



BUSINESS TALENT GROUP

2021 High-End Independent Talent Report

**TALENT AGILITY FOR THE
NEXT NEW NORMAL**

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The Independent Talent Economy in 2021

Agility is key in this ever-shifting business environment, so it's no surprise that 77% of employers say their talent strategies are more focused on workforce agility than ever before.¹

High-end independent talent are proving to be even more essential in this time—offering a flexible source of the expert strategic thinking, hands-on execution, interim leadership, and cutting-edge, in-demand skills companies need to succeed in the next new normal. In fact, nearly 90% of business leaders say that independent talent platforms, like BTG, will be important to their organization's future competitive advantage.² And the most innovative companies are installing enterprise-wide programs to facilitate the use of on-demand freelance talent.

Emerging from the unprecedented conditions of 2020, companies are planning for a post-pandemic future, seeking to capture market share, and blazing paths to renewed growth. Opportunity is on the horizon, but significant business constraints remain a concern, including headcount restrictions and a lack of highly skilled candidates for permanent roles. According to a recent survey, 40% of employers say talent scarcity has either had a negative impact or been one of their organization's biggest pain points—the highest total in the past five years.¹

So how are companies using high-end independent talent to address these challenges and opportunities in 2021? In this annual examination of BTG proprietary data, we reveal the trends shaping the independent talent economy to help organizations harness the power of this invaluable resource of skills, expertise, and leadership. [Here are our findings.](#)³

Business Talent Group (BTG) is the leading talent platform that connects top independent management consultants, subject matter experts, project managers, and interim executives with the world's best companies. BTG provides just the right on-demand talent needed: remote or on-site, part-time or full-time, individuals or teams, all around the world. That's why more than **50% of the F100 and hundreds of other leading companies trust BTG** to curate, vet, and compliantly deliver talent who fuel growth, innovation, and performance improvement.

Find in-demand skills and expertise at [businesstalentgroup.com](https://www.businesstalentgroup.com)

Demand Across Industries and Functions

From biopharma to industrial goods and marketers to CEOs, the use of high-end independent talent cuts across industries and functions. Here’s a look at the industries and business functions with the most need for independent, on-demand talent. *Categories in **blue** increased their usage of on-demand talent year over year.*

TOP TEN INDUSTRIES

-  **Life Science**
-  **Technology**
-  **Services (B2B and B2C)**
-  Industrial Goods and Services
-  Financial Services
-  Consumer Goods
-  Private Equity
-  **Insurance**
-  Healthcare
-  **Nonprofit and Government**

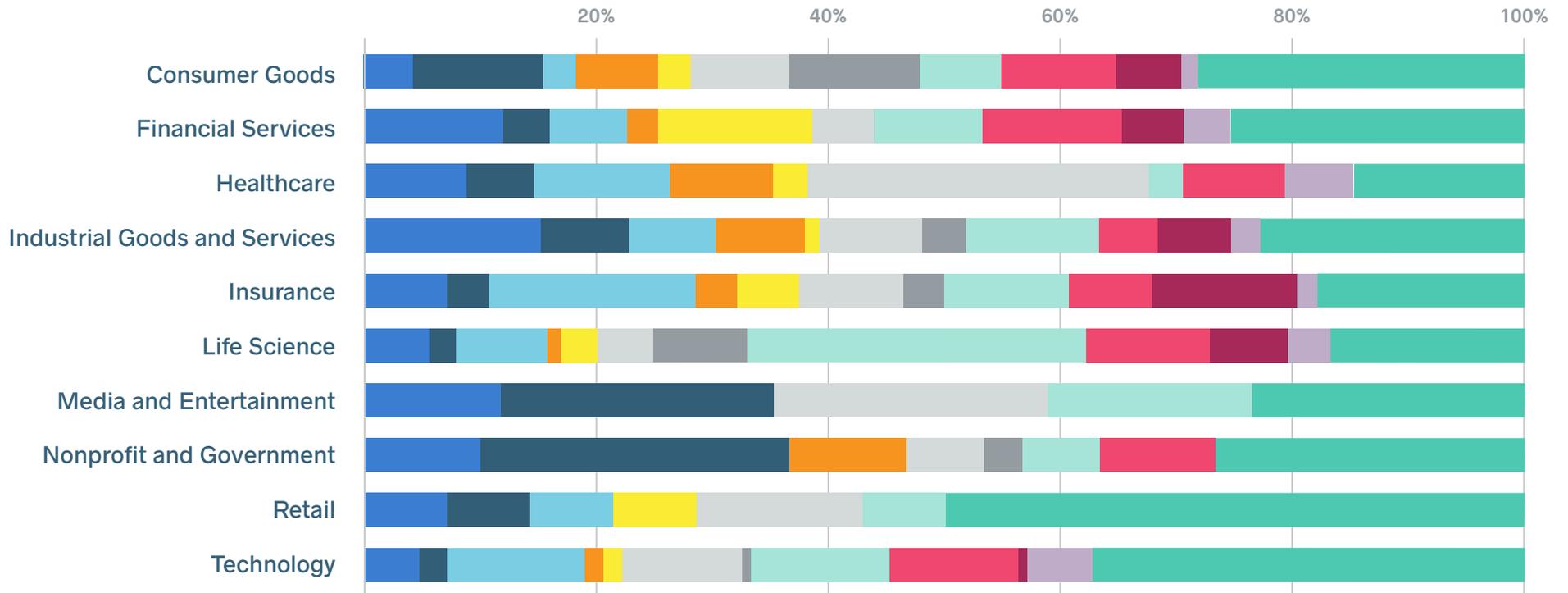
TOP TEN BUSINESS FUNCTIONS

-  Strategy and Internal Consulting Groups
-  **Marketing**
-  Digital and Tech
-  **Operations**
-  Human Resources
-  Business and Corporate Development
-  CEOs and Presidents
-  Procurement
-  **Innovation and R&D**
-  General Managers and P&L Leaders

This year, we see strong growth from the life science industry—a perennial leader adept at leveraging high-end, on-demand talent—as well as technology, B2B and B2C services, insurance, and nonprofit industries. The use of independent talent by marketing, operations, and innovation and R&D leaders shows just how embedded independents have become across the enterprise and the critical role they play in economic recovery.

CLIENT FUNCTION BY INDUSTRY

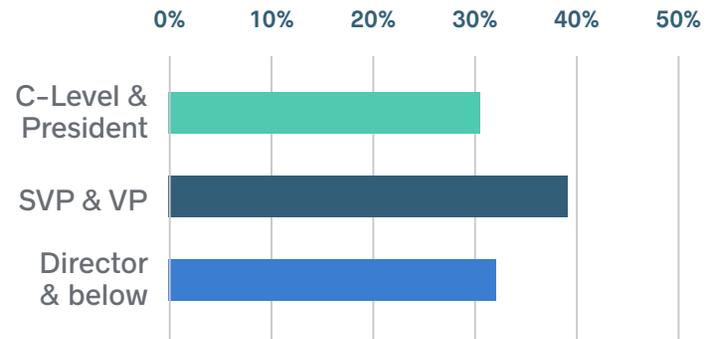
- Business and Corporate Development
- CEOs and Presidents
- Digital and Tech
- Finance
- General Managers and P&L Leaders
- Human Resources
- Innovation and R&D
- Marketing
- Operations
- Procurement
- Program Management Office (PMO)
- Strategy and Internal Consulting Groups



THE C-SUITE TAKES NOTE

The use of independent talent has increased at the more senior levels of an enterprise with nearly **69% of all requests coming from VPs and above**, including **30% of independent talent needs coming from C-level executives**—an increase of 67% year over year. Senior executives not only see the value of high-end on-demand talent for their organization's needs but also for their own key initiatives.

