

Free Webinar

Symptoms of poor positioning as a consultant
and what you can do about it...

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— THE —
VISIBLE AUTHORITY

Next webinar in November

- November 12, 2 pm, CET (2nd Wednesday)
- Topic: Productization in consulting
- Link to subscribe in chat (no page yet)

Accelerator individual coaching

- 2 new spots for 2021 → go to home page

Introduction

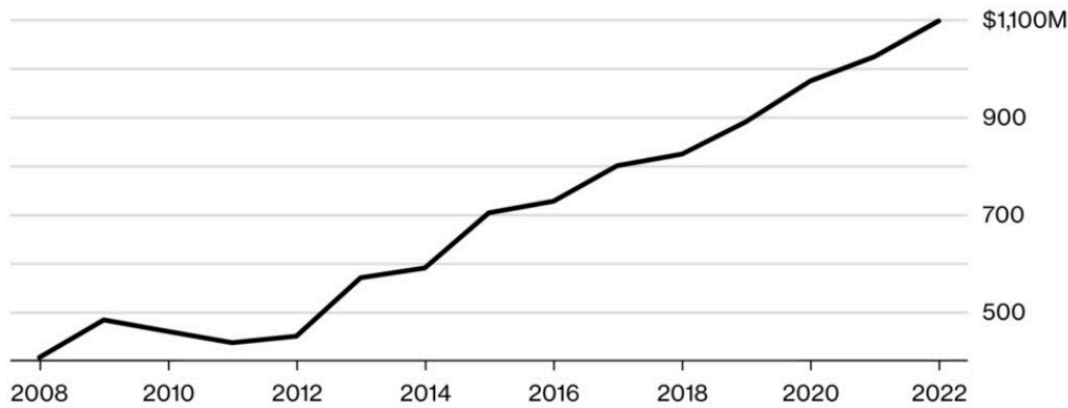
- There's so much opportunity out there!
- Stand Out!
- Laser-sharp positioning as an expert

Experts on the rise

Experts On Demand

Research spending on expert networks to soar past \$1 billion in coming years

■ Expert-network services



Source: Integrity Research

- Substantial skill gaps
- Faster changes, aggressive innovation
- Growing complexity, more experts needed
- More pillar topics, e.g. cyber, supply chain, digital transformation

BTG BUSINESS TALENT GROUP

TOP 10 FASTEST GROWING SKILLS (YOY)

1. Product Launch (+1100%)
2. Data Science and Data Engineering (+1000%)
3. Clinical Operations (+900%)
4. Regulatory Strategy and Submissions (+650%)
5. Customer Analytics (+500%)
6. Data Visualization (+500%)
7. Turnaround and Restructuring (+500%)
8. Global HR (+467%)
9. Agile Transformation (+400%)
10. Measures, Incentives, and KPIs (+400%)

Agenda

- Intro Luk & what happened to me
- My starting point: quality of life
- The positioning framework
- Sales as a side-effect of doing other things right
- Summary



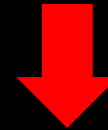
A few 'logistics'

- Have a cup of coffee ☺
- You will receive slides & recording
- Duration 50'
- There will be a 10' Q&A
- Progress boxes in upper right





I teach consultants the
strategies to grow revenue
by standing out in a
crowded market.



Positioning Statement
(XYZ)

XYZ Positioning Statement

X (target audience): I teach consultants

Y (impact/output): the strategies to grow revenue

Z (approach): by standing out in a crowded market.

Sales success:

Specific audience

Specific (prototypical) problem(s)

Specific solution or approach



Luk Smeyers

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

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





With hyper-focus & strong visibility,
I was able to...

- ...consistently invest 30% of my time in visibility
- ...grow organic traffic & strong pipeline
- ...grow premium revenue without doing sales
- ...close deals without doing any follow-up
- ...get enough organic opportunity to say NO
- ...always stay in my lane: FOCUS-FOCUS-FOCUS



This is what I did

- Narrow positioning: **smallest possible viable audience, smallest possible (expensive) problem, smallest possible expertise**
- Consistently developed high quality educative content **with a pain resolution focus**
- Openly **shared** all my experiences, successes, challenges, struggles, failures
- My formula: 'Here's what you can learn from what I learned'
- Rewired my brain from selling to **helping** (empathy, generous)





Seth Godin

“Give people an abundance of confidence in your expertise by creating an abundance of value and share it”.

