
# Adopting Virtual Reality in Consulting

An Empirical Study on Drivers, Barriers, Challenges, and Competitive Advantage of VR Adoption in Consulting

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## Abstract

**Title:** Adopting Virtual Reality in Consulting. An Empirical Study on Drivers, Barriers, Challenges, and Competitive Advantage of VR Adoption in Consulting

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The growing importance of VR in the consulting industry raises questions about its effective adoption. This study examines key drivers, barriers, challenges, application areas, and how VR contributes to competitive advantage in consulting. A qualitative approach was used, with 15 interviews from consultants in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. The results show that cost reduction, innovation, rising demand, and global working ability are the main drivers for adopting VR in consulting. However, significant barriers such as high initial costs, privacy concerns, and resistance to change were identified. Despite these challenges, the current research findings suggest the strategic benefits of VR — including enhanced client engagement, improved remote working, and competitive differentiation — make it a worthwhile investment. The current study emphasizes the importance of performance expectation, price, and social influence in VR adoption. To facilitate VR adoption, consultancies should invest in training, implement strong data protection measures, and engage clients by showcasing successful VR use cases. This work suggests that consultancies must actively integrate VR into their strategic initiatives and services to fully realize its benefits and strengthen their competitive position in a rapidly evolving digital environment.

**Keywords:** Virtual Reality (VR), Consulting, Drivers of VR Adoption, Barriers and Challenges, Application Areas, Competitive Advantage

## Resumo

**Título:** Adotar a realidade virtual na consultoria. Um estudo empírico sobre os factores, barreiras, desafios e vantagens competitivas da adoção da RV na consultoria

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A importância crescente da RV no sector da consultoria levanta questões sobre a sua adoção efectiva. Este estudo examina os principais factores, barreiras, desafios, áreas de aplicação e a forma como a RV contribui para a vantagem competitiva na consultoria. Foi utilizada uma abordagem qualitativa, com 15 entrevistas a consultores na Alemanha, Suíça e Áustria. Os resultados mostram que a redução de custos, a inovação, o aumento da procura e a capacidade de trabalho global são os principais impulsionadores da adoção da RV na consultoria. No entanto, foram identificadas barreiras significativas, tais como custos iniciais elevados, preocupações com a privacidade e resistência à mudança. Apesar destes desafios, os resultados da investigação atual sugerem que os benefícios estratégicos da RV - incluindo um maior envolvimento do cliente, um melhor trabalho remoto e uma diferenciação competitiva - fazem com que o investimento valha a pena. O presente estudo enfatiza a importância da expetativa de desempenho, do preço e da influência social na adoção da RV. Para facilitar a adoção da RV, as empresas de consultoria devem investir em formação, implementar fortes medidas de proteção de dados e envolver os clientes através da apresentação de casos de utilização de RV bem sucedidos. Este trabalho sugere que as empresas de consultoria devem integrar ativamente a RV nas suas iniciativas e serviços estratégicos, de modo a obterem plenamente os seus benefícios e a reforçarem a sua posição competitiva num ambiente digital em rápida evolução.



**Palavras-chave:** Realidade virtual (RV), consultoria, factores de adoção da RV, obstáculos e desafios, áreas de aplicação, vantagem competitiva

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## List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| VR | Virtual Reality |
| R&D | Research and Development |
| PU | Perceived usefulness |
| PEOU | Perceived ease of use |

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# 1. Introduction

*This chapter discusses the importance of virtual reality and its adoption in the consulting industry. It also outlines the academic and managerial relevance of the topic, as well as the aims and structure of this dissertation.*

## 1.1 General Topic Overview

Virtual reality (VR) has been on the rise in recent years and has become an increasingly popular IT topic. When world-renowned director Steven Spielberg released the science fiction film "Ready Player One" in 2018, it not only impressed audiences worldwide, but also served as a pivotal point in the scientific discourse on VR. Researchers such as Bailenson (2018) showed how the vivid depiction of VR in the film triggered a wave of interest and research in the field of VR, sparking discussions on its potential impact in all areas of life. Therefore, Ready Player One is not only an outstanding film, but also has had a profound influence on the development of research in the field of VR. However, few people know that the basic technology for VR was already available in the early 1960s (Sutherland, 1965). Nevertheless, factors such as high development costs and insufficient quality were obstacles to the final implementation of the technology (Valmaggia, 2017). As a result, VR was described at the time as a one-off trend and criticized for being overhyped (Walsh and Pawlowski, 2002). However, with the recent emergence of low-cost and customer-focused VR applications in the gaming and entertainment industries, the field was revitalized and gained global recognition (Wohlgenannt et al., 2020).

