



Welcome!

Free Webinar – May 2021

The Most Important Life-Changing Skills
You Need To Master As A Consultant

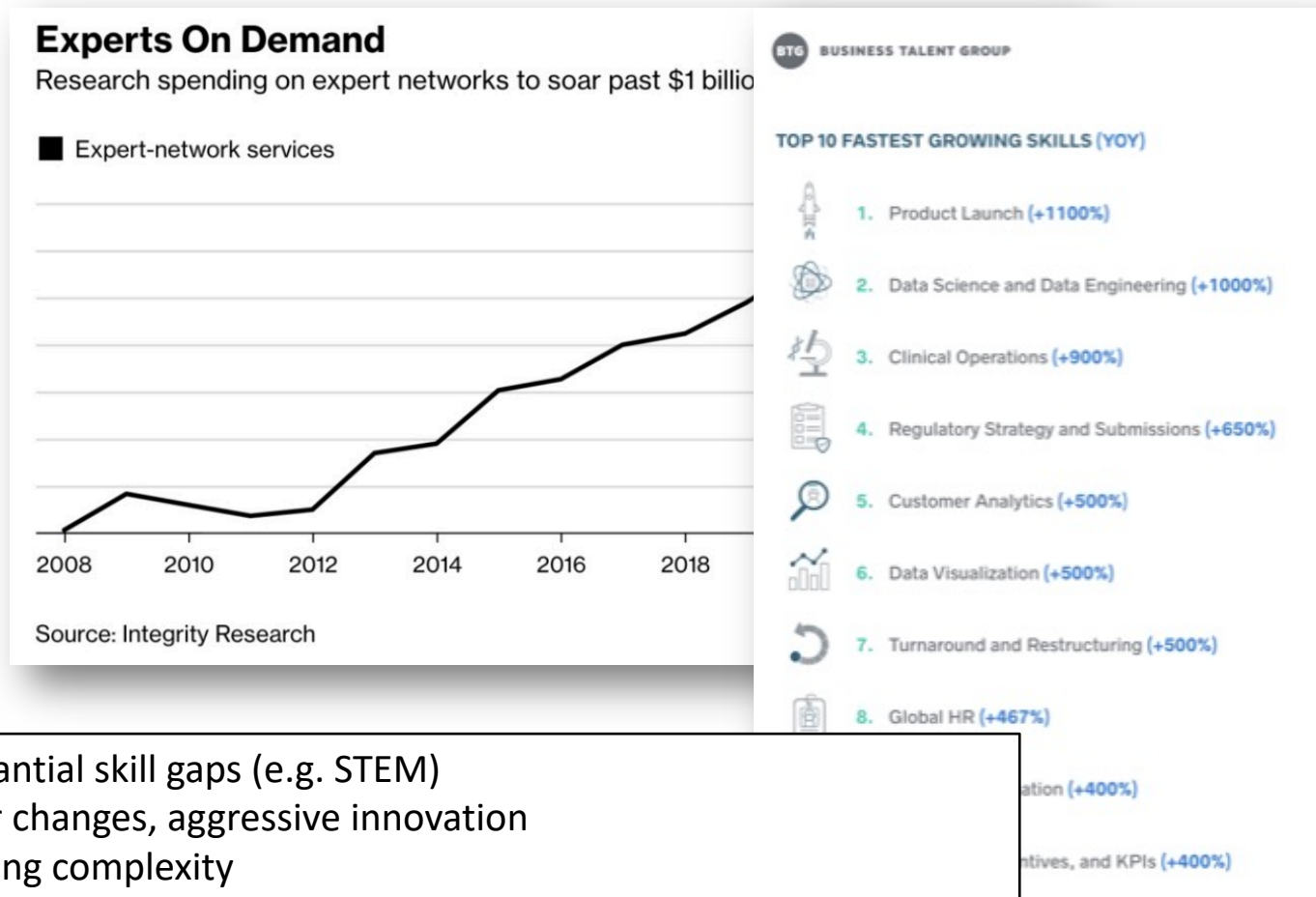
Luk Smeyers
Founder TheVisibleAuthority.com