(and keep doing it over and over again)



My starting point: Quality of life



- I only work 4 days/week
- Thursday is my cycling day
- Remind yourself why you are in business: to have the life we want

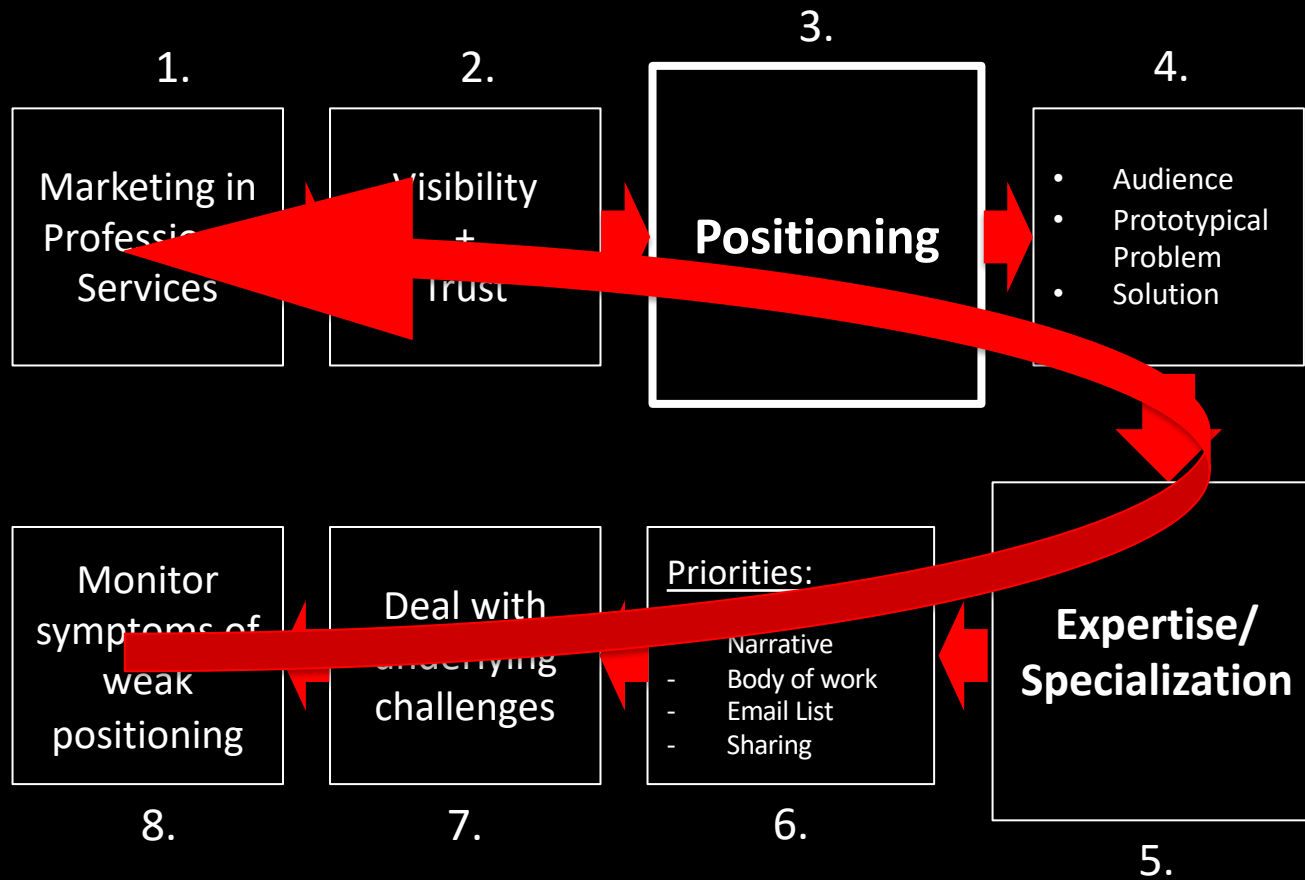


My 0,7 - 0,3 – 2,5x formula

- 0,7 - 0,3 - 2,5:
 - Reduce client facing time (to 70%)
 - Increase visibility/trust building time (to 30%)
 - Increase pricing: upstream work (to 2,5x of market)
 - Today: 0,5 – 0,3 – 0,2 – 2,5
- Laser-sharp positioning & specialisation:
 - Specific audience
 - Specific (prototypical) pain
 - Specific pain resolution
- Packaged in a client-centered value proposition
- Too many consultants: 1,2 – 0,0 – 0,7 (or 1,5 - 0,0 – 0,5)



