significant trust within a network before the company receives many leads from it (see Appendix E). • If it is not combined with say a recommendation it typically won't bring new customers or projects. Therefore, a lot of work still needs to be done before it leads to new projects (see Appendix E). • Often attendees will only meet professionals who had time to go to the events and not necessarily professionals who have needs to be solved (see Appendix E). • Attending the events requires a significant amount of time investment, to communicate with everyone and if traveling is required (see Appendix E).

Table 8: The advantages and disadvantages of networking and attending events

4.4.6 Presenting or speaking at events

Organizations and associations are often looking for interesting, educational, motivational, or entertaining speakers to address their employees or members at conferences or special events. This is a way that consultants can establish themselves as an expert in their field and therefore increase their credibility (Biech, 2003, p. 77). The table below highlights some of the advantages and disadvantages of presenting or speaking at events.

Advantages
• It can put the company on a platform directly in front of their ideal clients. Where they can display their ideas, visions, values, experiences and expertise in a live atmosphere which can be very powerful (see Appendix F). • The fact that it is live increases the believability and credibility of the company. This is because it creates this close encounter which gives a feeling that a relationship is being created between the speaker and attendee (see Appendix F). • It can be a source of revenue if the company has professional speakers. However, even if no payment is received for the presentation or speech the company is still receiving a platform to perform marketing for free (see Appendix F). • It acts as an implied endorsement because the conference, association or professional group that is hosting the event selected that specific consultant, which communicates to the attendees that they must be really good at what they do. This improves their creditability in the market place (see Appendix F). • If the speech or presentation is recorded it can be used to market through other channels, such as uploading it to the company website, YouTube or creating an article from it (see Appendix F). • It is marketing at scale as the speech or presentation is typically delivered in a big room, where one message or talk is carried out, but it is reaching a group of people which can sometimes be as many as thousands (see Appendix F).
Disadvantages
• If the speech or presentation is not in front of the company's ideal clients, then it could be a waste of time. Therefore, it is important to pick the correct events and hope the ideal clients will turn up to that event (see Appendix F). • The whole process of setting up speeches or presentations takes a lot of time. This means once an upcoming event has been identified it can take several months to sometimes a year before the speech or presentation occurs. This is partially because it takes time to complete all the follow-up emails and phone calls to secure and confirm the attendance to the event (see Appendix F).

• If the company is not clever than once the speech has been delivered, that marketing is over. Therefore unless the speech is recorded or the company uses the fact they spoke at a particular event to get into another one, they have no more marketing usage of that event (see Appendix F). • Speaking and presenting in front of a large audience requires skills and confidence that not everyone initially possesses. The necessary skills and confidence need to be developed and adapted over time due to the changes in audiences and time (Sellnow, 2004).

Table 9: The advantages and disadvantages of presenting or speaking at events

4.4.7 Article/report marketing

This is a public relations tool that involves the writing of an article that is published through different channels. The articles can be spread to interested agencies, such as consumers and journalists, by publishing them on the company's website, or sending them to online news feeds or via email to individuals on a subscription basis. It allows company managers or employees who are highly regarded in the industry and have the intelligence to share, to use this form of marketing to improve the company and brand recognition (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 184). Although very little scientific research on article marketing was found, it falls under the category of content marketing (Baltes, 2015). The table below highlights some of the advantages and disadvantages of article/report marketing, which was found. The next subchapter on content marketing highlights more of the advantages and disadvantages that in some cases is related to article marketing.

Advantages
• It does not cost much to write articles and get them published (Biech, 2003, p. 92). • The writer can gain instant respect and high visibility if they get a published article (Biech, 2003, p. 91).
Disadvantages
• It takes a lot of time to successfully write an article (Biech, 2003, p. 92). • To successfully write articles the company typically requires highly qualified individuals (Gummesson, 1979, p. 311). • The article needs to be written according to the guidelines of the publisher (Biech, 2003, p. 91).

Table 10: The advantages and disadvantages of article/report marketing

4.4.8 Content marketing

According to Sam Decker (Co-Founder & Executive Chairman, Clearhead), “Content Marketing is creating or curating non-product content — be it informational, educational, entertaining, etc. — and publishing it to contact points with customers to get their attention, to focus on the topic around your solution, and pull them closer to learning more about you” (Mille, 2016). “Therefore, it is more about communicating with your customers and prospects without selling. This means the company delivers information that helps make the buyer more intelligent instead of pitching its services. The idea is that if the company provides ongoing valuable information to its customers and prospects, they will reward it with service purchases and loyalty” (McPhillips, 2016). This content can come in many different forms, for example (Baltes, 2015, pp. 115, 116)(Rowley, 2008, p. 522):

- Custom magazines
- Print or online newsletters
- Website or microsites
- White papers
- Webcasts/webinars
- Podcast
- Video portals
- Electric articles and journals
- eBooks

The key to content marketing is carrying out extensive research on the target market so that the company is able to create content that meets their requirements (Baltes, 2015, p. 117). The table below highlights some of the advantages and disadvantages of content marketing.

Advantages
• It can help create long-lasting relationships with customers (Baltes, 2015, p. 117). • It helps retain reader attention and improves brand loyalty (Baltes, 2015, p. 116). • The fact that often useful information is provided for free means it can be easier to attract potential new customers (Rowley, 2008, p. 523). • It can be used as both an attractor in marketing communication and as a product. Therefore, it can be a form of revenue if customers have to purchase the information on a pay-per-view or subscription (annual memberships) basis. For this to work successfully previews of articles and journals can be provided for free, such as the abstract (Rowley, 2008, p. 523).

• It has a self-multiplicative quality as its exchange does not imply redistribution, loss or consumption (Rowley, 2008, p. 524). • One unit of content can be accessed from many different web pages, search engines and databases (Rowley, 2008, pp. 524–526). If the origin of this data is clearly indicated this can help increase website traffic. • Digital content can be accessed via a large number of different technologies providing they meet the necessary requirements (Rowley, 2008, p. 525). • Digital content does not deteriorate over time and it can continuously be updated to make sure it remains useful (Rowley, 2008, p. 525). • It is not constrained by distance and opening hours, therefore it is convenient, accessible and provides the customers with a greater level of control (Rowley, 2008, p. 527).
Disadvantages
• Its value depends largely on its context and its use by particular users, this is why it can't be determined in advance. Therefore, it is almost impossible to determine the willingness to pay for the information. Hence deciding on a pricing strategy is very difficult (Rowley, 2008, pp. 524, 532). • If it is not protected (with IP right), its self-multiplicative nature means it can easily be replicated. In the case of it being a source of revenue, this can be an issue (Rowley, 2008, p. 524). • If the company decides to make its content available through intermediaries and publishers, it can be a complex process and involve a considerable amount of effort from the consumer to obtain the information (Rowley, 2008, p. 526). • There is an absence of face-to-face interaction which could impair the development of the relationship (Rowley, 2008, p. 526). • Just providing digital content is not enough it needs to be somehow linked with other channels through which services can be delivered such as face-to-face, telephone or other remote services. This is important as most customers will need this support as part of their learning process (Rowley, 2008, pp. 526, 534). • Due to the complex environment, co-branding (if necessary) needs to be managed creatively (Rowley, 2008, p. 532).

Table 11: The advantages and disadvantages of content marketing

4.4.9 Company website and SEM

A company's website can be compared to a billboard, with the challenge being, making it not only informative so that all necessary information is on it, but also attractive enough so that customers find their way to it (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 181). For the website to be effective it should (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 181)(Biech, 2003, p. 90):

- Be clear, fast- uploading, and easy to navigate
- Reflect the personality of the company and provide information regarding its services
- Enable a simple interaction with customers
- Include other tools that will appeal to potential clients, such as articles

However, companies need to attract customers to their website. This is why companies should combine this with search engine marketing (SEM). It has been found that approximately 80% of web traffic is generated from search engines like Google, Yahoo! and MSN Search (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 181). Therefore, companies should focus on search engine optimization (SEO). SEO involves providing the right clues and keywords for the search engine so that the website appears as high as possible on the organic listing (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 182). The table below highlights some of the advantages and disadvantages of having a company website.

Advantages
• It provides timely information to customers as it is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (Kaur and Singh, 2017, p. 257). • It can be used as both a transaction medium and a physical distribution medium (Kaur and Singh, 2017, p. 257). • Faster and cheaper than most other traditional forms of direct marketing (Kaur and Singh, 2017, p. 257). • More cost-effective in the long run (Kaur and Singh, 2017, p. 257).
Disadvantages
• No face-to-face contact with current and potential clients (Kaur and Singh, 2017, p. 257). • Dependent on the functioning of the technology (Kaur and Singh, 2017, p. 258). • There are problems with security and privacy issues that need to be addressed (Kaur and Singh, 2017, p. 258). • Maintenance costs are higher than typically expected because of the constantly evolving environment (Kaur and Singh, 2017, p. 258).

• Having potential customers find and access the website. For example obtaining the necessary level of traffic to increase the website's power to attract customers (Hernández, Jiménez and Martín, 2009, p. 364). • It is necessary to have an employee that has the required skills to successfully develop and maintain the website. These skills need to be constantly maintained and upgraded (Kotamraju, 2002).

Table 12: The advantages and disadvantages of having a company website

4.5 E-marketing

Many of the previously mentioned marketing tools come under the category of electronic marketing, such as blogging, email marketing, social media marketing, digital content marketing and company website with SEO. Although the internet has gained in prevalence over the years it has several challenges associated with it as displayed above.

Creating websites and other social media sites is insufficient if they have static profiles (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 188). As shown with all the tools it is important to create a certain level of interaction with customers and communicate with them using useful content. This will help the company to generate leads, which can be converted into customers and turn customers into advocates (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 188).

As previously mentioned, small companies are characterized with limited amounts of resources and often a lack of marketing expertise. They will often look at using technology as a useful marketing tool because it does not cost much money to set up and start. However, what is often overlooked is the level of financial resources and competent employees with an understanding of these tools that are required. This is primarily because of the ongoing commitment required to communicate with customers through these channels (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 188).

Therefore, before any company decides on what tools to use they need to try and estimate the potential total cost. They then need to monitor the performance of the online tools and subsequently optimize activities with positive results and stop activities with negative results. It is important for them to realize that if they use a technology but don't do it properly this could damage the company more than if they don't use it at all.

4.6 Criteria clients use to select consultants

Over the years research has been carried out related to the criteria used by clients to select consultants. A lot of this research (cited approximately 183 times) has used the study published by Dawes et al. (1992) as somewhat of a benchmark. Examples are Corcoran and Mclean (1998), Bennett and Smith (2004), Sporrong (2011), Sonmez and Moorhouse (2010), and Van Holten (2017).

Dawes et al. (1992) looked at the final choice criteria used by 253 Australian organizational buyers in the selection of management consultants. They suggested that consultancies who had a strong understanding of these criteria could better shape the marketing of their services and withstand competition (Dawes, Dowling and Patterson, 1992, p. 188).

Choice criteria	Average score
1. Reputation of consultant in specific functional area	5.7
2. General reputation	5.5
3. Client knows specific consultant(s)	5.2
4. Client has experience with consulting firm	5.0
5. Experience in client's industry	5.0
6. Prior use of consultant	4.8
7. Written consulting proposal	4.7
8. Consultant will assist with implementation	4.6
9. Total costs of consultants	4.5
10. Formal presentation	4.2
11. Satisfied client's recommendation	3.8
12. Offers full range of services	3.6
13. Academic qualifications of consultants	3.5
14. Size of firm	2.9
15. Location of firm	2.5
16. Other consultant's recommendation	2.3
17. Age of firm	2.2
1 = not important, 7 = highly important	

Table 13: Importance rankings of choice criteria used in the final selection of management consultants (Dawes, Dowling and Patterson, 1992, p. 190)

Reputation was ranked as most important, which was found to be consistent with other studies, see Table 14. The third criterion suggests it is important for consultants to build and maintain personal networks. The following three most important criteria were all related to experience in the associated industry or experience with the consultancy. Hence why they argued that these top six criteria seemed to argue against the development of large multifunction or general-purpose consultants (Dawes, Dowling and Patterson, 1992, p. 190). In addition, the criterion "Offers full range of services" was found to rank only 12th. When comparing the results from this study with others that looked at management consultants the following results were obtained.

Dawes et al. (1992)	Patterson (1995)	Askvik (1992)
1. Reputation of consultant in specific functional area	1. Reputation of consultant in specific functional area	1. Reputation of consultancy
2. General reputation	2. Total costs of consultants	2. Prior experience with consultancy
3. Client knows specific consultant(s)	3. Prior favourable use of consultant	3. Prior knowledge of consultants
4. Client has experience with consulting firm	4. Experience in client's industry	4. Reputation of consultant
5. Experience in client's industry	5. Demonstrated understanding of our needs/problem	5. Personal recommendation
6. Prior use of consultant	6. Methodology	6. Academic background of consultant
7. Written consulting proposal	7. Recommendations from past clients/colleagues	7. Quality of formal presentation
8. Consultant will assist with implementation	8. Confidence in specific consultant	8. Approached by consultancy
9. Total costs of consultants	9. Ability to meet deadlines	9. Quality of advertising
10. Formal presentation	10. Their general reputation	10. Completely arbitrary

Table 14: Comparison of the choice criteria used in the final selection of management consultants (Dawes, Dowling and Patterson, 1992, p. 190)(Patterson, 1995, p. 182)(Askvik, 1992)

What is interesting from the comparison is that reputation ranked top in all three studies. Additionally, prior use or knowing the consultants was valued very highly. Then came the experience of the consultants in the client's industry. Cost was rated very highly in the study by Patterson (1995) but was found not to be such an important factor in the other two studies. Dawes et al. (1992, p. 191) did find that even though cost was not a dominant attribute for final selection, it played an important role when comparing a list of similar proposals from consultants. Also, recommendations was rated highly in the study by Askvik (1992) and Patterson (1995) but was ranked outside the top ten in the other study. These are interesting findings and the differences could be related to the variations in samples used and methods for collecting the data.

Dawes et al. (1992) suggested that due to their sampling procedures, the results might not be a fair representation of the wider population. On the other hand, Patterson (1995) suggested that the method used in their study should hopefully provide more valid results than the ones from Dawes et al. (1992).

Another study from Bennett and Smith (2004) obtained results from 454 consultants from Britain who were members of three organizations that span the main types of submarkets of small consultancy firms and independent consultants. They obtained results related to how management consultants typically obtained clients, visible in Table 15.

Selection process	%
1. Through a network or personal contact	32.7
2. Previous use	24.0
3. Through Business Link or other public sector bodies	17.8
4. Through mail, cold calls, telemarketing, directories	10.9
5. Through other consultants	5.9
6. Through a bank, accountant, solicitor	4.1
7. Through a professional institute or trade association	2.6
8. Through chambers of commerce	1.2
9. Via the Internet or website	0.7

Table 15: Method of selection of consultants by clients (Bennett and Smith, 2004, p. 444)

The research found that previous use and third-party recommendations are highly important ways for clients to find and select consultants. The high ranking of recommendations also corresponds to Figure 13, which shows that in 2019, 38% of consultants ranked it as the way they obtained the most work. Interestingly internet and websites were the least common method.

Some of these studies are outdated. Therefore, it would be interesting to see if some of these findings have remained consistent over the years and are representative of the case company's current and potential clients.

5. Analysis: IPP

5.1 Situation review: Internal analysis

An initial definition of IPP and what their current marketing activities entail, has already been mentioned in the subchapter "1.3 Case company: IPP". However, further information on IPP's business model, customer base and current financial situation has not been analysed yet. This is important information required to successfully generate marketing strategies and tactics to put the company in a better position (Biech, 2003, p. 27). Therefore, the next steps involved digging deeper into IPP.

5.1.1 Business model

As a very experienced company in management services, IPP assist companies in implementing technically complex projects (Dr. Klügl, 2018b, p. 3). IPP currently has a workforce of 15, including Dr. Volker Klügl (Dr. Klügl, 2018b, p. 2). The organizational structure is very horizontal, and it is made up of the following:

- 10 – Consultants
- 3 – Freelance managers
- 2 – Administration staff

Due to the nature of consulting, IPP has a small office in Nuremberg where all administration is carried out and several employees work. The rest of the employees are typically at the client's office's where project work is carried out. Additionally, Dr. Volker Klügl puts a large emphasis on having a very digital and scalable company (Dr. Klügl, 2018b, pp. 3–4).

Several issues brought up in subchapter "1.3.1 Existing marketing strategy" were immediately addressed by Dr. Volker Klügl and his team. This involved formulating a USP and services description that could be later used in IPP's marketing. Therefore, the actual USP is, "IPP offers specialized services for medical device manufacturers in all relevant areas to meet the Directive 93/42 / EEC or MDR 2017/745. With our support, manufacturers gain confidence and efficiency. This allows them to focus on their core competencies in technology development as well as marketing and sales." Essentially meaning IPP looks to provide a framework so that their clients can continue to focus on developing state of the art products, that can be commercialized.

Typically, the following services are provided:

- Project management for major projects
- Regulatory services
- Process Consulting ISO 13485 / MDR
- QMR / Internal audits
- Test management
- Technical documentation according to 93/42 / EEC / MDR
- Clinical evaluations MEDDEV 2.7 / 1 Revision 4 / MDR
- Process software validation
- Technology supplier management according to MDR (Sourcing & Contracts)

As of September 2019 both the updated USP and services description are clearly communicated on IPP's website (IPP Dr. Volker Klügl, no date). Currently, clinical evaluations are the only services where the customer pays for a product that is developed by a combination of the employees at IPP.

IPP has a service portfolio that is based on three models. The first one is the service provided by Dr. Volker Klügl himself. This is typically the first service demanded by the customers due to long-term business relationships. This model provides IPP with a daily rate of up to €1,400 and a potential annual profit of up to €250,000 (Dr. Klügl, 2018b, p. 4). The main issue with this model is its scalability. Hence why the service portfolio was quickly expanded with certified freelancers and hired consultants.

