Guide to Top UKG Implementation Partners

November 2022

Prepared by Raven Intelligence

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RAVEN INTELLIGENCE

Introduction

Raven Intelligence is an independent peer review site that helps Enterprise Software customers find, hire and review the best consulting partner for their implementation. We provide business leaders with valuable transparency into the software implementation process and raise the visibility of consulting partners who are doing the most to help their customers achieve the maximum benefit from their software purchase. Our site, ravenintel.com, provides free access to hundreds of vetted customer reviews about Enterprise Cloud Software projects, as well as to the profiles and ratings of over 150 consulting firms—from the Big 5 to boutique organizations.

2,000+	100%	150+	40+
Verified Reviews	Of Reviews Verified With a 2-Step Process	Consulting Firms Represented	Countries Represented

Our Vetting Process

100% of our reviews are verified. We know the identity of every one of our reviewers (work email & LinkedIn), their company and have validated their company uses the software they have reviewed. We disqualify approximately 20% of the reviews submitted when we are unable to verify full credentials. At no time can a partner, software company or other party pay for favorable data or for Raven to delete negative reviews or for favorable reporting.
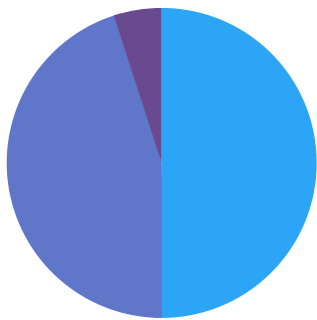
Direct-to-Customer - 50%
Raven continually runs independent campaigns (email, LinkedIn, social media) targeted to Human Resources decision makers who have implemented a cloud-based Human Capital Management system within the past 18 months and requested that they review their project on our site.

Consulting Firm Initiated - 45%
Consulting firms (aka Systems Integrators) have also sent customers to our website to complete a review, or provided us with contact lists so that we could go directly to customers.

RavenIntel.com – 5%.
Approximately 5% of customers came directly to Raven Intelligence to submit a review.

Our Raven's Community & Business Model

Raven Intelligence is free to software customers, as well as for consulting firms to be listed & reviewed on our site. For consulting firms, we offer a paid subscription service that allows them to purchase advertising space (similar to Glassdoor or Yelp!) for brand recognition, as well as provide them with in-depth analytics about their service delivery metrics and peer comparison scores.

We work with software vendors to provide independent, aggregate reporting of their customer sentiment data to inform them about how their partners and projects are performing, and how they compare to their peers in the industry. At no time is customer review data altered to enhance a software vendor or consulting firm's rating favorably.

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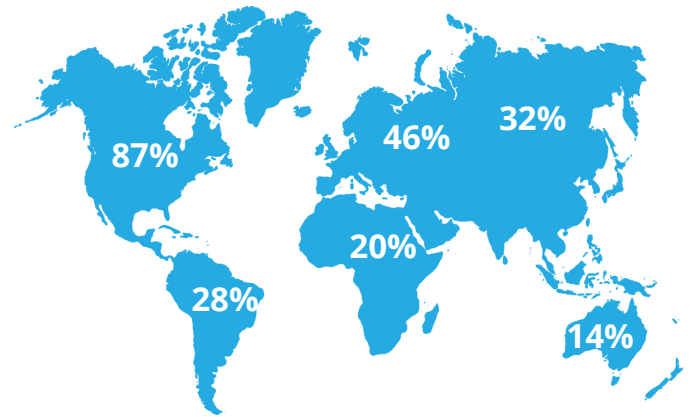
Raven Review Demographics
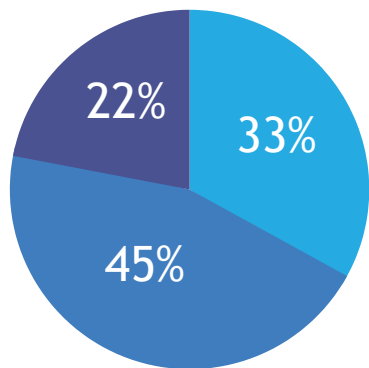
Raven's Review Database

2000+
Verified
Reviews

40+
Countries
Represented

87%
Of Implementations
Completed via
Consulting Firm

87%
46%
32%
20%
28%
14%

Composition of Consulting Firms Reviewed

33%
45%
22%

■ Global Consulting Firm - 33%
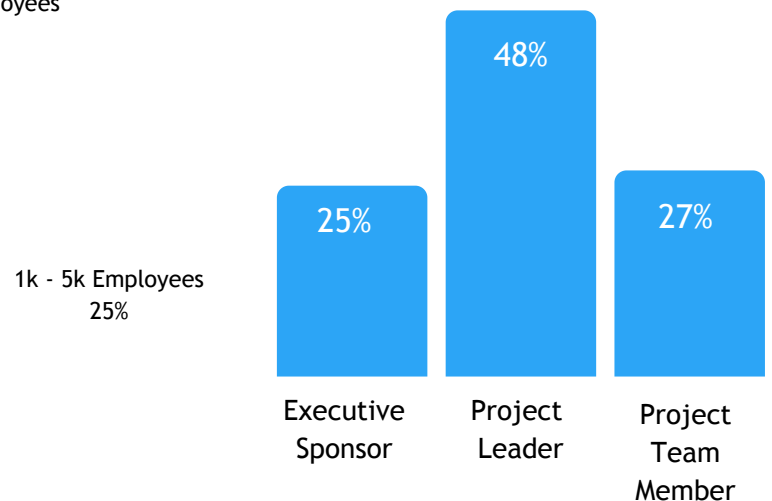
■ Independent Consulting Firm - 45%