Introduction

- Why this subject? I get this question all the time: what are the success characteristics?
- Of course, one-size-fits-all doesn't exist...however...
- In talking to >200 consultants the past 12 months + research + past decade: there's clear evidence of success versus struggle



Experts on the rise – plenty of opportunity



- Substantial skill gaps (e.g. STEM)
- Faster changes, aggressive innovation
- Growing complexity
- More pillar topics, e.g. cyber, supply chain, digital transformation

Here's what I will be talking about

- Understanding (some of) the trends in the consulting space
- The biggest blunder you can make: believing prospects will come across your profile
- Growing or scaling your consulting business needs authority
- The top 3, life-changing skills you need to master as a consultant



Logistics

- Have a cup of coffee 😊
- You will get access to the slides & recording via my blog
- Duration 45'
- Q&A 15'
- Questions in the Zoom CHAT (or send to me via newsletter)
- You can monitor the progress of the webinar in the upper right boxes



Luk Smeyers

I teach consultants the strategies to grow revenue by transforming them into visible authorities.



Luk Smeyers

- CHRO role until 2007 (in consulting)
- Founding CEO of a People Analytics consultancy in 2008
- iNostix got acquired by Deloitte in 2016 (stayed until Jan. 2020)
- With my global visibility, I never had to sell, persuade, negotiate
- My mantra: focus, openly sharing all my learnings
- My hobbies: endurance MTB

<https://www.thevisibleauthority.com/blog/i-never-had-to-sell-persuade-or-negotiate-to-grow-my-consulting-business>



With hyper-focus, this happened to me...

- I openly shared all my learnings & expertise
- Cases: business case, roadmap, adoption
- Organic pipeline, invited to write RFP's
- Won against big 4
- No sales!
- Never did any follow-up
- I got enough organic opportunity to say NO
- I NEVER left my lane: FOCUS-FOCUS-FOCUS

We all need business as consultants

- If we don't market ourselves, there's no income
- We can't stop doing it! We can't sit there and wait
- Nothing is more naïve, these days



- Trend 1: the digital chips are down
- Trend 2: 90/80
- Trend 3: you get 60"

Quote – Seth Godin

‘You need an immediate
abundance of trust stuff’

(consulting is a credence business: prospects
need to trust us before they buy)



A big gap...

- In talking to >200 consultants the past 12 months
- It becomes obvious there's a big gap between 'The Trends' and 'The Reality'
- Here's a real life example...

On the first page of a consultancy...

“We are a professional consulting and business service provider. Our 25 years of experience in consulting has allowed

- Who are they?
- What are they doing?
- Who are they helping?
- What is the problem they are solving?
- What is the real outcome of their work?
- What is their methodology or process?