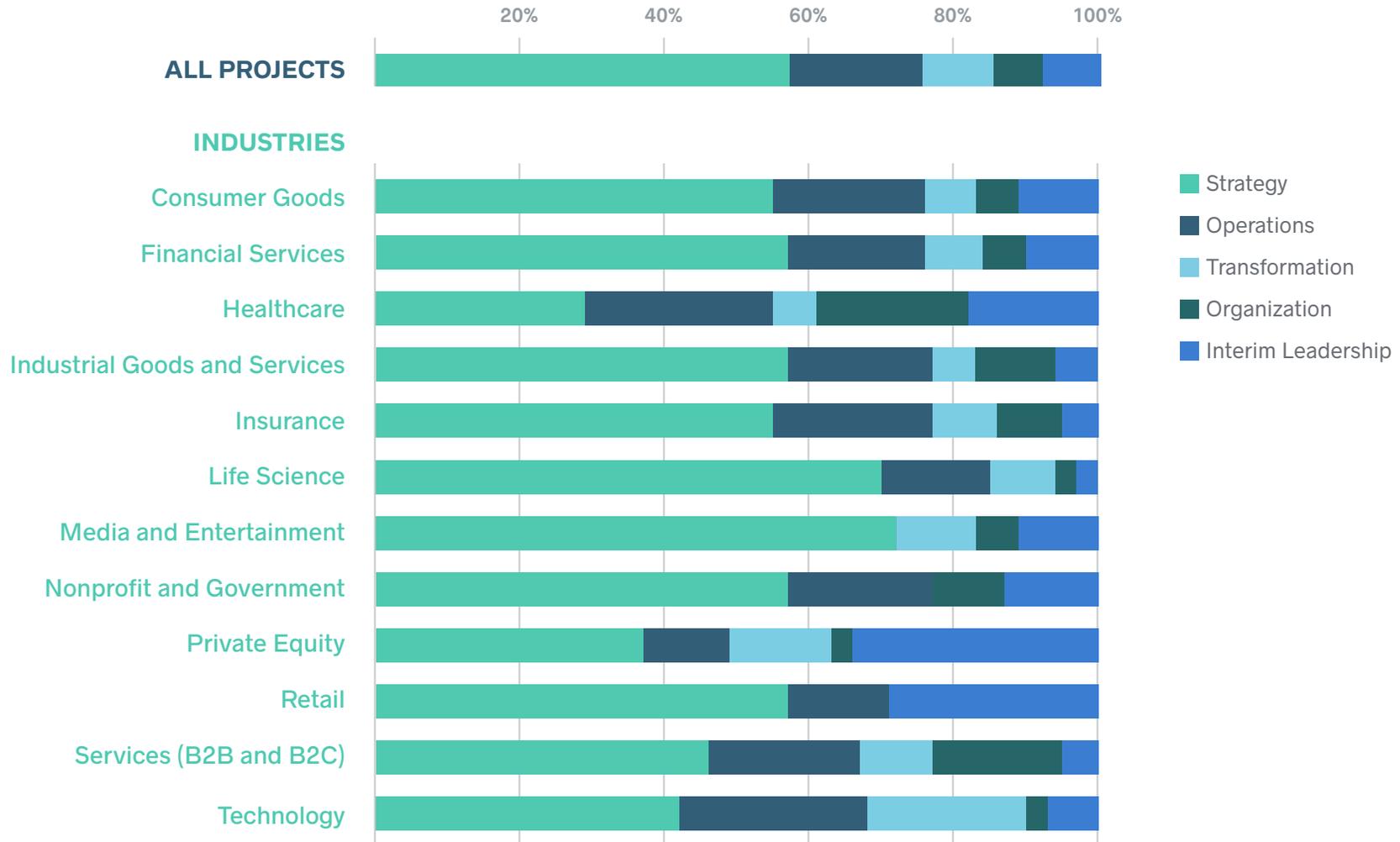
CLIENTS BY LEVEL



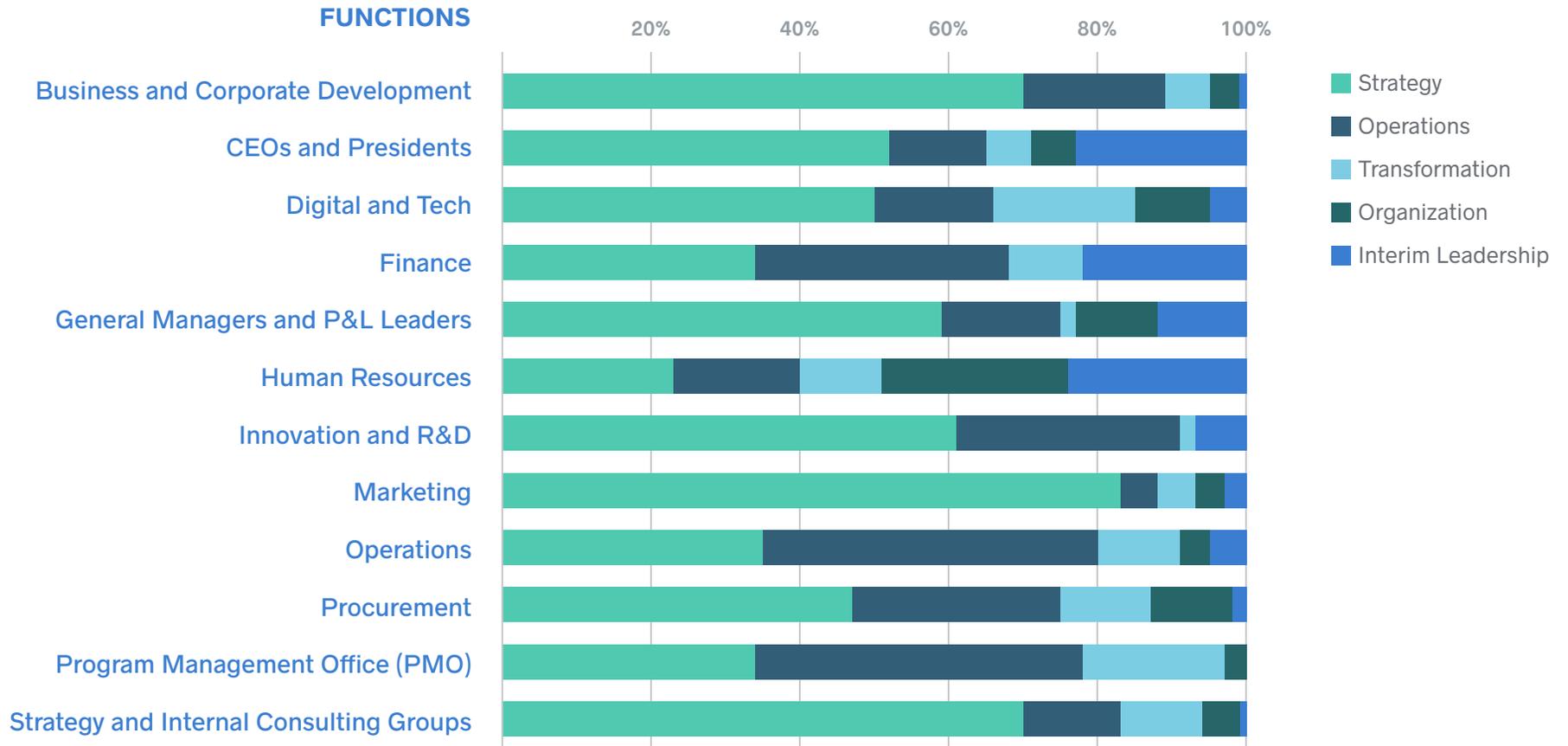
Notably, CEOs and presidents—who led their companies and business units through last year’s uncertainty—are now turning their eyes back toward growth. To help achieve their grand visions, they’re tapping high-end independent talent to serve as interim leaders in finance, marketing, business development, human resources, and general management.

Getting the Work Done

PROJECT CATEGORIES BY INDUSTRY



PROJECT CATEGORIES BY FUNCTION



PERENNIAL FAVORITES AND RISING NEEDS

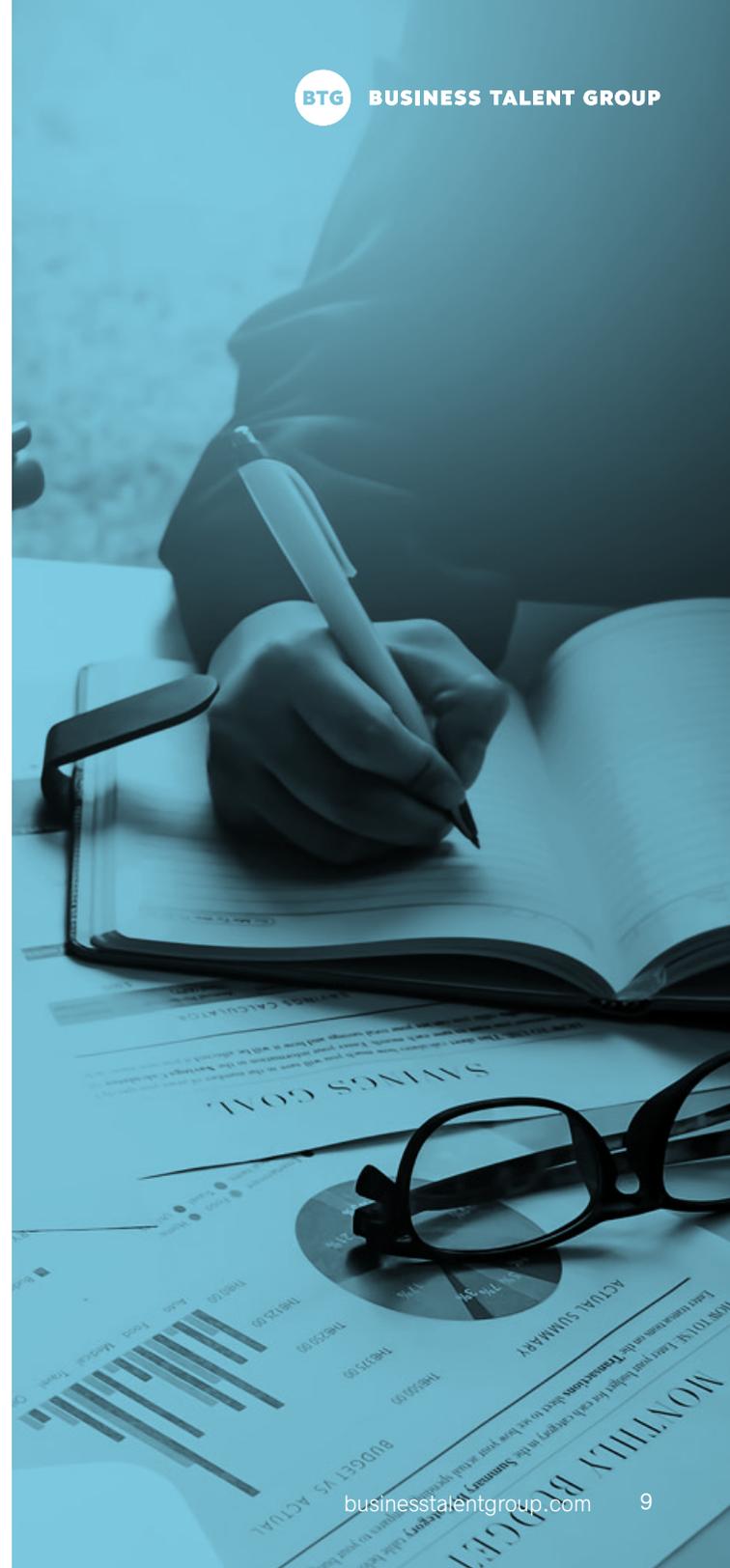
Across the high-end independent talent economy as a whole, trends for 2021 are similar to those of 2020—with mainstays such as marketing and sales strategy initiatives, project management, and market research and landscapes remaining among the most in-demand projects and talent skills. However, in 2021 we’re also seeing rising interest in interim leadership, mergers and acquisitions, corporate and business unit strategy, organizational design and workforce planning, market access and value, and technology and systems implementation. *New entrants to the most in-demand projects and skills in **blue**.*