■ Boutique Consulting Firm - 22%

Customer Employee Sizes Reviewed

100k+ Employees
6%

0 - 1000 Employees
14%

20k - 50k Employees
15%

50k - 100k Employees
7%

1k - 5k Employees
25%

10k - 20k Employees.com
17%

5k - 10k Employees.com
16%

Reviewer Roles

25%
Executive
Sponsor

48%
Project
Leader

27%
Project
Team
Member
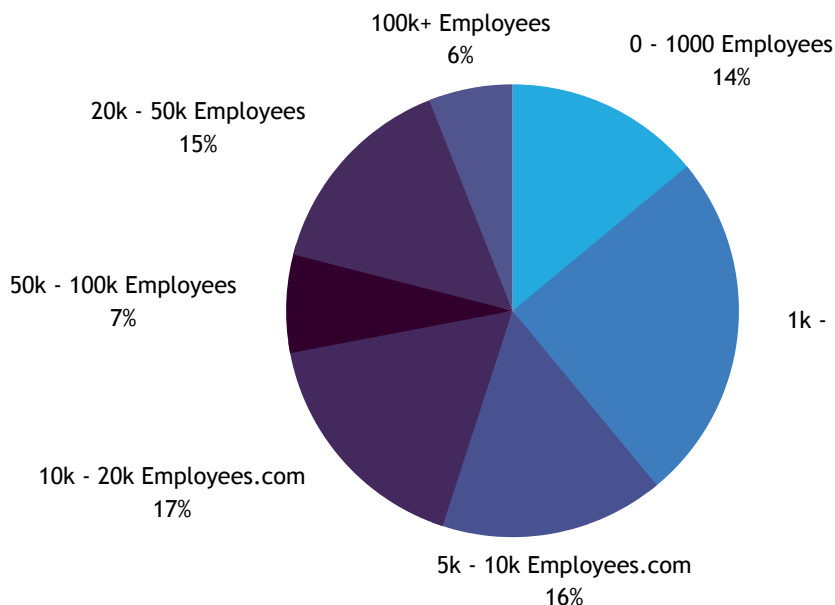
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Why Selecting the Right Partner is Vital

At Raven Intelligence, we research partners who implement Enterprise cloud software to understand the composition of their company, the geography they serve, the type of projects they work on, and the profile of consultants on their team. Firmographic data is important, but to really know a firm is to know their customers. The marketing adage, 'your company's brand is what customers are saying about you behind your back' rings true. If you are a business making a decision to entrust a partner to lead you on an Enterprise Software project–knowing this 'brand' before you're knee-deep in a project is critical. Hearing real-life customer experiences are perhaps the most indicative marker of a consulting firm's quality and are the easiest way for you to gain confidence that a firm can deliver on the promises made during the evaluation stage.

Expectation vs. Reality

We've seen a full range of quality when it comes to consulting projects and firms. There are firms that look impressive on the surface and say all the right things, but when you talk to their customers, a different picture of reality emerges. There are others that lack the million-dollar marketing budgets and polish of a larger firm, yet are delivering projects with high satisfaction and ahead of schedule. In addition, change happens over time. A firm who has once struggled may have added new talent or introduced new processes to improve the customer experience. Conversely, a firm once known for good quality might have gotten too overloaded with projects and thus now struggles to effectively satisfy customers. Being able to look under the hood and quickly get a sense for the current, authentic customer experience can end up saving your organization a lot of time and money in the long run.

"I'll just ask my software vendor for recommendations." Think again.

In 65% of the projects we've reviewed, customers chose their implementation partner "because of the recommendation of their software vendor." It would seem logical that your software vendor knows best when it comes to a partner, right? Not so. In those projects where the customer felt the decision for the partner was 'made for them', project satisfaction averages around 6 out of 10. While it is true that software vendors certify partners to implement their software and get used to working with certain firms, there is inherent bias in the process. Many times the same partners who implement are helping to sell the software engagement or are paying hefty fees for the ability to be walked in the door. In addition, the knowledge that software sales teams have about actual project delivery quality is many times incomplete and won't provide your organization with options best-aligned with the scope of your project.

The Upshot

Whether your software vendor tells you that their small, tightly-controlled ecosystem will guarantee you get a good partner or that there are vast partner choices available to choose from, you still need to do your own homework. In the end, you'll be the one living with your partner choice.