The second model is based on services provided by IPP certified freelancers. This is very low risk for IPP as freelancers are only paid when they are involved in a project. A very high turnover is also possible with freelance interim managers. The disadvantage is that the potential profit margin is much lower, because of the very low margins IPP has on these projects (Dr. Klügl, 2018b, p. 4). Strategically freelancers are very valuable to IPP, especially because they strongly represent the IPP brand and continuously develop new business relationships. Although what IPP benefits the most from is how they are typically the way in for IPP's consultants and they bring them extra value in the form of personal coaching (Dr. Klügl, 2018b, p. 4).

The final model, which is the most commonly used, is based on services provided by employed consultants. This is the riskiest out of the three models as these employees create a significant amount of fixed costs (Salaries). Although they provide IPP with the highest profit margin potential. The consultants are exclusively graduate's, mostly with a master's in Medical

Technology. The team is supported by two experienced specialists in quality management and regulatory affairs for medical products (Dr. Klügl, 2018b, p. 4).

5.1.2 Market

IPP's client portfolio from 2014 – 2018 is shown below in the table.

Company name	Location	Company size	Application
Dentsply Sirona Inc. (DS)	USA, York Germany, Bensheim	Large	Dental industry.
Erbe Elektromedizin GmbH	Germany, Tübingen	Large	Medical industry.
HV Meixner	Germany, Nürnberg	Small	Estate management.
Jörg & Sohn GmbH	Germany, Ahorn	Small/Micro	Dental and medical industry.
SICAT GmbH & Co. KG	Germany, Bonn	Medium	Dental industry.
Smiths Heimann GmbH	Germany, Wiesbaden	Large	Airport security (X-ray).

Table 16: IPP's clients from 2014 – 2018

Overall the majority of IPP's clients have come from the medical industry, specifically dental. They vary in size from micro to large enterprises. The pie chart below shows the percentage to which each client contributed to IPP's revenues from 2014 – 2018.

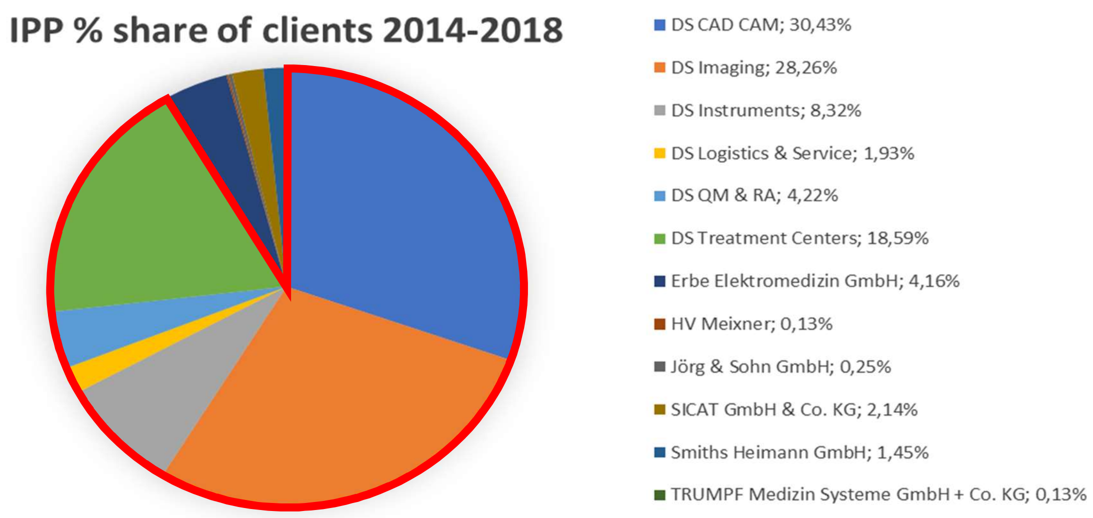

Figure 15: IPP's percentage share of clients from 2014 – 2018

From Figure 15, it is clear to see that DS CAD CAM was IPP's main client with 31% share of all revenues between 2014 and 2018. It is important to note that this is a business unit from the company Dentsply Sirona (DS). Hence why in terms of companies the biggest client of IPP by far was DS with a share of approximately 90% (Highlighted in red in Figure 15). DS is one of the leading providers of dental products and technologies in the world. Although it must be stated that initially, IPP's client was Sirona Dental System. However, in February 2016 Dentsply International and Sirona Dental Systems fused to form Dentsply Sirona.

5.1.3 Financials

In 2018, IPP had a revenue of €1.6 million, which resulted in a profit before tax of approximately €270,000 (Dr. Klügl, 2018a, p. 2). This can be split up into the following revenue streams:

1. Services provided by Dr. Volker Klügl.
2. Services provided by 3 IPP certified freelancers.
3. Services provided by 9 employed consultants.

	1.	**2.**	**3.**
Revenue	€90,000	€350,000	€1,160,000
Profit	€60,000	€20,000	€190,000
Return on sales	67%	6%	16%

Table 17: IPP's financial results from 2018 split into revenue streams (Dr. Klügl, 2018a, p. 3)

From the table above, revenue stream one provides the highest return on sales. However, due to scalability, revenue stream three provides the highest amount of annual profit.

5.1.4 SWOT analysis

This information alone is insufficient, the next important step is to perform a SWOT analysis on the company. The table below represents the SWOT analysis for IPP that was carried out in cooperation with Dr. Volker Klügl.

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• After a strong financial year, the company is in a good position.	• **Only one main client (DS).**

• **Good combination of experienced and young employees who can share knowledge to increase the value of young employees.** • The size of the company means it can provide very competitive pricing. • **The company has 14 years of experience in the medical industry.** • The only fixed costs the company has are its employee's salaries, therefore it has a high liquidity.	• Internal processes, such as billing and training, are still dependent on Dr. Volker Klügl (owner). • **Key account management, sales and client relationship are very much dependent on Dr. Volker Klügl (owner).** • Marketing communication is not consistent. • The company typically offers high-volume work with low margins, which means in situations where volume decreases it is hard to increase the margin, putting IPP in potential financial difficulties. • The business model means that IPP would not be able to survive for long without any projects, as it has no other source of financial support.
Opportunities	**Threats**
• **The new regulations caused by MDR requires a lot of changes to be made by companies, which they often can't do by themselves.** • **Certification of IPP either ISO 9001 or 13854 opens new client opportunities, especially for small clients.** • Sales activities over the last years resulted in six new clients with low order volumes, each with the potential of increasing their orders significantly. • DS is restructuring and has implemented a hiring stop in the company. This might in the short term require urgent work to be done from consultants at a high margin. • The purchase of HIPP provides opportunities to work there and gain contracts with its suppliers and customers.	• **DS's change in company philosophy might reduce the long-term demand for external consulting.** • **DS's change in company leadership and control mechanisms changes the responsible people, whom with strong relationships had already been developed.** • Clients try to hire IPP employees. • General economic recession. • Regulatory consulting companies that are doing a lot of MDR Migration will look for follow up orders, which will compete against IPP's current projects (especially clinical evaluations and PMS).

Table 18: SWOT analysis for IPP

From the table above, eight points are “Bold”, these are points that were deemed most important from each section. Therefore, it is essential that IPP, at a bare minimum, considers these points when developing their marketing plan. It is also important that the company’s strengths are somehow embedded in their marketing communication. In IPP’s case, this is not clearly communicated (for example on their website since September 2019)(IPP Dr. Volker Klügl, no date).

5.1.5 Employee questionnaire results

The raw data obtained from the questionnaire that was sent to ten IPP employees are visible in Appendix D. In total the sample was evenly split between employees that had been at IPP for less than and more than five years. The majority of which completed some form of higher education in varying subjects.

In terms of marketing experience, only three of the participants mentioned they had either gained some from their studies or previous work. Another two suggested that they might have very briefly covered the topic in their studies. It was found that only two of the ten participants had been involved in marketing at IPP (Excluding Dr. Volker Klügl). One stating that this occurred twice a year and the other that it was a monthly occurrence. The latter saying that they were involved in the creation of the website and recommendations of colleagues. Interestingly enough other employees are involved in recommendations of their colleagues. However, for some reason, they do not necessarily associate this with marketing.

When participants were asked if they knew IPP’s current marketing plan/strategy, as somewhat expected only three said yes. Only one of these participants mentioned they were involved in marketing at IPP. Remarkably the other participant that is involved in marketing at IPP stated that they did know what it was. From the three who answered yes, when asked what it was, they all gave different answers with slight similarities. This means that a clear plan or strategy has not been developed and/or communicated to the employees at IPP.

The next question relating to the “problems that could be solved through marketing at IPP” was not answered by two participants. All other answers had one theme in common, and this was relating to the dependence on one major client. Other interesting answers included solving the problem of employee project-free time, insecurity with future projects and a lot of searching for new projects. The following activities were suggested by employees, to have the potential to solve the previously mentioned issues:

- Expert positioning online with content marketing and social media community
- Accurate analysis of the market, target customers, competitors and own performance
- Attend trade fairs and potentially have an own stand
- Send out newsletters with current topics (like Johner Institute)
- Sponsoring
- Improve the website by having more detailed service descriptions
- Redesign the website with SEO
- Improve the range of services and technical expertise offered
- Get employees to actively participate in marketing
- Implement a commission-based referral system

All participants apart from three mentioned they would be willing to take part in some marketing activities for IPP. From the three, two put no answer available and the other suggested they could not take part as it is not an area of their expertise. Overall all the participants are aware that marketing could significantly help IPP in the future.

5.2 Situation review: External analysis

Understanding the services competitors offer and knowing the needs of clients, will allow the consultancy to offer better value and become unique (Biech, 2003, p. 37). The next sections will therefore look at performing these analyses for IPP.

5.2.1 Competitor analysis

A very important but difficult aspect of marketing research is learning as much as possible about competition. This is significant as it helps identify what the unique attributes of the company are and helps to define its niche (Biech, 2003, p. 38).

IPP's main competitors consist of companies involved in regulatory & QM services and temporary working contracts. Due to how IPP Currently only has projects with companies in Germany, when researching for potential competitors, only consultancies with offices in Germany were considered. Overall 13 companies were identified as potential competitors and a brief overview of them is visible in Appendix G. Due to the nature of the industry pricing information is typically not easy to obtain. The company is aware that its hourly rates charged for its employees are near the lower end of the spectrum. This is also true when compared to the calculated average hourly rate for German management consultants (see subchapter "1.1.2 Consulting").

The next step involved carrying out a thorough analysis of the services offered by each of the companies, based on what could be found on their company websites. The services were then split into the categories, visible in the first column of Table 19. This helped provide an overview of the number of different service categories that are used by competitors. A condensed version of the results is visible below (The full analysis is visible in Appendix H).

Service	Offered by IPP	Number of competitors
Consulting	X	13
Quality management systems	X	9
General outsourcing	X	8
Regulatory and QM outsourcing	X	7
Tools		5
Coaching		4

Seminar		2
Posters / Publications		2
E-learning / Video training		2
Legal services		2
Postgraduate education		1

Table 19: Overview of the service categories IPP and competitors are involved in

Almost all the companies offer services within regulatory affairs and QM, with a few offering additional services such as the creation of products, software's, testing equipment and systems. This was expected, as in the medical industry regulatory affairs and QM are very closely linked. To see exactly what services are offered under each category, view Appendix H.

All the companies were involved in giving expert advice (consulting) as this was part of the search when trying to identify potential competitors. However, it is clear to see that the four categories IPP is involved in are also the ones the majority of competitors also offer. After the top four categories, there is a significant decrease experienced. Although "Tools" and "Coaching" are still relatively high. These are services such as providing template documents and training project teams on specific tasks. All the other categories are used by very few companies. This presents a potential opportunity for IPP to help differentiate itself from the majority and create its niche. Content marketing requires the company to provide its produced content to its clients. Hence why having publications of generating training videos could help with that aspect of marketing. The category "Legal services" could also help with website traffic as major updates in regulations and QM could be posted here. If the company uses the correct keywords in its posts, it might lead to potential customers accessing IPP's website via search engines.

A potential explanation to why IPP is successful, even though it is not so unique in terms of services offered, is due to the large demand currently on the market for regulatory and QM consultancies. Nevertheless, this might not continue, therefore looking further into how they could separate themselves from the rest might be important in the future. It has to be said that IPP's success is also due to its strengths, which are listed in Table 18.

5.2.2 Client analysis

Client research is necessary, as it helps understand what clients will purchase and why (Biech, 2003, p. 42). Therefore, as previously mentioned, a client survey was carried out to obtain this information from current and potential future clients. As the client survey was not solely applicable to IPP, the results from the survey are presented in the next chapter "6. Results: Client survey".

6. Results: Client survey

In this chapter the results from the client survey are presented and compared to what was found in literature review, if applicable. The raw data from this client survey is visible in Appendix I.

6.1 Sample description

In total the client survey had 49 participants and the general background information from the sample is visible below.

Questions answers		Sample %
1. What industry is the company you work for in?	Medical Technology	88%
	Dental Technology	8%
	Electrical Technology	2%
	Information Technology	2%
2. Is the company you work for small, medium or large?	Large (>250 employees)	82%
	Medium (<250 employees)	10%
	Small (<50 employees)	8%
3. In which country/region does your company operate?	Worldwide	49%
	Europe	51%
4. What is your position in the company?	Management-Level	55%
	Other	37%
	Corporate-Level	8%
5. Are you in a position to decide what consultancy to pick?	Partially	49%
	Yes	35%
	No	16%

Table 20: A summary of the answers to questions 1. – 5. from the client survey

The majority of participants worked at a management-level, in large medical technology companies. The companies had a relatively even split in terms of operating Worldwide or just in Europe. Additionally, approximately 84% of the participants stated they were involved in the process of deciding what consultancies to choose. As expected, all participants at corporate-level and management-level, apart from two, said they are involved in this process. From the 49 participants, it was found that 90% of them had previous experience with consultants, but only 55% are considering working with them in the future. This is not because of bad previous experiences with consultants as only 2 of the 22 participants suggested this in their answers for question 10. It might be the case that question seven was answered incorrectly because only 3 of the 22 participants answered they did not anticipate the future need for consulting services in question nine.

The participants were also asked, what their level of satisfaction from previous work with consultants was. The answer from participant 20 was not taken into consideration, as they had previously stated that they had no experience with consultants. All the "Can't say (never worked with consultants)" were also removed which left a total of 43 answers which were statistically analysed, see below.

Descriptive Statistics: Question 10.						
N	**Minimum**	**Q1**	**Median**	**Q3**	**Maximum**	**Mode**
43	1	4	5	5	6	5
(1 = Completely dissatisfied, 2 = Mostly dissatisfied, 3 = Somewhat dissatisfied, 4 = neither satisfied or dissatisfied, 5 = Somewhat satisfied, 6 = Mostly satisfied, 7 = Completely satisfied)						
Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test: Question 10.						
Test of median = 4.00 versus median not = 4.00						
					Confidence Interval	
N for Test	**Wilcoxon Statistic**	**P**	**Estimated Median**	**Achieved Confidence**	**Lower**	**Upper**
35	434.50	0.051	4.50	95.00	4.00	5.00

Table 21: Descriptive statistical analysis and Wilcoxon signed rank test for question 10.

The median and mode answer to this question was 5 (Somewhat satisfied). However, there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, the sample median is not statistically different from 4 (Neither satisfied or dissatisfied).

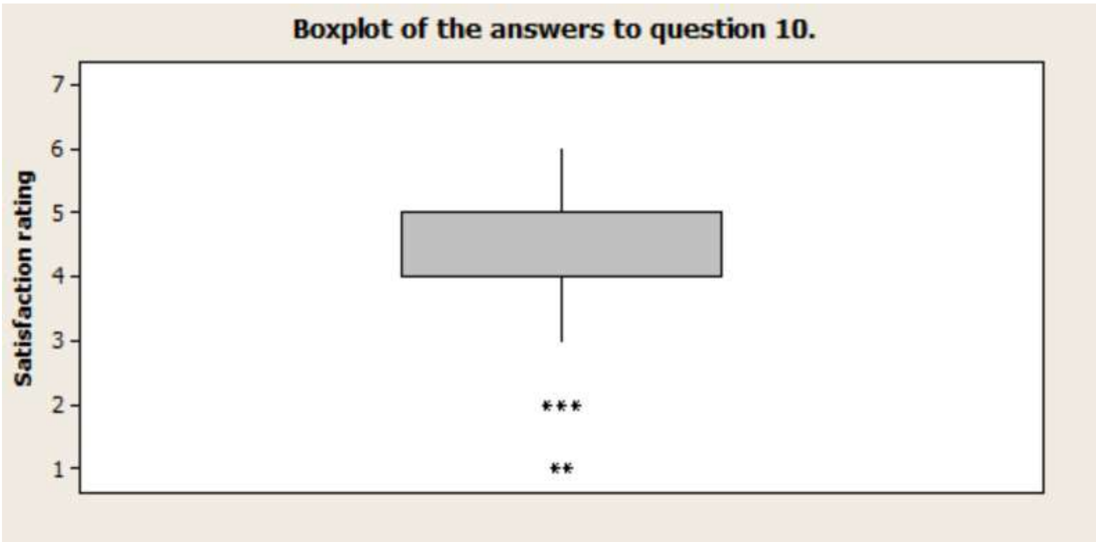

Figure 16: Boxplot of the answers to question 10.

This could be because of the five outliers (the stars on the boxplot), which are visible in Figure 16. These outliers could be as a result of recording errors or misunderstanding of the question. Unfortunately, the survey was completely anonymous therefore it is not possible to ask those specific participants more questions about these unusual cases. Although it should be noted not all consultants deliver the same value for money (essentially a different product), hence why this could somewhat explain these outliers. In terms of data spread, the interquartile range (IQR) is only 1 and the range (distance between opposite ends of the whiskers) is relatively small (3-6). Therefore, it is fair to say that the data spread for the answers to this question is small.