MOST IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

1. Marketing and Sales
2. Opportunity Assessment
3. Interim Leadership
4. Business Processes
5. Planning
6. Product Strategy and Launch
7. Business Intelligence and Analytics
8. **Mergers and Acquisitions**

MOST IN-DEMAND SKILLS

1. Project Management
2. Market Landscape and Research
3. Process Optimization and Transformation
4. **Corporate and Business Unit Strategy**
5. **Organizational Design and Workforce Planning**
6. **Market Access and Value**
7. Growth Strategy
8. Advanced Analytics
9. Strategic Planning
10. **Tech and Systems Implementation**



Flexible Leadership at All Levels

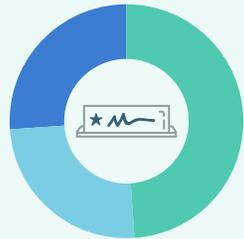
A BREAKTHROUGH MOMENT FOR INTERIM ENGAGEMENTS

As companies made massive changes to ride out the economic turbulence of 2020, the need for unique skills, expertise, and leadership was greater than ever. Meanwhile, the rapidly shifting business landscape required companies to consider entirely new and unique roles that didn't fit into their traditional job descriptions, reporting relationships, and budgeting processes. There was also uncertainty as to whether these would be bridge roles or positions that could evolve into a permanent part of the organization in addition to the company's regular headcount.

Ready to get right to work within days, experienced interim leaders provide just-in-time and right-sized resourcing where and when needed—addressing urgent needs that can't wait for a long-term hire, piloting new initiatives, and serving as trusted advisors to key executives. Interim engagements also provide the perfect opportunity to try something new while optimizing the skills, working style, and priorities for a role both in the near-term and for an eventual permanent hire.

It's no surprise then that companies are increasingly turning to on-demand interim leaders to tackle the critical business challenges and previously uncharted opportunities they face today. No longer reserved solely for filling gaps at the highest levels, interim leadership has taken an increasingly prominent role up and down the org chart, as evidenced by a **70% increase year over year in interim engagement placements below the C-suite.**

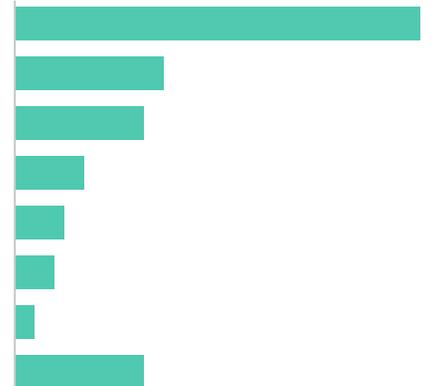
TOP INTERIM ROLES



49% CXO
 25% SVP & VP
 26% Senior Director & below

Interim CXO Breakdown

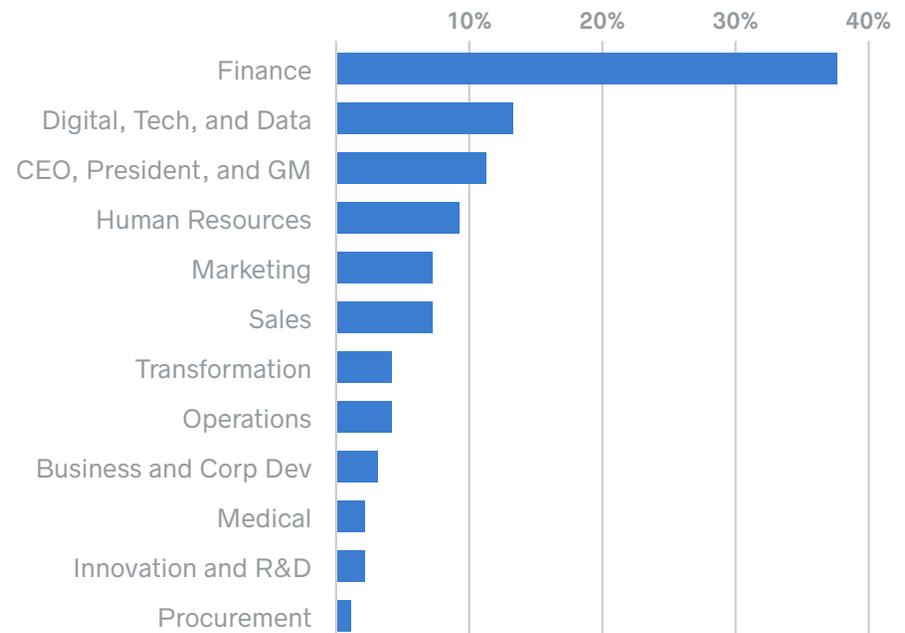
CFO 41%
 CEO 15%
 CTO and CIO 13%
 COO 7%
 CHRO 5%
 CRO 4%
 CMO 2%
 Other 13%



SAMPLE INTERIM LEADER PLACEMENTS

- **Interim CEO of a joint venture**, reporting to parent companies' leadership teams
- **Interim CFO** to prepare for Series B fundraising
- **Interim CTO** to lead a partnership to build a data platform
- **Interim Head of eCommerce** to develop an optimized grocery fulfillment network
- **Interim Chief Data Officer** to identify gaps in the data structure, develop governance processes, and serve as a data translator
- **Interim Business Development Director** to drive current opportunities and build a world class business development and capital projects function
- **Interim HR Business Partner** to execute career planning and performance management

Interim Role Function (All Levels)



PROJECT MANAGEMENT FOR CRITICAL WORKSTREAMS

Project management is a perennial leader among the most in-demand skills—and with good reason. With in-depth knowledge of specific tools, techniques, and frameworks, independent project managers are a powerful resource to help leading companies meet project requirements and keep transformational initiatives on track.

These detail-oriented, hands-on leaders have trained at boutique and big consulting firms and/or held executive roles at big companies, so they often have specific sector expertise as well as the know-how to manage big projects. That's why we frequently see project management as a skill requested alongside specific subject matter expertise—enabling business leaders to accomplish lofty goals within highly targeted areas.

Most importantly, they can be deployed individually or in teams for exactly the time it takes to deliver results, and in exactly the right configuration—whether that means they're tasked with coordinating executive stakeholders, driving workstreams, supporting a PMO, or all of the above. It's the kind of agility that's essential in 2021 and at any stage of an agile journey.

SAMPLE PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLACEMENTS

- Partner with a medical research team to **coordinate multiple real-world data (RWD) projects and workstreams**
- **Drive internal cross-functional initiatives** for a phase 3 drug
- Develop a **diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) playbook** and set up the internal program
- **Identify new processes, tools, and procedures** for the commercial planning team to function in a remote capacity
- Support the **marketing and enrollment of a clinical trial**
- **Lead the set up of governance and reporting processes** for a digital transformation group
- **Create alignment** across the five business units, **maintain a tight project timeline, and help build the business case** to improve drug development
- **Scope, plan, execute, and transition assigned projects** within the value chain management organization
- **Oversee the implementation of a new S&OP process** across multiple product teams

2020 in Review: A Year of Constant Change

2020 was a roller coaster of a year across all sectors and functions. By analyzing monthly project trends, a picture emerges of the priorities of F1000 executives across the year. Though marketing and sales, opportunity assessments, and interim leadership—our most in-demand projects—dominated each month, looking further into the list reveals the path that McKinsey identified as the five key stages of the pandemic: resolve, resilience, return, reimagination, and reform.⁴

This pattern is evident from the changing focus on business processes and opportunity assessment in March to M&A activity in May, followed by growth strategy, organizational effectiveness, and advanced analytics needs across the summer, and finally a transition to supply chain and human capital initiatives in the fall. It's clear that early optimism for 2021 actually began in July, and it continues to power project priorities through early 2021.