Reviews on Raven Intelligence

Visitors to Raven gain a bird's eye view and can look up any Enterprise software consulting firm on our website to read reviews – for free. Raven has over 1300 vetted reviews about Enterprise Software projects and the partners that help lead them. We ask customers a series of quantitative and qualitative questions about their project, and that information is then verified for authenticity and published, such as:

- Did the project succeed?
- What was the team like? Did the team stay consistent throughout the project?
- Was the project delivered on-time? On-budget?
- Was it scoped properly?

The answers to these questions are signals for other customers to learn from. In addition, we verify every review that it was written by a real customer who has gone through a Enterprise software cloud project within the past 24 months.
This trust is critical for us as we have thousands of customers who use our information to guide their decision process.

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UKG Projects & Partners Executive Summary

UKG has had close to 500 customer project reviews completed by customers on Ravenintel.com in the past 24 months. Through regular, independent customer survey and analysis conducted by Raven Intelligence, UKG have successfully monitored, measured and steadily improved the quality of service delivery of their partner network. In the same time period, they have doubled their partner ecosystem and services while integrating the Ultimate Software and Kronos businesses together. UKG requires their implementation partners to be reviewed publicly as a condition of partnership, and this feedback is heavily weighted in their partner awards and recommendations.

Patrick Lannon, Global Alliances VP provided the following growth metrics at UKG's Annual Partner Summit (November, 2022):
> Partner-led projects +122% of target
> 65 new integrations built to UKG products
> 100% increase in leads pushed to partners
> Added 45 new partners

UKG Implementation / Service Partner Strengths

- Implementation costs by comparison are on average one-half the cost large vendor peers (Workday, SAP, Oracle)
- Projects are delivered 20% more on-time than mid-sized peers (Ceridian, ADP.)
- Projects are 13% more likely to be delivered on-time, and 14% more on-budget than industry peers (aggregate)
- UKG's partner ecosystem maturity surpasses mid-sized peers (Ceridian, ADP) with more than 40% of projects completed with the assistance of a partner.
- UKG Project and Partner satisfaction leads industry averages by a full point (out of 10)
- Partners tend to have more highly-specialized HR consultant resources who have worked with the UKG product for several years and/or have had previous experience as a customer and an HR practitioner

Value Realized from Project

3/4 of UKG customers say they received the full value anticipated for their software project investment (versus the industry average of approximately 45%.)
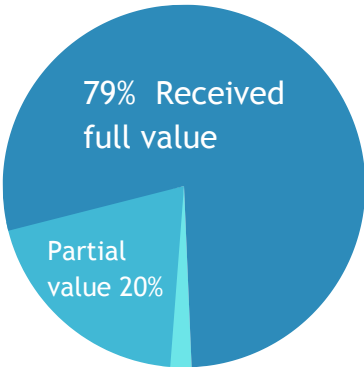
Likelihood to Rehire Partner

73% of customers say they would be highly likely to rehire their UKG implementation partner for additional projects.

79% Received full value

Partial value 20%

Highly likely to rehire partner 68%

Unlikely 2%

Likely to rehire partner 28%
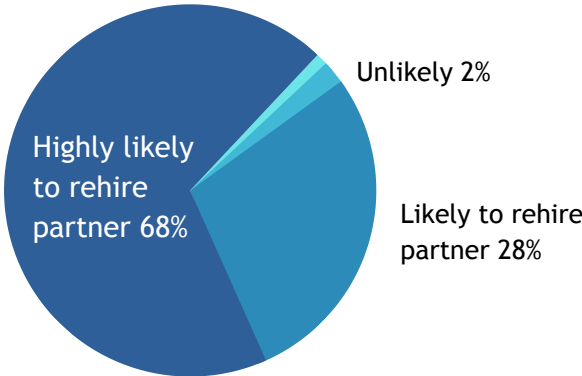
Traits of Top UKG Partners

It's easy to spot top UKG partners, as they are open to the idea of project transparency and being reviewed publicly. In 2022, the top 10 partners procured over 120 reviews from customers that have been fully vetted and are available for view on Ravenintel.com. Common traits include:
- Strong scoping capabilities during the sales process and fewer change orders
- >4.5/5 ratings for Systems Expertise, Responsiveness & Flexibility
- Strong team consistency throughout the full duration of the project (no change in team)

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UKG Project Review Highlights

UKG is outperforming its closest industry peer averages for Overall Software Vendor and Implementation Satisfaction by a full point.