The introduction of VR is leading to digital transformation in almost every industry. Offering immersive experiences previously associated with science fiction, VR is provoking mixed reactions. Nevertheless, integrating VR into our everyday lives is on the verge. For example, the Apple Vision Pro was recently launched to help users with everyday tasks (Apple, 2024). VR is also being used in business, for example in product development to speed up the process through visualized simulations (Ottosson, 2002). On the one hand, the possibilities offered by VR are immense and extend across all industries. For instance, VR can be used for education and training, strengthening customer relationships, better visualized presentations or improving the customer journey (Franchi, 1994; Grassini et al., 2020; Larsson et al., 2001; Suh & Chang, 2006). According to a study by PwC, more than 400,000 people will be working with VR in Germany alone by 2030 (PwC, 2019). On the other hand, it is normal for concerns/risks to arise when introducing new technologies (Kim & Pae, 2007). Risks range from health concerns to data privacy or technical limitations that complicate the adoption of VR (Spiegel, 2017; Vezzadini, 2004; Garrido et al., 2023).

VR is already being used in many industries, but the question now is why consultancies themselves are not yet fully exploiting this technology for their consulting services. Certain factors such as price, benefits, need for innovation, etc. play a decisive role (Mujber et al., 2004). There are also misconceptions about its relevance to the business sector, as it is often seen as a tool for the gaming industry rather than for professional services (BCG, 2022). However, VR offers a wide range of different applications, from data visualization to improving production efficiency in many industries (BCG, 2022). Firms that implement innovative solutions, such as the use of VR, can anticipate enhanced revenue growth, irrespective of the industry in which they operate (Thornhill, 2006). Consulting firms are known for offering specialised knowledge and external perspectives, making them of great value to companies that need help with transformational change (Kipping & Clark, 2012). Research in this industry is particularly valuable as it is characterised by many business trends, innovation and increasing challenges in a dynamic environment (Kipping & Clark, 2012).

### 1.2 Relevance and Objective

This master's thesis specifically examines the use of VR in the consulting industry. Although there are existing studies on the various applications of VR in different fields, there is still a lack of understanding of the critical factors that drive the adoption of VR, as well as the potential challenges that may arise, particularly in the consulting sector.

The primary objective of this research is to identify the factors that influence the use of VR in consulting services and the challenges/barriers that arise in this context. The study will also identify potential areas of application for VR in consulting services and how its use contributes to gaining a competitive advantage. In order to gain a basic understanding and to shed light on these open questions, this thesis uses a qualitative approach with interviews. This work focuses on four research questions:

*RQ 1: What are the key drivers influencing the adoption of VR technology in the consulting industry?*

*RQ 2: What are the barriers and challenges consulting firms face in adopting VR technology?*

*RQ 3: What are the application areas for VR in consulting?*

*RQ 4: How does VR technology contribute to creating a competitive advantage for consulting firms?*

By answering these four research questions, this master's thesis aims to shed light on the extensive role of VR within the consulting industry by identifying the key drivers for the

adoption of VR, its barriers and challenges, potential areas of application in consulting services, and its contribution to competitive advantage. The findings are essential for consulting firms to realize the full potential of VR and successfully integrate this technology into their consulting services to gain a competitive advantage. This work aims to advance the understanding and practical application of VR in the consulting industry.

### 1.3 Course of the Investigation

This thesis is comprised of six chapters and is designed to provide an overview of the interaction between VR and consulting.

Chapter 1 provides a general overview of the topic, focusing on the status of VR and consulting. Based on this, a research gap was identified, and the resulting research questions were presented. The academic and managerial relevance is highlighted, followed by the main objectives of this study. To provide a theoretical basis for answering the research questions, Chapter 2 deals with theoretical concepts and facts regarding VR and consulting. Chapter 3 deals with the methodological part of this thesis. It explains the design of the questionnaire and how the interviews were conducted. To evaluate the data obtained, content analysis according to Kuckartz (2019) was applied and briefly explained. The following Chapter 4 deals with the results of the data collection. The collected data is presented in a structured way to better understand the complex relationship between VR and consulting. In Chapter 5, the interpretation and discussion of the collected and structured data is deepened. The focus is on answering the four research questions. This is followed by an outlook for future research and a discussion of the limitations of the findings. The final Chapter 6 summarises all the important themes and findings of this dissertation to make it easier for consultancies to access the key findings.

# 2. Literature Review

*Chapter 2 focuses on the theoretical foundations and the state of research required to answer the research questions. It examines the fundamentals of VR and the consulting industry, as well as the relationship between consulting and the adoption of VR.*

## 2.1 Fundamentals Virtual Reality

### 2.1.1 Virtual Reality: An Overview

VR technology is evolving rapidly and has a wide range of applications, leading to different definitions that refer to various features and application areas (Guttentag, 2010). However, they all share a common understanding. Below are three different definitions that illustrate the different characteristics.