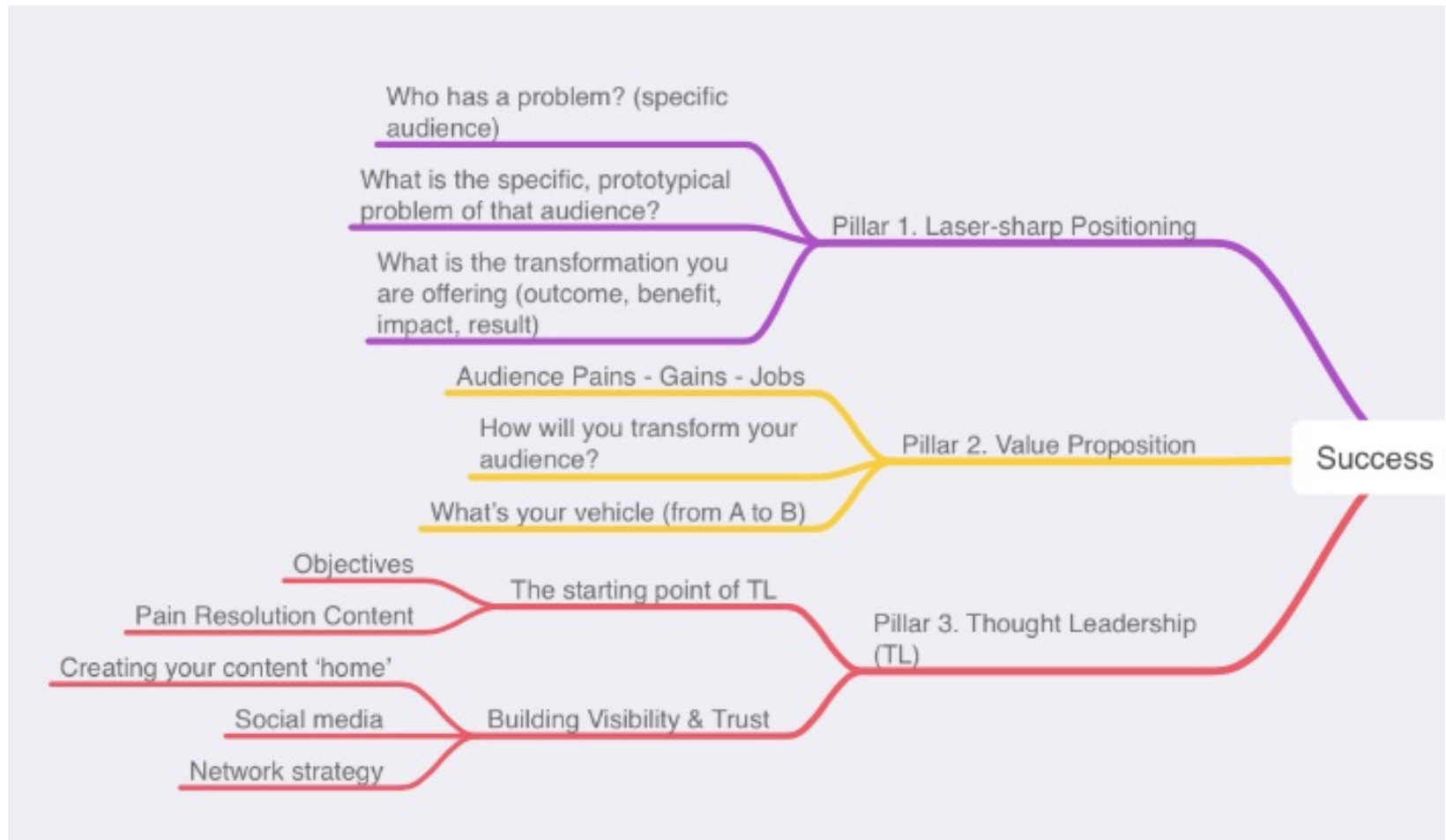
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clients, by leveraging and improving the opportunities in
their business.”