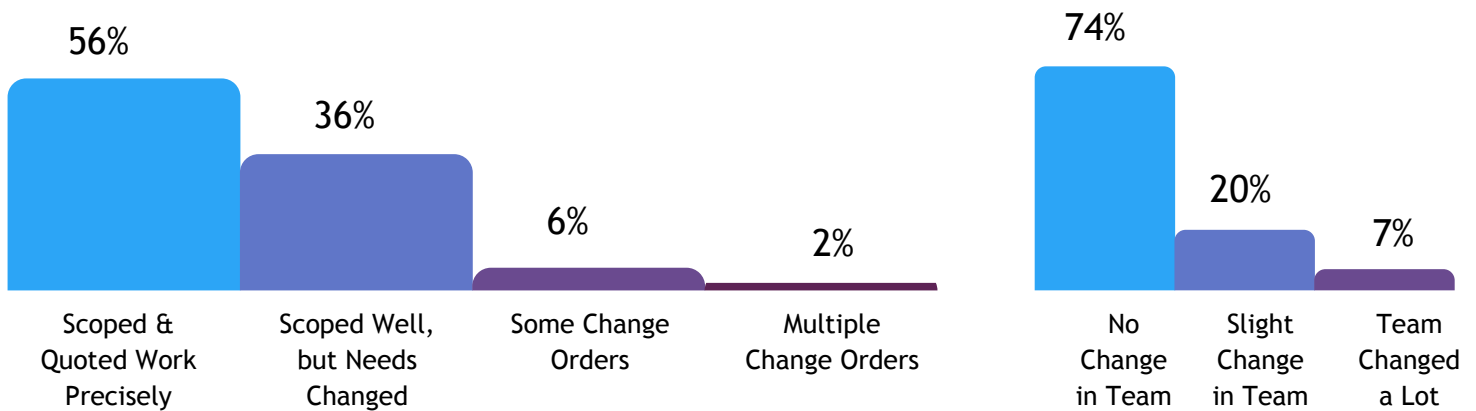|	
Overall Software Satisfaction	Industry Avg: 7.7 — 8.0
Overall Implementation Satisfaction	Industry Avg: 8.0 — 9.1
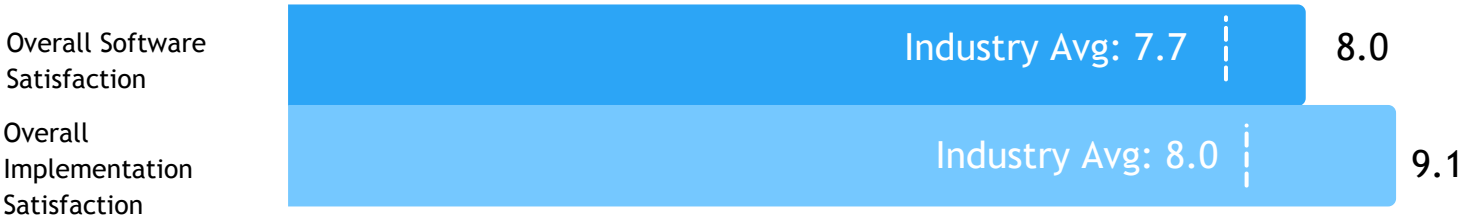
Service Delivery Metrics

UKG is outperforming industry averages for delivery. UKG's projects are delivered on-time 10% more than industry peers, and close to 20% more on-budget.

77%	23%		71%	29%
On-Budget	Over Budget		On-Schedule	Behind Schedule

51% industry average   58% industry average
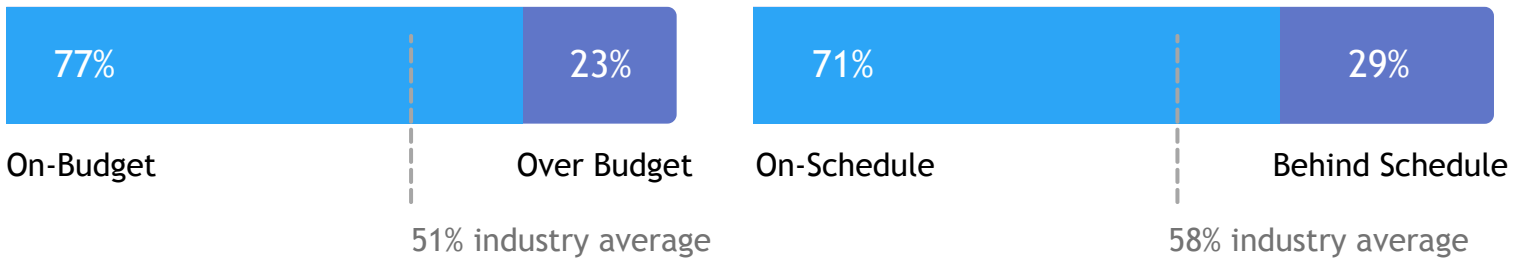
Scoping Quality & Team Consistency Averages

UKG is outperforming industry scoping accuracy by 15% and team consistency averages by 20%.