Sherman and Craig describe VR as “the use of computer modelling and simulation that enables a person to interact with an artificial three-dimensional visual or other sensory environment” (Sherman & Craig, 2003, p.7). LaValle defines VR as a “technology that allows users to experience and interact with a computer-generated environment in a way that simulates reality” (LaValle, 2017, p.2). Sutherland defines VR as a system that “would, of course, be a room within which the computer can control the existence of matter” (Sutherland, 1968, p. 760). In summary, Sherman and Craig (2003) emphasise the basis of VR in computer modelling for interactive environments, while LaValle (2017) focuses on the immersion of the user in the simulated environments. Moreover, Sutherland (1986) defines VR as an image of digital and physical space controlled by computers. The definitions of VR are quite diverse, encompassing electronic devices, simulation aspects, and environments. However, the aspect of immersion and the specific technology that enables it are not universally agreed upon (Bailenson, 2018). For this master thesis, Sherman and Craig´s definition of VR will be used as the foundation, as it highlights the interactive element that is crucial in the consulting industry. A more general approach to understanding VR can be described as an artificial environment that is experienced through certain sensory stimuli generated by a computer. In this environment, the user's own actions determine what happens in the artificial environment (Bailenson, 2018).

VR has been around for a long time. However, the first concrete concept of VR was developed by Morton Leonard Heilig in 1962. He created a virtual simulator called "Sensorama", which created a multi-sensory experience by simulating a bicycle ride through Brooklyn. Sights, sounds, smells, and movements were synchronised to give the user as realistic a picture as possible of a day in New York City (Gigante, 1993). Five years after his initial breakthrough,

Sutherland developed the first head-mounted display system, dubbed the "Sword of Damocles" (Sutherland, 1968). This invention served as a cornerstone for all subsequent immersive digital experiences and illustrated the potential of computer-generated environments (Sutherland, 1968). In the years that followed, the potential of VR continued to be explored, leading to the development of several new systems. For example, the Aspen Movie Map allowed users to virtually explore the city of Aspen, Colorado (Naimark, 2006). This period was marked by significant advances in the VR industry, including the introduction of head tracking and stereoscopic displays (Lippman, 1980). The early 1990s saw a surge of interest in VR technologies as computer graphics improved and computing resources became more accessible (Biocca & Levy, 1995). This led to the development of personalised VR systems such as Nintendo's Virtual Boy (Song-He, 2009). However, this trend did not last long due to technical limitations (Biocca & Levy, 1995). In the early 21st century, the trend repeated itself and products such as the Oculus Rift virtual reality headset were introduced thanks to constant improvements in display technologies, motion sensors, and graphics hardware (Carmack, 2012). As VR technologies become more affordable, mass-market production becomes possible (Barnes, 2016). VR technologies are now being used in a wide range of industries, including entertainment, healthcare, and education (Burdea & Coiffet, 2003). This again illustrates the versatility of the technology.

Although there are various VR applications, they can be divided into two categories that encompass them all: immersive and non-immersive, which vary according to their application and technology. Immersive refers to the ability of VR to reproduce the highest level of digital reality, allowing users to be fully immersed in the virtual world (Hamad & Jia, 2022). Users can use devices such as wearable glasses or helmets to interact with their environment. Non-immersive refers to a simulated 3D environment where users are not fully immersed in the experience. Instead, they interact with the environment through a computer screen using a mouse and keyboard with limited interaction capabilities (Robertson et al., 1993). Unlike immersive experiences, the environment does not interact directly with the user. In a flight simulation, the user sits in a chair in front of multiple screens that create a cockpit-like experience without full immersion. This is an example of non-immersive technology (Hamad & Jia, 2022).

### 2.1.2 VR in Business Contexts

VR is increasingly being used across different industries and business sectors. Its focus is on transforming traditional, operational, and customer interaction models (Hoyer et al., 2020). The versatility of VR is a significant advantage that can enhance business models by providing an immersive and interactive experience (Regt et al., 2020). According to a study conducted by PwC (2022), the potential of VR in training and development is quite impressive. The study reports that VR training leads to four times faster learning than traditional classroom training (PwC, 2022). In addition, learners using VR tend to focus on the material four times more than their e-learning peers (PwC, 2022). In addition, VR provides a safe and low-risk environment for learning and practising challenging tasks, such as medical procedures, without time constraints or pressure. This type of training can be applied to almost any industry for training and skills development (Mulders, 2022).