6.2 Current and future sector requirements

When analysing which sectors the participants perceived their company currently requiring consulting services, an average of 2.82 sectors were selected per participant. In total there were 39 different sector combinations. Although no combination occurred drastically more than the others.

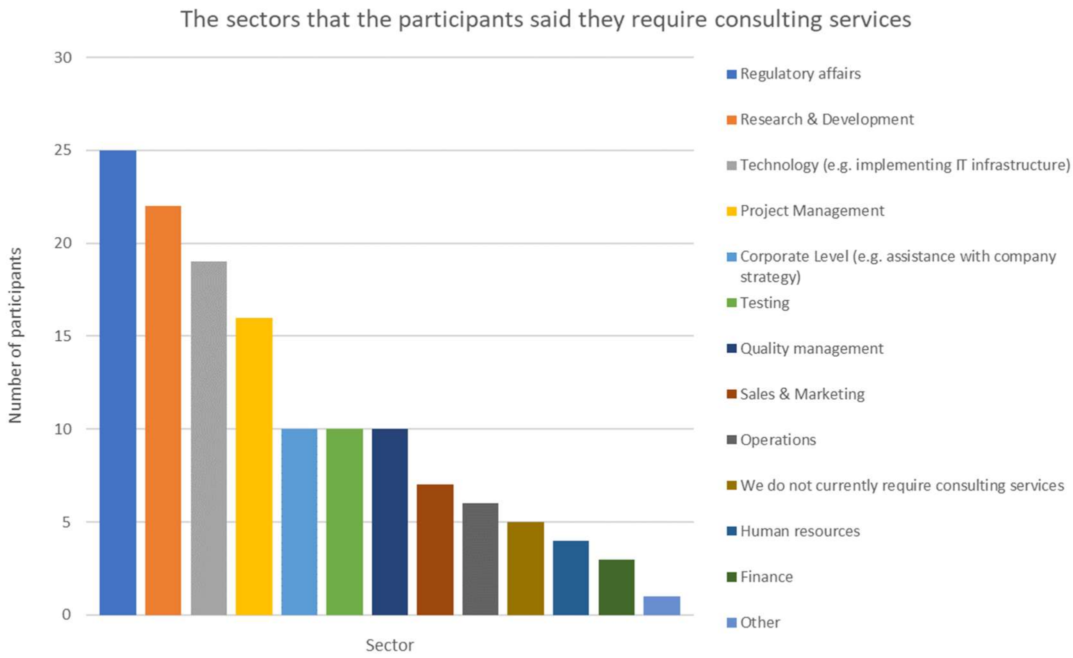

Figure 17: The answers to question 8. presented in a bar graph

As of now, the highest number of the participants suggested that sectors such as regulatory affairs (25), research & development (22), technology (19) and project management (16), are where their companies require consulting services. Then a significant drop was experienced, with only 10 saying they required services for corporate level, testing and quality management. This was followed by sales & marketing (7), and operations (6). In total five participants stated that they do not require consulting services. Overall the lowest ranking sectors were human resources (4) and finance (3). Finally, one participant selected other and mentioned they currently require services in events, training and capability development.

Figure 18 summarizes the sectors which the participants expect to require consulting services for, in the future. On average 3.02 sectors were selected per participant. In total there were 34 different sector combinations. The combination that occurred the most was just selecting research & development (four times), although it was not drastically more than the others.

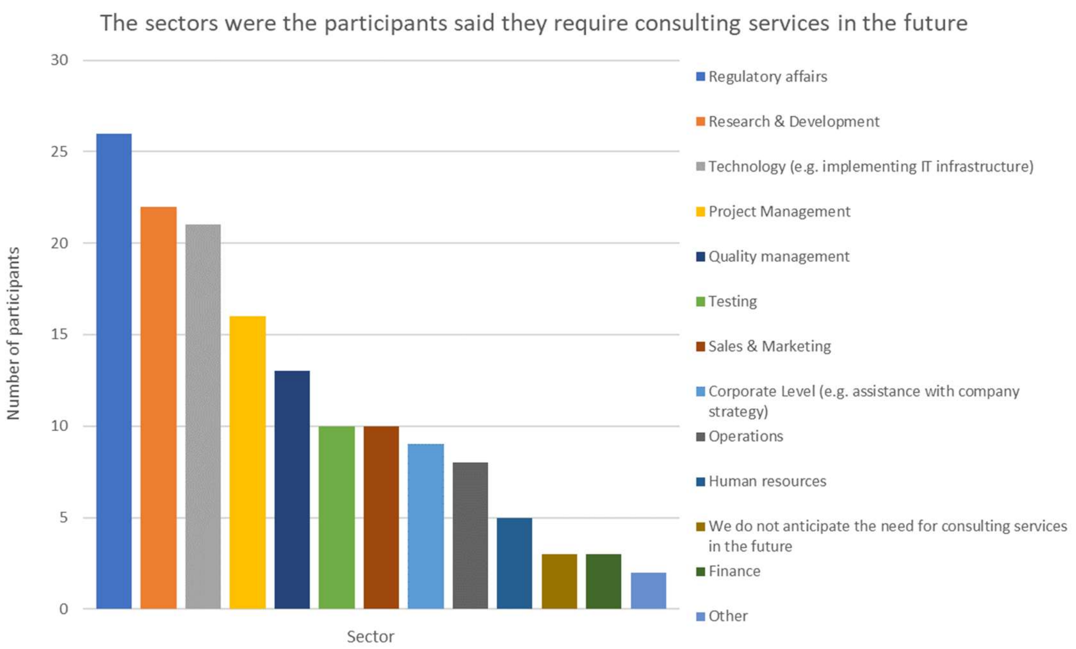

Figure 18: The answers to question 9. presented in a bar graph

The top four sectors that appeared most often in the participant's answers are the same as in Figure 17, regarding the order. An interesting observation is that the next sector was quality management (13), which was answered three more times than in Figure 17. The next two sectors were testing (10) and, sale & marketing (10), with the latter being answered three more times than in Figure 17. This was followed by corporate level (9), operations (8), human resources (5) and finance (3). In total two participants selected other, one of which was the same participant who had previously answered other and had a similar answer, and the other stating data science.

Only three participants answered that they did not anticipate the need for consulting services in the future. In addition, 10 more answers were given in question nine when compared to question eight. This could suggest that the participants are expecting to require services in more sectors than previously. A potential explanation here is the fact that over the next five years companies involved in the medical or dental technology industry have to adjust according to MDR. What is interesting is that from the 55% of participants who stated they were not considering working with consultants in the future, only three answered they did not anticipate the future need for consulting services in question nine. Therefore, this question might have been answered more regarding the needs of their overall company and not specifically their area.

6.3 Criteria clients use to select consultants

The next answers came from a question (11. - 29.) asking the participants to rate 19 criteria in terms of their importance when making the final selection of consulting services. Statistical analysis was then carried out on these results, see below (See Appendix I for full analysis).

Questions 11. – 29.					
Rank	Criteria	*Test of median = 4.00 versus median > 4.00*			
		Median	P	Confidence Interval (95 %)	
				Lower	Upper
1	Knowing the specific consultant(s) personally or professionally	6	0.000	6.00	6.50
1	Experience and knowledge in the particular field of business	6	0.000	6.00	6.50
3	Offering customized solutions for the client	6	0.000	5.50	6.00
3	Reputation of consultant in the relevant functional area	6	0.000	5.50	6.00
5	Consultant will assist with implementation of the solution	6	0.000	5.00	6.00
6	Previous experience with the consulting company	5	0.000	5.00	6.00
7	Total costs of the consultant(s)	5	0.000	5.00	5.50
7	General reputation	5	0.000	5.00	5.50
7	A written consulting proposal for the project	5	0.000	5.00	5.50
7	Referrals, reviews and recommendations from satisfied clients	5	0.000	5.00	5.50
11	Prior use of the consultant	5	0.000	4.50	5.50
12	Formal presentation	5	0.000	4.50	5.00
13	Certifications of the consultant(s) (e.g. ISO 9001)	5	0.027	4.00	5.00
14	Academic qualification of the consultant(s)	4	0.697	3.50	4.50
15	Recommendation from other consultants	4	0.977	3.50	4.00
16	Location of the company	4	0.990	3.00	4.00
17	Offers wide range of services	3	0.999	3.00	3.50
17	Age of the company	3	1.000	3.00	3.50
19	Size of the company	3	1.000	2.50	3.50
(1 = Not at all important, 2 = Low importance, 3 = Slightly important, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Moderately important, 6 = Very important, 7 = Extremely important)					

Table 22: Condensed version of the descriptive statistical analysis and Wilcoxon signed rank test for questions 11. – 29.

The criteria in the table above are ranked according to their median and calculated confidence intervals. Only the criteria ranked 1 to 13 are considered as important. This is because their *P* values provide sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, their medians are statistically larger than 4. As the medians for these criteria are between 5 and 6, it can be concluded that their importance ratings lie between moderately important and very important. Based on these results, the criteria that ranked lower than 13 are not significant and should therefore not be considered as important by consultancies. This observation is also visible in the Boxplot below, as the majority of the criteria that ranked below 13 have ratings around 4 or below. Hence why they were found to not be statistically larger than the neutral point (4).

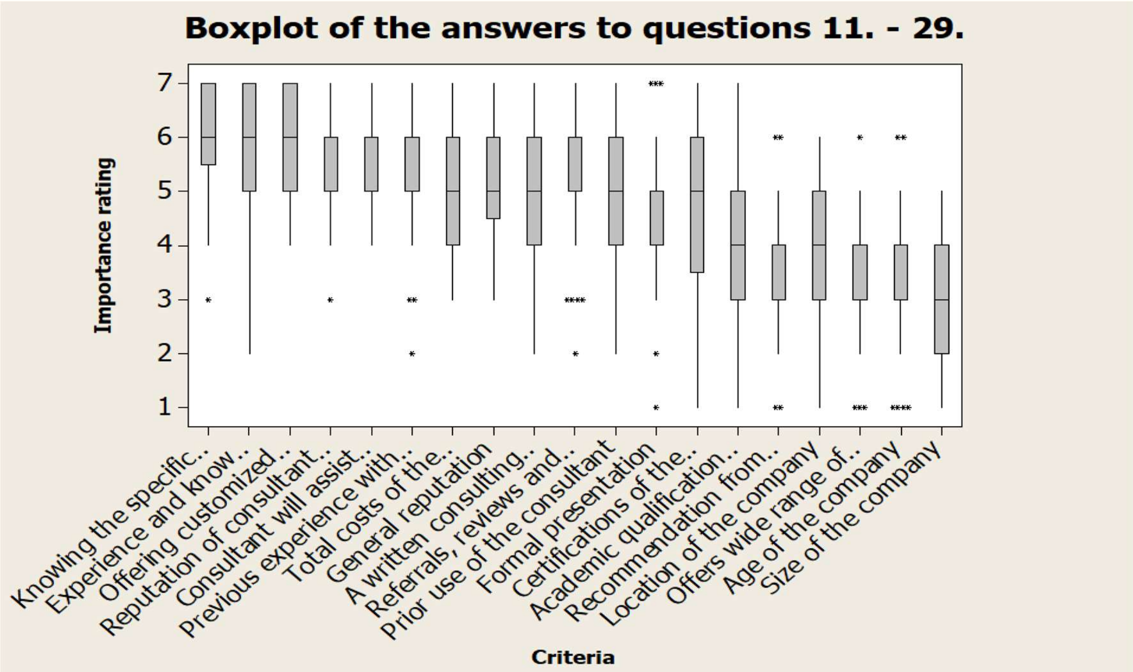

Figure 19: Boxplot of the answers to questions 11. – 29.

The criteria from the boxplot have several outliers which could be as a result of recording errors or misunderstanding of the question. Unfortunately, as the survey was completely anonymous, it was not possible to ask those specific participants more questions about these unusual cases. It is also probable that there are other reasons for these outliers, but it can only be speculated what they might be. If it was possible to further analyse the outliers it could be the case that the results changed slightly. It is also clear that several of the criteria have larger IQR's and ranges, such as certifications of the consultants. This shows that the data obtained for those criteria have a larger data spread. The range is however often easily influenced by extreme values. Therefore, it would be beneficial to try and obtain more data to help identify if the outliers might be negatively affecting the data.

When looking at the ranking from Table 22 and Figure 19 the top two criteria were knowledge of the specific consultant and, their experience and knowledge in the relevant field of business. This was closely followed by offering customized client solutions and the consultant's reputation in the relevant functional area. Then came the consultant will assist with the implementation of the solution and previous experience with the consulting company. Although the latter has three outliers equal to and less than 3. This means the participants set a lot of value on knowing the consultants and the companies they work for. Interestingly enough referrals, reviews and recommendations from satisfied clients was ranked seventh along with total cost of the consultant(s), general reputation and a written consulting proposal for the project. Referrals, reviews and recommendations were somewhat expected to be more important, due to previous findings of how consultants obtained the majority of their projects. This could potentially be explained due to the five outliers equal to or less than 3, which have a negative impact on the median.

The next three criteria were prior use of the consultant, formal presentation and certification of the consultants. Once again it was surprising that prior use of the consultant was ranked so low, but knowing the consultant was ranked very highly. Potential explanation here is that the criteria was most likely not understood correctly, as in most situations knowing the consultant, requires previous use of the consultant. In the other studies visible in Table 14 this criterion ranked higher, as expected. In terms of formal presentation, five outliers were also identified. However, in this situation three were equal to 7 and the others were equal to and less than 2. The next three were academic qualification of the consultant(s), recommendation from other consultants and location of the company. All of which had a median of 4 (neutral). Although the first has very variable results and the second has four outliers, two equal to 6 and the other two equal to 1. The overall rating of recommendation from other consultants shows that it is important from whom the recommendation comes from. The last three all had a median of 3 meaning they all were viewed to have slight importance. These criteria were, offers a wide range of services, age and size of the company. Although the first two had several outliers. Interestingly here is that offering a wide range of services is not deemed very important and suggests that it is more important to focus on a few services.

When comparing the survey results to the data (Table 13) obtained from Dawes et al. (1992, p. 190) all the criteria above the importance rating 4 (neutral) were the same. However, the ranking was different with a few similarities. For example, reputation of consultant in the relevant functional area and knowing the specific consultant(s) personally or professionally were in the top three in both cases. In both sets of results written consulting proposal was ranked seventh and age of company was ranked 17th. All the criteria that were rated as 4 or below were also the same apart from recommendations from satisfied clients, which in the survey from this thesis had a median of 5. Although in Patterson's (1995) and Askvik's (1992) studies recommendations ranked at a much more similar level (see Table 14).

6.4 Marketing tools and selection process

A very important part of the client survey was the question relating to what marketing tools the participants prefer the most to find consultants or learn about specific services. On average 3.20 tools were selected per participant. In total there were 40 different combinations. The combination that occurred the most was just selecting referrals (four times), although it was not drastically more than the others.

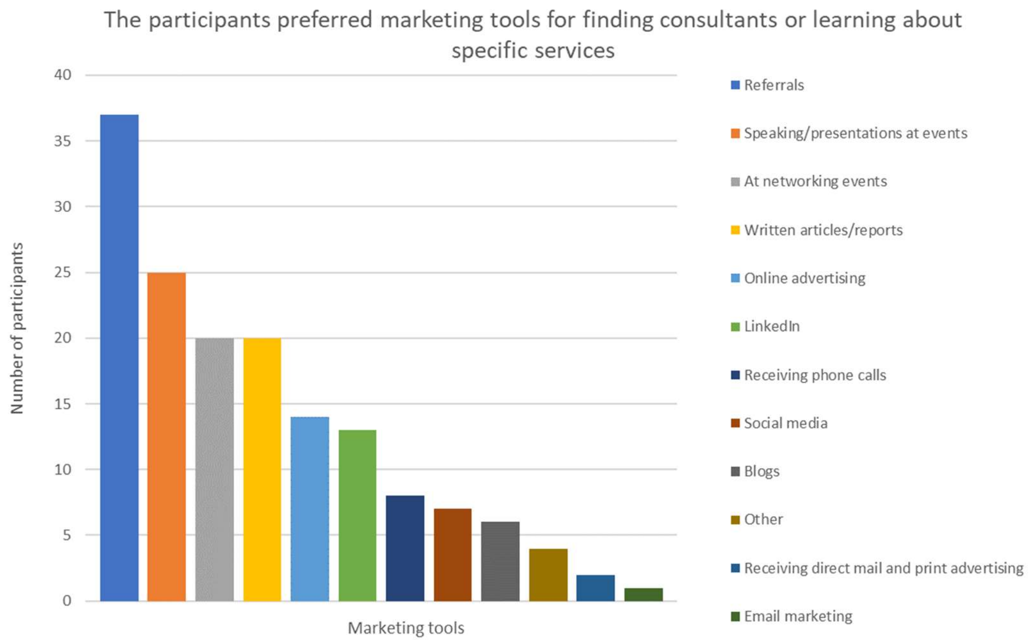

Figure 20: The answers to question 30. presented in a bar graph

The favourite tool was referrals (37), and this was followed by speaking/presentations at events (25). At networking events (20) and written articles/reports (20) closely followed. The top three tools provide a nice mixture of relationship-building and direct verbal contact. This helps develop the necessary trust and might be a reason as to why they ranked highly. Then a gradual decrease was experienced with the bottom two tools being receiving direct mail and print advertising (2), and email marketing (1). Four of the participants answered other, and when asked to specify, they gave the following answers; own research, experience with the consultant in other BU's, approval from corporation and 3 Story Software vendor management system (3SS-Tool). The 3SS-Tool is a software developed by HAYS, that supposedly provides efficient and transparent processes for resource and service procurement (HAYS, no date).