56%	36%	6%	2%		74%	20%	7%
Scoped & Quoted Work Precisely	Scoped Well, but Needs Changed	Some Change Orders	Multiple Change Orders		No Change in Team	Slight Change in Team	Team Changed a Lot

Average Sentiment Scores

4.7 / 5	4.6 / 5	4.7 / 5	4.6 / 5	4.4 / 5
Systems Expertise	Implementation Process	Responsiveness	Quality of Consultants	Flexibility

Top UKG Partners to Consider

★★★★★

30 Reviews

4.9 / 5

Align Compared to Industry Averages

	Responsiveness	Quality of Consultants	Implementation Process	Flexibility	Systems Expertise
Align	4.9	4.9	4.8	5.0	4.9
Industry Average	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9

● Align   ● Industry Average
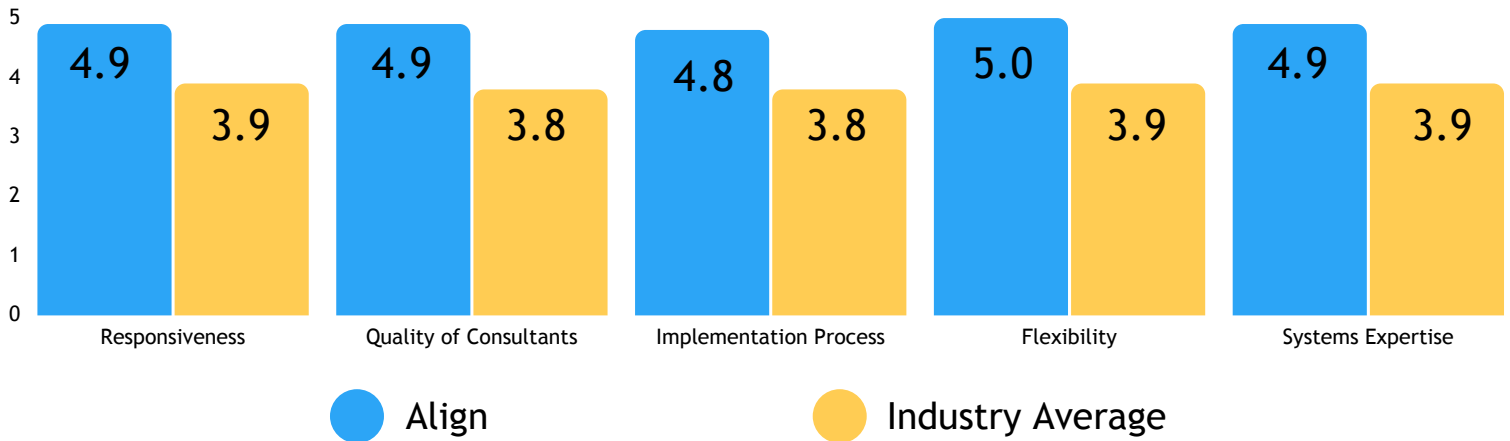
Align HCM is an award-winning, exclusively UKG services firm. Trusted by UKG representatives and customers alike, Align offers turnkey services for UKG Pro, Dimensions, Talent, Benefits, Analytics, Document Manager, People Assist, and more.

Having completed more than 200 successful engagements, Align offers expert services to help at every stage of the UKG journey. In addition to launches and implementations, Align delivers HCM strategy, solution roadmaps, system optimization, API Integrations, and more.

9.7 / 10
Average Partner Satisfaction Score

9.5 / 10
Average Project Satisfaction Score

Customer Quote

"Align HCM's level of professionalism and customer service were the best I have ever worked with. We were very pleased with the results, and will be happy to engage them in our future UKG projects."

- Customer, Construction Industry, North America

Customer Quote

"The competency and responsiveness were most important. We could not have done this on our own. The Align HCM team is as good as it gets!"

- Customer, Wholesale Industry, North America

# DIY v. Using a Consulting Firm for Your Software Implementation

At Raven Intelligence, we see the good, bad and sometimes ugly results of digital transformation projects through our customer reviews. Close to 50% of Enterprise Software projects fail outright or fail to deliver the results anticipated. In some cases, customers unfortunately report their projects have taken them steps backward — hardly the outcome anticipated when developing their plans and securing budgets. Yet others, even when implementing the exact same software, have been successful in transforming their businesses and employee experience through improving processes and technology.

Why such variability in results? We've found less depends on the technology, and more hinges on an organization's readiness, team and partner that is chosen to help lead the effort. During the planning and selection process, customers need to consider their implementation approach--and decide if they will utilize a 3rd party consulting firm to help guide them or approach the project DIY (do-it-yourself) internally (potentially enlisting the help of the Software Vendor's professional services team).