The application of VR extends to customer service and support. The focus is on providing a more personalised and efficient customer support solution (Nisar & Prabhakar, 2017). By using virtual service environments, real-time support and interactive product demonstrations can be provided to increase customer satisfaction (Nisar & Prabhakar, 2017). The application of immersive brand experiences in marketing and consumer behavior enables the exploration of new customer behaviors and preferences in virtual environments (Wedel, 2020). For example, in the tourism sector, it is possible to offer customers virtual test drives and 360-degree travel experiences in order to provide them with an unforgettable experience with the specific product/service (Guttentag, 2010). With remote working on the rise, VR offers a unique solution for virtual meetings by providing a more interactive environment (Choudhury et al., 2020). The focus is on platforms suitable for customer presentations, workshops, and virtual collaboration, which are more advanced than videoconferencing due to the virtual environment that responds to user interactions (Bonfert et al., 2023).

The wide range of applications for VR technology demonstrates its ability to revolutionise traditional processes by increasing efficiency, fostering customer loyalty, personalising the user experience, and providing inventive solutions (Wedel, 2020; Ottosson, 2002). Therefore, the following section examines the specific factors that have a significant impact on the adoption of VR.

### 2.1.3 Drivers of VR Adoption

The rise of VR as a mainstream technology is influenced by several key drivers, ranging from technological breakthroughs to economic factors such as cost reduction, which together increase its appeal and utility in different domains (Lawson et al., 2016).

When considering VR, it's important to consider the technological factors that influence its use. In particular, the immersive experiences that simulate a lifelike situation enable entertainment and practical applications (Franchi, 1994). The hardware used in VR is crucial as it significantly affects the quality and realism of the virtual environment, which in turn determines the feasibility of using VR (Tarr & Warren, 2002). The cost of VR is also a critical factor in determining whether it is a viable option for a particular application. The current price of VR is heavily influenced by the cost of hardware (Wohlgenannt et al., 2020). While the cost of VR hardware has often been a barrier to wider adoption in the past, current trends towards more affordable VR solutions are reducing this barrier, encouraging more people to explore and invest in VR technologies and making it easier for developers and businesses to enter the market (Wohlgenannt et al., 2020).

Organisations are currently looking for innovative solutions to improve their services and provide a better experience to their customers (Di Stefano et al., 2012). As a result, interest in exploring and adopting VR is increasing due to the potential benefits it can bring in terms of improving customer experience and providing more innovative solution technologies, which in turn leads to an increased drive to adopt VR and interest in exploring this technology further (Wedel, 2020). The term cost reduction is often associated with VR technology, as it can help to save significant costs in several areas (Lawson et al., 2016). For example, VR technology can be used in education and training, eliminating the need for physical learning materials (Jensen & Konradsen, 2017). Furthermore, in the healthcare sector, VR can be used to perform surgeries for training purposes without the need for equipment (Lawson et al., 2016). As described above, the increase in remote working is a good opportunity for VR to create an immersive experience despite videoconferencing, as well as an interesting solution to maintain productivity and attention in online meetings compared to face-to-face meetings (Wei et al., 2019). The overall goal is to provide users with a sense of physical presence despite the remote environment (Riva & Gamberini, 2004).

## 2.2 Consulting Industry Fundamentals

### 2.2.1 Consulting Industry Overview

The consulting industry has experienced strong growth since the 2020 pandemic due to digitalisation and the drive to reduce costs, making it increasingly important in the overall business environment (Piumelli, 2018). By 2020, the consulting industry was valued at $132 billion, highlighting its importance in the business world (Statista, 2022). The term consulting is constantly being used in many ways, but what exactly does it mean? For a general definition, consulting can be described as a professional service that provides expert advice and knowledge in specialised fields such as management, IT, and engineering (Singh & Ramteke, 2017). Consultants assist organisations in solving day-to-day tasks and problems, which can range from project management to successful IT implementation (Puutio et al. 2009). Different consultancies focus on specific areas to provide expert services. However, some consultancies offer a wide range of services to cover many subject areas and provide clients with a diverse range of services. Despite this, consultants are highly valued for their excellent communication skills and immense expertise (Kipping & Clark, 2012).

The consulting industry has experienced strong growth since the 2020 pandemic due to digitalisation and the drive to reduce costs, making it increasingly important in the overall business environment (Piumelli, 2018).

The consulting business serves a wide range of industries, so there is no typical client. However, all clients share a common goal: they are looking for improvements in specific areas, they are facing business challenges that they cannot solve on their own, or they require specialised knowledge that is not available within their organisation (Noruzi et al., 2020). This highlights the importance of the consulting industry, as not every company has the resources to solve every problem on its own, or to tackle the tasks required in an efficient manner. In addition, today's business world is very fast-moving, and not every company can cope with it and act promptly (Engwall & Kipping, 2002).