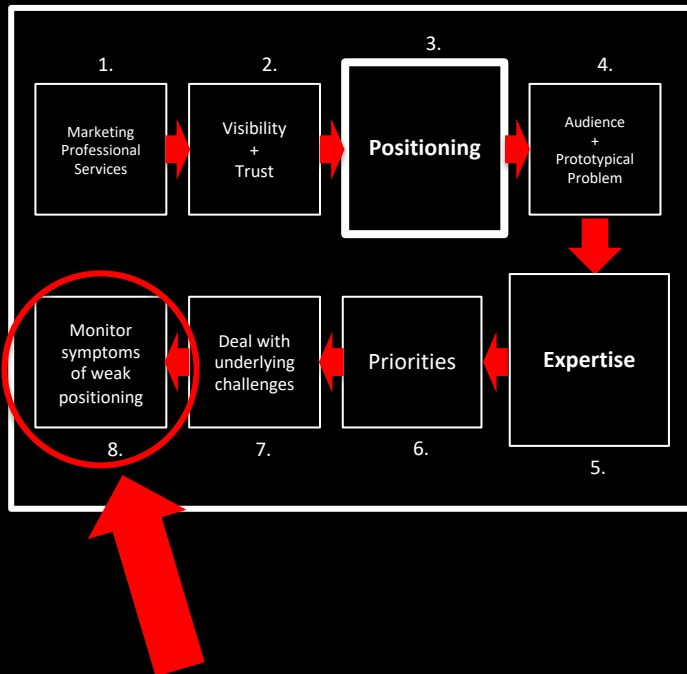
No visibility/trust without positioning





8. Symptoms of weak positioning

How do you feel during the sale?

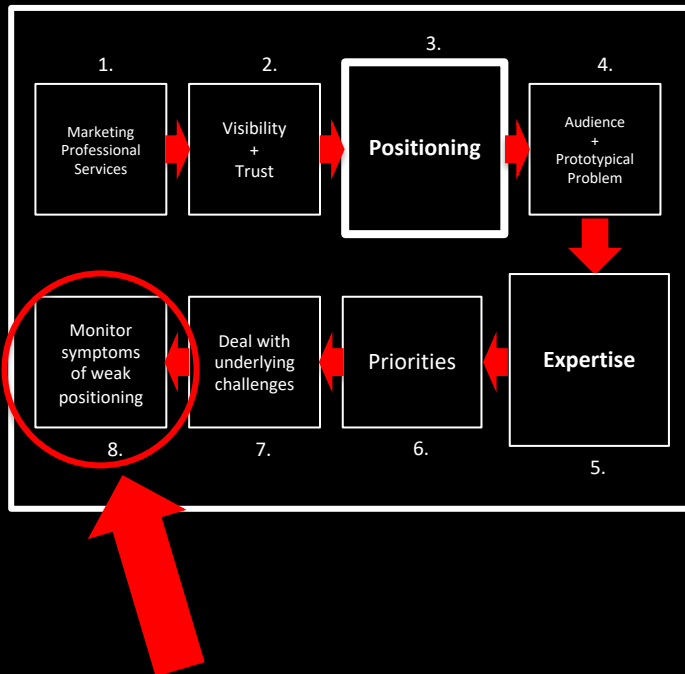


- How do you feel when you are pitching?
- Do they consider you as
 - a vendor or an expert?
 - an order taker or strategic advisor?
- Is preparing the proposal effortless or a big investment?
- Are they connecting with you for your meaningfully different point of view?
- Are you able to get a premium price or do you need to give a discount?
- Are you protecting income or protecting time?



