UNIT4

Guide to Top Unit4 Implementation Partners

Prepared by Raven Intel

January 2021

RAVEN INTEL

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Raven Intel 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.

|			
1000+ Verified reviews	**100%** Of our reviews are verified with 2-step verification	**150+** Consulting firms represented	**40+** 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, for Raven Intel to delete negative reviews or for favorable reporting.

SOURCE OF REVIEWS
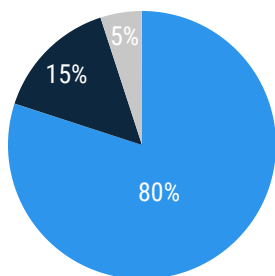
Direct-to-Customer - 80%
Raven Intel continually runs independent campaigns (email, LinkedIn, social media) targeted to Human Resources decision makers who have implemented a cloud-based Human Capital Management system within the past 18 months and requested that they review their project on our site.

Consulting Firm Initiated - 15%
Consulting firms (aka Systems Integrators) have also sent customers to Raven Intel.com 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 Intel to submit a review.

ABOUT RAVEN INTEL'S COMMUNITY & BUSINESS MODEL

Raven Intel 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.
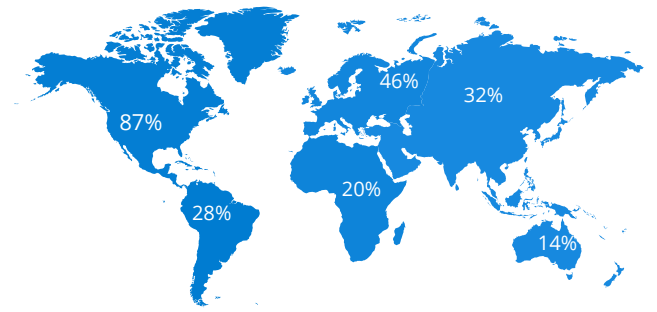
RAVEN INTEL REVIEW DEMOGRAPHICS

RAVEN INTEL

RAVEN INTEL'S REVIEW DATABASE

1000+
Vetted customer reviews

40+
Countries represented

87%
Implementations completed via consulting firm

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

COMPOSITION OF CONSULTING FIRMS REVIEWED

- Global consulting firms
- Independent consulting firms
- Boutique consulting firms

33%
45%
22%
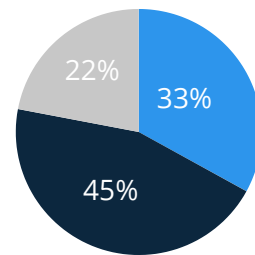
CUSTOMER EMPLOYEE SIZES REVIEWED

100k+ Employees (6%)
50 - 100k Employees (7%)
20 - 50k Employees (15%)
10k - 20k Employees (17%)
0 - 1000 Employees (14%)
1k - 5k Employees (25%)
5k - 10k Employees (16%)

REVIEWER ROLES

	25%	48%	27%
	Executive Sponsor	Project Leader	Project Team Member

50
25
0
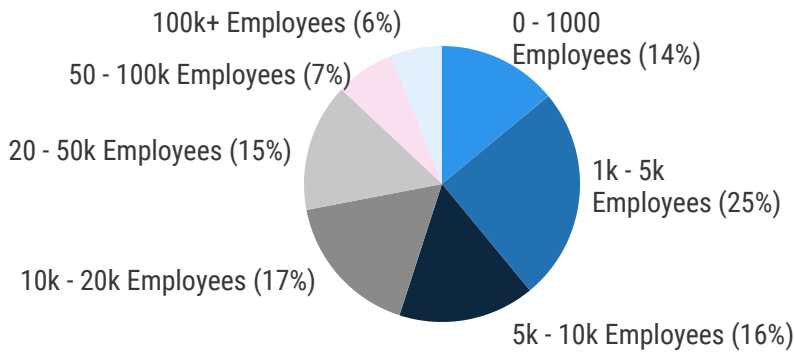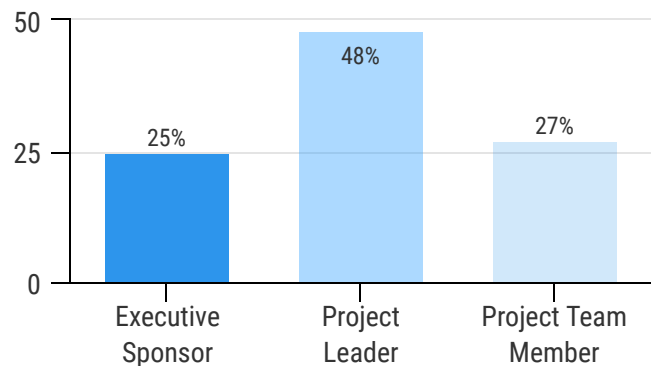
UNIT4 INDUSTRIES REVIEWED

Higher Education

Professional Services

Public Sector

Non Profit

At Raven Intel, 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.

Expectations 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, ahead of schedule. In addition, change happens over time—a firm who has once struggled may have added new talent or 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. 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 their small, tightly-controlled ecosystem will guarantee you get a good partner or the vast choices available will give you many partners to choose from—you still need to do your own homework. In the end, you'll live with your partner choice.

Reviews on Raven Intel

Visitors to Raven gain a bird's eye view—and can look up any Enterprise software consulting firm on our website and read reviews—for free. Raven has over 900 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.

- 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.

RAVEN INTEL

Unit4 Highlights

Unit4 has rapidly grown its partner ecosystem within the past year to implement and provide ongoing services and software extensions to its customers. Due to its rapid growth as a business and similar to the model that other Enterprise Software vendors employ, Unit4 is leaning on partners for a larger percentage of their system implementations and services work. Building out a healthy partner ecosystem allows Enterprise software vendors the ability to focus their core competencies in developing and selling software, increase their distribution channel and allow customers to benefit from a partner firm's digital transformational capabilities that are difficult to procure and maintain internally.

Unit4's services partner ecosystem of ~25 partners is primarily comprised of independent consulting firms versus Global Service Providers (e.g. "Big 5"). Their average partner has a bench of <25 full-time consultants and has been a partner for 5+ years.

How Customers Typically Choose Partners

Based upon Raven Intel's review data, Enterprise Software customers typically choose a partner based upon their software vendor's recommendation (62%), but customers who did their own research (21%) or used a partner for other projects (19%) were more likely to rate their project a 9 or 10.