According to Statista (2023), the growth rate of employees increased by almost 9% in 2022, confirming the steady trend of the previous six years (except for the coronavirus year of 2020). It is clear from this figure that consulting is one of the driving forces behind innovation change, as there has been a significant increase in the number of people employed in consulting, highlighting the influence of this sector on innovative practices and strategies. According to the study by Heusinkveld and Benders (2005), rapid technological developments and the need to

differentiate from competitors play a central role in driving innovation in consulting. Applying this statement to VR, the consulting industry may potentially be an important factor in driving innovation and underpinning the development and manifestation of VR.

### 2.2.2 Digital Transformation in Consulting

Organizations around the world are experiencing digital transformation in their day-to-day operations, but what exactly is it? The term digital transformation is used to describe the utilisation of new technologies with the objective of achieving significant improvements in business operations. One such improvement is the enhancement of the customer experience (Warner & Wäger, 2019). Digital transformation is the use of the latest technologies across all industries to fundamentally change processes and the way they deliver value to customers with their products or services (Vial, 2019). This process consists of the following three phases: digitisation, digitalisation and digital transformation (Verhoef et al., 2022). Digitisation is the process of converting information into a digital format (Guss, 2020). The process of digitalisation entails the utilisation of digital technologies with the objective of transforming business models and the creation of new revenue streams (Riedl et al. 2017). The term "digital transformation" refers to the integration of digital technologies into all areas of the business, with the objective of changing business processes and the manner in which value is created for customers (Vial, 2019).

The consulting industry is forced to embrace the trend of digital transformation, as it influences clients' interest in consulting services. Therefore, new technologies are entering the market that require expert knowledge, offering consulting firms a new opportunity to differentiate themselves from their competitors (Nissen, 2018).

As a result, there has been a shift in the consulting services being offered. The focus is now primarily on applying and implementing the latest and most advanced technologies. These technologies are significantly more efficient than older models and offer a more innovative approach to customer-oriented work (Nissen & Seifert, 2016). By embracing this trend, consultancies can create and successfully implement more customized solutions for their clients (Nissen & Seifert, 2016). This adaptation to the trend of digital transformation means that consultants must also acquire new skills to always be able to present the latest know-how to their clients (Bughin et al., 2017). The focus is particularly on analytical skills, a good understanding of technologies, and the ability to adapt quickly to new trends (Bughin et al.,

2017). To keep up with the wave of digital transformation, consultants must constantly upskill themselves (Doukidis et al., 2020).

The way consultants conduct their work has also changed. Modern problem-solving now involves taking a more data-driven and flexible approach (Christensen et al., 2013). Nowadays consultants are supported by platforms that use big data, for example, to process and evaluate a large amount of data in the shortest possible time for a more precise and faster solution (Christensen et al., 2013). As a result of the digital transformation, there has been a noticeable change in the way clients and consultants interact with each other within organizations.

In addition to improving market value to clients (Sayyadi & Provitera, 2023), digital transformation poses challenges such as cyber security, organizational resistance, etc. (Kane et al., 2015). Despite the numerous obstacles and challenges that come with digital transformation, it is crucial to continue pushing it forward. According to Jackman et al. (2021), every digital change comes with its own set of difficulties, but it is necessary to overcome them for a successful implementation of the trend.

### 2.2.3 Challenges in the Consulting Industry

The consulting industry has experienced rapid growth in recent decades and has made a major contribution to innovation (Gross & Poor, 2008). Despite the great dynamism and adaptability that exists in consulting, Deltek (2021) stated in a report that the consulting industry faces several challenges in the digital age. Accordingly, three key challenges are addressed in the following paragraphs.

Nowadays, there is a huge amount of information available to everyone, and clients are increasingly asking how consultancies can add value when they have all the information they need. Maister et al. describes (1998) the business of consultants as building a relationship of trust with clients by delivering goal-oriented solutions. The challenge is that clients are always looking for the latest solutions, which change rapidly as technology advances. As a result, consultants need to acquire a wide range of specific knowledge to be able to present and implement innovative solutions (Dunford, 2000). As a result, more expertise in all industries and updated agile working methods, such as SCRUM, are needed to deliver faster and more adaptable solutions (Serrador & Pinto, 2015). Establishing trust-based communication with clients is essential to ensure their loyalty and satisfaction during consulting services (Ball et al., 2004).