Typically, it would be expected that the marketing tools clients prefer to use to find consultants or learn about specific services, would also be the tools which make consultants the most money. When comparing these results to what was found in the literature (Figure 13), regarding the tools which consultants made the most money from, as expected some similarities can be observed. In both situations, referrals was by far the highest tool. Additionally, networking and events was ranked highly. On the other hand, speaking/presentations at events was not perceived to make consultants much money but was ranked highly regarding the tools the survey participants preferred. This is most likely because not many consultants use this marketing tool due to some of the difficulties involved with it. When looking at the lower ranking tools contrary to the survey answers (Figure 20), direct mail and print advertising, and email marketing ranked significantly higher in the study from Zipursky (Figure 13).

When participants were asked how they most commonly chose consultancies in the past, a total of seven participants said they had never had consultants work for them. Although in question six only five answered that they had never worked with consultants in the past. A potential explanation here is that these were participants that were not involved in the selection process and therefore could not answer the question.

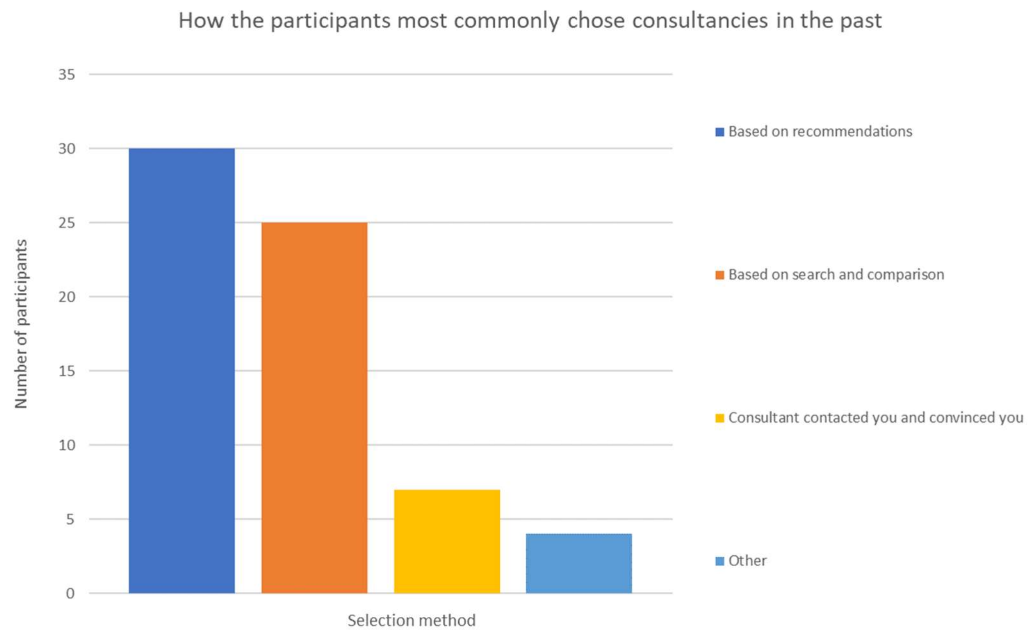

Figure 21: The answers to question 31. presented in a bar graph

As somewhat expected, recommendations was the highest-ranked selection method, with search and comparison coming next. Other was answered by four participants, three of which stated they had selected other as they were not involved in the selection process. The fourth participant mentioned they typically selected consultants at conferences.

6.5 Online marketing

The next questions in the survey were related to online marketing. The participants were firstly asked how effective they thought online marketing (website, blogging, social media) was if it was done correctly. The answers to this question (32.) were then statistically analysed, see below.

Descriptive Statistics: Question 32.						
N	**Minimum**	**Q1**	**Median**	**Q3**	**Maximum**	**Mode**
49	1	4	5	6	7	5
(1 = Not at all effective, 2 = Low effectiveness, 3 = Slightly effective, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Moderately effective, 6 = Very effective, 7 = Extremely effective)						
Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test: Question 32.						
Test of median = 4.00 versus median not = 4.00						
					Confidence Interval	
N for Test	**Wilcoxon Statistic**	**P**	**Estimated Median**	**Achieved Confidence**	**Lower**	**Upper**
38	567.00	0.004	5.00	95.00	4.50	5.00

Table 23: Descriptive statistical analysis and Wilcoxon signed rank test for question 32.

The median and mode answer to this question was 5 (somewhat satisfied). In this case, it is fair to say the participants feel that if online marketing is done correctly, it is moderately effective. This is because there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the sample median is statistically different from 4 (Neither satisfied or dissatisfied).

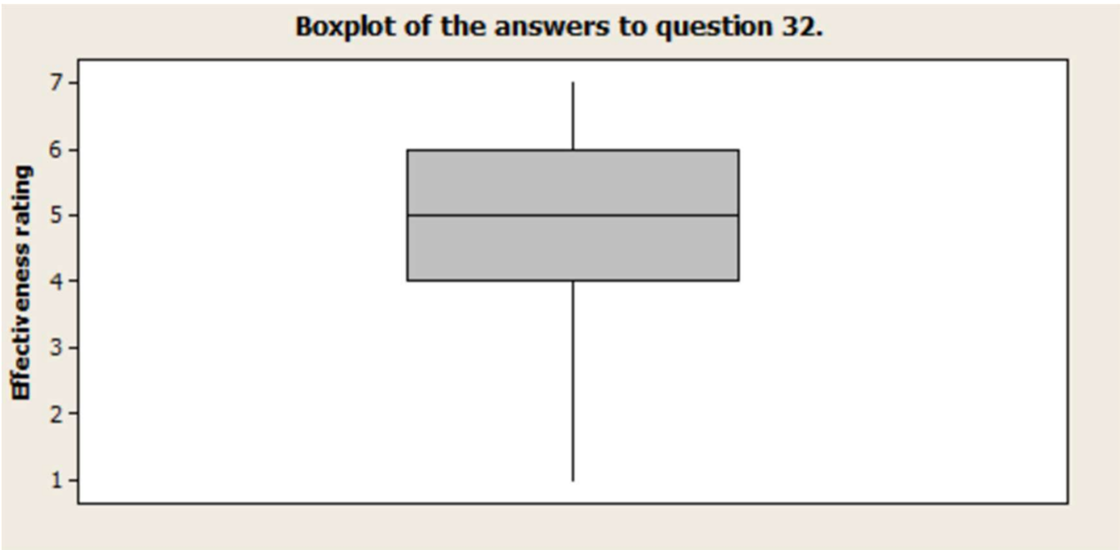

Figure 22: Boxplot of the answers to question 32.

When the Boxplot in Figure 22 is analysed it shows that the data obtained from the question is relatively spread out. Although, the IQR is only 2, the range is relatively large (1-7). Therefore, it would be beneficial to try and obtain more data to help identify if the outliers might be negatively impacting the results.

The second question (33.) was used to find out what information was deemed most important in online marketing and the following results were obtained. In total there were 18 different combinations. The combination that occurred the most was skill profile, company profile, reviews from previous projects and employee profile (nine times), which accounted for 18% of the participant's answers.

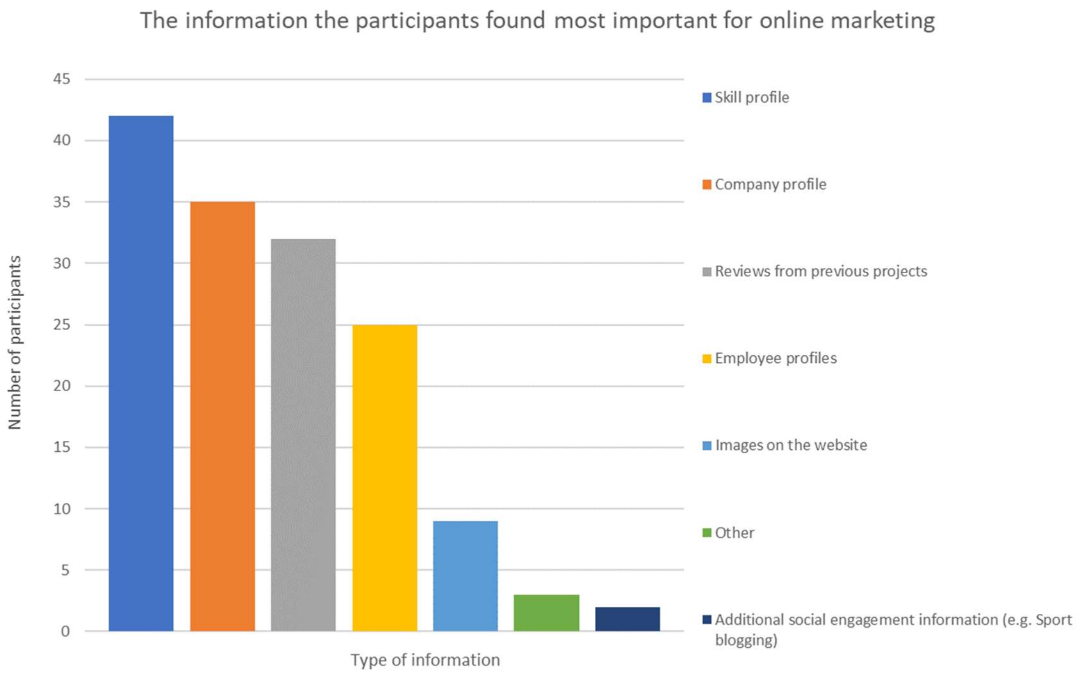

Figure 23: The answers to question 33. presented in a bar graph

In total 148 answers were provided by participants, meaning on average each participant provided 3.02 answers. The most answered type of information was skill profile (42), which was followed by company profile (35), reviews from previous projects (32) and employee profiles (25). Then a significant drop was experienced for images on the website (9), other (3) and lastly additional social engagement information (2). From the three participants that answered other, when asked to specify one participant answered with a question mark. As this participant also did not check any of the other types of information, it suggests that they did not understand the question. The other two answers suggested information such as previous engagements with references, articles in journals and posts on LinkedIn, are important in online marketing.

6.6 Content marketing

When completing the competitor analysis, it was found that several competitors provide quality content such as templates of technical documents, for free to their clients. Therefore, it was of interest if to find out whether this might increase the trust in a company that provided this.

Question answers		Sample %
34. Would you increase your trust in a consultancy if they provided free access to quality content related to the services it offered?	Yes	59%
	Can't say	33%
	No	8%

Table 24: A summary of the answers to question 34. from the client survey

Overall most of the participants answered yes (59%) to the question. As trust was found to be a very important aspect in consulting, it suggests providing this type of content could be very beneficial.

6.7 Social media marketing

Social media has grown significantly over the last years. This is why it was necessary to ask the participants how important it is for consultancies to have a presence on social media. The answers to this question were then statistically analysed, see below.

Descriptive Statistics: Question 35.						
N	**Minimum**	**Q1**	**Median**	**Q3**	**Maximum**	**Mode**
49	1	2	3	4	6	2
(1 = Not at all important, 2 = Low importance, 3 = Slightly important, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Moderately important, 6 = Very important, 7 = Extremely important)						
Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test: Question 35.						
Test of median = 4.00 versus median not = 4.00						
					Confidence Interval	
N for Test	**Wilcoxon Statistic**	**P**	**Estimated Median**	**Achieved Confidence**	**Lower**	**Upper**
37	109.00	0.000	3.00	95.00	2.50	3.50

Table 25: Descriptive statistical analysis and Wilcoxon signed rank test for question 35.

The median answer to this question was 3 (slightly important). The participants felt that a consultancies presence on social media is slightly important. This is because there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis (p < 0.05). Therefore, the sample median is statistically different from 4 (Neutral).

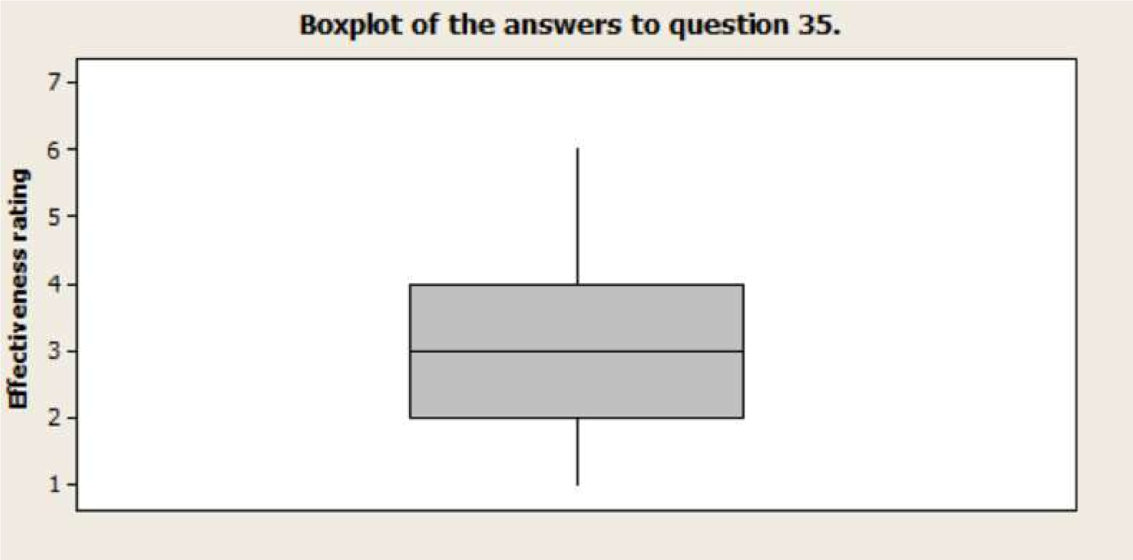

Figure 24: Boxplot of the answers to question 35.

Once again, when the Boxplot in Figure 24 is analysed, it can be concluded that the data obtained is relatively spread out. The IQR is 2 and the range is rather large (1-6). Therefore, similarly to several other questions, it would be beneficial to try and obtain more data to help identify if the outliers might be having a negative impact on the results. What has to be noted here is that this question was more targeted at social media such as Facebook and not LinkedIn (formal contact networks).

6.8 Email marketing and phone calls

Email marketing is a cheap tool that over the last decade has been used a lot. The participants were asked how they felt about receiving cold emails from consultancies, as an attempt to obtain projects (question 36.). This received a negative reaction with 67% of the participants stating it is totally inappropriate as it is spam. This is most likely because of how this tool has been overused by companies in the past. Staying on the email marketing topic the next question asked, was how participants would feel if they received personalized emails with a tailored offer (question 37.). This received a more positive reaction, 43% answered “Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases”, 35% answered “Appropriate, I could consider an offer” and 22% answered “Totally inappropriate”. Similarly, to question 36, when participants were asked about how the felt about receiving cold phone calls by consultancies (question 38.), most of them reacted negatively (71% answered totally inappropriate, it is spam).

7. Discussion & recommendations

In this chapter, the research questions that were stated in chapter "2. Aims and objectives", will be attempted to be answered. This will be a set of recommendations, stating what small/micro consultancies working in the medical industry should focus on in regards to marketing.

What types of services should small/micro consultancies in the German medical industry focus on to obtain new clients?

The results from the client survey suggest that clients in the medical industry are expecting to require services in more sectors in the future. A lot of clients require services in regulatory affairs, research & development, technology (e.g. implementing IT infrastructure) and project management. Several of which are intertwined, to a certain extent. The hint towards an increase in services in quality management could pose a potential opportunity for consultancies who offer this. It was suggested previously that these changes might be as a result of the MDR which will heavily influence the European medical industry over the next years. It is not possible to predict exactly what additional services will be required, therefore its essential consultancies actively analyse the market and become very reactive. These opportunities could be very high margin orders due to the urgency.

In terms of specific services, there are opportunities for consultancies to expand their services, which could help differentiate themselves from the rest. For example, the provision of document templates and trainings. They should also investigate the possibilities of generating publications and training videos. Finally providing regulatory and QM updates could be very interesting. Several of these services won't directly generate revenue or projects. However, they provide more marketing opportunities and are information often searched by potential clients. On top of this many consultancies already have all this information and would only require extra work to make it easily accessible to current and potential clients.

Consultancies should be vigilant in terms of how many services they provide. This is especially the case as previous research and results from the client survey found that consultancies that offer a wide range of services do not necessarily gain an advantage in the client selection process. Hence why they need to be selective to find the correct balance. This leans once again more towards the importance of market reactivity.

How should small/micro consultancies in the medical industry market their services feasibly and successful in the current German market?

First of all, consultancies such as IPP need to get their employees more involved with their marketing. This will already help solve the issue, to a certain extent, of consultancies mentioning they do not have the resources to carry out marketing. Furthermore, it is about creating the awareness that they are currently marketing without necessarily being aware of it. This can be assisted by making employees, with little marketing experience, attend basic marketing training (should be short). Then supplement this with annual or biannual meetings with all employees to discuss the company's marketing strategy and plan. It is also important to make sure the employees understand the company portfolio and USP. This should therefore be clearly communicated and discussed in these meetings.

There are many marketing tools available, some of which have been covered in this thesis. Several of them are more suited to the consulting industry than others. From the research carried out the following recommendations can be made. Referral marketing is very well-liked by clients in the medical industry and has been found to be very successful in consulting. Organic word of mouth (WOM) is a self-motivated form of referral marketing. Therefore, there is very little that can be done here apart from making sure the consultancy provides the best service possible. Although consultancies should try to provide incentives (firm-stimulated WOM) so that clients refer their services to others, without making them lose their credibility. An example here is providing a discount on future projects with clients that referred certain services, which resulted in a new project. This should not be done excessively and should remain confidential. Additionally, asking clients to provide reviews on the company website regarding completed projects is also a way to display positive reviews to a wider audience. This could be followed up with a personalised thank you email and in IPP's case, a voucher for their web shop could be provided. Although this might come across as a gift which in the case for clients working in large companies, cannot be accepted due to their policies. Referrals are important, however consultancies should not solely rely on them. As this has been found to have a negative correlation on the number of client's consultancies work with.