TOP PROJECTS BY MONTH IN 2020

★ Emerging Top Project



SKILLS IN THE COVID-19 ERA

Companies everywhere took great steps to safeguard employees and customers in the early stages of the COVID-19 public health crisis—such as remote working mandates, office and retail location closures, and travel restrictions—but such measures also had a massive impact on critical operations, and in some cases, the company’s entire business model. In prior BTG research, we identified various ways that independent talent stepped in to drive strategic initiatives and keep workstreams moving through this time of unprecedented uncertainty.

How did high-end independent talent deliver the skills required to help companies adapt to last year’s business and economic uncertainty?

FROM BTG’S 2020 SKILLS INDEX:⁵



A significant spike in demand for **eCommerce and Internet Strategy (+425% YOY)**, **Product Development (+350% YOY)**, and **Customer Experience and Insights (+160% YOY)** shows how companies turned to independents for help meeting customer needs via different, and often, contactless channels.



A rise in requests for experts in **Organizational Transformation (+225% YOY)** helped companies adjust to the workforce impacts of the pandemic.



Increased demand for talent skilled in **Financial Controls, Accounting, and Audit (+200% YOY)** demonstrates how companies used cost containment modeling and forecasting to pivot amid economic disruption.

FROM BTG'S 2020 TALENT LENS:⁶

Strategy and planning projects dominated both before and during COVID, but changes in talent engagements reflected a shifting economic environment.



Optimizing operations grew by 25% (before versus during COVID), as companies worked to respond to recessionary fears, a newly remote workforce, and increased risk and uncertainty.

Talent also indicated increased demand for expertise in:



Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I)



COVID planning and technologies



Employee health and wellness



Cybersecurity

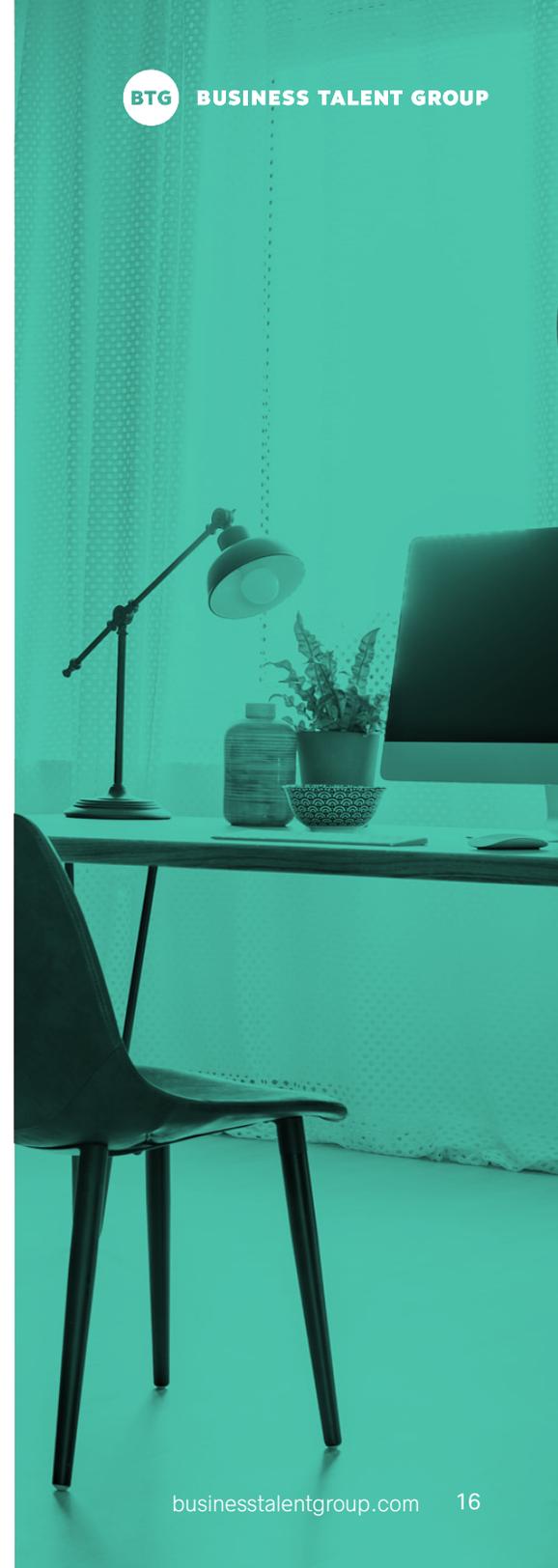
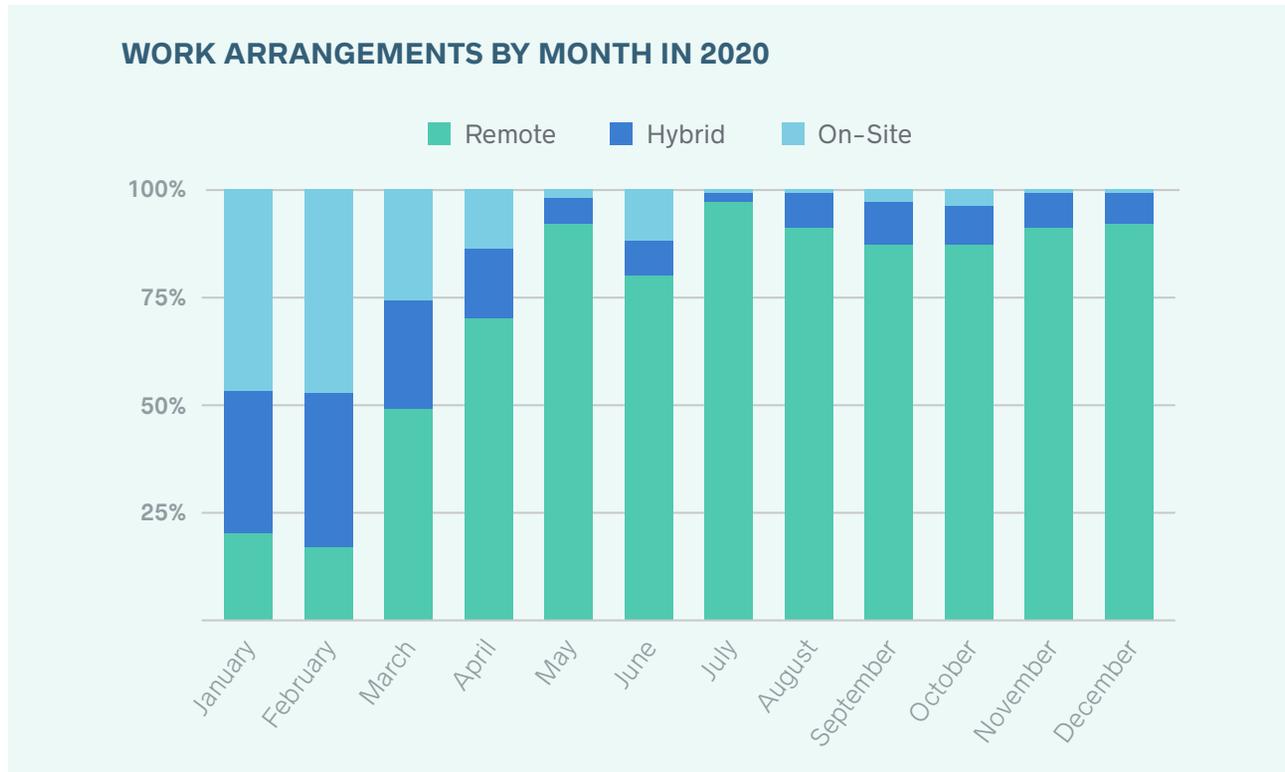


Environmental sustainability

THE REMOTE WORK REVOLUTION

Business leaders have long preferred some element of in-person interaction when it comes to the complicated, high stakes projects on which BTG’s high-end independent talent work. Whether through fully on-site engagements or a hybrid mix of remote and on-site work, some element of face-time has traditionally been a must-have on the majority of projects.