The aforementioned challenge of rising client expectations, which goes hand in hand with greater expertise, leads directly to the second challenge, talent management. It is becoming increasingly difficult for consultancies to attract and retain highly qualified staff (Mabaso et al., 2021). As noted by Goffee and Jones in their book (1998), the demanding and stressful work culture and the high demand for top talent in the consulting industry are driving consultancies to develop more innovative and modern recruitment solutions. Once top talent has been recruited, it is important to retain them through a good learning culture (Argyris & Schön, 1998). However, this requires more than just offering voluntary training workshops. It is necessary to create a learning culture that encourages employees to reflect on their experiences and share them with colleagues, and to face challenges, even if this means acquiring new knowledge (Argyris & Schön, 1998). An example of this is the introduction of innovative learning methods, such as the use of VR glasses for this purpose. Many companies have already started using VR technology to make their training more effective, as immersive and interactive learning experiences are highly effective (Parong & Mayer, 2018).

Finally, according to a study by Deltek (2018), more than 82% of consultancies are concerned that they are not adequately prepared in the area of regulatory risk/compliance. This is because consultancies operate in many different regulatory environments, making uniform compliance difficult (Djelic & Sahlin-Andersson, 2006). A further complicating factor is that clients tend to be in highly regulated environments, such as the financial industry. As explained in Chapter 2.2.2, the use of analytical tools for data evaluation is increasing, and therefore consulting firms face data protection and security challenges, which gives them access to a large amount of highly sensitive data (Tikkinen-Piri et al., 2017). As European regulations such as GDPR impose very strict data handling requirements, consultancies need to ensure that their practices are compliant. In doing so, they not only avoid potential penalties but also ensure the security of their clients' data and maintain a good reputation (Tikkinen-Piri et al., 2017). As the regulatory landscape can also change rapidly, the challenge is to remain compliant at all times. Identifying and preparing for future regulatory changes is particularly challenging (Eckert, 2012).

### 2.2.4 Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage is the ability to outperform competitors. According to Porter (as in Bredrup, 1995), there are two different approaches to this: Cost leadership and differentiation.

Cost leadership means that the company tries to be the cheapest in the market. This can be achieved by focusing on cost reduction. In turn, the cost savings benefit the customer and are reflected in the low price, allowing the company to achieve a higher profit margin. Differentiation, on the other hand, is the concept of using certain characteristics to make one's products as different as possible from those of competitors. This can be achieved through unique features or superior quality. This allows the company to charge a higher price for the product (Bredrup, 1995).

While the literature suggests a variety of concepts and models for assessing the competitive landscape of an organization, the Porter's Five Forces model is widely used. This model suggests that there are five factors influencing the competitiveness: Threat of new entrants, bargaining power of buyers, bargaining power of suppliers, threat of substitutes and rivalry among existing competitors (Porter, 1985). Therefore, the next section assesses the contribution of VR to a competitive advantage in consulting, following Porter´s concept.

In the consulting industry, barriers to entry are very low, making it easy for new consulting firms to enter the market. Consulting firms that specialise in particular issues can have a significant competitive advantage (Clark & Fincham, 2002). Additionally, clients have considerable power in the consulting industry, as they can easily switch firms, if they are not satisfied with the service. Consultancies can reduce the buying power of clients by focusing on specific areas of expertise and thereby delivering greater value to clients (Nanda, 1996). Furthermore, in the consulting industry, consultants are themselves suppliers. In this respect, the bargaining power of suppliers depends on the knowledge of consultants. Accordingly, consultancies can increase their power by hiring highly qualified staff, which they attract through effective recruitment and attractive salaries (Løwendahl, 2005). Moreover, freelance, or in-house consultants act as substitutes for traditional consulting services. To reduce the risk of substitution consultancies can offer combined solutions that already include all phases of consulting services, including strategy, implementation, and measurable results (Christensen et al., 2013). Lastly, the consulting industry is characterised by a high degree of competitive intensity. Firms are engaged in a continuous process of competing for their reputation, which is defined by the combination of price and service quality (Kippings & Armbruster, 2002).

Competitive advantage can be achieved by specialising in specific areas and offering innovative solutions combined with a client-centric approach (Kippings & Armbruster, 2002).

In summary, consultancies may gain a competitive advantage over their rivals by taking specific actions, such as focusing on a particular industry or offering innovative solutions, such as using VR for the project.

## 2.3 Virtual Reality in Consulting

### 2.3.1 Application Areas

The consulting industry is known for delivering customized solutions to clients across all industries. The rise of VR is proving to be an opportunity for the consulting industry to transform its services by providing interactive and immersive experiences to its clients. The following section explores the various application of VR in consulting.