Further viable options for consultancies are speaking/presenting and networking at events. They were also both found to be tools well-liked by clients in the medical industry. It is important here to identify the relevant events or fairs to visit. Examples for the German medical industry are MEDICA and IDS. These are huge events that might be relatively costly to have a stand and hard to obtain a spot to speak/present. Hence why smaller fairs such as MedTech Live could be interesting options. A recommendation here is to try and have a stand or service point at an event where an employee is speaking/presenting. This makes follow up discussions easier and increases the chance of them happening. Speaking/presenting at events was found to not be very successful in consulting. This is because of several reasons such as it is not easy to find a relevant event and the whole process is lengthy. On top of the fact that it requires an employee that is confident and good at speaking/presenting. Although it definitely has its benefits, as found earlier in the literature research, such as it can become an extra source of revenue and improves credibility.

As previously touched on, several consultancies have started to look at the opportunities with content marketing. This is all about creating awareness for the company, by providing useful information to clients, without directly promoting and selling services. Examples are writing articles/reports and providing document templates (more examples can be found in the subchapter "4.4.8 Content marketing"). Writing articles and reports was once again found to be a tool very well-liked by clients in the medical industry. It was also found that they would increase their trust in a consultancy if free access to quality content is provided. Although it was suggested that it does not make consultants a lot of money, as it does not directly promote or sell services. If it is done properly and linked to the company and its website, it could increase website traffic. It can also be a very good tool to allow potential clients to initiate a conversation with the company. For example, if they read an article or download a document template and are unsure about something, they might be interested in contacting the consultancy for further information. The consultancies need to identify what type of content is best suited to them and can then use this to differentiate themselves from the majority. In the medical industry, writing articles on norm updates and regulatory changes could be suitable ideas.

Online marketing definitely needs to be considered by consultancies. It was also found to be a tool preferred by clients to find consultancies and their services. Additionally, they suggested that if it is done correctly it would be moderately effective. This is why just having a company website is insufficient. It is important that it has the correct communication and SEO is used. For the latter to be successful time needs to be invested to identify which words are most often searched based on the topic. Moreover, it was found that clients find the following information important in these cases; skill profile, company profile, reviews from previous projects and employee profiles. Consultancies should look to complete SWOT analysis on themselves to help with their marketing communication. This will help prevent forgetting to mention their strengths on their website like is currently the case for IPP. This is an example of key messages missed in their communication which could damage the company's future opportunities.

LinkedIn or Xing (German version) was found to be a tool that clients also liked to use and was found to be moderately successful for consultants. Suggestions here are that the companies look to create a company profile on these platforms. This enables them to post articles from the company into their communities which will help with website traffic. Furthermore, these platforms are specifically developed to help find people with the correct skills. Hence why many job portal companies search for consultants here. The fact that the majority of professionals already have profiles on these platforms, means with little extra work they can already post the company articles into their communities. What is important is that they are kept up to date and consistent. This means simple things such as company name needs to be the same in each profile. An idea to explore is to link the employee profiles on these platforms to the website in a way that allows the company to be able to update profiles in one location.

In the literature, it was suggested that E-marketing tools require more resources than typically expected. All the tools suggested in this section do not require huge investments of resources (especially financial) to successfully carry them out. Having said this it is important that the needed amount of time is invested by each employee to do it correctly the first time round, as this will be more beneficial in the long run. Time is also critical for tools that involve interaction with the client, to provide quick responses. Consultants should not view this time spent as money lost due to the hours not being billable. Instead, it should be viewed as project free time which is enhancing the long-term success of the company.

Traditional marketing tools such as phoning potential clients or sending emails are definitely not as appropriate as previously. This can be somewhat explained with the developments in internet which has provided better platforms for marketing. Moreover, tools that provide relationship-building and directly demonstrate the consultant's expertise come across very well with clients, as it helps to better build trust. In terms of IPP it is also unsure exactly how much sponsoring is creating new opportunities. In addition to the fact it involves high investments, means it might not be the best tool for consultancies to focus on. Some might argue that it helps with the social image of the company. However, in the client survey, it was suggested that this information is not important in online marketing. Hence why this tool might be more suitable for larger consultancies.

What do clients in the European medical industry perceive as most important for the final selection of a consultancy?

Consultants should be aware of what the client's value when making the final selection of a consultancy. In this thesis, a combination of information from primary and secondary data was obtained to try and identify this. From the data (client survey data) obtained specifically for clients in the medical industry the top five criteria were:

- Knowing the specific consultant(s) personally or professionally
- Experience and knowledge in the particular field of business
- Offering customized solutions for the client
- Reputation of consultant in the relevant functional area
- Consultant will assist with implementation of the solution

As previously discussed in the subchapter "6.3 Criteria clients use to select consultants", this was somewhat similar to data obtained from samples from other industries and regions. Some of the criteria above can be easily influenced by the company. However, for others it could take several years to develop. This data does highlight the importance of having relationships with as many different clients as possible, which can be achieved through successful marketing.

In addition, it was found that clients in the medical industry find the following criteria to not really being important:

- Academic qualification of the consultant(s)
- Recommendation from other consultants
- Location of the company
- Offers wide range of services
- Age of the company
- Size of the company

This indicates that hiring competent employees with relevant knowledge is more important than based on qualifications. It also suggests it is more important to have a lot of knowledge and experience in a particular field of business instead of offering a wide range of services. This information is a good starting point for consultancies looking to be more successful however they must communicate with their clients to see exactly what is valuable to them.

8. Conclusion

The primary goal for all small/micro consultancies is to find effective marketing tools that build strong trust with current and potential clients, that do not require huge amounts of resources (specifically financial investments). Recommendations regarding these tools can be found in the previous chapter “7. Discussion & recommendations”, where the full answers to the three research questions have been stated.

Consultancies must be prepared to invest the necessary time to do it properly and make sure everyone is involved. They should take the recommendations provided in the previous section on board, but it is important to note there is no best recipe for each situation. Therefore, they need to carry out further research, regarding their situation, to successfully select the services they will provide and tools to market them. The starting point for all consultancies should involve them carrying out this further research and developing a marketing plan, similar to the one in the subchapter “4.3 The marketing plan”. This will help them identify all the necessary aspects to successfully market their services in a systematic format. Although, just having a marketing plan will not guarantee success. A mindset of marketing must be implemented within the whole consultancy.

As a result of time constraints with this thesis, certain areas were not covered that are important to fully answer how small consultancies should market their services. Hence why further research would need to try and address the following points:

- How to calculate the cost-benefit ratio of the different marketing tools
- Look deeper into how to successfully implement each marketing tool that was suggested to be useful for consultancies
- Identify the keywords for SEO in the medical industry
- How to develop an effective marketing plan without using up too many resources
- How to develop trust, using trust equations developed by Peter Block as examples

A limitation of the client survey was the fact that follow up questions were not possible as it was anonymous. The issue here is the extra effort required for this to be legal and then having participants take part. Findings from literature review were not identically inserted into the client survey, which made comparison of results not always possible. Also non-parametric tests typically have more chance of accepting that there is no difference between medians when in reality a difference exists (Field, 2009, p. 551). Furthermore, the accuracy of the answers to the questions with a Liker-Type scale is dependent on the understandability of this scale from the participant. That is why some of the results should be accepted with caution. The client survey only had a sample size of 49 participants and was primarily targeted at the medical and dental industry. If possible, future research should look to try and obtain a larger sample of participants and potentially look at other related industries. This will help to increase the power of the results and will mean stronger recommendations and conclusions can be drawn, as some of the previously mentioned limitations could be limited.

References

Askvik, S. (1992) *Choosing Consultants for OD assignments*. Paper presented to the International Organization Development Association World Conference. University of Coventry.

Baltes, P. L. (2015) 'Content marketing - the fundamental tool of digital marketing', *Economic Sciences*, 2(8), pp. 111–118. Available at: http://webbut.unitbv.ro/BU2015/Series V/BILETIN I/15_Patrutiu.pdf.

Barefoot, D. and Szabo, J. (2010) *Friends with benefits: A Social Media Marketing Handbook*. San Francisco: William Pollock. Available at: https://books.google.de/books?id=B0MyDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=de#v=onepage&q&f=false.

Bennett, R. J. and Smith, C. (2004) 'The selection and control of management consultants by small business clients', *International Small Business Journal*, 22(5), pp. 435–462. doi: 10.1177/0266242604046295.

Biech, E. (2003) *Marketing Your Consulting Services: A Business of Consulting Resource*. Pfeiffer.

Biyalogorsky, E., Gerstner, E. and Libai, B. (2001) 'Customer Referral Management: Optimal Reward Programs', *Marketing Science*, 20(1), pp. 82–95. doi: 0732-2399/01/2001/0082.

Cerruti, C. *et al.* (2018) *Survey of the European Management Consultancy 2017/2018*. Available at: http://www.feaco.org/sites/default/files/sitepagefiles/Feaco.Survey 2017-2018.pdf.

Chaffey, D. *et al.* (2009) *Internet Marketing*. Fourth Edi. Edited by D. Chaffey. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Clark, N. and Nixon, C. (2015) *Professional Services Marketing Handbook: how to build relationships, grow your firm and become a client champion*. 1st Editio. Kogan Page Limited.

Corcoran, J. and McLean, F. (1998) 'The selection of management consultants', *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 11(1), pp. 37–54. doi: 10.1108/09513559810199889.

Dawes, P. L., Dowling, G. R. and Patterson, P. G. (1992) 'Criteria used to select management consultants', *Industrial Marketing Management*, 21(3), pp. 187–193. doi: 10.1016/0019-8501(92)90015-L.

Day, J. (2000) ‘Commentary – The value and importance of the small firm to the world economy’, *European Journal of Marketing*, 34(9/10), pp. 1033–1037. doi: 10.1108/03090560010342764.

Dr. Klügl, V. (2018a) *Businessplan IPP - Zahlenwerte und Anlagen*. Nürnberg.

Dr. Klügl, V. (2018b) *Fortlaufender Businessplan IPP*. Nürnberg.

European Commission (2005) ‘The New SME Definition: User Guide and Model Declaration’, *Official Journal of the European Union*, pp. 1–52. doi: EN NB60-04-773-ENC-C 92-894-7909-4.

Eurostat (2018) *Business demography statistics - Statistics Explained*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Business_demography_statistics#Enterprise_survival_rate (Accessed: 1 May 2019).

Field, A. (2009) *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. Third. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Grant, K., Gilmore, A. and Carson, D. (2001) ‘SME marketing in practice’, pp. 6–11. doi: 10.1108/02634500110363583.

Gummesson, E. (1979) ‘The marketing of professional services—an organisational dilemma’, *European Journal of Marketing*, 13(5), pp. 308–318. doi: 10.1108/EUM0000000004951.

Hackett, G. (1981) ‘Survey Research Methods’, *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 59(9), pp. 599–604. doi: 10.1002/j.2164-4918.1981.tb00626.x.

Hagen, J. (2004) *Why Small Businesses Fail, Counselors to America’s Small Business website*. Available at: www.score.org (Accessed: 8 May 2019).

Hart, C. (1998) ‘Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination (SAGE Study Skills Series)’, *Doing a Literature Review*.

HAYS (no date) *Hays vendor management system*. Available at: https://www.hays.de/personaldienstleistung/hays-talent-solutions/vendor-management-system (Accessed: 21 August 2019).

Hernández, B., Jiménez, J. and Martín, M. J. (2009) ‘Key website factors in e-business strategy’, *International Journal of Information Management*, 29(5), pp. 362–371. doi: 10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2008.12.006.

Hill, R. P. and Moran, N. (2011) 'Social marketing meets interactive media', *International Journal of Advertising*, 30(5), pp. 815–838. doi: 10.2501/IJA-30-5-815-838.

Van Holten, T. (2017) *Adapting the sales approach to the customer ' s buying behaviour*. Eindhoven university of technology.

Huang, X. and Brown, A. (2000) 'An Analysis and Classification of Problems in Small Business', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 18(1), pp. 73–85. doi: 10.1177/07399863870092005.

IPP Dr. Volker Klügl (no date) *IPP Dr. Klügl Projektmanagement | Medizintechnik | Nürnberg*. Available at: https://ipp-nbg.de/ (Accessed: 13 September 2019).

Kaur, R. and Singh, G. (2017) 'Internet Marketing : The New Era of Innovation In E-Commerce', *International Journal of Scientific Research in Computer Science, Engineering and Information Technology © 2017 IJSRCSEIT*, 1(2), pp. 2456–3307. Available at: www.ijsrcseit.com.

Kotamraju, N. P. (2002) 'Keeping Up: Web Design Skill and The Reinvented Worker', *Information, Communication & Society*, 5(1), pp. 1–26. doi: 10.1080/13691180110117631.

McDonald, M., Frow, P. and Payne, A. (2011) *Marketing Plans for Services: a complete guide*. 3rd edn. John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

McPhillips, C. (2016) *What is Content Marketing? Content Marketing World*. Available at: https://www.contentmarketingworld.com/what-is-content-marketing/ (Accessed: 21 July 2019).

Mille, J. (2016) *What Is Content Marketing? - 25 Definitions | LinkedIn Marketing Blog*. Available at: https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/blog/best-practices--content-marketing/2016/what-is-content-marketing--definitions-from-25-thought-leaders (Accessed: 21 July 2019).

Minitab (2007) 'Minitab 15'. Available at: http://www.minitab.com/en-us/.

Muller, P. *et al.* (2017) *Annual Report on European SMEs 2016/2017: Focus on self employment*, *SME Performance Review*. doi: 10.2873/742338.

Nadaraja, R. and Yazdanifard, R. (2013) *Social Media Marketing: Advantages and Disadvantages*. Centre of Southern New Hampshire University. Available at: https://www.politeianet.gr/books/9789604613199-paschopoulos-arsenis-kleidarithmos-nea-mesa-eisai-mesa-151795.

Nwankwo, S. and Gbadamosi, A. (2011) *Entrepreneurship Marketing: Principles and practice of SME marketing*. Routledge.

Patterson, P. (1995) ‘Choice Criteria in Final Selection of a Management Consultancy Service’, *Journal of Professional Services Marketing*, 11(2), pp. 177–187. doi: 10.1300/J090v11n02_13.

Rowley, J. (2008) ‘Understanding digital content marketing’, *Journal of Marketing Management*, 24(5–6), pp. 517–540. doi: 10.1362/026725708x325977.

Schmitt, P., Skiera, B. and Van den Bulte, C. (2011) ‘Referral Programs and’, *American Marketing Association*, 75(January), pp. 46–59.

Sellnow, D. D. (2004) *Confident public speaking*. Second. Edited by A. Mitchel. Allen, Holly J. Available at: https://books.google.de/books?hl=de&lr=&id=TAaDaezB__8C&oi=fnd&pg=PR16&dq=Successful+Public+Speaking&ots=5j1SAs3dju&sig=VaWQDdRef5AZmt-H2QIL5lw2Hq8#v=onepage&q=DOI&f=false.

Sing, A., Taneja, A. and Mangalaraj, G. (2009) ‘Creating online surveys: Some wisdom from the trenches tutorial’, *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 52(2), pp. 197–212. doi: 10.1109/TPC.2009.2017986.

Singh, T., Veron-Jackson, L. and Cullinane, J. (2008) ‘Blogging: A new play in your marketing game plan’, *Business Horizons*, 51(4), pp. 281–292. doi: 10.1016/j.bushor.2008.02.002.

SoGoSurvey (2019) *Complete List of Survey Tool Features - SoGoSurvey*. Available at: https://www.sogosurvey.com/complete-feature-list/?type=individual (Accessed: 18 June 2019).

Sonmez, M. and Moorhouse, A. (2010) ‘Purchasing professional services: Which decision criteria?’, *Management Decision*, 48(2), pp. 189–206. doi: 10.1108/00251741011022572.

Sporrong, J. (2011) ‘Criteria in consultant selection: Public procurement of architectural and engineering services’, *Australasian Journal of Construction Economics and Building*, 11(4), pp. 59–76. doi: 10.5130/ajceb.v11i4.2297.

Sweeney, J. C., Soutar, G. N. and McColl-Kennedy, J. R. (2011) ‘The marketing practices-performance relationship in professional service firms’, *Journal of Service Management*, 22(3), pp. 292–316. doi: 10.1108/09564231111136845.

Trusov, M., Bucklin, R. E. and Pauwels, K. (2009) ‘Effects of Word-of-Mouth Versus Traditional Marketing: Findings from an Internet Social Networking Site’, *Journal of Marketing*, 73(1), pp. 90–102.

Vagia, W. M. (2006) *Likert-Type Scale Response Anchors*. Clemson University. doi: 10.1525/auk.2008.125.1.225.

Zhang, X. (Alan), Kumar, V. and Cosguner, K. (2017) ‘Dynamically Managing a Profitable Email Marketing Program’, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 54(6), pp. 851–866. doi: 10.1509/jmr.16.0210.

Zipursky, M. (2018) *Marketing Strategies for Consultants Study: 2018*. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20190422205406/https://www.consultingsuccess.com/marketing-strategies-for-consultants-study-2018 (Accessed: 9 May 2019).

Zipursky, M. (2019) *Marketing for Consultants Study (2019) | Consulting Success*. Available at: https://www.consultingsuccess.com/marketing-for-consultants-study#comments (Accessed: 9 May 2019).