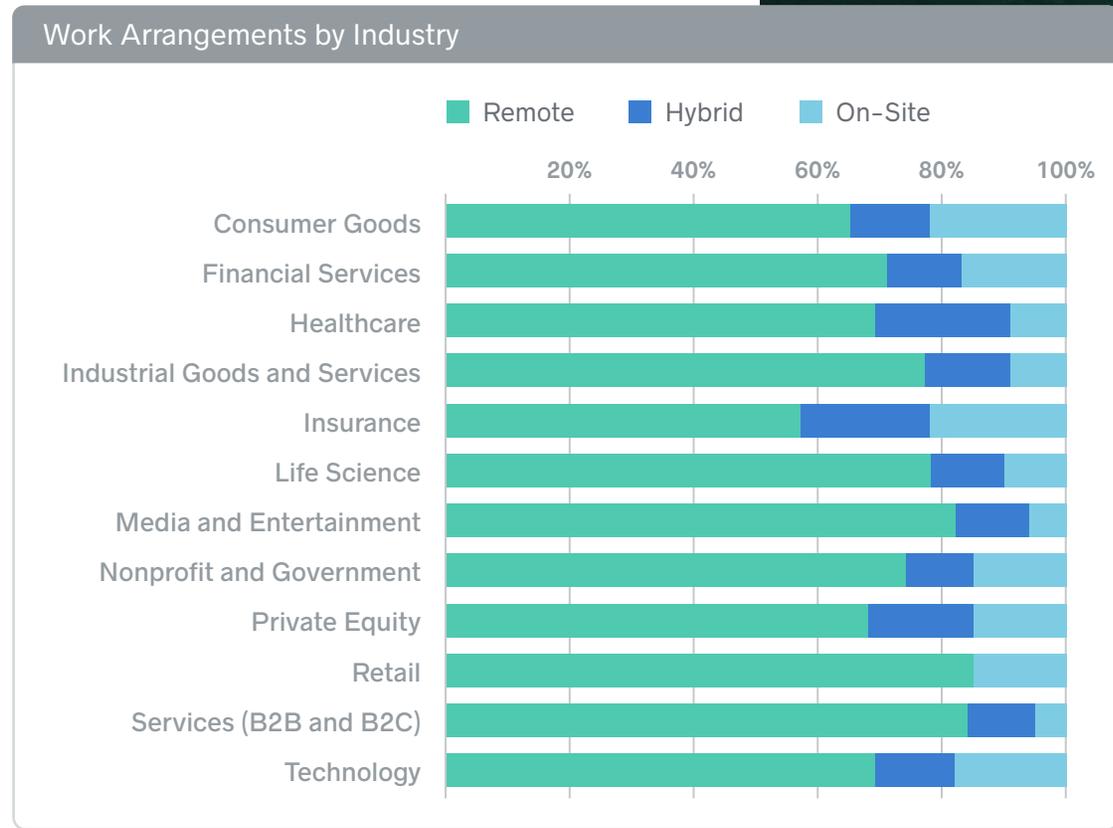
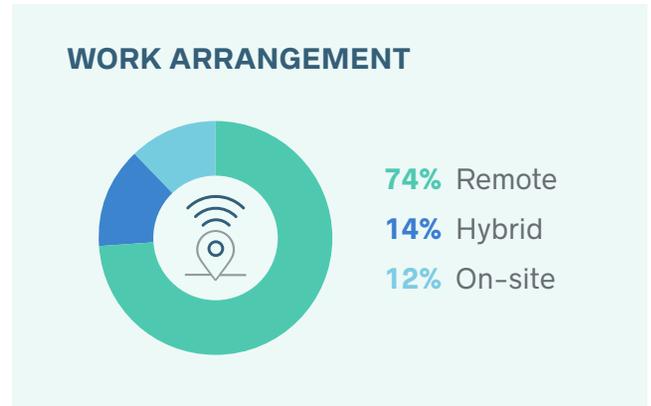
Before COVID, only 17% of executives were interested in remote-only work arrangements for independent talent.⁷ 2020 began much the same, with **only 18% of projects configured for remote-only work arrangements in January and February**, on average.



That all changed when the impact of the pandemic began to make itself known in mid-March. As more and more companies transitioned their operations to remote work arrangements, so too did the rate of remote-only talent engagements increase.

By May nearly all project requests were limited to remote work arrangements, with the only exceptions being those that absolutely required talent on the ground. As a cumulative effect of the Remote Work Revolution, **remote-only project requests increased 335% YOY** across all industries and business functions.

This widespread—and likely long-lasting—shift to remote work opens up a world of possibilities for business leaders in need of critical project resourcing. No longer limited to talent in their immediate vicinity, or those willing to travel to their offices, leaders can tap a richer, more diverse pool of talent and find the absolute best person for the job, no matter where in the world they are located.



2021 High-End Independent Talent Report

TRENDS BY INDUSTRY

Consumer Goods

Consumer goods companies need fast access to the skills required to navigate a new era of change and uncertainty. This year, advanced analytics, planning, and interim leadership displaced business processes and growth strategy as the most requested projects from consumer goods companies, illustrating the critical need for on-demand cutting-edge expertise and strategic leadership.

IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Business Intelligence and Analytics
-  Planning
-  Interim Leadership
-  Supply Chain
-  Growth Strategy
-  Marketing and Sales
-  Organizational Effectiveness
-  Innovation and R&D
-  Business Processes
-  Business Transformation

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Corporate and Business Unit Strategy
-  Advanced Analytics
-  Strategic Planning
-  Financial Planning, Analysis, and Modeling
-  Capital Raising
-  Tech and Systems Implementation
-  Pricing Strategy
-  Process Optimization and Transformation
-  Growth Strategy
-  Logistics

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 55%** Strategy
- 21%** Operations
- 11%** Interim Executive
- 7%** Transformation
- 6%** Organization

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- **Analyze internal data, customer insights, and external market research** to drive the company's 10-year strategic plan
- **Rationalize existing SKUs, map necessary adjustments, and present recommendations** to drive top-line growth
- Serve as an **interim CFO** to prepare for Series B fundraising
- **Lead the demand planning workstream** of a supply chain transformation PMO
- **Develop go-to-market plans** for key digital marketplaces to evolve digital capabilities

Financial Services

Financial services executives—tasked with a mandate to become agile and resilient—are embracing new fast and flexible talent models. They are seeking expertise in M&A, market analysis and product strategy, digitization, and operations from the independent market to power transformations and organizational clarity.

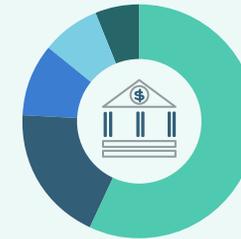
IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  M&A
-  Interim Leadership
-  Product Strategy and Launch
-  Business Processes
-  Opportunity Assessment
-  Digital Strategy
-  Growth Strategy
-  Business Intelligence and Analytics
-  IT and Tech Transformation
-  Marketing and Sales

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Market Landscape and Research
-  Organizational Design and Workforce Planning
-  Due Diligence
-  Process Optimization and Transformation
-  Advanced Analytics
-  Product Launch
-  Program Management Office (PMO)
-  Digital Marketing
-  Acquisitions

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 57%** Strategy
- 19%** Operations
- 10%** Interim Executive
- 8%** Transformation
- 6%** Organization

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- **Integrate transition service agreements** as a project manager supporting the M&A team
- Serve as an **interim CFO** with asset management expertise
- Lead **opportunity assessment, positioning, proof of concept, and client interviews** for an investment product launch
- **Build reporting and analytics capabilities** to track key KPIs
- **Drive customer acquisition** experimentation and innovation

Healthcare



Healthcare organizations, faced with a continuing, unprecedented period of change and uncertainty, are seeking independent talent to execute and lead new partnerships, develop and implement new technologies, and build resilient workforces. With deep experience and a hands-on approach to engagements, independent experts are a natural fit for the industry.

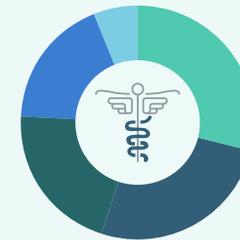
IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Human Capital
-  Interim Leadership
-  Business Processes
-  Service Operations
-  Planning
-  Opportunity Assessment
-  Marketing and Sales

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Organizational Design and Workforce Planning
-  Operational Excellence
-  Tech and Systems Implementation
-  Program Management Office (PMO)
-  Corporate and Business Unit Strategy
-  Growth Strategy

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 29%** Strategy
- 26%** Operations
- 21%** Organization
- 18%** Interim Executive
- 6%** Transformation

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- Serve as an **interim CTO** to lead a partnership to build a data platform
- **Manage first-of-its-kind joint venture** and serve as objective leader to all stakeholders
- Facilitate end-to-end **business process re-engineering** efforts across the organization
- **Develop and launch a program management office** to track and manage multiple initiatives
- **Develop a best-in-class onboarding program** for new staff

Industrial Goods and Services

Facing a shortage of skilled talent, industrial companies have found help in the independent market. Opportunity assessment, for the third year, leads the pack for most requested project type. New on this year’s agenda: planning, manufacturing excellence, and human capital aimed at identifying new markets and innovations, building operational resilience, and enabling workforce agility and safety.