The average customer considered (3) proposals before making a partner choice. Top (3) reasons for partner choice: Experience, Reputation, Price. **Raven Intel can help you vet these areas as well**.
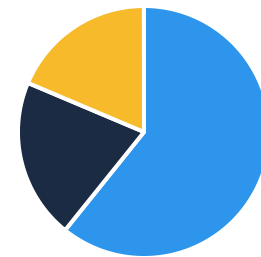
- Recommendation of vendor
- Independent Research
- Used Partner Previously

Unit4 Implementation / Service Partner Strengths

- Projects are more likely to be delivered on-time / on-budget than industry counterparts (as compared to the Enterprise Software industry averages, Unit4 and its partner consulting firms are exceeding the average on-budget delivery by 17% and on-time delivery by 19%)
- Overall partner satisfaction exceeds industry averages by close to 2 satisfaction points (out of 10)
- Unit4 Partners are 17% more likely to have a project without change orders than industry counterparts
- Fewer partner firms and a smaller partner ecosystem allow for greater oversight and control over certifications and partner training
- Unit4's commitment to quality & delivery excellence as evidenced by their requirement that all partners have a high quality and quantity of public customer reviews to be 'certified' as a services partner

Implementation / Service Partner Challenges

- Rapidly scaling the partner ecosystem to handle the volume of global customer growth
- Few Global Systems Integrator (GSI) partnerships

Traits of Top Partners

It is easy to spot top Unit4 partners, as they are open to the idea of project transparency and being reviewed publicly. Over the past 9 months, Unit4 partners have procured over 200 reviews from customers that have been fully vetted and are available for view on RavenIntel.com. Common traits include:

- Scope projects well during the sales process and have fewer change orders
- Rated well for Systems Expertise, Responsiveness & Flexibility
- Do not change out project resources mid-project

2020 SALES PARTNER OF THE YEAR

tieto EVRY

COMMERCIAL CO-SELL PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Embridge Consulting

BREAKTHROUGH PARTNER OF THE YEAR

ARRIBATEC

SERVICES EXCELLENCE
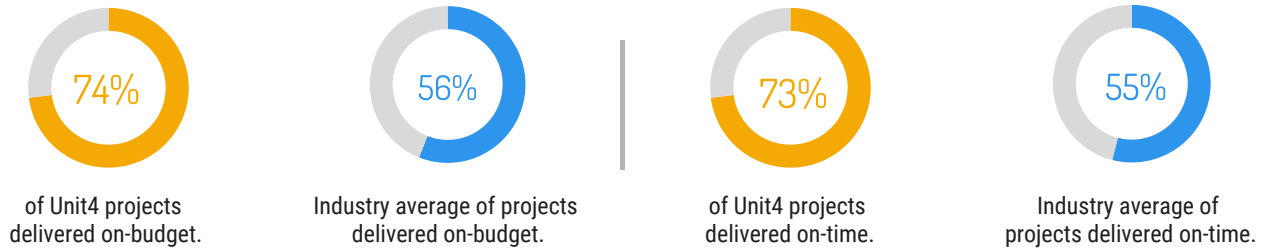
integra associates

TECHNOLOGY PARTNER OF THE YEAR

proactis

RAVEN INTEL

ON-TIME & ON-BUDGET DELIVERY

We ask customers if their project was delivered on-schedule and on-budget. If delivered late or over-budget, we ask to what degree. As compared to the Enterprise Software industry averages, Unit4 and its partner consulting firms are **exceeding the average on-budget delivery by 18% and on-time delivery by 18%.**

74%
of Unit4 projects delivered on-budget.

56%
Industry average of projects delivered on-budget.

73%
of Unit4 projects delivered on-time.

55%
Industry average of projects delivered on-time.
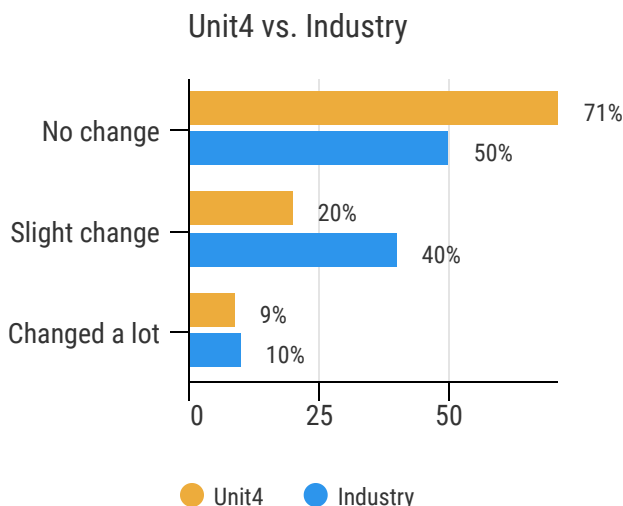
OVERALL PROJECT SATISFACTION

A summary of all Unit4 and partner consulting firms show that their **average project satisfaction rate is 8.9**, on a scale of 1-10 (with 10 being the highest).

Compared to the overall **software industry average of 7.28**, Unit4 and its partner consulting firms are exceeding other consulting partners in project satisfaction.

ERP Industry Average	7.28
Unit4 & Partner Firms Average	8.9

(Scale: 0, 2.5, 5, 7.5, 10)
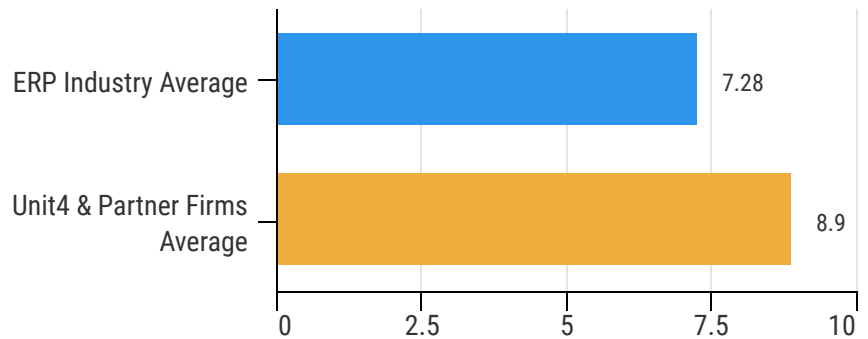
TEAM CONSISTENCY

We ask customers if their partner project team was consistent throughout or if there were changes. According to Raven Intel data, Unit4 and its partner consulting firms are **21% more likely to retain the same team throughout the entire implementation**.