Appendix A

Explanation of the different service segments

Service Segment	Description
Strategy	These are activities that support organizations in analysing and redefining their strategies, improve their business operations and optimize their corporate and business planning, business modelling, market analysis and strategy development.
Operations	These are activities that are related to the integration of business solutions through Business Process Re-engineering (BPR); customer/supplier relations management (CRM); cost reduction; purchasing & supply chain management, manufacturing, research and development (R&D), product development and logistics.
Sales & Marketing	These are activities which aim to evaluate and redesign Sales & Marketing activities in terms of customer insight and relationship management, sales and channel management, product portfolio management and branding, and digital marketing.
Finance & Risk Management	These are activities that support organizations in analysing and redefining their planning, budgeting and performance management models and improving their capabilities in measuring and optimizing enterprise risks.
People & Change	These are activities that support organizations in dealing with the effects that change has on the human element of the organization, everything related to Human Resources (HR).
Technology	These are activities that support organizations in evaluating their IT strategies with the objective of aligning technology with business processes.
Other Services	These are activities that include a variety of complementary professional services to MC projects, such as training, market studies, outplacement, executive selection and recruitment

Table 26: Explanation of the different service segments (Cerruti *et al.*, 2018, p. 20)

Appendix B

HOCHSCHULE FURTWANGEN UNIVERSITY | HFU

Marketing of consulting services from a clients perspective

* Required Information

Dear participants,

This survey has been developed for my master thesis in marketing and is under the supervision of Hochschule Furtwangen University.

The survey intends to support and further develop current information on how clients choose consulting services.

The survey will take a maximum of 5-10 minutes of your time and will be very beneficial for the research topic.

All data will be kept anonymous and if you are unsure about an answer just select an option to the best of your knowledge.

All questions only have one possible answer unless specified otherwise.

Thank you for your support,

Maxime Cerulus

Introduction questions:

* 1. What industry is the company you work for in?

Characters Remaining: 100

* 2. Is the company you work for small, medium or large?

- Small (<50 employees)
- Medium (<250 employees)
- Large (>250 employees)

* 3. In which country/region does your company operate?

Characters Remaining: 100

* 4. What is your position in the company?

- Corporate-Level
- Management-Level
- Other

General client research questions:

✱ 5. Are you in a position to decide what consultancy to pick?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Partially

✱ 6. Have you ever worked with consultants in the past?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

✱ 7. Are you considering working with consultants in the future?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

✱ 8. In what sectors do you or your company currently require consulting services? (Multiple answers possible)

- ☐ Corporate Level (e.g. assistance with company strategy)
- ☐ Project Management
- ☐ Research & Development
- ☐ Testing
- ☐ Operations
- ☐ Sales & Marketing
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Human resources
- ☐ Technology (e.g. implementing IT infrastructure)
- ☐ Regulatory affairs
- ☐ Quality management
- ☐ We do not currently require consulting services
- ☐ Other (Please specify)

✱ 9. In what sectors do you anticipate yourself or your company requiring consulting services in the future? (Multiple answers possible)

- ☐ Corporate Level (e.g. assistance with company strategy)
- ☐ Project Management
- ☐ Research & Development
- ☐ Testing
- ☐ Operations
- ☐ Sales & Marketing
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Human resources
- ☐ Technology (e.g. implementing IT infrastructure)
- ☐ Regulatory affairs
- ☐ Quality management
- ☐ We do not anticipate the need for consulting services in the future
- ☐ Other (Please specify)

✱ **10. In general, what is your satisfaction level from previous experiences with consultants?**
(1 = Completely dissatisfied, 2 = Mostly dissatisfied, 3 = Somewhat dissatisfied, 4 = neither satisfied or dissatisfied, 5 = Somewhat satisfied, 6 = Mostly satisfied, 7 = Completely satisfied)

Completely dissatisfied Completely satisfied

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ Can't say (never worked with consultants)

Marketing questions:

What criteria do you find important for the final selection of a consulting service over an another?
(1 = Not at all important, 2 = Low importance, 3 = Slightly important, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Moderately important, 6 = Very important, 7 = Extremely important)

✱ **11. Reputation of consultant in the relevant functional area**

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ **12. General reputation**

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ **13. Knowing the specific consultant(s) personally or professionally**

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ **14. Previous experience with the consulting company**

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ **15. Experience and knowledge in the particular field of business**

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ **16. Prior use of the consultant**

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 17. A written consulting proposal for the project

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 18. Consultant will assist with implementation of the solution

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 19. Total costs of the consultant(s)

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 20. Formal presentation

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 21. Referrals, reviews and recommendations from satisfied clients

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 22. Offers wide range of services

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 23. Academic qualification of the consultant(s)

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 24. Certifications of the consultant(s) (e.g. ISO 9001)

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 25. Size of the company

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 26. Location of the company

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 27. Recommendation from other consultants

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 28. Age of the company

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 29. Offering customized solutions for the client

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 30. What are your preferred marketing methods for finding consultants or learning about specific services?
(Multiple answers possible)

- [ ] Blogs
- [ ] Receiving phone calls
- [ ] Receiving direct mail and print advertising
- [ ] At networking events
- [ ] Online advertising
- [ ] Email marketing
- [ ] Speaking/presentations at events
- [ ] LinkedIn
- [ ] Social media
- [ ] Referrals
- [ ] Written articles/reports
- [ ] Other (Please specify)

✱ 31. How have you most commonly chosen consultancies in the past? (Multiple answers possible)

- ☐ Based on recommendations
- ☐ Based on search and comparison
- ☐ Consultant contacted you and convinced you
- ☐ Never had a consultant work for me
- ☐ Other (Please specify)

✱ 32. How effective, in your opinion, is online marketing (website, blogging, social media) if done correctly, for consultancies?

(1 = Not at all effective, 2 = Low effectiveness, 3 = Slightly effective, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Moderately effective, 6 = Very effective, 7 = Extremely effective)

Not at all effective — Extremely effective

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 33. What information is important for you in the online marketing? (Multiple answers possible)

- ☐ Employee profiles
- ☐ Company profile
- ☐ Skill profile
- ☐ Images on the website
- ☐ Additional social engagement information (e.g. Sport blogging)
- ☐ Reviews from previous projects
- ☐ Other (Please specify)

✱ 34. Would you increase your trust in a consultancy if they provided free access to quality content related to the services it offered? (For example, Templates of technical documents)

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Can't say

✱ 35. How important is the consultancies presence on social media for you? (promoting services on social media such as Facebook or Twitter)

(1 = Not at all important, 2 = Low importance, 3 = Slightly important, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Moderately important, 6 = Very important, 7 = Extremely important)

Not at all important — Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 36. How appropriate in your opinion are sending cold emails in order to attract new customers?

- ○ Appropriate, I could consider an offer
- ○ Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases
- ○ Totally inappropriate, it is spam

✱ 37. How appropriate in your opinion are sending personalized emails to the particular company with a tailored offer?

- ○ Appropriate, I could consider an offer
- ○ Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases
- ○ Totally inappropriate

✱ 38. How appropriate in your opinion are cold phone calls to attract new customers?

- Appropriate, I could consider an offer
- Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases
- Totally inappropriate, it is spam

Clear answers on page | Submit

Figure 25: SoGoSurvey English client survey – Marketing of consulting services from a client's perspective

HOCHSCHULE FURTWANGEN UNIVERSITY HFU

Marketing of consulting services from a clients perspective

✱ Erforderliche Informationen

Sehr geehrte Teilnehmer/Teilnehmerinnen,

Diese Umfrage wurde für meine Masterarbeit in Marketing entwickelt und steht unter der Aufsicht der Hochschule Furtwangen Universität.

Die Umfrage soll aktuelle Informationen darüber, wie Kunden Beratungsleistungen wählen, unterstützen und weiterentwickeln.

Die Umfrage dauert maximal 5-10 Minuten und ist für das Forschungsthema von großem Nutzen.

Alle Daten bleiben anonym und wenn Sie sich über eine Antwort nicht sicher sind, wählen Sie nach bestem Wissen eine Option.

Alle Fragen haben nur eine mögliche Antwort, sofern nicht anders angegeben ist.

Danke für Ihre Unterstützung,

Maxime Cerulus

Einführungsfragen:

✱ 1. In welcher Branche befindet sich das Unternehmen, für das Sie arbeiten?

Verbleibende Zeichen: 100

✱ 2. Ist das Unternehmen, für das Sie arbeiten, klein, mittelgroß oder groß?

- klein (<50 Angestellte)
- mittelgroß (<250 Angestellte)
- groß (>250 Angestellte)

✱ 3. In welchem Land/Region ist Ihr Unternehmen tätig?

Verbleibende Zeichen: 100

✱ 4. Was ist Ihre Position im Unternehmen?

- ○ Unternehmensleitung
- ○ Führungsebene
- ○ Sonstiges

Allgemeine Fragen zur Kundenrecherche:

✱ 5. Können Sie in Ihrer Position entscheiden, welche Beratungsunternehmen Sie wählen möchten?

- ○ Ja
- ○ Nein
- ○ Teilweise

✱ 6. Haben Sie in der Vergangenheit schon einmal mit Beratern zusammengearbeitet?

- ○ Ja
- ○ Nein

✱ 7. Bestehen konkrete Überlegungen, mit Beratern zusammenzuarbeiten?

- ○ Ja
- ○ Nein

✱ 8. In welchen Abteilungen benötigen Sie oder Ihr Unternehmen aktuell Beratungsleistungen? (Mehrfachantworten möglich)

- ☐ Unternehmensleitung (z. B. Unterstützung bei der Unternehmensstrategie)
- ☐ Projektmanagement
- ☐ Forschung & Entwicklung
- ☐ Testen
- ☐ Operations
- ☐ Vertrieb & Marketing
- ☐ Finanzen
- ☐ Humanressourcen
- ☐ Technologie (z. B. Implementierung der IT-Infrastruktur)
- ☐ Regulatorische Angelegenheiten
- ☐ Qualitätsmanagement
- ☐ Derzeit benötigen wir keine Beratungsleistungen
- ☐ Sonstiges (Bitte spezifizieren)

✱ 9. In welchen Abteilungen rechnen Sie mit einem zukünftigen Beratungsbedarf für Sie oder Ihr Unternehmen? (Mehrfachantworten möglich)

- ☐ Unternehmensebene (z. B. Unterstützung bei der Unternehmensstrategie)
- ☐ Projektmanagement
- ☐ Forschung & Entwicklung
- ☐ Testen
- ☐ Operations
- ☐ Vertrieb & Marketing
- ☐ Finanzen
- ☐ Humanressourcen
- ☐ Technologie (z. B. Implementierung der IT-Infrastruktur)
- ☐ Regulatorische Angelegenheiten
- ☐ Qualitätsmanagement
- ☐ Für die Zukunft sehen wir keinen Beratungsbedarf
- ☐ Sonstiges (Bitte spezifizieren)

*** 10. Im Allgemeinen, wie zufrieden sind Sie mit Ihren bisherigen Erfahrungen mit Beratern?**

(1 = Sehr unzufrieden, 2 = Eher unzufrieden, 3 = Unzufrieden,4 = Weder zufrieden noch unzufrieden, 5 = Zufrieden, 6 = Eher zufrieden, 7 = Sehr zufrieden)

Sehr unzufrieden Sehr zufrieden

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ keine Angabe möglich

Spezifische Marketingfragen:

Welche Kriterien finden Sie wichtig für die endgültige Auswahl einer Beratungsleistung gegenüber einer anderen?

(1 = Überhaupt nicht wichtig, 2 = Sehr unwichtig, 3 = Relativ unwichtig, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Relativ wichtig, 6 = Sehr wichtig, 7 = Äußerst wichtig)

*** 11. Reputation des Beraters im relevanten Funktionsbereich**

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*** 12. Allgemeiner Ruf**

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*** 13. Persönliche oder berufliche Kenntnisse der / des spezifischen Berater(s)**

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*** 14. Frühere Erfahrungen mit dem Beratungsunternehmen**

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*** 15. Erfahrung und Wissen in dem jeweiligen Geschäftsfeld**

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*** 16. Vorheriger Einsatz des Beraters**

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 17. Ein schriftlicher Beratungsvorschlag für das Projekt

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 18. Der Berater wird bei der Implementierung der Lösung unterstützen

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 19. Gesamtkosten der / des Berater(s)

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 20. Formelle Präsentation

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 21. Bewertungen und Empfehlungen von zufriedenen Kunden

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 22. Bietet eine breite Palette von Dienstleistungen

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 23. Akademische Qualifikation des / der Berater (s)

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

✱ 24. Zertifizierungen des / der Berater (s) (z.B. ISO 9001)

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*** 25. Größe des Unternehmens**

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*** 26. Standort des Unternehmens**

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*** 27. Empfehlung anderer Berater**

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*** 28. Alter des Unternehmens**

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*** 29. Kundenspezifische Lösungen werden angeboten**

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*** 30. Was sind Ihre bevorzugten Marketingmethoden, um Berater zu finden oder sich über bestimmte Dienstleistungen zu informieren?
(Mehrfachantworten möglich)**

- [ ] Blog
- [ ] Anrufe entgegennehmen
- [ ] Direktwerbung und Printwerbung erhalten
- [ ] Bei Netzwerkveranstaltungen
- [ ] Onlinewerbung
- [ ] E-mail Marketing
- [ ] Vorträge/Präsentationen bei Veranstaltungen
- [ ] LinkedIn
- [ ] Sozialen Medien
- [ ] Empfehlungen
- [ ] Schriftliche Artikel / Berichte
- [ ] Sonstiges (Bitte spezifizieren)

*** 31. Wie haben Sie in der Vergangenheit am häufigsten Beratungsunternehmen ausgewählt? (Mehrfachantworten möglich)**

- ☐ Basierend auf Empfehlungen
- ☐ Basierend auf Recherche und Vergleich
- ☐ Der Berater hat Sie kontaktiert und überzeugt
- ☐ Ich hatte noch nie einen Berater
- ☐ Sonstiges (Bitte spezifizieren)

*** 32. Wie effektiv ist Ihrer Meinung nach Online-Marketing (Website, Blogging, soziale Medien) für Beratungsunternehmen, wenn es richtig durchgeführt wird?**

(1 = Überhaupt nicht effektiv, 2 = Sehr uneffektiv, 3 = Relativ uneffektiv, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Relativ effektiv, 6 = Sehr effektiv, 7 = Äußerst effektiv)

Überhaupt nicht effektiv Äußerst effektiv

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*** 33. Welche Informationen sind für Sie im Online-Marketing wichtig? (Mehrfachantworten möglich)**

- ☐ Mitarbeiterprofile
- ☐ Firmenprofil
- ☐ Fähigkeitsprofil
- ☐ Bilder auf der Website
- ☐ Zusätzliche Informationen zum sozialen Engagement (z. B. Sportblogging)
- ☐ Bewertungen aus früheren Projekten
- ☐ Sonstiges (Bitte spezifizieren)

*** 34. Würden Sie Ihr Vertrauen in ein Beratungsunternehmen stärken, wenn es freien Zugang zu qualitativ hochwertigen Inhalten im Zusammenhang mit den angebotenen Dienstleistungen gewähren würde? (Zum Beispiel Vorlagen für die Technische Dokumente)**

- ○ Ja
- ○ Nein
- ○ Kann nicht sagen

*** 35. Wie wichtig ist für Sie die Präsenz der Beratungsunternehmen in den sozialen Medien? (Werbung für Dienste in sozialen Medien wie Facebook oder Twitter)**

(1 = Überhaupt nicht wichtig, 2 = Sehr unwichtig, 3 = Relativ unwichtig, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Relativ wichtig, 6 = Sehr wichtig, 7 = Äußerst wichtig)

Überhaupt nicht wichtig Äußerst wichtig

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*** 36. Wie angemessen ist es Ihrer Meinung nach, „Cold E-Mails“ zu versenden, um neue Kunden zu gewinnen?**

- ○ Angemessen, ich würde mir ein Angebot überlegen
- ○ Unangemessen, aber ich könnte in einigen Fällen ein Angebot in Betracht ziehen
- ○ Völlig unangemessen, es ist Spam

*** 37. Wie angemessen ist es Ihrer Meinung nach, personalisierte E-Mails mit einem angepassten Angebot an das jeweilige Unternehmen zu senden?**

- ○ Angemessen, ich würde mir ein Angebot überlegen
- ○ Unangemessen, aber ich könnte in einigen Fällen ein Angebot in Betracht ziehen
- ○ Völlig unangemessen

✱ 38. Wie angemessen sind Ihrer Meinung nach „Cold Phone Calls“, um neue Kunden zu gewinnen?

- Angemessen, ich würde mir ein Angebot überlegen
- Unangemessen, aber ich könnte in einigen Fällen ein Angebot in Betracht ziehen
- Völlig unangemessen, es ist Spam

Antworten auf dieser Seite löschen Absenden

Figure 26: SoGoSurvey German client survey – Marketing of consulting services from a client’s perspective

Appendix C

IPP employee questionnaire

<u>Introduction questions:</u>

1. Since how many years have you been working for IPP?
2. What kind of education and work experience do you have?

<u>Marketing related questions:</u>

3. What experience do you already have with marketing? (For example: study, work etc.)
4. Are you working in the field of marketing for IPP?
5. If yes, how often? (daily, weekly, monthly, once a year)
6. Do you know the current marketing plan / strategy of IPP?
7. If yes, describe it?
8. Which problems of IPP could be solved by clever marketing in your opinion?
9. On your opinion, how could these problems be solved?
10. Would you be willing to take over part of IPP's marketing?

