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**March 2022:**

**The consultant wearing a hoodie**



***Life as a consultant 20 years ago was fundamentally different from today, and customers' expectations of a consultant were also different. If you had to portray the term "consultant" in charades, would you still tighten your tie, close your jacket and pull your rolling suitcase imaginary behind you? Would you still be thinking of the business clown, the delightful skit from the bullyparade, the hotel permanent residents like George Clooney in "up in the air", the funny consultant lexicons, the rows of dark suits in the fastlane at the airport?***

A nice client request published in a recent pitch was "less glitz more substance" as a requirement for external consulting services. Nearly ten years ago, renowned Harvard professor Clayton Christensen predicted a fundamental shift in the consulting industry. Certainly, the pandemic played its part in accelerating this change. Travel was suddenly no longer possible and video conferencing was the norm in all companies. The requirement profile in the projects also seems to be changing away from the classic business economist to the data scientist and digital expert. The areas in which consulting services are required to support change are also changing dramatically.

## **Digital transformation is very complex**

The digital transformation in many companies is still not at the level where it should be expected, or requires such special solutions that it cannot be handled by the company itself. And in addition, there is a new topic area of "sustainability", which is driven in consultancies from three directions: Customers, employees and alliance partners.

National and international regulation, such as the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, CO<sub>2</sub> prices or the Supply Chain Act, is also playing into the cards of the large consultancies that are now claiming this topic as their own.

In addition, a large number of companies are currently in tense situations. Be it because in risk management the availability of goods or logistics capacities prevent the necessary growth or because the digital transformation must create quick effects and a quick ROI in a software or process change cannot be calculated on years. In all these situations, colorful charts with a lot of theory do not help. What is needed are empirical values but with practical implementation capability.

## **Consulting is changing - like everything around it**

Consulting has always defined itself as a people business. Now the consultant is distant, digital, the topics new and the requirements new. This creates a whole new image of a consultant. It remains to be seen whether all consultancies, which have change as their business purpose, can undergo this change, adapt their own cultures and also create a new image for the customer.

## **Consultants as partners - successes as a team**

Why has Adconia not been affected by this disruption of the consulting market as much as some other consultancies? Because Adconia has always been a misfit in traditional consulting. The honest consultant who tackles



and identifies himself as part of the company. What sounds like an empty promise in the acquisition phase very quickly proves to be true and customer relationships last for years and not just short project phases. Adconia consultants are quickly perceived as part of the organization. Our philosophy is together with the customer and not we for the customer. Roll up our sleeves and get to work. What sets us apart is our practical experience. We have also been on the other side of the table, received many colorful slides from consultants with a lot of theory and far too little practical relevance and even more so without reference to the situation on our own company and concrete proposals. We always aim to offer added value. And at the same time we are just people, with families, with children, with everyday worries, but still proud consultants. Even if we mothballed the suit and costumes already five years ago.

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## **Recognise trends early and act correctly**

As a small boutique consultancy, we can claim to have advised on digital transformation in the supply chain even before Industry 4.0 became a buzzword. When the Supply Chain Act and CO<sub>2</sub> taxation were still a long way off, we discussed with clients the use of recycled materials, their sources of supply and circular economy. We were allowed to accompany the first sustainability report almost ten years ago. This specialization with many years of experience paired with an implementation orientation makes us unique. We look forward to accompanying you on your journey and don't be surprised if you find us in a gray Adconia hoodie.

