

Consulting operating benchmarks 2026 — extract

Consulting Benchmark Council · 2026

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES OPERATING BENCHMARKS (EXTRACT)
Consulting Economics Institute · Benchmark Study 2026, Table Pack B

SAMPLE
412 US advisory and consulting firms, 50 to 500 professionals, fiscal year 2025. Figures are medians with interquartile range in brackets.

TABLE B1 — DELIVERY ECONOMICS
Billable utilization: 68 percent [61 – 74].
Realization against standard rates: 89 percent [84 – 93].
Revenue per professional: \$312,000 [\$268,000 – \$359,000].
Direct delivery cost as percent of fee revenue: 54 percent [49 – 59].
Operating margin: 16.1 percent [11.8 – 21.0].

TABLE B2 — COMMERCIAL ENGINE
Win rate on qualified proposals: 34 percent [26 – 43].
Median proposal turnaround: 11 days [6 – 18].
Revenue from clients in their first year: 22 percent [15 – 31].
Revenue concentration in top five clients: 41 percent [30 – 54].

TABLE B3 — PRODUCTIZATION AND RECURRING REVENUE
Firms with at least one productized offering: 37 percent of sample.
Recurring or subscription revenue as percent of fee revenue: 6 percent [0 – 14].
Firms above 15 percent recurring revenue reported median operating margin of 21.4 percent, against 14.2 percent for firms below 5 percent.
Median time from offering design to first sale: 7 months [4 – 13].

TABLE B4 — TALENT LEVERAGE
Professionals per partner or principal: 6.4 [4.1 – 9.0].
Voluntary attrition: 17 percent [12 – 23].
Share of delivery performed by staff below manager grade: 44 percent [35 – 53].

NOTE ON COMPARABILITY
Section B, paragraph 3 states: "Utilization definitions vary materially across respondents; firms should compare against the definition footnoted in Table B1 before drawing conclusions."
Table B1 defines billable utilization as billed hours divided by 1,850 standard available hours per professional.