Unit4 vs. Industry

	Unit4	Industry
No change	71%	50%
Slight change	20%	40%
Changed a lot	9%	10%

● Unit4 ● Industry

SCOPING ACCURACY

We ask customers how accurately their project was scoped, and if they had change orders. Raven Intel's data indicates that Unit4 and its partner consulting firms are **13% more likely to scope project precisely** and 5% less likely to have "some" change orders compared to the industry average.

Unit4 vs. Industry

	Unit4	Industry
Precise scoping	46%	33%
Scoped well, but needs changed	43%	48%
Some change orders	9%	16%
Multiple change orders	2%	3%

● Unit4 ● Industry
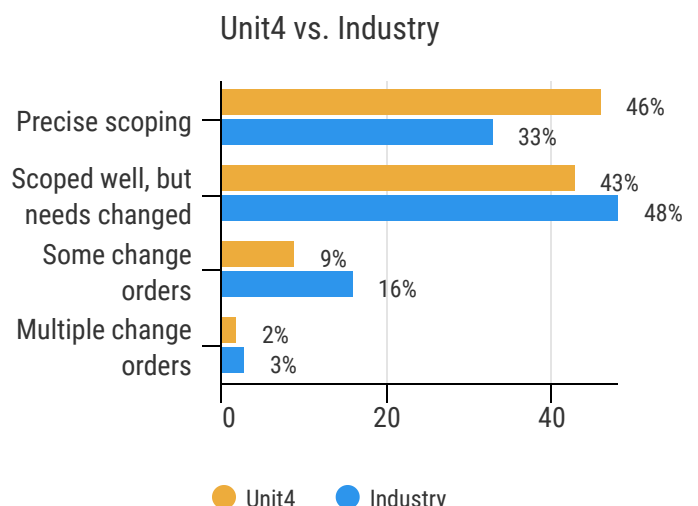
Agilyx

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **4.4/5**

12 Reviews

Agilyx Compared to Industry Averages

	Responsiveness	Quality of Consultants	Implementation Process	Flexibility	Systems Expertise
Agilyx	4.5	4.58	4	4.58	4.5
Industry Average	3.89	3.77	3.73	3.84	3.94

● Agilyx   ● Industry Average

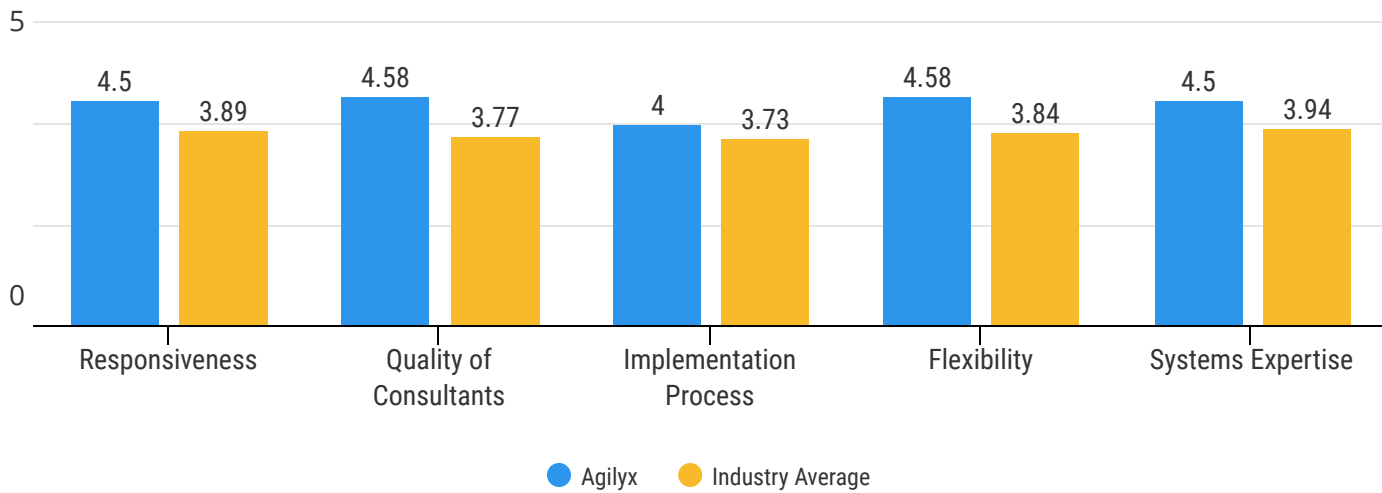At Agilyx Group, our purpose is to build better organisations by empowering people at work to be their best. We do that through people, technology and inspired thinking, striving for high performance and value through deep collaborating with our customers globally. As a global change-ready technology services company we deliver transformational technology solutions to people-focussed organisations in the Commercial, Government, Education and Not-for-profit sectors.

Working at the intersection of people, technology and change, Agilyx Group has a two decade record of success in the delivery of digital transformation projects for customers globally, leveraging our 'Agilyx Way' delivery methodology and the inspired thinking of our team of professionals across our 7 global locations. As a cloud-first organisation, we work with leading technologies across the ERP, Human Capital Management, Learning & Talent landscape.

> ❝
>
> Agilyx is an excellent partner. They are very knowledgeable! They always deliver what they say they will deliver. They are always on time!
>
> Project Leader
> Unit4 ERP
> Non-profit Industry