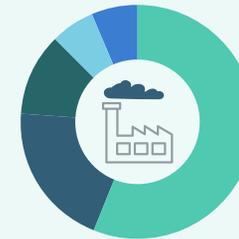
IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Opportunity Assessment
-  Planning
-  Manufacturing Excellence
-  Human Capital
-  Business Processes
-  Interim Leadership
-  M&A
-  Product Strategy and Launch
-  Growth Strategy
-  Marketing and Sales

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Market Landscape and Research
-  Project Management
-  Organizational Design and Workforce Planning
-  Business Plan Development
-  Communications
-  Corporate and Business Unit Strategy
-  Compensation Strategy
-  Process Optimization and Transformation
-  Portfolio Strategy
-  Advanced Analytics

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 57%** Strategy
- 20%** Operations
- 11%** Organization
- 6%** Transformation
- 6%** Interim Executive

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- **Conduct market and competitive situational assessment** and recommend strategic options in an adjacent industry
- **Develop an integrated economic value model** for a major organizational transformation
- **Serve as an interim Business Development Director** to drive current opportunities and build a world class business development and capital projects function
- **Analyze the current plant network strategy** and provide recommendation to **reduce costs and increase utilization**

Insurance

As insurance executives enter 2021, the focus is twofold: accelerate recovery strategies by focusing on business processes, service operations, and transformations while simultaneously searching for growth opportunities in products and services buoyed by digital, data, and automation. Independent talent offer a fast, flexible, and low-risk source of skills, expertise, and capacity to meet this dual focus in insurance.

IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Marketing and Sales
-  Business Processes
-  Product Strategy and Launch
-  Opportunity Assessment
-  Planning
-  Service Operations
-  Business Transformation
-  Interim Leadership
-  Business Intelligence and Analytics

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Corporate and Business Unit Strategy
-  Project Management
-  Market Landscape and Research
-  Program Management Office (PMO)
-  Organizational Design and Workforce Planning
-  Agile Transformation
-  Financial Controls, Accounting, and Audit
-  Data Science and Data Engineering
-  Innovation Strategy

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 55%** Strategy
- 22%** Operations
- 9%** Transformation
- 9%** Organization
- 5%** Interim Executive

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- Build out the strategy function and **develop a capabilities roadmap and strategic framework** for a 10-year plan
- **Conduct a market analysis** to identify overall market trends, customer needs, market channels, and growth areas
- **Identify greenfield opportunities, revenue optimizations, and operational efficiencies** through data science
- Provide strategic and actionable recommendations to assist with the **catastrophic risk management redesign**

Life Science

Independent consultants bring life science companies a unique mix of real-world experience, strategic rigor, and targeted domain expertise in areas like market access, clinical operations, commercial strategy, and digital health. As in previous years, life science executives are turning to independents for help with marketing, operations, product, and portfolio strategy across business units and therapeutic areas.

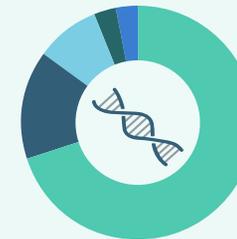
IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Marketing and Sales
-  Product Strategy and Launch
-  Planning
-  Opportunity Assessment
-  Business Intelligence and Analytics
-  Business Processes
-  Innovation and R&D
-  Growth Strategy
-  Digital Strategy
-  Supply Chain

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Project Management
-  Market Landscape and Research
-  Market Access and Value
-  Product Launch
-  Clinical Operations
-  Portfolio Strategy
-  Corporate and Business Unit Strategy
-  Digital Marketing
-  Process Optimization and Transformation
-  Manufacturing Strategy

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 70%** Strategy
- 15%** Operations
- 9%** Transformation
- 3%** Organization
- 3%** Interim Executive

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- Develop updated **health economics and outcomes research (HEOR) and market access commercial playbook**
- Conduct an **assessment of the competitive landscape and market access scenarios** for a rare disease portfolio
- **Develop a segmentation and messaging strategy, resource guide, and KPI plan** for pharmaceutical marketing materials
- **Assess digital health investments and create a roadmap for digital technology investments** to maximize the commercial potential of assets and reduce clinical cost

Media and Entertainment

Media and entertainment companies faced considerable change and uncertainty in 2020 forcing many to rethink their business models and go-to-market strategies. As such, media and entertainment leaders are tapping independent talent to understand consumer preferences, identify new products and services, and drive strategic planning across the organization.

IN-DEMAND PROJECTS



Planning



Marketing and Sales



Opportunity Assessment



Interim Leadership



Business Intelligence and Analytics

IN-DEMAND SKILLS



Brand Strategy



Strategic Planning



Project Management

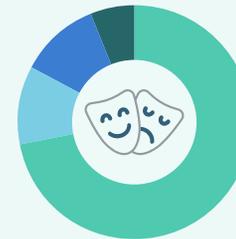


Corporate and Business Unit Strategy



Financial Planning, Analysis, and Modeling

PROJECT CATEGORIES



72% Strategy

11% Transformation

11% Interim Executive

6% Organization

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- **Develop a business plan** for location-based entertainment (LBE)
- **Design and deliver a business transformation program** focused on editorial workflows, content distribution, and organization effectiveness
- **Conduct an international opportunity assessment** and evaluate non-US businesses to guide 2021 strategic planning

Nonprofit and Government

Tackling society’s biggest challenges requires the brightest minds and the ability to quickly put them to work against an ever-evolving set of initiatives. Nonprofit and government leaders have found that help in the independent talent market. This year, interim leadership, innovation and R&D, and strategic planning top the list of most in-demand needs that will allow nonprofits to adapt, innovate, and make a bigger impact in a rapidly changing world.

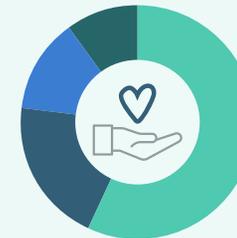
IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Interim Leadership
-  Innovation and R&D
-  Planning
-  Growth Strategy
-  Marketing and Sales
-  Product Strategy and Launch

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Project Management
-  Growth Strategy
-  Corporate and Business Unit Strategy
-  Strategic Planning
-  Business Plan Development

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 57%** Strategy
- 20%** Operations
- 13%** Interim Executive
- 10%** Organization

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- Serve as an **interim CFO** to temporarily lead the organization
- **Develop a vaccine investment strategy** with an emphasis on manufacturing
- Build a **pharmacovigilance and regulatory affairs portfolio strategy**
- **Develop a global marketing function and strategy** to support initiatives in multiple countries

Private Equity

Private equity firms need leaders who are skilled and experienced enough to execute strategies across the investment cycle. Independent consultants and executives are a perfect resource for these firms, helping evaluate acquisition targets, validating investment theses, and driving and sustaining impact through interim leadership roles.

IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Interim Leadership
-  M&A
-  Business Processes
-  Marketing and Sales
-  Opportunity Assessment
-  Product Strategy and Launch
-  IT and Tech Transformation

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Due Diligence
-  Financial Planning, Analysis, and Modeling
-  Financial Controls, Accounting, and Audit
-  Salesforce Effectiveness
-  Product Development
-  Post-Merger Integration
-  Process Optimization and Transformation
-  Program Management Office (PMO)

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 37%** Strategy
- 34%** Interim Executive
- 14%** Transformation
- 12%** Operations
- 3%** Organization

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- Serve as an **interim CFO** to lead the integration of three companies and 2021 budget process
- Lead **global implementation of a human resource information system (HRIS)**
- **Assess target company's inventory, finances, and operations** and provide a recommendation to the investment committee
- Post-acquisition, review **product strategy and roadmap**, provide **customer segmentation, targeting, and product positioning recommendations**, and develop resource allocation plan

Retail

Retailers—from mass merchants and grocery to specialty and apparel—pivoted virtually overnight in 2020. Retail executives tapped independent talent as they scaled up eCommerce activities, adjusted supply chains, modified logistics and distribution strategies, met new consumer preferences, reduced operational costs, and more. Interim leadership, product strategy, and innovation expertise will be critical as retailers continue transformation initiatives in 2021.

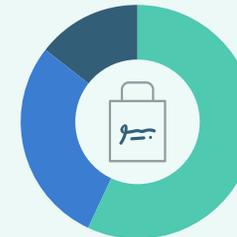
IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Interim Leadership
-  Product Strategy and Launch
-  Service Operations
-  Digital Strategy
-  Marketing and Sales
-  Business Intelligence and Analytics

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  eCommerce
-  Project Management
-  Advanced Analytics
-  Digital Marketing
-  Promotions and Advertising
-  Tech and Systems Implementation
-  B2B Marketing
-  Innovation Strategy

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 57%** Strategy
- 29%** Interim Executive
- 14%** Operations

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- Serve as an **interim head of eCommerce** to develop an optimized grocery fulfillment network
- **Develop the strategy for diagnostic call centers** including hiring, training, and selecting technology systems
- Serve as an **interim Chief Data Officer** to identify gaps in the data structure, develop governance processes, and serve as a data translator

Services (B2B and B2C)

As B2B and B2C services firms adjust to a complicated and uncertain business environment, they are seeking independent consultants, project managers, executives, and subject matter experts to help with everything from business process transformations to workforce planning and marketing strategy to business resilience.