Expectation

Reality
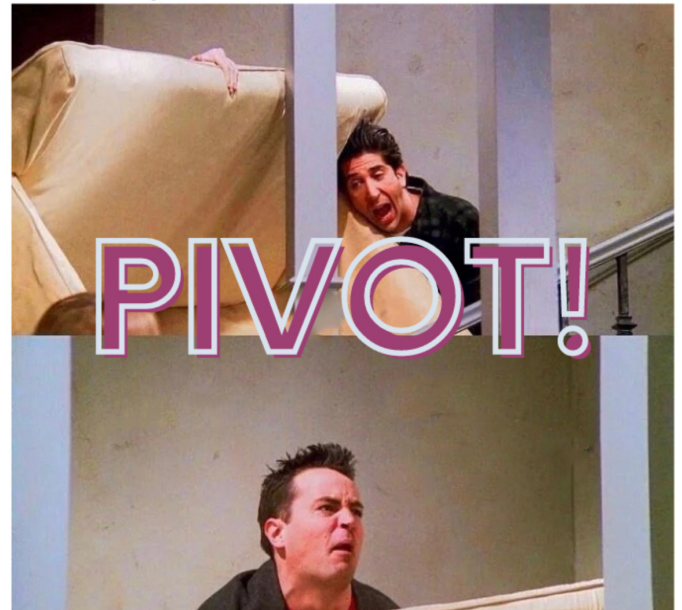
Pros of DIY

No one wants to spend more money or time then they have to, which makes the DIY approach attractive--at least initially. Here are a few reasons why customers opt the DIY approach:

- Cheaper (at least up front). The cost of working with a Consulting partner ranges from 1.5x - 4x the cost of your annual software license.

- Not having to make a partner selection makes the due diligence process faster (and you don't have to explain the plan you've developed).

- You only have "1 Throat to Choke" if things go south — your SaaS vendor (and your internal team).

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DIY v. Using a Consulting Firm for Your Software Implementation

Cons of DIY

One of the questions we ask software customers in our post-implementation reviews is about the "Lessons Learned" along the way. One of the regrets we hear often is "not hiring a consulting partner sooner". Here are a some drawbacks of the DIY approach:

- You're on your own. If your internal project team member quits, goes on leave or moves roles—your project will be impacted. Partner firms can in many cases offer staff augmentation for this common scenario.

- No "best practices" to draw from in terms of what others in your industry / peer software customers have done.

- Understanding & managing change (aka "Change Management") is much more difficult.

- A partner will help ensure to keep your project on-schedule and help you determine if your timeframe / budget are realistic from the outset.

- SaaS vendor Professional Services-led projects are rated much lower. This is true regardless of software--look any up vendor's PS teams up on RavenIntel.com

- Failure rate is higher for internally-led projects and if you bring in a 3rd party to clean up a project in the later stages, it likely will end up costing you more in the end.

- Integrations can be a beast. Partners have access to previous integrations and experience building these things (e.g. why in many cases partners are called "Systems Integrators (SIs)".

- Your people may not have the required time available for the project while also performing their regular job.

- New system implementations create anxiety for HR and Payroll practitioners. Having a 3rd party that has "been there / done that" will lower their stress and make them feel supported by the organization. (They will thank you for it!)

- Hiring a certified partner that knows your software vendor's software and implementation methods means they can translate 'vendor-speak' terms and tasks so that your team understands what is being asked of them.

- Partner resources can be engaged up front to be sure you're prepared before the implementation kickoff. They can also be contracted for post-go-live support beyond the point that the vendor's implementation team has moved on to another client.

- Using a partner's Project Manager means you have a resource that has implemented your chosen software's systems before (whereas you internal IT PM probably hasn't).

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10 Questions to Ask a Partner

Raven Intelligence has spoken with over 1,300 companies about their recent implementation of Workday, SAP SuccessFactors, UKG, ServiceNow, Cornerstone, or Oracle HCM. We found these organizations went through a thorough review process to ensure every feature and function met their needs, but in most cases, the consulting partner they chose to get the system up-and-running was an afterthought.

In 95% of these projects, consulting partners were chosen based upon 2 factors:

- The recommendation of the chosen software firm's salesperson / customer relationship manager, or
- The chosen consulting firm had done a previous project with the company (typically non-HR related)

The majority of customers we spoke with received two or fewer proposals and spent far less time on partner selection than they did on selecting their software. We even spoke with one large organization who said, "We had a choice in partner?"

Just because you recognize a consulting partner's name because they advertise at the airport or because your software salesperson brought them to your door doesn't necessarily mean they are your best options. Conversely, a boutique vendor might not have the capabilities or capacity to handle your project depending on its scale. A thorough and independent partner evaluation with multiple options is important–at the very least to make sure you're confident in your choice and getting a competitive deal.

The vetting process for a consulting partner up until now has not been easy, but finding the right match is absolutely critical to project success. The capital investment made to implement these systems is just as large as the software purchase, and the team you end up with can make or break your project's success.

Lessons Learned: Raven Intelligence Project Reviews

Below are 10 hard questions you should be asking (but might not know to ask) when you interview potential consulting partners. These are based upon the "Lessons Learned" that we hear in our project reviews at Raven Intelligence, as well as wisdom from industry experts.

10. Have you done this type of project before? Previous experience that matches your software, scope and geography are critical.

Your potential partner should be able to point to specific projects (software, modules and geographic scope) that look similar to your project. Similar industry expertise is important, but so is expertise with the functional areas of the product you'll be installing.