> ❝
>
> Agilyx is quick to respond and flexible. My consultant is extremely knowledgeable and helps in a variety of ways, including pointing out that we could be doing things a bit better, and helping us with that.
>
> Project Sponsor
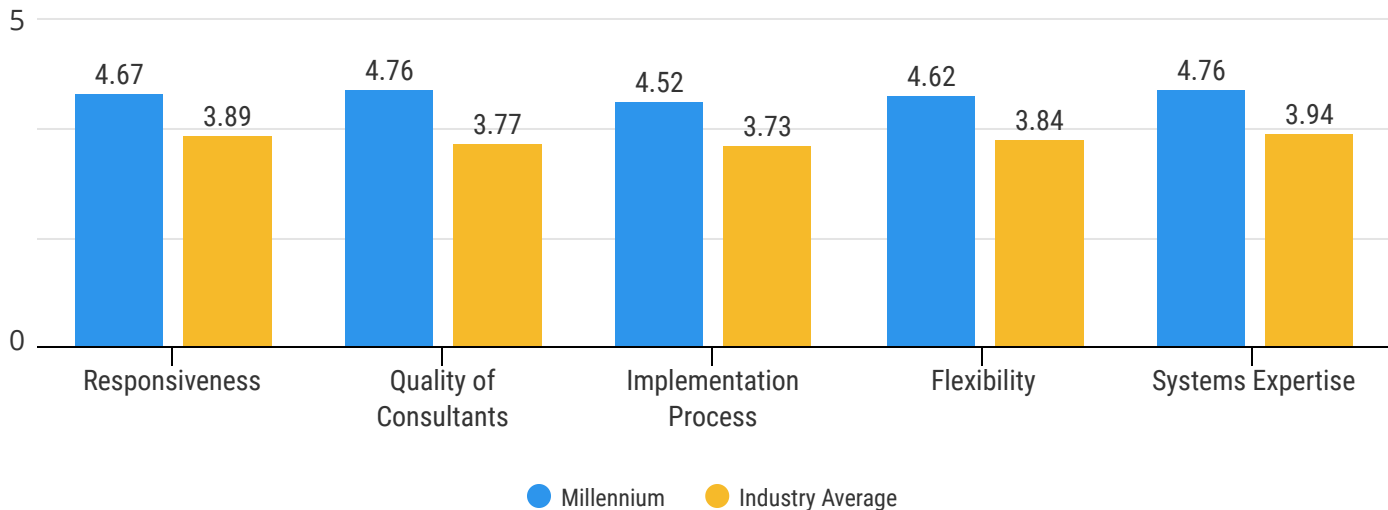> Unit4 ERP
> Public Services Industry

Read More Reviews

Millennium Consulting

dataBridge

★★★★★ **4.8/5**

21 Reviews

Millennium Consulting Compared to Industry Averages

Category	Millennium	Industry Average
Responsiveness	4.67	3.89
Quality of Consultants	4.76	3.77
Implementation Process	4.52	3.73
Flexibility	4.62	3.84
Systems Expertise	4.76	3.94

● Millennium   ● Industry Average

Introducing Unit4 Elite Partner, Millennium Consulting, one of only two Elite Partners for Financials' globally. For the past 26 years, we have built a reputation of quality, value, and delivery, providing global solutions and services to the world's most demanding industries. Our emphasis on quality delivery and unbiased advice has allowed us to attain trusted partner status with many of our customers.

With offices in the UK, Europe, and the US, Millennium Consulting is the global expert in Unit4 Financials. We offer world-class finance transformation, change management, and regulatory compliance consultancy. Allied to this, we have developed a suite of cutting-edge solutions including, dataBridge, Asset Master, Interface Manager, and AutoCash that help firms drive efficiencies and reduce operational risk.

> **"**
>
> The team at Millennium was very helpful guiding us regarding the information we needed to provide to them to complete the work they were doing for us. They were quick to respond at each stage of the development of the work where we had queries. They completed the work for us ahead of schedule and were very helpful when we hit a small teething problem post go live.
>
> Consultant
> Unit4 ERP & Financials
> Other Industry

> **"**
>
> The Millennium team was professional and responsive and provided a high level of knowledge on the product and quickly related them to our business processes. They took a high level of ownership in results to have a positive outcome in the project.
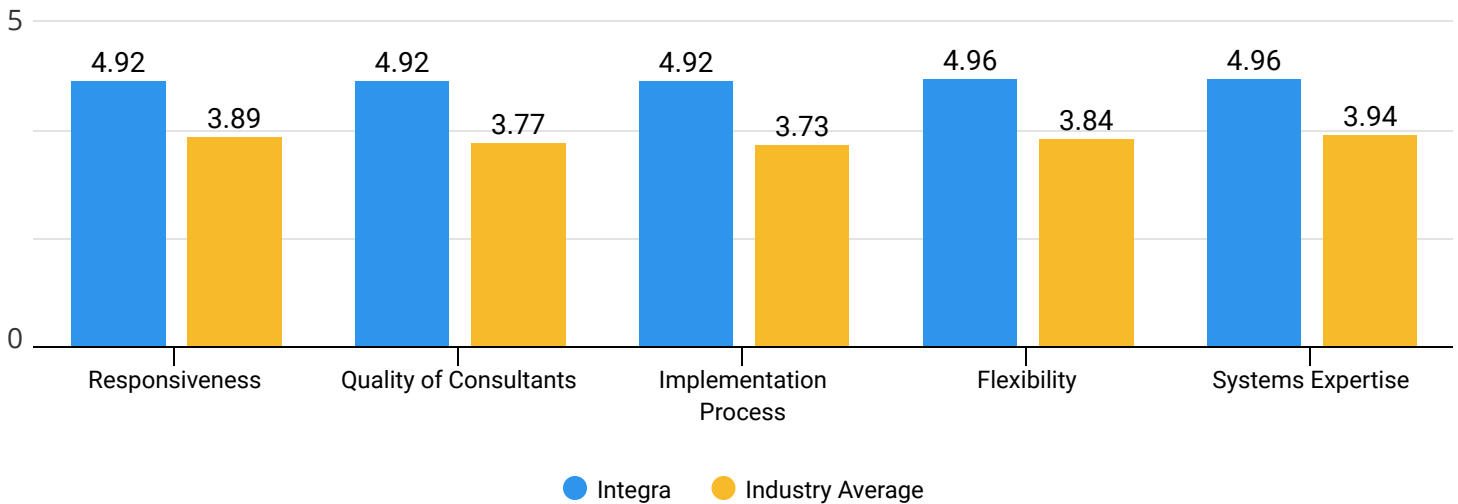>
> Project Leader
> Unit4 Financials, Procurement
> Other Industry

Read More Reviews

integra
associates

UNIT4
SERVICES
EXCELLENCE

★★★★★ **5/5**

25 Reviews

Integra Compared to Industry Averages

Category	Integra	Industry Average
Responsiveness	4.92	3.89
Quality of Consultants	4.92	3.77
Implementation Process	4.92	3.73
Flexibility	4.96	3.84
Systems Expertise	4.96	3.94

● Integra   ● Industry Average

For over 25 years, Integra Associates have been committed to helping organisations across the globe achieve further value from Unit4's range of leading business solutions.

As the Unit4 Global Service Partner of the Year, they handpick their team to ensure they possess expertise across all services, solutions, and industries, helping to ensure you can reap the numerous benefits that come from working with a single expert partner.