8. Symptoms of weak positioning

The world doesn't need another generalist consultant

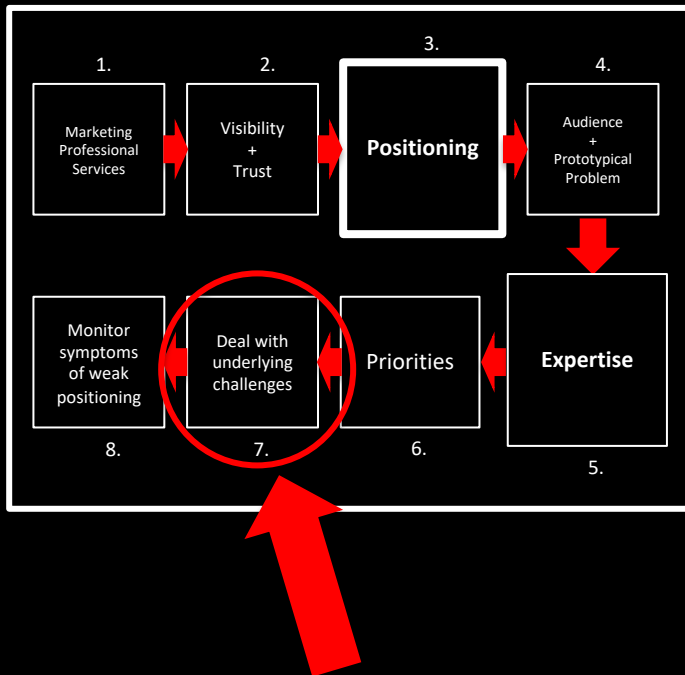


- Low/no invitations, low win rate, pitches are stressful
- You are afraid to give candid feedback
- You struggle to deal with objections (you didn't learn your lines)
- You are weak on process definition (if any process???)
- You hardly ever say NO
- You twist your narrative to ease the pitch
- You are requested to share your rate, even before pitch
- You allow discounts, payments are slow, nobody cares
- You meet with tough gatekeepers without client air cover (e.g. procurement)
- You get managed by team members (100x in cc in mails), they consider you as an order taker
- You get measured on hours performed (instead of outcomes)
- You struggle to provide case studies and social proof
- You don't know what to write about



7. Deal with the underlying challenges

Laser-sharp positioning = new identity

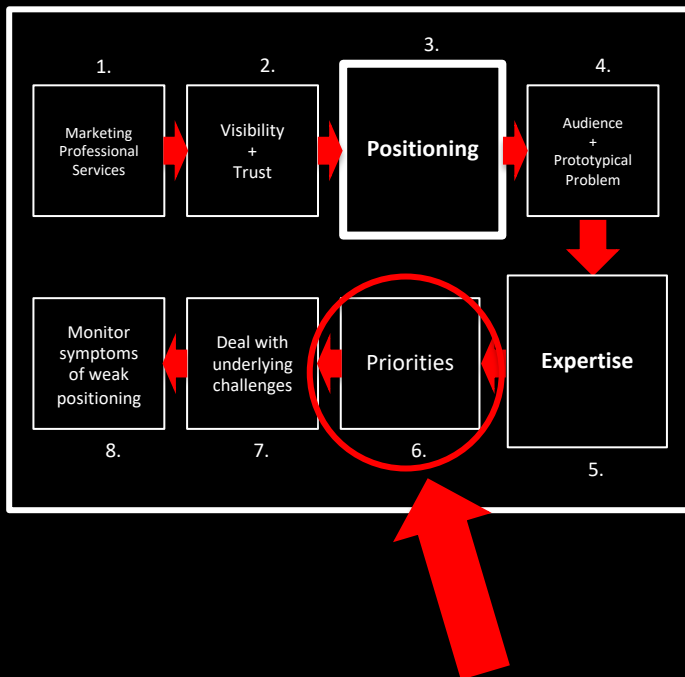


- FOMO → move from protecting income to protecting time
- Pleaser syndrome → stop overservicing & undercharging
- Ego → there's no need to crush everything
- Depth → deep expertise + T-shape
- Variety → get rid of the boredom myth
- Marketing → start sharing, educating, new archetype
- Imposter → deal with the fear to move upstream
- Time → Time is an outcome of focus