Appendix D

Employee	1	3	4	5	6	7
1	< 5 years	None	No	N/A	No	N/A
2	< 5 years	Barely any	No	N/A	No	N/A
3	< 5 years	15 years	Yes	2 times a year	Yes	Through its support of sports and social affairs, IPP's marketing aims to keep the conversation "casual" with old and new business partners in order to intensify short-term discussions on business dealings in the event of urgent customer needs or available consultants on IPP's side. At the moment, new customer acquisition is also taking place in order to minimize the dependency on incoming orders from our existing business partners. Furthermore, preparations for the introduction and certification of a QM system are taking place.
4	< 5 years	I was once head of "scientific-technical marketing"	No	N/A	No, only internet presence	… Sport blogs?
5	> 5 years	None	No	N/A	No	N/A
6	> 5 years	None	No	N/A	No	N/A
7	< 5 years	Barely any	No	N/A	Yes	Advertising via Sport blogger Marketing weighs heavily on shoulders of IPP’s boss. He acquires customers personally. As IPP had a large customer in dental medicine, no new customer acquisition was deemed necessary.
8	> 5 years	None	No	N/A	Yes	Project Management and Regulatory for Medical Devices Companies, incl. Clinical Evaluations.
9	> 5 years	Technical Marketing Becker Flugfunkwerk GmbH.	Yes	Monthly, Initial creation IPP homepage. Recommendation of employees.	No	N/A
10	> 5 years	None	No	N/A	No	N/A

Employee	8	9	10
1	Expand customer base. This also increases the "Mouth propaganda" with regards to other new customers. In my opinion, IPP relies more on " we are good, we do not need marketing". But that can quickly go wrong.	Expert positioning online with Content Marketing and Social Media Community. You will automatically receive requests from potential target customers. Accurate analysis of the market, target customers, competitors and own performance. Provide convincing answers if you want to win customers.	Yes
2	More independent orders or inquiries, less job search (more selection of projects), planning security, more and different fields of industry (fields outside the dental industry), follow-up projects.	Attend trade fairs, Internet presence (for example, employees via LinkedIn or Xing) or update them), send out newsletters with current topics (similar to the Johner Institute), appearances at trade fairs, sponsoring.	Yes
3	Dependence on incoming orders of existing business partners.	Through new customer acquisition. More detailed service descriptions on the website.	Yes (if it can fit into my schedule)
4	N/A	N/A	N/A
5	Become independent of the main customer DENTSPLY SIRONA. Address more and different customers.	More present on the homepage, fairs and directly with customers 1. Specialize on gaps at the customer, such as medical approvals, Project management for new development of medical products, Documentation of development, approval and service of medical products. 2. Offer a wider range of technical tasks 3. Project Management	No (not really my area of expertise)
6	Make potential customers aware of the company	Develop strategies, revise the website (currently under development)	Yes
7	Expand customer base. Less project-free time for employees.	Redesign the website SEO (Search engine optimization). Employees actively participate in marketing. Visit trade fairs (possibly with own stand). Networking via social networks (LinkedIn, XING, etc.)	Yes
8	Target group is difficult to reach. Reputation can only be mediated through experience.	Targeting former customers with a short overview of the product portfolio, perhaps also implement a commission-based referral system.	N/A
9	Better utilization and compensation of employees.	Better employee balances with multiple customers.	Yes (in small packages)
10	Do not know enough about marketing to answer this question.	Do not know enough about marketing to answer this question.	Yes (As far as it is in my capacity)

Table 27: Questionnaire answers from IPP employees

Appendix E

Interview on the 26.06.2019 with Volker Klügl, related to the advantages and disadvantages of certain marketing tools.

Referrals

Advantages:

- Very little work involved
- Customers who contact you based on referrals, already have a need and decided that they require your services and that your services are appropriate to solve their problems. A lot of decisions made in advanced.
- Very close to the final stage of obtaining a new order.
- Easier communication because typically the referral is from somebody in a close relationship to you.

Disadvantages:

- Difficult to actively drive it without giving incentives, which could affect trustworthiness.
- For it to work more effectively you need people outside of your bubble. This is difficult in consulting.

Networking and events

Advantages:

- You get a feeling of the general needs of customers and how others present their services.
- Good way to test run your business proposal with other professionals, in a none pressure situation. Get feedback from them to improve it potentially.
- Good way to meet competition and benchmark against them in a neutral situation.

Disadvantages:

- It takes several years to build significant trust with networking.

- Without recommendations it typically does not bring new customers or projects. Therefore, there is still a lot of work to be done before it converts into an order.
- You find people typically who had time to attend the events and not necessarily people who have a need that you can solve.
- You need to find the time to attend the event and communicate with everyone.

Making phone calls

Important to phone when closing the order/deal!!

Advantages:

- It can be a quick way to inform clients on the services the company offers.
- Compliments referrals as you make sure clients are aware of all the services the company currently offers.

Disadvantages:

- Typically, people don’t like to be called as it interrupts their daily business.
- Not always appropriate to call someone even if you have their number, due to the new types of communication such as WhatsApp.
- Takes a lot of time with still a lot of work to be done before it converts into an order.

Email marketing

Disadvantages:

- Newsletters are typically too long, and people receive too many and therefore don’t often read them.
- You can only send emails to people who subscribe to them.

Appendix F

Interview on the 27.06.2019 with Michael Zipursky, related to the advantages and disadvantages of **presenting and speaking at events**.

Advantages:

- It can put you on a platform directly in front of your ideal clients. Where you can display your ideas, visions, values, experience and expertise in a live atmosphere which can be very powerful.
- The fact that attendees can see you live, the believability and credibility increases. It creates this close encounter which gives a feeling of a relationship which is being created.
- It can be a source of revenue if you become a professional speaker. Even if you don't get paid your essentially marketing for free.
- It acts as an implied endorsement because whatever conference or association or professional group is hosting the event the fact that you're on the stage means to the attendee you must be really good at what you do as they selected you to present. Improves your creditability in the market place.
- If you record your speech or presentation you can use it to market via other channels such as uploading it to your website or YouTube or making a podcast or create an article.
- Its marketing at scale as you are in one room delivering one message or one talk, but it is reaching a group of people depending on the size of the event.

Disadvantages:

- If you are unable to get your ideal clients to attend your speeches or presentations than it could be a waste of your time.
- The process takes time to set up the speaking engagements. Meaning even if you have identified an upcoming event to speak at it can take many months before your actually on that stage. It takes time to complete the follow up emails and phone calls to secure and actually confirm your attendance to the event.
- Once you deliver the speech that marketing is done. If you are clever you can market the fact that you spook at event X to event Y to try and get in front of them. However, if you are unable to do that or record the event you essentially can't really use it for further marketing.

Appendix G

Company	Link	Geographical location	Company size	Company age	Typical clients
Johner Institut GmbH	https://www.johner-institut.de/	Germany: Constance	45 employees	??	Medical device manufacturers, hospitals, consulting firms, government agencies
Regular Services	https://www.regular-services.com/	Germany: HQ Germering (Munich), Nürnberg, Karlsrühe, Constance South Africa: Cape town	13 employees	14 years	Medical device manufacturers
Intertek	http://www.intertek.de/	Worldwide offices (1,000 locations), HQ in London UK Germany: Kaufbeuren, Hofeheim-Wallau, Leinfelden-Echterdingen, Griesheim, Mönchengladbach and Fürth	44,000+ employees	130 years	Medical device manufacturers
Betrandt	https://www.bertrandt.com/en/company/	Worldwide offices (50 locations) Germany: HQ Ehningen (Stuttgart), Fürth and Nürnberg	13,000 employees	45 years	Medical device manufacturers
Metecon	https://www.metecon.de/en/	Germany: Mannheim	34 employees	20 years	Medical device manufacturers
Activoris	http://www.activoris.de/en/	Germany: Gemünden	??	4 years	MedTech companies, biotech and pharma, start-ups and Investors
CDE	https://www.cde.at/	Austria: Hagenberg and St. Georgen/Gusen	20 employees	18 years (MedTech since 14 years)	Medical device manufacturers
Fraunhofer ITEM	https://www.item.fraunhofer.de/en.html	Germany: Hannover, Braunschweig and Regensburg	300 employees	35+ years	device manufacturers, industry, service providers, and public authorities
HMG Systems Engineering GmbH	https://www.hmg-systems-engineering.com/	Germany: Fürth	54 employees	5 years	Medical device manufacturers
Imbus	https://www.imbus.de/en/	Worldwide offices: China, Tunisia, Canada and Kosovo Germany: HQ Möhrendorf (Erlangen)	??	26 years	Medical device manufacturers (focus on software)

Method park	https://www.methodpark.com/	Germany: Erlangen, Frankfurt/Main, Hannover, Hamburg, Munich and Stuttgart USA: Detroit, Miami and Pittsburgh	~ 200 employees	18 years	medical devices and automotive technology manufacturers
senetics healthcare group GmbH & Co. KG	http://senetics.de/en/company/	Germany: Ansbach	~19 employees	10 years	medical technology, pharmacy and biotechnology
Solnovis	https://www.solnovis.com/en/	Germany: Forchheim, Erlangen, Nuremberg	??	13 years	medical device manufacturers

Table 28: A brief overview of potential IPP competitors

Appendix H

	Company						
Service	**IPP**	**Johner Institut GmbH**	**Regular Services**	**Intertek**	**Betrandt**	**Metecon**	**Activoris**
Consulting	Project management for major projects, Regulatory affairs, Process Consulting ISO 13485 / MDR, QMR / Internal audits, Test management, Technical documentation according to 93/42 / EEC / MDR, Clinical evaluations MEDDEV 2.7 / 1 Revision 4 / MDR, Process software validation, Technology supplier management according to MDR (Sourcing & Contracts)	Medical software law, Compliance with standards	Regulatory & QM knowledge transfer	Regulatory requirements for medical equipment, Medical product testing solutions, Environmental & regulatory services	Clinical tests, Clinical evaluation, Regulatory affairs, Post market surveillance and complaints management, Testing and analytics (method development and validation, product tests, data evaluation and analysis, and lab maintenance)	Clinical tests, Clinical evaluation, Regulatory affairs, Post market surveillance and complaints management, Medical device software development, Test strategy	Clinical tests, Clinical evaluation, Regulatory affairs, Post market surveillance and complaints management, Life science start-up support, Clinical supply for pharma
Quality management systems	QMR / Internal audits, Technical documentation according to 93/42 / EEC / MDR, Process Consulting ISO 13485 / MDR	QMS, Medical audits		Medical management systems certification & auditing	Project/quality management, Risk management and Technical documentation	Risk management and technical documentation, Quality management support	Technical documentation
General outsourcing	Project management for major projects, Technology supplier management according to MDR (Sourcing & Contracts)				Product development (design, simulation, prototype building and toolmaking), Process management (production of machine samples, process validation, validation, installation qualification, operational qualification, performance qualification, computer system validation and	Equipment construction, Testing robots	Manufacturing logistics & service

					CSV), eDevelopment (hardware development, software development, app development, software and system tests), Develop and operate testing laboratories		
Regulatory and QM outsourcing	Clinical evaluations MEDDEV 2.7 / 1 Revision 4 / MDR, Process software validation, Technical documentation according to 93/42 / EEC / MDR, QMR / Internal audits, Test management, Regulatory affairs		Clinical evaluations, Internal audits, GAP analysis and project management	Scientific support services, Clinical research services	Clinical tests, Clinical evaluation, Regulatory affairs, Post market surveillance and complaints management	Clinical tests, Clinical evaluation, Regulatory affairs, Post market surveillance and complaints management	Clinical tests, Clinical evaluation, Regulatory affairs, Post market surveillance and complaints management, Product development (design, simulation, prototype building)
Tools			Templates, forms and pre-filled documents demonstrating compliance with regulations		Technical documentation	Technical documentation	Technical documentation
Coaching			Regulatory & QM knowledge transfer				
Seminar		Product development, MDR and standards, Design, Testing, Clinical information	Regulatory & QM knowledge transfer				
Posters / Publications			Regulatory & QM knowledge transfer				
E-Learning / Video training		Product development	Regulatory & QM knowledge transfer, workshops or Edu-				

			casts (learning videos)				
Legal services			Regulatory & QM compliance updates				
Postgraduate education		Part-time master's courses					
	Company						
Service	**CDE**	**Fraunhofer ITEM**	**HMG Systems Engineering GmbH**	**Imbus**	**Method park**	**senetics healthcare group GmbH & Co. KG**	**Solnovis**
Consulting	Medical device software development	Clinical tests, Clinical evaluation, Regulatory affairs, Post market surveillance and complaints management, Testing and analytics (method development and validation, product tests, data evaluation and analysis, and lab maintenance)	Innovation management support, Innovation Process (system specification, requirements management, system integration strategy and execution, test strategy, component test and system test, commissioning)	Medical device software development, V&V (improvement, project support)	Medical device software development, Innovation management support, Compliance (optimization development process, fulfilment of standards and regulations)	Regulatory requirements for medical equipment, Life science start-up support, Support in business expansion (acquisition, SWOT analysis, strategy development, technical due diligence), marketing support (communication and market success, preparation of subject-specific documents, medical writing, organization of professional events and congresses, fair joint stands)	Regulatory requirements for medical equipment, Developing optical systems and MedTech devices
Quality management systems	Project/quality management, Risk management and Technical documentation	Risk management				Project/quality management, Risk management and	Project/quality management, Risk management and

						Technical documentation, Quality management support	Technical documentation
General outsourcing	Medical device software development	Manufacturing logistics & service		V&V (gap analysis)	Medical device software development		Manufacturing of optical systems and MedTech devices
Regulatory and QM outsourcing		Clinical tests, Clinical evaluation, Regulatory affairs, Post market surveillance and complaints management, Product development (design, simulation, prototype building and toolmaking)				Quality management support	
Tools	Technical documentation						
Coaching				V&V (training)	Train project teams, Project management		
Seminar							
Posters / Publications				Yes, but don't mention what specifically			
E-Learning / Video training							
Legal services						Regulatory & QM compliance updates	
Postgraduate education							

Table 29: In depth analysis of the services provided by IPP competitors

Appendix I

	Questions			
Participant	**1.**	**2.**	**3.**	**4.**
1	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Other
2	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany, Baden-Württemberg	Other
3	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany	Other
4	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Management-Level
5	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Management-Level
6	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Management-Level
7	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany, Baden-Württemberg	Other
8	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany, Baden-Württemberg	Other
9	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Management-Level
10	Medical technology	Medium (<250 employees)	Germany, Baden-Württemberg	Management-Level
11	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany	Management-Level
12	Electrical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany	Other
13	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany	Management-Level
14	Medical technology	Medium (<250 employees)	Worldwide	Management-Level
15	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany, Hessen	Management-Level
16	Dental technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany, Hessen	Management-Level
17	Dental technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany, Hessen	Other
18	Medical technology	Small (<50 employees)	USA, Germany	Corporate-Level
19	Medical technology	Small (<50 employees)	Belgium, Brussels	Management-Level
20	Medical technology	Small (<50 employees)	Belgium	Other
21	Medical technology	Small (<50 employees)	Germany, Baden-Württemberg	Management-Level
22	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Corporate-Level
23	Dental technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Management-Level
24	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany	Other
25	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Other
26	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Corporate-Level
27	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Other
28	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany, Baden-Württemberg	Management-Level
29	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany, Worldwide	Management-Level
30	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Management-Level
31	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Other
32	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Other

33	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany, Tuttlingen	Other
34	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Management-Level
35	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany, Hessen	Management-Level
36	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany, Baden-Württemberg	Other
37	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Other
38	Medical technology	Medium (<250 employees)	Germany	Management-Level
39	Medical technology	Medium (<250 employees)	Germany, Baden-Württemberg	Corporate-Level
40	Medical technology	Medium (<250 employees)	Germany, Baden-Württemberg	Management-Level
41	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Management-Level
42	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany, Hessen	Management-Level
43	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany, Worldwide	Other
44	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Management-Level
45	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany, Hessen	Other
46	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Germany, Worldwide	Management-Level
47	Medical technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Management-Level
48	Dental technology	Large (>250 employees)	Worldwide	Management-Level
49	IT	Large (>250 employees)	Germany	Management-Level

Table 30: Raw data of the answers to the client survey questions 1., 2., 3. and 4.

	Questions		
Participant	**5.**	**6.**	**7.**
1	Partially	Yes	Yes
2	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Yes	Yes	No
4	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Partially	Yes	No
6	Partially	Yes	Yes
7	No	No	No
8	Partially	Yes	No
9	Yes	Yes	Yes
10	Yes	Yes	No
11	Partially	Yes	No
12	No	No	No
13	Partially	Yes	Yes
14	No	Yes	Yes
15	Partially	Yes	Yes
16	Partially	Yes	No
17	Partially	Yes	No
18	Yes	Yes	Yes
19	Partially	Yes	No
20	No	No	Yes
21	Yes	Yes	No
22	Yes	Yes	No
23	Yes	Yes	Yes
24	Yes	Yes	No
25	Partially	Yes	No
26	No	Yes	Yes
27	Partially	Yes	Yes
28	Partially	Yes	Yes
29	Yes	Yes	Yes
30	Partially	Yes	No
31	Partially	Yes	No
32	No	No	No
33	Partially	Yes	No
34	Partially	Yes	Yes
35	Partially	Yes	Yes
36	Partially	Yes	No
37	No	Yes	No
38	Yes	Yes	Yes
39	Yes	Yes	Yes
40	Yes	Yes	Yes
41	Partially	Yes	No
42	Yes	Yes	Yes
43	No	No	No
44	Yes	Yes	Yes
45	Partially	Yes	Yes
46	Partially	Yes	Yes
47	Partially	Yes	Yes
48	Yes	Yes	Yes
49	Partially	Yes	Yes

Table 31: Raw data of the answers to the client survey questions 5., 6. and 7.