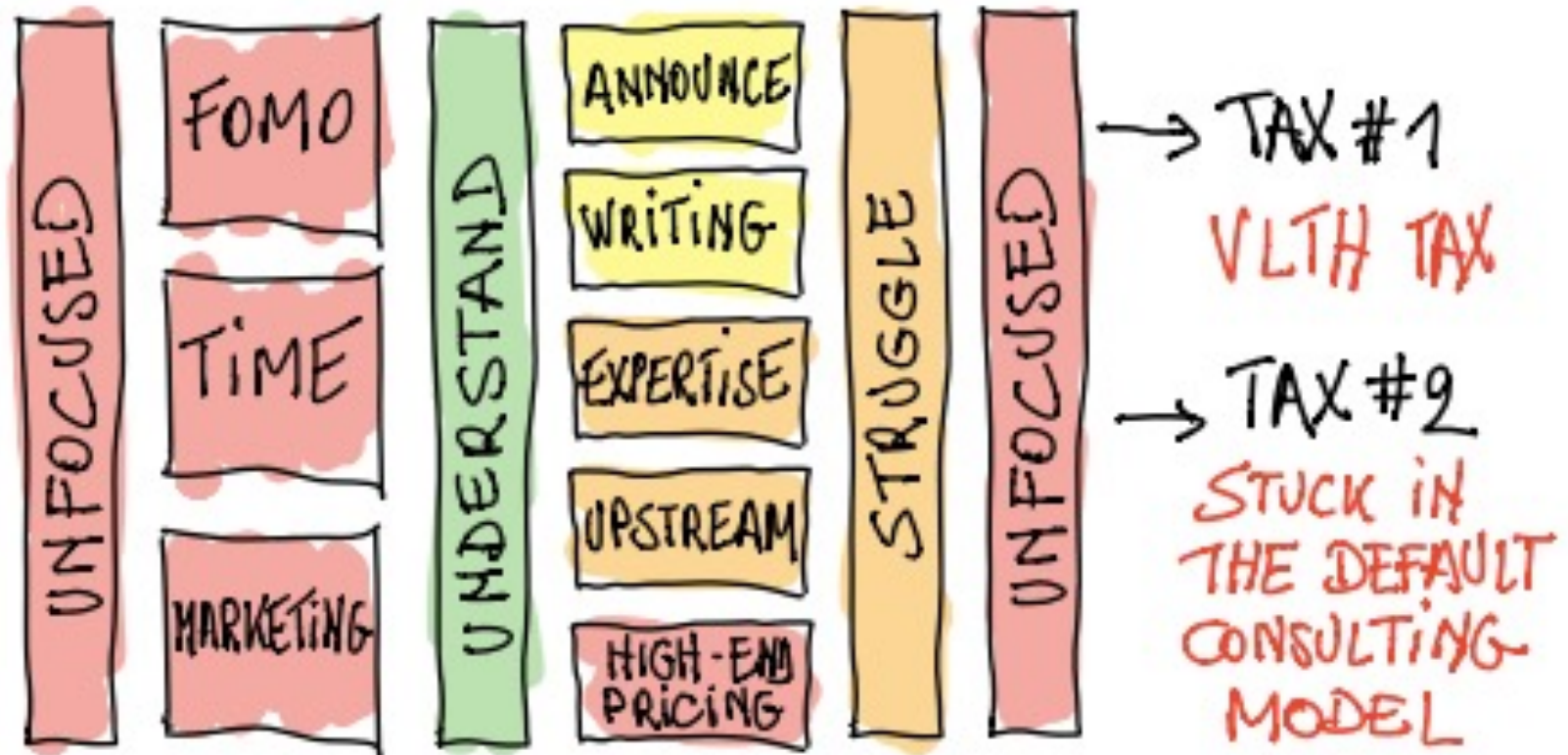
to our

The success pillars in consulting





Here's what happens...





Tax #1: VLTH

Vicious Loop To Hell

- Being unfocused, saying yes to everything (to make a living)
- Lack of time to develop trust & visibility (marketing)
- Survival mode, uncertainty, risk
- Saying yes to everything to protect income
- ...and the loop starts again, and again, and again



Tax #2

Stuck in the consulting default model

- “We’ll come back to you soon”
- Reminder mail
- Procurement hell, substantial discounts
- Scope creep, multiple discussions, poor relationship quality
- Disrespectful payment timelines
- Downstream work, difficult to get transformational reco’s
- Lose self-confidence, hesitation about consulting future
- The default model burns you out



Some even start working from desperation

- Working for free (to get access)
- Add freelance, interim or contractor to their profile
- Or worse: 'open for opportunities'
- Lower their rates, offer substantial discounts
- Sign up for 6 months contractor work

**Erosion, dilution, devaluation
of your expert (upstream) profile**



Unfocused? Laws of marketing won't work!

- Marketing law: specific audience, specific problem, specific solution
- We – we – we are the experts doesn't work as marketing
- Everybody says that (and some do it better)
- The Sea of Sameness (Book: Standout Marketing)
- Nobody cares (they search for a problem solution)
- Google doesn't care (E.A.T.)
- WOM doesn't work (don't know what to recommend)
- Team alignment doesn't work (they say different things, no sync)
- Thought leadership & trust building doesn't work
- Demand generation doesn't work (no pain-resolution advice)
- Prequalification doesn't work (leading to a non-ideal prospect flow)



Unfocused? Laws of marketing won't work!

When 'everyone' is your target market, you attract no one.