> I would highly recommend Integra Associates. They are extremely professional. The consultants we used were probably the best I have dealt with over the last 20 years on this large European roll out.
>
> Decision Maker
> Unit4 ERP & Financials
> Professional Services Industry

> The partner (Integra Associates) was excellent. We had constant communication and felt we were in safe hands. It was very much an atmosphere of partnership and not transactional in the slightest.
>
> Project Leader
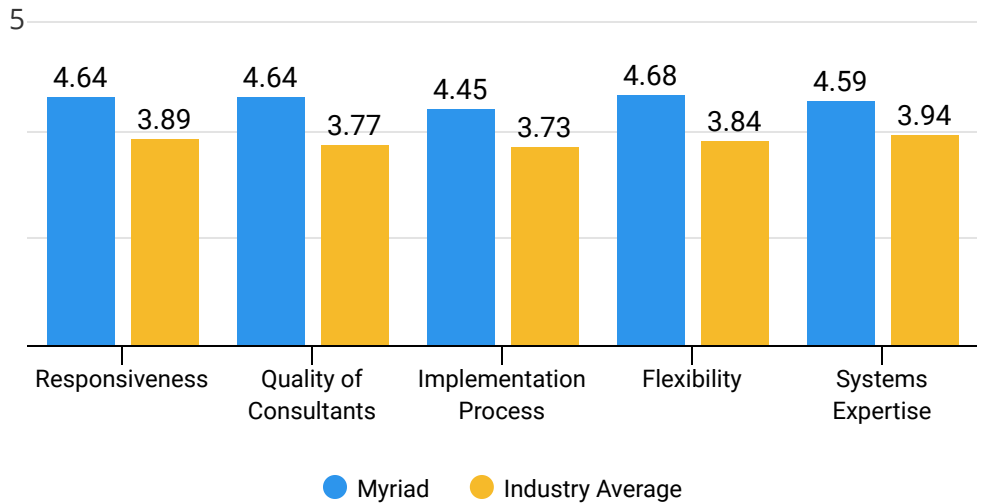> Unit4 ERP & Financials
> Professional Services Industry

Read More Reviews

MYRIAD Consulting

★★★★★ **4.7/5**

22 Reviews

Myriad Compared to Industry Averages

	Responsiveness	Quality of Consultants	Implementation Process	Flexibility	Systems Expertise
Myriad	4.64	4.64	4.45	4.68	4.59
Industry Average	3.89	3.77	3.73	3.84	3.94

● Myriad   ● Industry Average

> Myriad provided an expert consultant that did everything required for the upgrade but also assisted with the business as usual issues and additional ad-hoc work.
> They worked pragmatically and flexibly adapting to the needs of the project and worked with us as a member of the team, not apart as consultants.

Project Leader
Unit4 ERP & Financials
Professional Services Industry

Read More Reviews

---

smart PM .solutions

★★★★★ **4.8/5**

20 Reviews

smartPM.solutions Compared to Industry Averages

	Responsiveness	Quality of Consultants	Implementation Process	Flexibility	Systems Expertise
smartPM.solutions	4.47	4.74	4.74	4.74	4.79
Industry Average	3.89	3.77	3.73	3.84	3.94

● smartPM.solutions   ● Industry Average
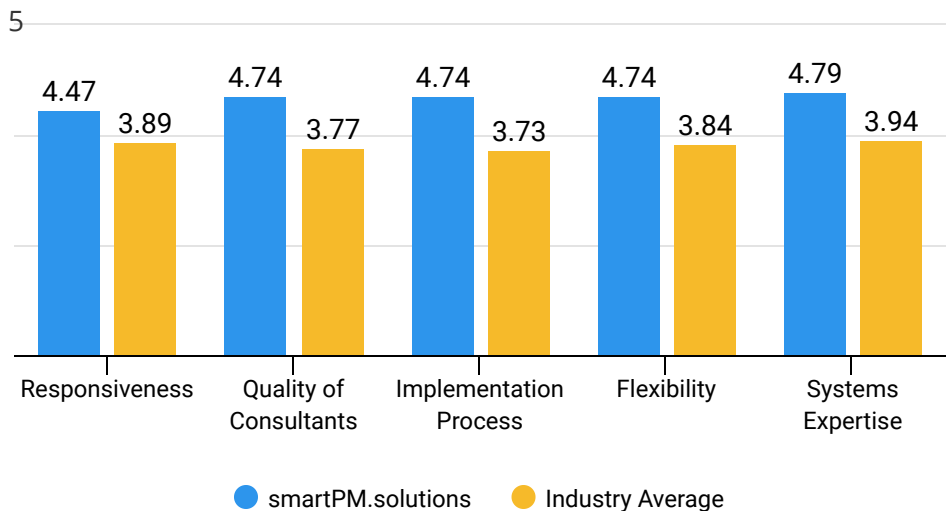
> The biggest advantage was the combination of financial / industry specific and technical know how of the SmartPM implementation team. We are planning to work onwards with the same team to further develop our solution.

Project Leader
Unit4 FP&A
Other Industry

Read More Reviews

GCON4

★★★★☆ **4.8/5**

13 Reviews

GCON4 Compared to Industry Averages

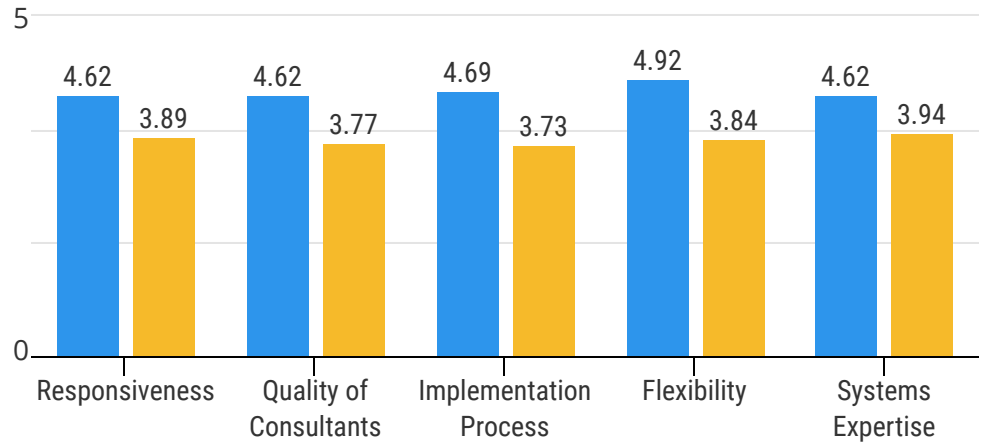|	Responsiveness	Quality of Consultants	Implementation Process	Flexibility	Systems Expertise
GCON4	4.62	4.62	4.69	4.92	4.62
Industry Average	3.89	3.77	3.73	3.84	3.94

● GCON4   ● Industry Average

> We are pleased to work with the great GCON4 team and UNIT4 ERP. We found several management solutions and had good results with the ERP implemented modules. We continue to receive updates and follow ups for the management system. We have future plans of expansion and plan to do so with GCON4.