	Questions												
Participant	**8.**												
	Corporate Level (e.g. assistance with company strategy)	**Project Management**	**Research & Development**	**Testing**	**Operations**	**Sales & Marketing**	**Finance**	**Human Resources**	**Technology (e.g. implementing IT infrastructure)**	**Regulatory Affairs**	**Quality Management**	**We do not currently require consulting services**	**Other**
1	x	x	x			x				x			
2										x			
3					x						x		
4			x										
5	x								x				
6			x			x			x				Events. Training and Capability Development
7												x	
8				x						x			
9				x						x	x		
10												x	
11												x	
12	x					x							
13	x												
14		x	x		x								
15		x	x							x			
16	x					x	x			x			
17			x										
18	x									x			
19		x								x	x		
20												x	
21											x		
22		x	x			x			x	x			
23			x	x	x				x	x			
24		x								x			
25		x	x						x				
26									x				
27		x	x							x	x		

28			x	x									
29	x	x	x		x			x	x	x	x		
30												x	
31	x	x						x	x	x			
32									x				
33			x	x				x					
34			x						x				
35		x	x							x			
36	x	x				x		x	x	x	x		
37									x	x			
38				x					x				
39			x				x		x	x			
40										x			
41		x	x	x	x	x			x				
42		x	x	x					x	x			
43		x					x						
44	x		x						x	x	x		
45		x								x	x		
46			x	x					x	x			
47			x	x						x			
48										x	x		
49			x		x				x				
	Questions												
Participant	**9.**												
	Corporate Level (e.g. assistance with company strategy)	**Project Management**	**Research & Development**	**Testing**	**Operations**	**Sales & Marketing**	**Finance**	**Human Resources**	**Technology (e.g. implementing IT infrastructure)**	**Regulatory Affairs**	**Quality Management**	**We do not currently require consulting services**	**Other**
1	x	x						x		x			
2										x			
3					x								
4			x										
5	x		x						x				
6						x			x				Training and Development

7												x	
8			x	x						x			
9				x						x	x		
10			x		x								
11			x										
12												x	
13	x						x		x	x			
14	x	x	x		x								
15		x	x								x		
16						x	x			x			
17			x										
18										x			
19												x	
20						x			x				Data science
21											x		
22			x			x			x	x	x		
23			x	x	x				x	x			
24		x								x			
25		x	x						x				
26	x	x	x						x				
27										x	x		
28	x					x		x					
29	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x		
30		x				x				x	x		
31	x	x						x	x	x			
32									x				
33				x				x					
34			x										
35		x	x							x			
36	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x		
37		x							x	x			
38		x								x	x		
39							x		x	x			
40										x			
41		x	x	x	x	x			x				
42									x				

43		x							x	x			
44			x	x					x	x	x		
45		x	x	x		x			x	x	x		
46			x	x					x	x	x		
47			x	x						x			
48										x	x		
49			x		x	x			x				

Table 32: Raw data of the answers to the client survey questions 8. and 9.

	Questions
Participant	**10. (1 = Completely dissatisfied, 2 = Mostly dissatisfied, 3 = Somewhat dissatisfied, 4 = neither satisfied or dissatisfied, 5 = Somewhat satisfied, 6 = Mostly satisfied, 7 = Completely satisfied)**
1	5
2	1
3	4
4	6
5	4
6	5
7	Can't say (never worked with consultants)
8	5
9	5
10	5
11	4
12	Can't say (never worked with consultants)
13	4
14	2
15	6
16	5
17	6
18	1
19	4
20	7
21	6
22	5
23	6
24	5
25	Can't say (never worked with consultants)
26	3
27	5
28	6
29	6
30	4
31	5
32	Can't say (never worked with consultants)
33	3
34	4
35	5
36	2
37	5
38	3
39	6
40	2
41	5
42	5
43	Can't say (never worked with consultants)
44	5
45	3
46	5
47	6
48	5
49	4

Table 33: Raw data of the answers to the client survey question 10.

	Questions								
Participant	**11. – 19.**								
	Reputation of consultant in the relevant functional area	**General reputation**	**Knowing the specific consultant(s) personally or professionally**	**Previous experience with the consulting company**	**Experience and knowledge in the particular field of business**	**Prior use of the consultant**	**A written consulting proposal for the project**	**Consultant will assist with implementation of the solution**	**Total costs of the consultant(s)**
1	4	4	6	5	6	5	7	6	7
2	4	4	7	5	7	4	6	4	6
3	6	4	6	6	6	7	4	5	5
4	5	4	6	6	5	6	5	6	6
5	6	6	7	5	7	7	7	5	5
6	7	6	6	6	7	3	7	7	5
7	6	6	5	6	5	5	4	4	5
8	5	7	6	7	6	5	5	5	7
9	5	3	3	5	4	5	3	5	4
10	5	5	6	7	2	7	6	6	4
11	4	3	5	5	6	3	6	6	4
12	6	6	6	4	6	6	6	6	4
13	5	5	5	4	6	6	4	6	5
14	6	6	7	5	5	5	6	6	6
15	4	4	7	6	5	5	4	4	6
16	6	4	6	7	7	5	7	6	6
17	5	5	7	7	7	6	6	6	7
18	5	5	5	7	7	7	6	5	7
19	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5
20	5	5	6	5	6	5	5	5	5
21	6	7	6	3	6	6	6	5	5
22	4	4	6	6	4	3	3	4	3
23	5	6	6	3	6	5	2	6	4
24	5	4	7	6	6	5	6	6	5
25	7	5	7	6	7	6	6	6	7
26	6	5	4	4	5	3	7	7	7
27	5	3	5	6	6	6	4	6	6
28	7	6	7	6	7	4	7	7	4
29	6	6	6	7	7	5	7	6	6
30	6	5	6	6	6	5	6	7	6

31	7	6	7	4	7	4	4	7	6
32	6	6	6	5	6	4	6	5	4
33	5	5	6	4	6	3	3	4	3
34	6	5	7	6	6	6	6	6	6
35	6	6	5	2	4	4	5	5	4
36	3	6	6	5	4	5	5	5	3
37	5	4	7	6	7	2	5	6	4
38	6	5	4	5	7	5	7	7	6
39	7	5	6	7	7	6	6	4	6
40	6	5	6	5	7	5	3	5	6
41	6	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	3
42	6	6	5	5	6	6	4	5	5
43	5	5	7	4	6	5	4	4	5
44	6	5	7	7	6	6	5	5	6
45	5	6	6	6	5	4	5	6	4
46	5	7	7	6	7	4	5	6	6
47	6	6	7	5	7	5	4	6	6
48	6	6	6	6	7	6	7	5	7
49	6	7	6	5	7	5	3	7	3

Table 34: Raw data of the answers to the client survey questions 11. – 19.

	Questions									
Participant	**20. – 29.**									
	Formal presentation	**Referrals, reviews and recommendations from satisfied clients**	**Offers wide range of services**	**Academic qualification of the consultant(s)**	**Certifications of the consultant(s) (e.g. ISO 9001)**	**Size of the company**	**Location of the company**	**Recommendation from other consultants**	**Age of the company**	**Offering customized solutions for the client**
1	5	4	4	4	5	3	5	4	3	5
2	6	5	3	1	6	2	3	3	2	6
3	4	3	5	4	3	2	2	2	2	6
4	6	6	5	6	6	4	4	4	4	6
5	5	5	3	5	3	5	5	2	2	7
6	5	6	3	6	5	4	5	4	4	6
7	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4
8	6	3	4	4	4	2	5	5	2	7
9	3	5	3	3	3	3	3	5	3	4
10	5	7	3	4	3	3	2	6	1	7

11	4	5	3	3	4	4	4	3	3	6
12	6	5	3	6	6	3	3	4	6	5
13	5	5	5	5	6	5	3	4	4	6
14	7	6	4	5	6	5	4	5	6	6
15	4	4	3	5	4	4	2	2	3	6
16	5	5	2	4	5	1	1	2	4	6
17	4	6	4	4	6	2	6	4	5	7
18	6	6	6	4	4	4	5	4	4	7
19	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	6
20	5	6	5	4	4	3	3	5	3	5
21	5	7	5	3	5	3	3	4	3	5
22	1	2	2	3	1	1	5	3	1	7
23	2	4	2	2	3	1	4	4	4	4
24	5	5	3	5	5	3	3	5	3	6
25	7	5	4	4	6	4	5	5	4	7
26	5	5	3	1	2	3	3	5	5	7
27	4	7	5	6	6	3	4	4	4	5
28	6	6	5	6	6	5	4	5	4	7
29	5	6	4	2	6	2	2	3	4	6
30	6	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	3	6
31	5	7	3	5	4	4	2	2	3	7
32	5	5	2	4	4	3	3	3	2	6
33	5	5	3	3	5	3	3	3	3	6
34	3	6	3	3	5	2	3	3	3	5
35	3	3	2	3	2	4	1	1	3	5
36	7	4	3	1	2	1	1	2	3	6
37	5	6	3	4	4	1	1	4	1	5
38	6	6	1	6	7	1	3	4	4	7
39	4	6	2	2	2	2	2	6	5	5
40	5	3	2	3	2	1	5	4	2	6
41	4	6	3	3	5	5	3	2	3	5
42	4	6	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	6
43	5	6	1	2	4	3	5	1	4	5
44	4	5	3	4	6	3	4	3	3	6
45	4	5	4	3	5	4	5	4	3	6
46	3	6	2	3	4	1	5	2	4	7

47	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	6
48	5	5	5	7	6	4	4	4	4	7
49	4	5	1	2	3	1	4	4	1	5

Table 35: Raw data of the answers to the client survey questions 20. – 29.

	Descriptive Statistics: Question 11. – 29.							**Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test: Question 11. – 29.**						
								Test of median = 4.00 versus median > 4.00					**Confidence Interval**	
Criteria	**N**	**Minimum**	**Q1**	**Median**	**Q3**	**Maximum**	**Mode**	**N for Test**	**Wilcoxon Statistic**	**P**	**Estimated Median**	**Achieved Confidence**	**Lower**	**Upper**
Knowing the specific consultant(s) personally or professionally	49	3	5.5	6	7	7	6	46	1076.00	0.000	6.00	95.00	6.00	6.50
Experience and knowledge in the particular field of business	49	2	5	6	7	7	6; 7	45	1017.00	0.000	6.00	95.00	6.00	6.50
Offering customized solutions for the client	49	4	5	6	7	7	6	46	1081.00	0.000	6.00	95.00	5.50	6.00
Consultant will assist with implementation of the solution	49	4	5	6	6	7	6	44	980.50	0.000	5.50	95.00	5.00	6.00
Reputation of consultant in the relevant functional area	49	3	5	6	6	7	6	41	861.00	0.000	5.50	95.00	5.50	6.00
Previous experience with the consulting company	49	2	5	5	6	7	5; 6	43	900.00	0.000	5.50	95.00	5.00	6.00
Total costs of the consultant(s)	49	3	4	5	6	7	6	39	737.50	0.000	5.00	95.00	5.00	5.50
General reputation	49	3	4.5	5	6	7	5	40	788.50	0.000	5.00	95.00	5.00	5.50
A written consulting proposal for the project	49	2	4	5	6	7	6	39	717.00	0.000	5.00	95.00	5.00	5.50
Referrals, reviews and recommendations from satisfied clients	49	2	5	5	6	7	5	45	952.00	0.000	5.50	95.00	5.00	5.50
Prior use of the consultant	49	2	4	5	6	7	5	41	767.50	0.000	5.00	95.00	4.50	5.50
Formal presentation	49	1	4	5	5	7	5	37	588.50	0.000	5.00	95.00	4.50	5.00
Certifications of the consultant(s) (e.g. ISO 9001)	49	1	3.5	5	6	7	5	38	503.50	0.027	4.50	95.00	4.00	5.00
Academic qualification of the consultant(s)	49	1	3	4	5	7	4	35	284.00	0.697	4.00	95.00	3.50	4.50
Recommendation from other consultants	49	1	3	4	4	6	4	29	126.00	0.977	3.50	95.00	3.50	4.00

Location of the company	49	1	3	4	5	6	3; 4	36	185.00	0.990	3.50	95.00	3.00	4.00
Offers wide range of services	49	1	3	3	4	6	3	38	152.50	0.999	3.50	95.00	3.00	3.50
Age of the company	49	1	3	3	4	6	4	31	77.00	1.000	3.50	95.00	3.00	3.50
Size of the company	49	1	2	3	4	5	4	34	47.50	1.000	3.00	95.00	2.50	3.50

Table 36: Full descriptive statistical analysis and Wilcoxon signed rank test for questions 11. – 29.

	Questions											
Participant	**30.**											
	Blogs	**Receiving phone calls**	**Receiving direct mail and print advertising**	**At networking events**	**Online advertising**	**Email marketing**	**Speaking/presentations at events**	**LinkedIn**	**Social media**	**Referrals**	**Written articles/reports**	**Other**
1							x			x		
2		x						x		x	x	
3		x				x						
4										x		
5		x		x						x		
6				x	x				x	x		
7										x		
8					x		x			x	x	
9				x			x			x		
10								x	x	x		
11							x			x		
12					x							
13							x	x	x	x	x	
14				x	x					x	x	
15		x					x			x		
16							x			x	x	Own research
17										x		Experience with the consultant in other departments
18	x			x			x			x		
19	x			x			x	x	x			
20		x	x	x				x	x			
21							x			x		
22										x		
23										x	x	

24					x					x		
25							x			x	x	
26				x			x					
27												Approval from Corp.
28				x				x		x		
29	x			x	x		x	x		x	x	
30				x						x	x	
31					x							
32								x		x		
33				x			x	x		x		
34					x		x				x	
35										x	x	
36	x			x			x			x	x	
37				x	x		x	x	x		x	
38			x	x			x	x		x	x	
39				x			x	x			x	
40		x			x		x			x		
41										x		
42					x		x			x		
43					x					x	x	
44	x	x			x		x			x	x	
45				x						x	x	
46		x		x	x					x	x	
47				x			x					3SS-Tool
48							x		x	x		
49	x			x			x	x			x	

Table 37: Raw data of the answers to the client survey question 30.

	Questions					
Participant	**31.**					**32.**
	Based on recommendations	**Based on search and comparison**	**Consultant contacted you and convinced you**	**Never had a consultant work for me**	**Other**	**(1 = Not at all effective, 2 = Low effectiveness, 3 = Slightly effective, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Moderately effective, 6 = Very effective, 7 = Extremely effective)**
1	x					2
2	x	x				6
3	x	x				2

4		x	x			5
5					Largely decided by senior management	2
6	x	x				5
7				x		4
8	x					6
9	x					4
10	x					5
11	x					4
12				x		6
13	x	x				4
14	x	x				6
15	x	x	x			3
16	x	x				5
17	x		x			7
18	x	x				6
19	x					6
20				x		5
21				x		4
22	x					1
23					Conferences	4
24		x				4
25	x	x				7
26					They were not hired by me.	6
27	x					4
28	x	x				5
29	x	x	x			4
30	x	x				6
31		x				7
32				x		5
33		x				3
34	x	x				6
35	x		x			3
36	x	x				2
37				x		7
38		x				5

39	x	x	x			6
40		x				6
41	x					3
42	x					4
43				x		5
44	x	x				5
45				x	Never selected by myself	5
46			x			4
47		x				5
48	x	x				6
49	x	x				5

Table 38: Raw data of the answers to the client survey questions 31. and 32.

	Questions								
Participant	**33.**							**34.**	**35.**
	Employee profiles	**Company profile**	**Skill profile**	**Images on the website**	**Additional social engagement information (e.g. Sport blogging)**	**Reviews from previous projects**	**Other**		**(1 = Not at all important, 2 = Low importance, 3 = Slightly important, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Moderately important, 6 = Very important, 7 = Extremely important)**
1		x	x			x		Yes	2
2	x		x			x		No	1
3	x		x	x				Can't say	2
4						x		Yes	4
5	x	x	x			x	Previous projects	Yes	1
6		x	x	x	x	x		Yes	4
7						x		Can't say	3
8		x				x		Yes	3
9	x	x	x		x	x		Can't say	4
10			x					Yes	6
11	x	x	x					Can't say	3
12		x	x	x				Yes	6
13	x	x		x		x		Yes	4
14		x	x					Yes	4
15	x	x	x					No	2
16	x	x	x			x		Can't say	2

17	x		x			x		Yes	1
18	x	x	x			x		Yes	5
19			x					Can’t say	4
20			x			x		Can’t say	3
21	x	x	x					Can’t say	3
22			x			x		Can’t say	1
23							?	Can’t say	2
24	x	x	x			x		Yes	3
25		x	x					Can’t say	4
26	x	x	x	x		x		Yes	6
27						x		Can’t say	1
28		x	x			x		Can’t say	4
29	x	x	x			x		Yes	6
30		x	x			x		Yes	5
31	x	x	x	x				Yes	2
32		x	x					Can’t say	2
33	x		x			x		Yes	2
34	x	x	x			x		Yes	1
35	x	x	x	x		x		Can’t say	3
36	x	x	x			x		Yes	2
37		x	x			x		Yes	4
38	x	x	x	x		x		Yes	2
39		x	x					No	4
40		x	x					Can’t say	5
41						x		Yes	2
42		x	x			x		Yes	4
43	x	x	x	x				No	3
44	x	x	x			x		Yes	2
45	x	x	x			x		Yes	3
46		x	x			x		Yes	1
47	x	x	x					Yes	3
48	x	x	x			x		Yes	4
49			x				References from completed projects. Articles in journals (No high gloss advertising). Posts on LinkedIn.	Yes	2

Table 39: Raw data of the answers to the client survey questions 33., 34. and 35.

	Questions		
Participant	**36.**	**37.**	**38.**
1	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
2	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
3	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Totally inappropriate	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
4	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
5	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Appropriate, I could consider an offer
6	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases
7	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
8	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
9	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases
10	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
11	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
12	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
13	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
14	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases
15	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Appropriate, I could consider an offer
16	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Totally inappropriate	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
17	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases
18	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
19	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Totally inappropriate	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
20	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Appropriate, I could consider an offer

21	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
22	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
23	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Totally inappropriate	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
24	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
25	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Totally inappropriate	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
26	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
27	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Totally inappropriate	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
28	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
29	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases
30	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
31	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
32	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases
33	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
34	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
35	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Totally inappropriate	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases
36	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Totally inappropriate	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
37	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
38	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
39	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Appropriate, I could consider an offer
40	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
41	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Totally inappropriate	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases
42	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Totally inappropriate	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
43	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Totally inappropriate	Totally inappropriate, it is spam

44	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Appropriate, I could consider an offer	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases
45	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
46	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
47	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
48	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Totally inappropriate, it is spam
49	Totally inappropriate, it is spam	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases	Inappropriate, but I could consider an offer in some cases

Table 40: Raw data of the answers to the client survey questions 36. and 37.