We heard from one customer who said the consulting firm they chose did great in North America, but the "wheels came off the bus" during the European roll-out.

Other Questions to Ask:

- How many projects have you completed with the same software / modules / geography as ours?
- How long have you been implementing this specific cloud software?

Red Flags:

- General statements about implementing HCM v. your chosen cloud software.
- Few specific project references (or consultant certifications) for the modules that are important to you.
- If your project is global–lack of actual in-country project experience or consultants.
- Lack of proof points around the quality of implementations of similar scope.

9. Who is my team going to be? Where is my team located?
It's all about the people.

No matter how strong a consulting organization is, the quality of your project is going to be based on the team that you are assigned. Many customers we surveyed recognized individual consultant project leads by name as the most important reason for their satisfaction/project success.

10 Questions to Ask a Partner

9. Team - *Continued*

There is much talk about the concept of choosing a partner for "Cultural Fit", but what exactly does that mean? It's important that your organization "likes" the persona of a consulting firm, but it's hard to truly know how that feeling will mature during the actual project. Many times the team that you "like" during the sales process is totally different than who you get during implementation as consulting firms assign resources based upon capacity. Industry expert, Brian Sommer says, "the wanting and the gettin' are 2 different things."

Depending on a firm's workload and staffing and when you sign an agreement with them, you may not get the resources you thought you would. No matter how strong a consulting organization is, the quality of your project is going to be based on the team that you are assigned. Many customers we surveyed recognized individual consultant project leads by name as the most important reason for their satisfaction / project success.

Other Questions to Ask:

- Is the team you present during the evaluation process going to be who I get during my actual project?
- Where is my team located? How often will they be on-site?
- How many other projects will they be working on at the same time?
- What type of background do they have? Are they recent college grads or HR functional experts?

Red Flags:

- The consulting sales team (v. actual consultants) is doing most of the talking.
- The consulting firm makes no guarantees about who is going to be assigned to the project.
- The consulting firm has no in-country resources in or near the countries you have a big footprint in.

8. What are customers and employees saying (independently) about this consulting partner? No shocker–the consulting partner is only going to give you happy references.

Real-life customer experiences are perhaps the most indicative marker of a consulting firm's quality. Without these proof points, all the number of certifications, projects completed and awards in the world don't matter. Most of the time customers 'spoke with a reference' that was provided by the consulting firm, but this isn't an objective approach–consulting firms wouldn't provide a negative reference. Independent peer reviews and references are the easiest way to gain confidence that a partner can deliver on their promises and hear the real-life stories of customers like you. (Raven Intelligence is and will be a huge source of information here.)

Other Questions to Ask:

- What independent project reviews are available about your firm?
- At Raven, we can spot good firms from a mile away with how receptive they are to providing customers for us to survey.
- What are independent references saying about your team?
- What are your employees / former employees saying about your firm?

Red Flags:

- Consulting partner talks a big game but has no publicly available reviews or references to be found
- Consulting partner is guarded about providing references (and uses the phrase "NDA" often.)

7. Certifications. Bigger numbers don't always mean better. In some cases, one consultant can have 8 certifications.

Certifications are indication of the breadth and expertise of a consulting firm and shows they've invested in bench strength to handle many projects. Larger firms will lead with these numbers, and while they are important, they still need qualification. What's most important is the team assigned to you has the right certifications to get the job done right.

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10 Questions to Ask a Partner

7. Certifications - *Continued*

Each software vendor runs their certification and partner ecosystem differently. Some are tightly monitored and closed, others are more loosely controlled and open. In our research, we've found that no software company is immune to implementation hiccups or partners that may be aggressive in stating certification statistics.

Other Questions to Ask:

- How many certified consultants do you have? (in the type of software modules we bought)
- Are they located in the same geography as my project? (very important that they are)
- Are they Professional v. Associate designations (+1 for Professional designations)
- What previous work / functional experience do your consultants have? (Recent college grads without any real-life work experience can earn certifications)
- Is your firm a Recognized Expert by the Software Company?

Red Flags:

- Resources are not certified or have low certification #s in the geography you're in.
- The consulting firm is boasting about big numbers of certifications, but light on the actual project references or unable to tell you where or what those certifications are in (see #8).

6. How much is this going to cost? Raven Intelligence has found when projects go over budget 25%+, NPS drops 2 points. That's significant.

Chances are if a consulting firm can afford to advertise at the airport, they're not going to be the least expensive option. Conversely, if a consulting firm is coming in at rock-bottom prices, they might not be able to offer the breadth and depth of experience you need and that is a big risk as well. Finding the right balance between your confidence in the firm's quality, capabilities and price is key.

Other Questions to Ask:

- Is this quote fixed-bid or time-and-materials?
- In previous projects like mine, what % did you deliver on-budget?

Red Flags:

- Rock-bottom pricing / "free" services up-front (that result in expensive change orders mid-implementation.)