VR enables consultancies to take client presentations to a new level by making both workshops and presentations much more interactive. This is made possible by immersive experiences that allow complex problems/processes to be represented visually, thereby providing a deeper understanding of the strategies presented by the consultants (Dam, 2002). One of the main tasks of a consultant is to prepare a complex set of data in a structured way and then present the results. VR makes it possible to present large amounts of data in a three-dimensional environment, providing an interactive environment for the client (Dam, 2002). As consultants work in a variety of different industries, they need specialised training in areas such as negotiation, stakeholder management, etc. To be able to practice the theoretical knowledge they have learned without being exposed to stress or pressure, employees can use VR to demonstrate their skills in simulated environments (Jensen & Konradsen, 2017). As most consultancies operate internationally, they rely on remote working. VR can also make remote working more interactive by creating virtual working environments. Teams can work together in a virtual space to find new solutions to existing problems without neglecting the aspect of collaborative teamwork (Wei et al., 2019).

The application areas mentioned above represent only a small part of the potential use cases for VR in consulting. One of the aims of this work is to identify additional application areas for VR in the consulting sector and to extend the existing ones with additional features. This will be achieved by conducting expert interviews.

### 2.3.2 Drivers and Barriers of VR Adoption in Consulting

To understand the adoption of VR in consulting, it is essential to measure industry acceptance using models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) introduced by Davis in 1986 (Al-Gahtani, 1999). Through many theories, the TAM has evolved into a compelling framework. TAM suggests that acceptance is based on perceived usefulness (PU) and ease of use (PEOU) (Al-Gahtani, 1999). Building on this with TAM, Sepasgozar and colleagues conducted a study focusing on the application of TAM to VR (Sepasgozar et al., 2021). The positive influence of PU and PEOU on subjects' attitudes towards the use of VR was confirmed (Sepasgozar et al., 2021). However, no specific research currently focuses on adopting virtual reality in the consulting industry.

In addition, since the introduction of TAM, more recent models have been proposed by researchers, such as the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model (Venkatesh et al., 2003) and the UTAUT2 model (Venkatesh et al., 2012), which is an extension of the original UTAUT model. This model suggests that there are seven key components that influence the acceptance and use of technology: 1. Performance Expectancy, 2. Effort Expectancy, 3. Social Influence, 4. Facilitating Conditions, 5. Hedonic Motivation, 6. Price Value, and 7. Habit (Venkatesh et al., 2012). In addition, three moderating factors were identified: 1. Age, 2. Gender, and 3. Experience (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Returning to the adoption of VR in consulting, no previous research has applied the UTAUT2 model to this specific context. Therefore, the next step is to review the results of studies from other industries that have used the UTAUT2 model to potentially inform the response to VR in the consulting sector.

Looking at studies that have used the UTAUT2 model to examine behavioural intentions to use VR in different contexts, there seems to be agreement on the components of performance expectancy and facilitating conditions (Wang & Chuang, 2023; Faqih & Jaradat, 2021; Huang, 2020). While performance expectancy can be described as the extent to which users believe that using VR will improve their job performance (Huang, 2020), facilitating conditions are concerned with the extent to which individuals believe that there are sufficient resources and organisational and technical infrastructure to support the use of VR (Wang & Chuang, 2023; Faqih & Jaradat, 2021; Huang, 2020). As these factors are the main drivers for the adoption of VR, the following section will address the main barriers.

Barriers are factors that make it difficult to use VR. Although VR technology has been on the market for some time, companies are still faced with the challenge of using this technology correctly. Accordingly, the lack of expertise plays a major role in the efficient adoption and implementation of VR (Badamasi et al., 2021). Until now, for example, employee training courses have been held exclusively online or face-to-face and have been very effective (Badamasi et al., 2021). As a result, many within an organization question why new technologies such as VR should be used for this purpose. Cultural resistance is therefore also a barrier to the adoption of VR. Consequently, many companies are still unsure whether VR technology is sufficiently developed or mature enough to be seamlessly integrated into their daily tasks for business purposes (Maqsoom et al., 2023). In addition, companies have not yet reached a consensus on whether the technology adds value to the customer, and therefore do not see the need to invest in this technology (Maqsoom et al., 2023). As VR headsets process a large amount of data, companies remain uncertain about their compliance, especially concerning highly sensitive customer data (Munilla Garrido et al., 2024).

The existing literature provides a general understanding of the drivers and barriers to the adoption of VR in different industries. However, in order to gain specific insights for the consulting industry, this study uses qualitative interviews. Understanding these drivers and barriers is therefore essential for consultancies considering the adoption of VR technology in their services. This thesis aims to identify the different drivers, application areas, challenges, and potential competitive advantage of VR in consulting. The information gathered serves to answer the four research questions and provide a comprehensive picture of VR in consulting. The following methodology section presents the structure and qualitative analysis of the interviews, thus providing a customised understanding of the adoption of VR in the consulting sector.