6. Priorities

Educate – Share – Educate – Share - Educate

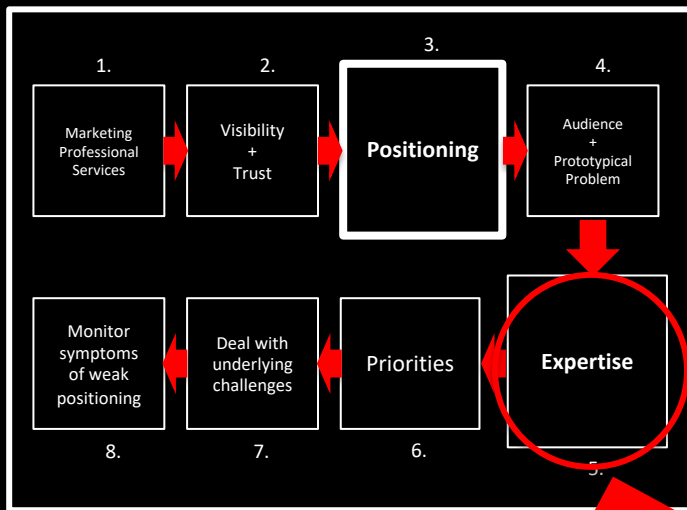


- Strategic Narrative (why hire you?):
 - Position statement
 - Point of View (re prototypical client problem(s))
 - Client pain/problem overview
 - The ‘YOU’ in your narrative
 - Value proposition (here’s how I/we help)
- Start with your ‘body of work’ (cases)
- Build an email list to start nurturing
- Create content sharing routines (eg. blog, email, social media, speaking,...)



5. Expertise – why focus is so important

Expertise =
repetition & pattern detection

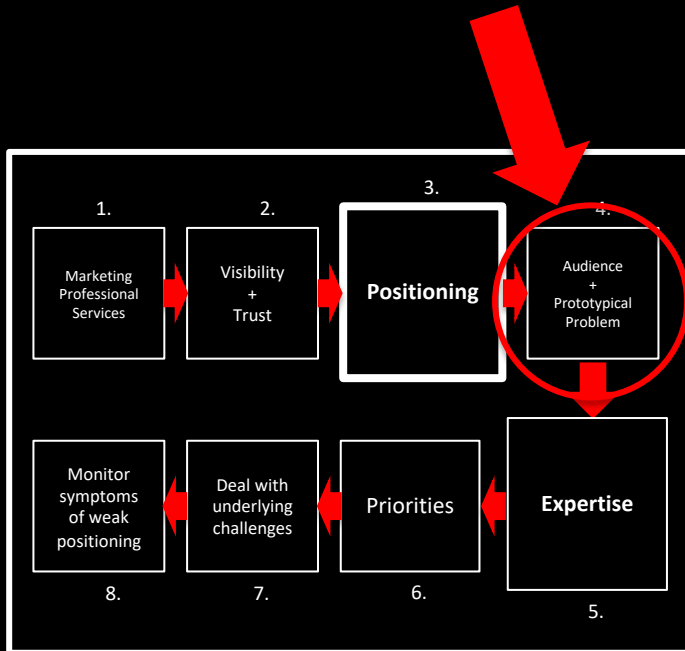


- **Methodology:** How do you bring your clients from point A (their current pain-based status) to point B
- **Roadmap:** How does a typical project roadmap look like
- **TTR:** What is the typical TTR (time to resolution) of your journey
- **Outcomes:** What are the typical outcomes or impact of your approach or solution?
- **Social Proof:** Can you demonstrate outcomes by explaining similar cases & testimonials
- **Predictability:** How reliable/predictable is your outcome/impact?
- **Remote:** Can you describe in detail what your presence will be at the client's side and/or what you will do remotely?
- **Agile:** Are you operating in an agile approach? How will you collaborate?
- **Involvement:** Who should be typically involved in the project at the client's side? Why?
- **Education:** What education will you provide, will you help the client to become self-sufficient over time?
- **Legal:** Do you master all the knowledge about possible legal barriers (related to the client problem, if relevant)?
- **Trends:** Are you also aware of industry trends? Academic research? Did you do any research yourself? Benchmarks?
- **Technology:** Do you fully grasp technology, data, AI-related challenges/opportunities of the client's problem?