Project Leader
Unit4 ERP
Non-Profit Industry

Read Our Reviews

G7

★★★★★ **4.9/5**

10 Reviews

G7 Compared to Industry Averages

	Responsiveness	Quality of Consultants	Implementation Process	Flexibility	Systems Expertise
G7	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.9
Industry Average	3.89	3.77	3.73	3.84	3.94
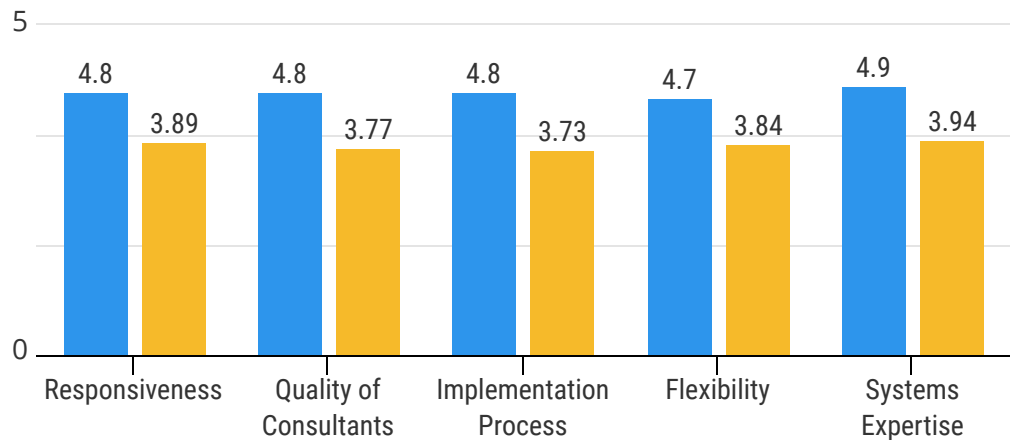
● G7   ● Industry Average

> G7BS was excellent in every way, from the planning of our upgrade to the support I received from the Managed Service Des post-implementation. I honestly could not recommend using them more. The knowledge of their employees is superb. There is always someone able to help you.

Decision Maker
Unit4 ERP
Other Industry

Read More Reviews

RAVEN INTEL

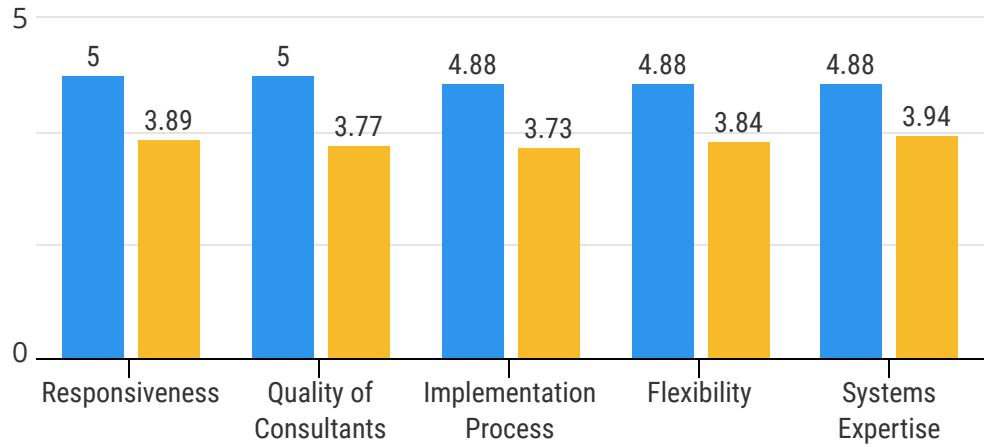## Embridge Consulting

★★★★★ **5/5**

8 Reviews

Embridge Consulting Compared to Industry Averages

Category	Embridge	Industry Average
Responsiveness	5	3.89
Quality of Consultants	5	3.77
Implementation Process	4.88	3.73
Flexibility	4.88	3.84
Systems Expertise	4.88	3.94

● Embridge ● Industry Average

❝

Embridge successfully helped us to transition smoothly from the project into steady-state with excellent knowledge transfer. The quality of their service – which was good at the outset – has only improved over the past 18 months. The product expertise in the Embridge team and their excellent customer service has significantly reduced the burden on our small organisation of working with a new IT system

Project Leader
Unit4 ERP & Financials
Public Services Industry

Read Our Reviews

FinTec Consulting
Finance ▪ Technology ▪ Processes

★★★★★ **4.5/5**

8 Reviews

FinTec Consulting Compared to Industry Averages

Category	FinTec	Industry Average
Responsiveness	4.38	3.89
Quality of Consultants	5	3.77
Implementation Process	4.5	3.73
Flexibility	4.62	3.84
Systems Expertise	4.62	3.94
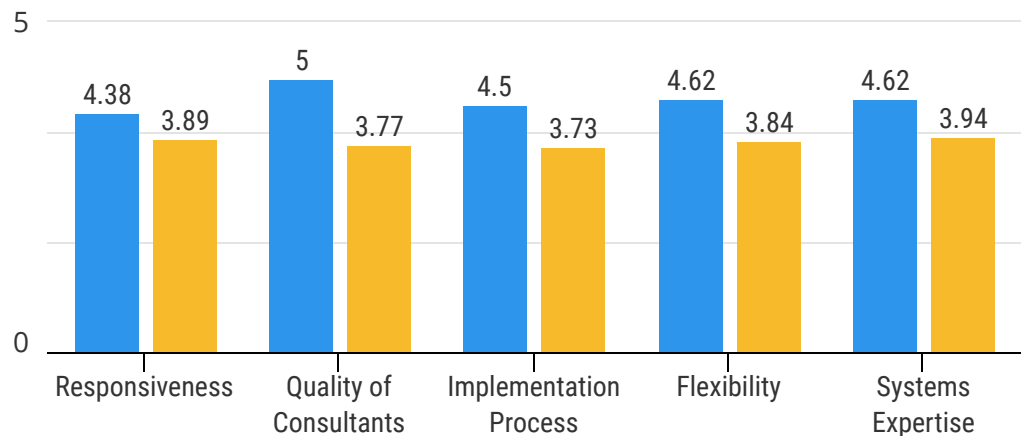
● FinTec ● Industry Average

❝

Cooperation with Finance and Technology Consulting was very good and very customer-focused!