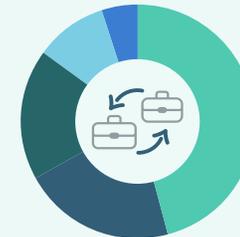
IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Planning
-  Marketing and Sales
-  Business Processes
-  Human Capital
-  Opportunity Assessment
-  Organizational Effectiveness
-  Supply Chain
-  Business Transformation

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Process Optimization and Transformation
-  Organizational Design and Workforce Planning
-  Project Management
-  Corporate and Business Unit Strategy
-  Market Landscape and Research
-  B2B Marketing
-  Strategic Planning
-  Organizational Transformation
-  Business Plan Development
-  Growth Strategy

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 46%** Strategy
- 21%** Operations
- 18%** Organization
- 10%** Transformation
- 5%** Interim Executive

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- Develop an **internal marketing strategy and roadmap** to increase awareness across functions
- Design and implement **business transformation playbooks** leveraging waterfall and agile methodologies
- Develop and implement a **diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) strategy**
- As a PMO coordinator, track progress and coordinate **on-time delivery of project deliverables**, create and execute **project work plans**, and develop **progress dashboards**

Technology

2020 saw the rapid acceleration of digital transformations across all industries and sectors, keeping technology companies front and center. Independent talent remains the industry’s secret weapon, helping clients evaluate strategies and push forward digital, process, and business model transformations.

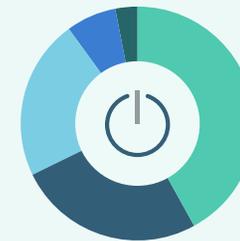
IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Business Processes
-  IT and Tech Transformation
-  Marketing and Sales
-  Opportunity Assessment
-  Interim Leadership
-  Service Operations
-  Supply Chain
-  Planning
-  Growth Strategy
-  M&A

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Process Optimization and Transformation
-  Market Landscape and Research
-  Project Management
-  Tech and Systems Implementation
-  IT Systems Strategy
-  Post-Merger Integration
-  Program Management Office (PMO)
-  Change Management

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 42%** Strategy
- 26%** Operations
- 22%** Transformation
- 7%** Interim Executive
- 3%** Organization

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- **Optimize and execute transformation projects** by working collaboratively and cross-functionally as a project manager
- Serve as an **interim leader to create and drive a global go-to-market channel strategy**
- **Define the marketing strategy** for next six to nine months and shape new Head of Marketing role
- Facilitate the **development of three-year strategic plans and roadmaps**

2021 High-End Independent Talent Report

TRENDS BY FUNCTION

Business and Corporate Development

Following the turbulence of last year, corporate development leaders are now charting a path to renewed growth in 2021. From in-depth market research and acquisition due diligence to management of complex post-merger integrations, independents deliver the flexible, in-demand skills companies need throughout the deal cycle.

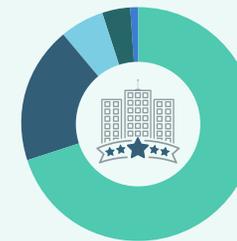
IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  M&A
-  Opportunity Assessment
-  Marketing and Sales
-  Growth Strategy
-  Business Intelligence and Analytics
-  Business Processes

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Market Landscape and Research
-  Due Diligence
-  Program Management Office (PMO)
-  Growth Strategy
-  Post-Merger Integration
-  Portfolio Strategy
-  Corporate and Business Unit Strategy

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 70%** Strategy
- 19%** Operations
- 6%** Transformation
- 4%** Organization
- 1%** Interim Executive

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- **Evaluate the technology and technical capabilities** of an acquisition target to ensure alignment with expectations and risk model
- **Identify manufacturers within and outside Asia** for key industrial supplies
- **Assess market trends, customer needs, and growth areas** within cybersecurity
- **Develop a blueprint** for the life science commercial channel of the future

CEOs and Presidents

CEOs and presidents—who led their companies and business units through last year’s uncertainty—are now turning their eyes back toward growth. To help achieve their grand visions, they’re tapping high-end independent talent to serve as interim leaders, develop robust marketing strategies and financial models, and manage complex M&A workstreams.

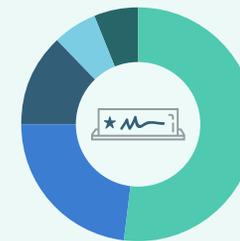
IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Interim Leadership
-  Marketing and Sales
-  M&A
-  Product Strategy and Launch
-  Planning
-  Human Capital
-  Manufacturing Excellence

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Financial Planning, Analysis, and Modeling
-  Financial Controls, Accounting, and Audit
-  Strategic Planning
-  Growth Strategy
-  Corporate and Business Unit Strategy
-  Post-Merger Integration
-  Product Development
-  Brand Strategy
-  Acquisitions

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 52%** Strategy
- 23%** Interim Executive
- 13%** Operations
- 6%** Transformation
- 6%** Organization

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- Serve as an **interim CEO of a joint venture**, reporting to parent companies’ leadership teams
- **Lead integration workstreams** for a cross-border acquisition
- **Navigate regulatory agency approval processes** in multiple regions for a new product line
- **Formulate mid- to long-term financial plans** and **develop pricing policies** for specific business lines

Digital and Tech

2020 brought a wave of acceleration in **digital transformation** initiatives—a trend that will continue as companies harness technology to glean greater insights, optimize processes, and meet customers where they are. Independents deliver digital and tech leaders the cutting-edge skills they need for these critical projects and more.

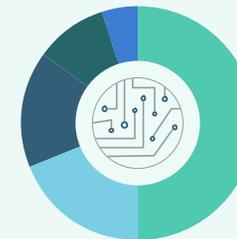
IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  IT and Tech Transformation
-  Business Processes
-  Digital Strategy
-  Business Intelligence and Analytics
-  Planning
-  Business Transformation

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Project Management
-  Corporate and Business Unit Strategy
-  Process Optimization and Transformation
-  Agile Transformation
-  Advanced Analytics
-  Tech and Systems Implementation
-  Product Launch
-  Data Science & Data Engineering
-  Digital Marketing
-  Manufacturing Strategy

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 50%** Strategy
- 19%** Transformation
- 16%** Operations
- 10%** Organization
- 5%** Interim Executive

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- **Redesign IT job profiles and organizational layers** to ensure a business-centric function
- **Prepare an organizational change management plan** to minimize the impact of a technology implementation on staff and business processes
- **Analyze the benefits and opportunities** of various client support models
- Develop strategic insight and facilitate conversations regarding **software contracts and licensing**
- **Provide business function insights** using SQL, Python, and R

Finance

Finance leaders spent much of last year dealing with the economic fallout of COVID-19. In 2021, they will resume the execution of long-term strategies for growth and profitability with the help of high-end independents skilled in FP&A, financial controls, business unit and pricing strategies, and process optimizations—as well as skilled interim hands at all levels of the function.

IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Business Processes
-  Interim Leadership
-  Planning
-  Opportunity Assessment

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Financial Planning, Analysis, and Modeling
-  Financial Controls, Accounting, and Audit
-  Corporate and Business Unit Strategy
-  Process Optimization and Transformation
-  Pricing Strategy
-  Program Management Office (PMO)

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 34%** Strategy
- 34%** Operations
- 22%** Interim Executive
- 10%** Transformation

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- **Evaluate and improve P&L reports and processes** according to best-in-class practices
- Serve as an **interim operational leader and general manager** for a joint venture
- **Develop a pricing strategy** for SaaS products
- **Perform a portfolio analysis and identify the most promising opportunities** for business transformations and investments in the next five years
- **Provide project management support** for implementation of a new compliance strategy

General Managers and P&L Leaders

As GMs and P&L leaders pivot their businesses out of the uncertainty of 2020 and into long-term growth, independent talent present a broad array of expertise to supplement their existing capabilities. From project management and market research to product and growth strategies, independents deliver the skills these leaders need to win in the new normal.

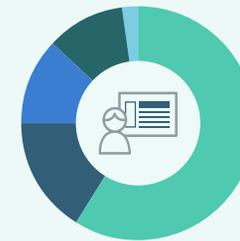
IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Opportunity Assessment
-  Product Strategy and Launch
-  Marketing and Sales
-  Growth Strategy
-  Interim Leadership
-  Organizational Effectiveness
-  Business Processes
-  Digital Strategy

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Project Management
-  Growth Strategy
-  Organizational Design and Workforce Planning
-  Market Landscape and Research
-  Process Optimization and Transformation
-  Program Management Office (PMO)
-  Product Development
-  Salesforce Effectiveness
-  Organizational Transformation
-  Corporate and Business Unit Strategy

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 59%** Strategy
- 16%** Operations
- 12%** Interim Executive
- 11%** Organization
- 2%** Transformation

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- **Review and refine a commercial go-to-market strategy** in an emerging niche
- **Build a business case and manage workstreams** for the development of a new product
- **Drive marketing, public relations, and enrollment** for clinical trials
- **Assess manufacturing operations and recommend improvements** to enable greater efficiency and international expansion

Human Resources

Human resources faced bigger challenges in 2020 than nearly any other function—from right-sizing workforces and keeping employees safe to adjusting to the widespread shift to remote work. As companies seek to reopen offices and plot resourcing for the new normal, HR leaders require independent experts in everything from organizational design and compensation strategy to technology implementations—as well as interim leadership to fill gaps in critical roles.

IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Interim Leadership
-  Human Capital
-  Marketing and Sales
-  Business Processes
-  Planning
-  Service Operations

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Organizational Design and Workforce Planning
-  Project Management
-  Compensation Strategy
-  Tech and Systems Implementation
-  Organizational Transformation
-  Operational Excellence
-  Communications
-  Benefits Planning and Management

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 25%** Organization
- 24%** Interim Executive
- 23%** Strategy
- 17%** Operations
- 11%** Transformation

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- Partner with business leaders on people-related strategy and execution of career planning, performance management, and more as an **interim HR Business Partner**
- Serve as an **interim Benefits Manager** to design and implement health and welfare benefits programs
- **Develop and set up new total rewards programs** for multinational workforce
- **Research and enhance the employee experience** across internal digital platforms

Innovation and R&D

The tumultuous year behind us required widespread innovation across every business function. In the wake of significant strategic shifts, innovation and R&D leaders are turning to independent talent for emerging high-tech and analytical skills, as well as skilled project management, to enable manufacturing excellence, optimize product portfolios, and lead new technology implementations.

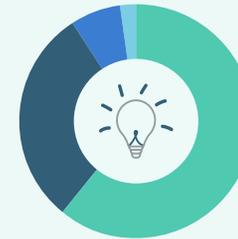
IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Innovation and R&D
-  Business Intelligence and Analytics
-  Planning
-  Interim Leadership
-  Opportunity Assessment
-  Manufacturing Excellence

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Project Management
-  Manufacturing Strategy
-  Portfolio Strategy
-  Tech and Systems Implementation
-  Innovation Strategy
-  Advanced Analytics
-  Data Science and Data Engineering
-  Strategic Planning
-  Market Access and Value

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 61%** Strategy
- 30%** Operations
- 7%** Interim Executive
- 2%** Transformation

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- **Project manage early clinical development teams** to ensure execution against strategic plans and consistency with business processes
- **Develop dashboards and metrics in Power BI** to enable progress reporting
- **Build out the strategy function and develop a capabilities roadmap and strategic framework** for a 10-year plan
- **Assess opportunities for investment in VC funds** backing advanced technologies within a targeted industry

Marketing

2020 tore up the traditional marketing playbook. As marketing leaders chart a new path forward, they're turning to independent talent to help harness data and understand the customer landscape, identify new segments, and develop digital strategies and positioning for products old and new.

IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Marketing and Sales
-  Product Strategy and Launch
-  Opportunity Assessment
-  Business Intelligence and Analytics
-  Growth Strategy
-  Business Processes
-  Planning
-  IT and Tech Transformation
-  Digital Strategy
-  Interim Leadership

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Market Access and Value
-  Market Landscape and Research
-  Project Management
-  Product Launch
-  Communications
-  B2B Marketing
-  Digital Marketing
-  Portfolio Strategy
-  B2C Marketing

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 83%** Strategy
- 5%** Operations
- 5%** Transformation
- 4%** Organization
- 3%** Interim Executive

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- **Manage healthcare provider promotions and increase brand awareness** by overseeing key messaging, agency output, and sales meeting prep
- **Make data-driven recommendations on go-to-market plans** to maximize digital marketplace revenue opportunities
- **Develop and implement an overall strategy, roll-out map, and detailed action plan** for the global commercial launch of a new product
- Propose, design, and execute **primary market research** for products in the company's portfolio

Operations

Operations leaders have a lot on their plates right now, from building more resilient supply chains to transforming processes to meet organizational needs amid fluctuating work arrangements. Independent experts are here to help with in-demand skills in critical areas and hands-on project management support to successfully implement the changes.

IN-DEMAND PROJECTS



Supply Chain



Business Processes



Business Transformation



Marketing and Sales



Interim Leadership



Business Intelligence and Analytics

IN-DEMAND SKILLS



Project Management



Process Optimization and Transformation



Supply Chain



Regulatory Strategy, Process, and Submissions



Advanced Analytics

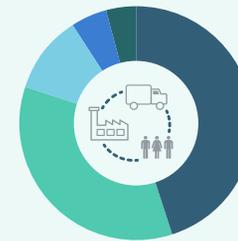


Program Management Office (PMO)



Operational Excellence

PROJECT CATEGORIES



45% Operations

35% Strategy

11% Transformation

5% Interim Executive

4% Organization

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- **Project manage a new S&OP process implementation** across various product teams
- **Develop a tactical sourcing plan and manage organizational spend** to ensure continuous improvement and value creation
- **Operationalize a product pilot and develop a playbook** that can be implemented with other products
- **Implement standardized governance procedures** within a highly matrixed organization and analyze success of new processes

Procurement

In many organizations, procurement leaders not only manage their own independent talent engagements, but also those of other functions throughout the business. In addition to building enterprise-wide on-demand talent programs, procurement leaders are also tapping independent expertise in their strategic planning exercises, supply chain initiatives, process transformations, and change management efforts.

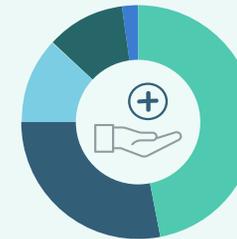
IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Planning
-  Supply Chain
-  Opportunity Assessment
-  Business Processes
-  Change Management

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Project Management
-  Sourcing and Procurement
-  Market Landscape and Research
-  Regulatory Strategy, Process, and Submissions
-  Process Optimization and Transformation
-  Change Management

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 47%** Strategy
- 28%** Operations
- 12%** Transformation
- 11%** Organization
- 2%** Interim Executive

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- **Audit suppliers to identify gaps and recommend corrective action** in line with the Responsible Business Alliance framework
- **Analyze opportunities to leverage automation and digitalization** in procurement strategies
- **Build a bench of flexible project management resources** to fill gaps in process optimization, change management, and data analysis workstreams
- **Plan and lead organizational change management and communications activities** for a new enterprise procurement system implementation

Program Management Office (PMO)

A well-resourced Program Management Office is key to the critical transformations companies must undertake to succeed in 2021. Independent talent are here to help with additional expertise and capacity on everything from process improvements and tech implementations to M&A activities and new product launches.

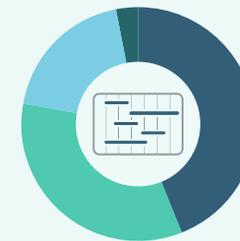
IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Business Processes
-  Supply Chain
-  IT and Tech Transformation
-  M&A
-  Growth Strategy
-  Product Strategy and Launch
-  Business Transformation

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Project Management
-  Post-Merger Integration
-  Process Optimization and Transformation
-  Program Management Office (PMO)

PROJECT CATEGORIES



44% Operations

34% Strategy

19% Transformation

3% Organization

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- Work with cross-functional organizations, teams, and individuals to **plan, optimize, and execute business transformation projects**
- **Explore logistic carriers, onboard suppliers, and improve supply chain processes** to help the organization adapt to changes brought on by the global pandemic
- **Plan and lead change management efforts** for the integration of a new human cloud management platform
- Coordinate content development, governance, transition planning, and operations activities for a **post-merger integration**

Strategy and Internal Consulting Groups

2020 showed that businesses must be able to adapt to even the most uncertain conditions with robust strategies focused on long-term growth and resilience. Independent talent provide strategy and ICG leaders with targeted support on everything from creating strategic plans and implementation roadmaps to harnessing data and identifying the most promising opportunities.

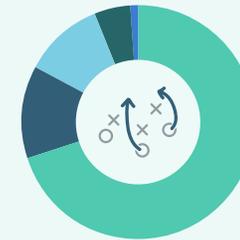
IN-DEMAND PROJECTS

-  Planning
-  Opportunity Assessment
-  Business Intelligence and Analytics
-  Product Strategy and Launch
-  Marketing and Sales
-  Growth Strategy
-  IT and Tech Transformation
-  Business Processes
-  Digital Strategy
-  Business Transformation

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

-  Market Landscape and Research
-  Project Management
-  Corporate and Business Unit Strategy
-  Process Optimization and Transformation
-  Strategic Planning
-  Advanced Analytics
-  Growth Strategy
-  Forecasting
-  IT Systems Strategy
-  Change Management

PROJECT CATEGORIES



- 70%** Strategy
- 13%** Operations
- 11%** Transformation
- 5%** Organization
- 1%** Interim Executive

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- **Facilitate agile development of strategic plans and implementation roadmaps** for various business units in alignment with the organization's three-year plan
- **Study the commercial potential** of expanded use cases for an existing product and **develop a replicable framework** for other products
- **Forecast trends, COVID impacts, and potential 2021 scenarios** for pipeline and inline products
- Provide subject matter expertise, develop work plans, and help manage the **pilot program launch of a new product**

SOURCES

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- 4 "Beyond coronavirus: The path to the next normal." McKinsey & Company, March 2020.
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