5. Is this a Transformation or Systems Implementation? Which is it?

If your project is a full-scale "Transformation" where you are re-defining company culture or significantly augmenting your processes, you probably need something more than a systems implementer. You also need to budget accordingly. Conversely, if you are just looking for a software implementation or project work, you very well could do well time / cost-wise to find a more niche player.

Other Questions to Ask:

- Is my project a true Transformation or a Systems Implementation? Or a software project?

Red Flags:

- Consulting partner is selling you a Transformation when all you need is a systems install
- Consulting partner is selling you a Systems Install when you need a Transformation

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10 Questions to Ask a Partner

4. Integrations

This is one of the biggest sources of frustration for customers–integration scope-creep–that almost always results in project time and budget over-run. Make sure to define all of these up-front, and ask what the process is if 'something new comes up'.

Other Questions to Ask:

- What integrations are included with the project?
- Do you have pre-built connectors to my systems?
- How difficult are these integrations (e.g. Global Payroll integrations are very difficult)

Red Flags:

- Consulting firm says 'integrations are included' without any specifics. It's never that easy.

3. How much time is this going to take?

One customer who just completed a Phase 1, full HCM global install said, "plan on 1.5x the amount of time you think it is going to take you to implement your system, then double that." We hear this regularly on project reviews. In general, if you have a specific date you need your project live, plan on a nice cushion beyond the estimate.

Other Questions to Ask:

- What is the time required to do this project?
- How often does your firm deliver on-time?

Red Flags:

- Consulting firm says they can implement "as fast as you need us to"

2. What other services / products do you offer?

Many consulting partners offer pre-packaged services and software they've built beyond just consulting. Their firm might also have expertise beyond just the software you're implementing. That can be a value-add and provide additional, out-of-the-box options.

Other Questions to Ask:

- What ongoing, post-implementation services do you offer?
- What other systems do you have expertise with?
- Do you offer any additional out-of-the-box products you've developed

1. How big does my internal team need to be? Who does what?

One large global manufacturer said they assumed they'd need less IT resources than they did for their on-premise system because they were moving to the Cloud. Not so. This caused friction during the implementation process they wish they'd avoided.

Other Questions to Ask:

- How many internal resources are needed from a functional as well as IT perspective?
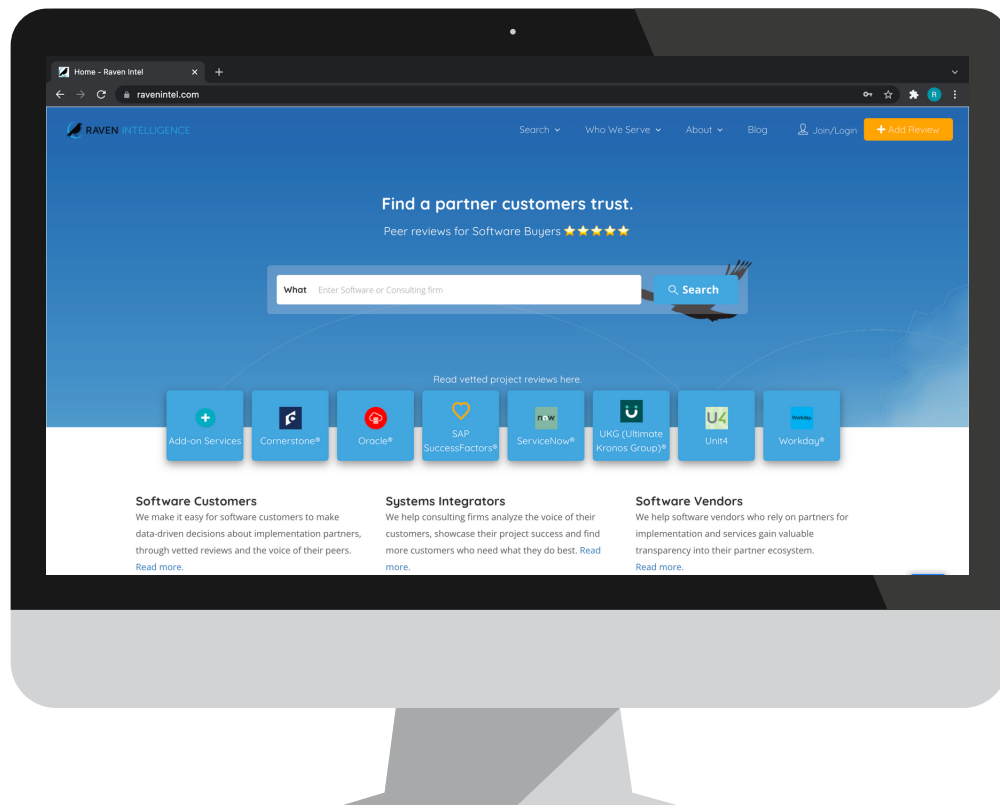- What is the % time commitment from each party given the timeline established?

Red Flags:

- Consulting firm says that since it's cloud software "fewer IT resources are needed."

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For more information about Raven Intelligence, please visit our website or contact us at info@ravenintel.com

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