Team Lead
Unit4 ERP & Financials
Other Industry

Read More Reviews

TOP PARTNERS TO CONSIDER

tieto EVRY

★★★★☆ **3.6/5**

8 Reviews

Tieto Evry Compared to Industry Averages

	Responsiveness	Quality of Consultants	Implementation Process	Flexibility	Systems Expertise
Tieto Evry	3.78	3.67	3.33	3.56	3.56
Industry Average	3.89	3.77	3.73	3.84	3.94

● Tieto Evry ● Industry Average

> We had a successful on-budget and on-time project. TietoEvry executed for a large organization in a short time.

Project Leader
Unit4 ERP
Public Services Industry

[Read Our Reviews](#)

ARRIBATEC

★★★★★ **4.9/5**
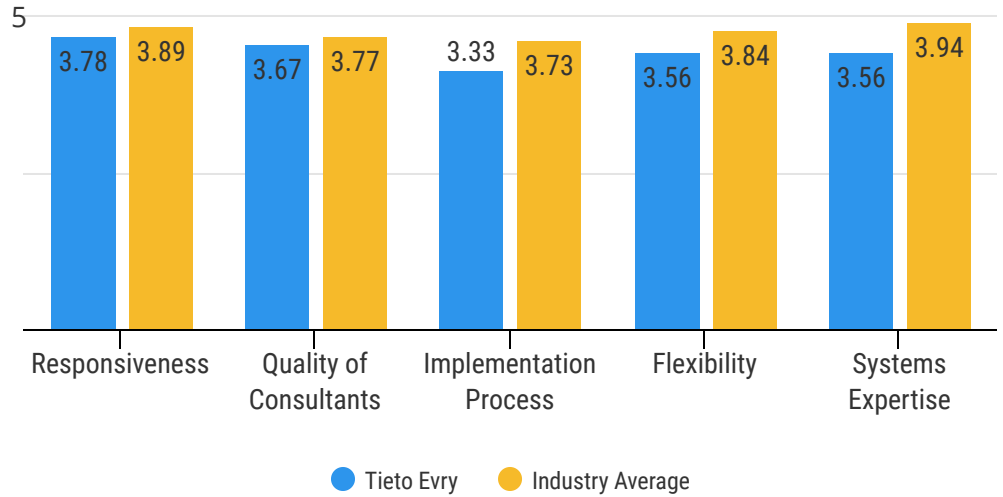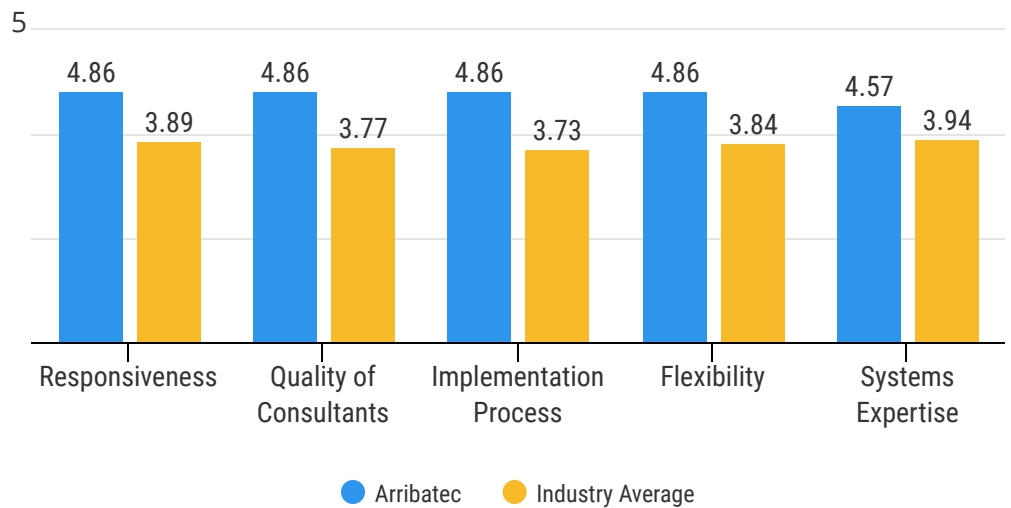
7 Reviews

Arribatec Compared to Industry Averages

	Responsiveness	Quality of Consultants	Implementation Process	Flexibility	Systems Expertise
Arribatec	4.86	4.86	4.86	4.86	4.57
Industry Average	3.89	3.77	3.73	3.84	3.94

● Arribatec ● Industry Average

> Arribatec is a wonderful continuing implementation partner. I am happy with their level of experience, professionalism, and overall optimism on this project. This has been an extremely difficult implementation.

Decision Maker
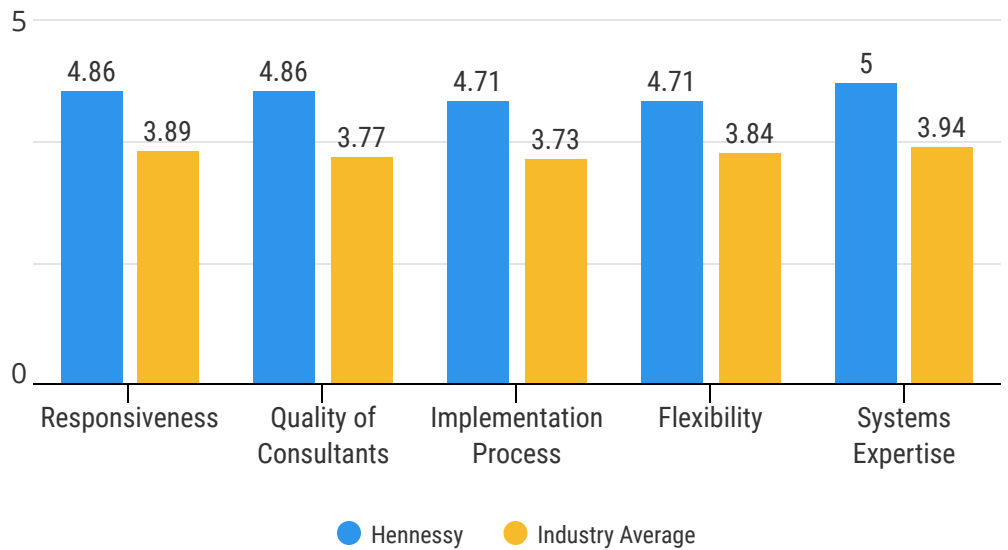Unit4 ERP
Professional Services Industry