4. Audience & prototypical problem(s)

Specific audience – specific problem – specific solution

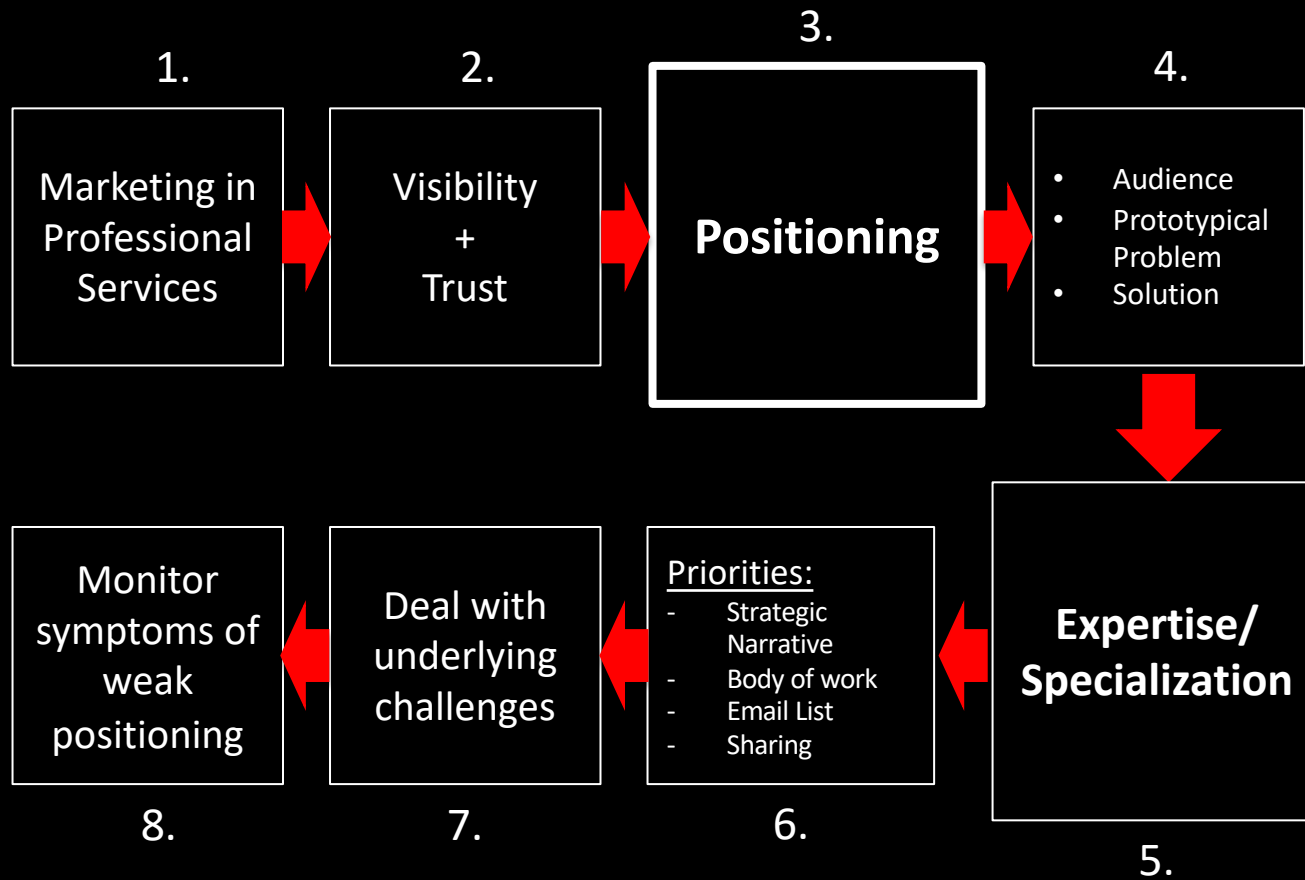


- Prospects are searching for subject matter experts
- Clients have more options than ever before
- Evolve to 'doing a pain-resolving transformation for your client'.
- Picture them 'The Promised Land'
- Show them how you can secure a transformation home run, with process details
- Show them how you can ensure stakeholder buy-in
- Shift their thinking. Inspire change

And with the premium fees for such transformational expertise, you can compensate for saying NO to protect your business development time.