The 3 most important skills

1. Building the **courage and mindset** to focus (to evolve to your highest point of contribution)
2. Developing an **outside-in view** (instead of the inside-in we-we-we)
3. Learn to develop pain-resolving **value propositions**



Skill #1: courage & mindset to focus

- Need to get rid of the **false belief** that offering more = more opportunity
- Doing less to grow = **counterintuitive**
- Choose to compete at your **highest point of contribution** & accept missing out on the rest
- Start enjoying **repetition** (pattern recognition = backbone of expertise)
- Use **lean principles**: step by step, fade-out/in, test & validate, iterate (and iterate)

Our FOMO mindset

Our vicious FOMO mindset instructs our brain to assume we have endless opportunities in our consulting work, and we should relentlessly explore them all...



Skill #2: develop outside-in view

- **STOP** the 'we-we-we' or the 'I-I-I' (inside-in view)
- Buyers of services are **2/3 of the way through** the buying process before they get in touch
- Your prospective clients **search online** to get educated, either from you, your competitor or another source
- We need to get **in the head of that buyer**, connect with 'the buyer pain': the outside view
- And **test, validate everything** we do (and iterate, iterate, iterate)

Getting in the head of the buyer

Do any of the following consulting struggles ring true?



- You are fed up with attracting the wrong consulting clients and you are continuously undercharging for your expertise
- You are overwhelmed by online marketing and social media and nobody can exactly explain what you should do
- You can't say no because you are afraid of missing new opportunities and you get in the vicious trap of being a Jack of all trades
- You are struggling to create a business model that supports your envisioned lifestyle that brings you more fulfillment, time, income and freedom

If you can relate to any of the previous challenges, be sure you're not alone.

Most consultants

'DOING ACTIVITIES'

It gets them caught in a downstream consulting approach and a consultant and a

- ...get considered as one-to-many (craving for work, without negotiation power in a crowded consulting market)
- ...accept everything to make money (selling their finger, getting taken their arm)
- ...are working at a low hourly/day rate as a result with zero perspectives to upgrade (working themselves to death to earn a living)
- ...are considered risk-free to get replaced (unexpectedly) by their client
- ...are unable to get a distinctive testimonial to help grow their expert reputation

I was able to move to an upstream **CLIENT TRANSFORMATION VALUE PROPOSITION as an expert and never had to deal with the vicious downstream, non-authoritative consulting approach again.**

On my website: the prototypical pains of my potential buyers are very prominent!



Skill #3: Learn to develop Value Propositions

- 'Add transformational value' instead of 'doing activities' (and 'picture' the Promised Land)
- Based on validation/interviewing/researching buyer pains, gains, objectives (outside view)
- Forrester research: the vendor that gets in early and has a crystal-clear pain-resolving value proposition, wins 74% of the time
- Study how to do it: Value Proposition Design, Alex Osterwalder & Team, Book & Video Course, Questionnaires to be used, Webinars & Blog



The 3 most important skills

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Think about this...

- **Ordinary consultants are asked to send a quote (and will have to send a reminder)**
- **Authorities are asked to solve a problem (and will get invited)**

Client: 'There are consultants who cost less'.

Me: 'There are clients who pay more'.

(always kept the power to say no on my side)
(learn your lines!)



Summary –

- There are endless consulting opportunities out there!
- 3 Trends you need to understand:
 - digital business development
 - 90/80 (90% checks you out, 80% get deselected immediately – no trust)
 - 60” (you only get 60” – or less - to show an abundance of trust)
- There’s a big gap: trends vs. reality
- The 2 taxes you will pay:
 - The ‘vicious loop to hell’ tax (no focus leading to uncertain future)
 - The ‘getting stuck in the default consulting model’ tax (the need to chase your clients because they don’t see you as THE expert)
- Unfocused? Laws of marketing won’t work
- 3 Skills you will need in the future:
 1. Courage & Mindset to focus (saying no to non-ideal prospects)
 2. Develop an Outside-In View (getting in the head of your buyer)
 3. Value Proposition Design (specific audience, specific pain, specific pain resolution)

Next...

- Next Webinar: JUNE 9, 2 pm CET: 'Getting visible as a consultant requires a time strategy'.
- Newsletter has all the info's (bi-weekly):
www.thevisibleauthority.com/theauthority24
- This week's reader question: do I need to follow-up on a proposal when a prospect turns silent?

Thanks a lot!

Let's get to the Q&A

Kind regards,
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