[Read More Reviews](#)

Hennessy IT Consulting

★★★★★ **4.7/5**

7 Reviews

Hennessy Consulting Compared to Industry Averages

Category	Hennessy	Industry Average
Responsiveness	4.86	3.89
Quality of Consultants	4.86	3.77
Implementation Process	4.71	3.73
Flexibility	4.71	3.84
Systems Expertise	5	3.94

● Hennessy   ● Industry Average

> "
Our projects are a combination of ongoing improvement and development projects, reconfiguring the core application to meet new business requirements and to try and improve the end-user experience. This also included time spent on supporting and maintaining the system. Hennessy IT has been a key partner in helping us deliver this change.

Project Leader
Unit4 ERP & FPA
Other Industry

Read Our Reviews

RAVEN INTEL

network4 consulting

Visit their profile

LEVEL 8

Visit their profile

<SpendRight>
CONSULTING

Visit their profile

Solmate
Optimizing financial performance

Visit their profile

ACE Consulting Experts

Visit their profile

ServeVita

Visit their profile

Vision ERP

Visit their profile

Tech4Consulting
Customisation & Reporting

Visit their profile

CBII

Visit their profile

efima

Visit their profile

Imisys Software & Service

Visit their profile

Alithya

Visit their profile

pertus

Visit their profile

Accounting for Funding

Visit their profile

cellent.
Mittelstandsberatung

Visit their profile

Informatica

qep

CGI

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3D Technologies

i+k In The Know Solutions Group

REMONTOWA ELECTRICAL SOLUTIONS | MEMBER OF REMONTOWA HOLDING S.A.

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Konsultnet

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UNIT4

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **4.6/5**

52 Reviews

Unit4 Professional Services Compared to Industry Averages

	Responsiveness	Quality of Consultants	Implementation Process	Flexibility	Systems Expertise
Unit4 Professional Services	4.4	4.42	4.33	4.4	4.48
Industry Average	3.89	3.77	3.73	3.84	3.94

● Unit4 Professional Services ● Industry Average
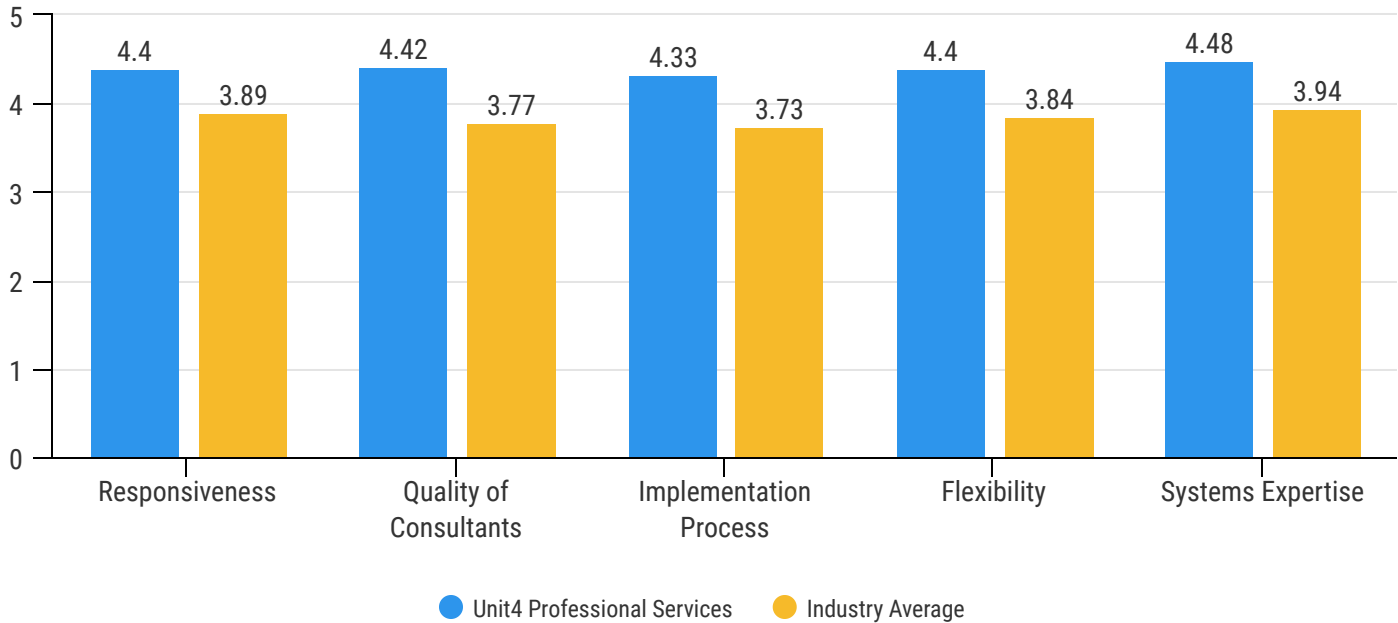
> " The Unit4 team were really easy to work with; they picked up on problems and dealt with them. Although we had problems they came through for us. Our tech consultant deserves a particular mention, he really went out of his way for us.

Project Lead
Unit4 ERP & Financials
Public Services Industry

> " The implementation experience has been very good. Unit4 has listened to our needs and has been flexible with the solutions they offer. They have informed us when it would be better to look at the process instead of trying to make complicated solution, which is a good thing.

Project Leader
Unit4 ERP & Financials
Public Services Industry

Read More Reviews

Raven Intel recently spoke with over 900 companies about their recent implementation of Workday, SAP SuccessFactors, Ultimate Software, 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 (see "What I Learned as a Ghost Shopper for HR Services"), 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 Intel 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 Intel, 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.

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 Intel 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.

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 Intel 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 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

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."