No visibility/trust without positioning



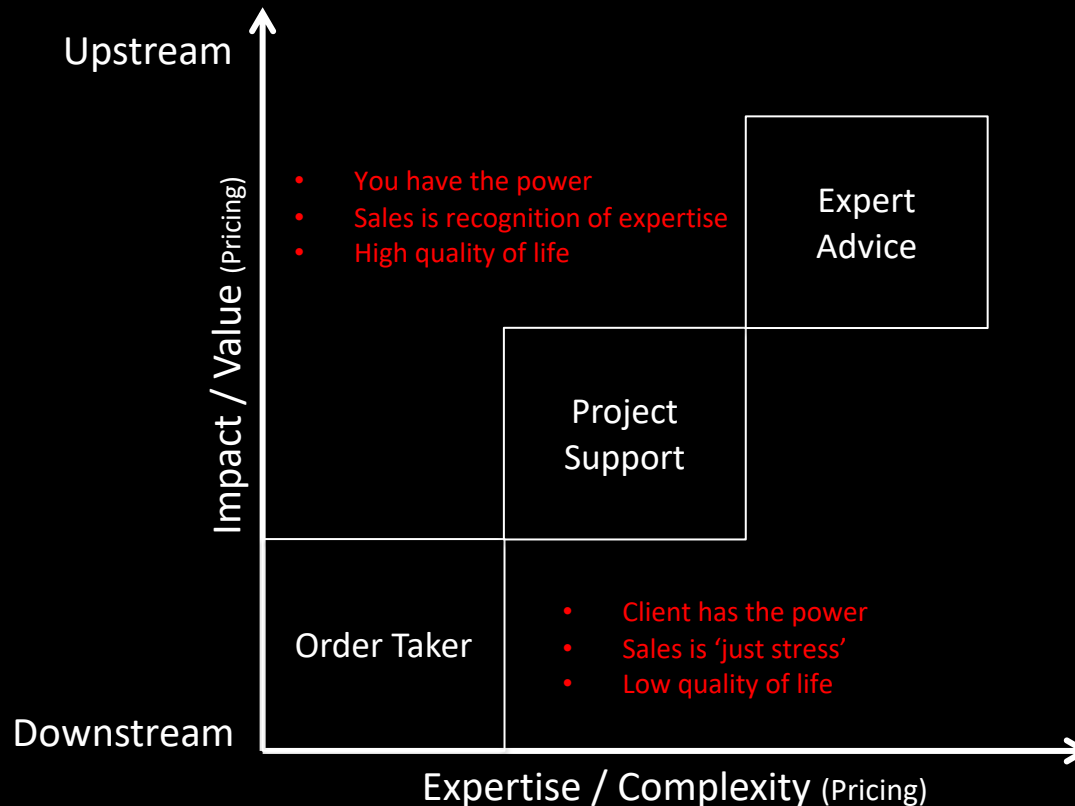


Most consultants are 'order takers'

- Downstream, executional work
- Client is telling you what to do
- Client has all the power, keeps you 'small'
- Client perceives you as low cost, easy to replace



Most consultants are 'order takers'





It takes time, there's NO hack...

- It's walk, run, stumble, crash, crawl, walk, run, stumble, crash, crawl, walk, run...
- You need to speed up:
 - Focus: specific audience, pain, solution
 - Learning: things are changing incredibly fast
 - Iterate: don't wait till it's perfect
- Start from your quality of life
- Think: 0,7 – 0,3 – 2,5x



Summary

Sales success in consulting is a side-effect of doing these things extremely well...

- Getting rid of symptoms of weak positioning
- Deal with your underlying challenges (FOMO, Ego, Pleaser,...)
- Priorities: Strategic narrative, body of work, email list, sharing
- Expertise: repeat, study the patterns, go deep
- Specific audience, specific problem, specific approach
- Positioning: never, ever leave your lane!

Announce it !!!

Thank you !

Luk

Questions ?