# 3. Methodology

*This chapter now presents the applied methodology of the work. The process of selecting interview participants, the method of data collection and the approach to subsequent data analysis, based on the framework for qualitative content analysis proposed by Kuckartz (2019), are explained.*

## 3.1. Research Design

The overall aim of empirical research is to gain knowledge and insights (Creswell, 2017). Empirical research can be divided into qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative research aims to gain an understanding of complex human behaviour and social phenomena (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). The approach is more explanatory and inductive without pre-defined hypotheses (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). In comparison, the quantitative method attempts to gain an understanding of the relationship between variables and to test the hypotheses that have been established (Smith, 1983).

The decision to conduct qualitative research was based on a number of factors. Fundamentally, the aim of this work must be considered. As Helfferich (2004, p.18) describes, "Qualitative research attempts to [reconstruct] meaning or subjective perspectives." This is precisely the intention of this thesis, to present the partially subjective perspectives of the individual interviewees. It is also stated that a further aim of the qualitative research is to gain a basic understanding of the topic and accordingly try to understand the drivers, application areas, challenges and potential competitive advantages of VR in consulting (Helffereich, 2004). Semi-structured interviews were used for this study, as this approach has the advantage of being very flexible (Adams, 2015). On the one hand, there are pre-prepared questions, but on the other hand, there is the possibility to respond to topics that arise during the interview. In addition, the use of consistent questions makes it easier to compare responses from different interviews in order to identify patterns or trends (Adams, 2015).

## 3.2. Interviewee Selection

The selection of interviewees was specifically designed to provide a wide range of different perspectives within the consulting industry. Fifteen consultants from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, and from a range of consultancies, were interviewed for the study to ensure a broad range of sectors such as IT, strategy and financial consulting. The size of the consultancies in which the interviewees work varies from 100 to more than 500 employees to get the perspectives of consultants from both smaller and larger consultancies. Several media were

used to contact consultants from a wide range of sectors. Firstly, some of the interviewees were contacted via LinkedIn. However, the majority of interviewees were professional contacts from previous consulting internships. Other interviewees were recruited through contacts provided by work colleagues. The different media used to make contact provided access to consultants in different sectors. It was essential that the interviewees had already gained professional experience in consulting. In addition, consultants with less than one year of professional experience were excluded to ensure a certain level of professional experience among the interviewees. The table below shows all relevant information about the interviewees and the interview duration.

**Table 1: List of Experts interviewed**

| Acronym | Gender | Age | Position | Industry | Experience in consulting | Number of employees | Interview duration |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A** | Male | 29 | Senior Consultant | IT-Consulting | 3 years | >500 | 42:29 |
| **B** | Male | 27 | Consultant | IT-Consulting | 2,5 years | 50 | 37:48 |
| **C** | Male | 58 | Managing Consultant | Financial Consulting | 28 years | >500 | 43:40 |
| **D** | Male | 28 | Senior Consultant | IT-Consulting | 3 years | >500 | 36:21 |
| **E** | Male | 30 | Senior Consultant | IT-Consulting | 5 years | >500 | 38:54 |
| **F** | Female | 30 | Senior Consultant | Strategy Consulting | 4,5 years | 200 | 36:49 |
| **G** | Male | 26 | Consultant | Financial Consulting | 2 years | >500 | 31:17 |
| **H** | Male | 29 | Senior Consultant | Operations Consulting | 4 years | >500 | 41:12 |
| **I** | Female | 27 | Consultant | IT-Consulting | 2,5 years | >500 | 39:24 |
| **J** | Male | 28 | Consultant | HR-Consulting | 3 years | 300 | 43:04 |
| **K** | Female | 26 | Consultant | Strategy Consulting | 2 years | >500 | 33:46 |
| **L** | Male | 29 | Consultant | Operations Consulting | 3,5 years | 250 | 28:19 |
| **M** | Male | 28 | Consultant | IT-Consulting | 4 years | >500 | 51:13 |
| **N** | Male | 33 | Senior Consultant | IT-Consulting | 6 years | 150 | 39:28 |
| **O** | Male | 28 | Consultant | HR-Consulting | 3 years | >500 | 44:18 |

The interviews were conducted using Microsoft Teams to ensure a flexible and user-friendly tool for the interviewees. To ensure the highest possible audio quality, a second laptop was used, and the audio track was recorded using the Voice Memo app. Prior to the interview, respondents were sent a consent form (see Appendix A) which explained the background of the research for this study and the rights of the participants. The email also stated that the form had to be signed and returned. The interviewees were also informed in advance of the estimated interview duration of approximately 45 minutes, in order to make it easier for them to schedule

the interview. In the email with the consent form, each interviewee was also sent a link to a Microsoft Teams meeting with the date and time.

### 3.3. Interview Guide Construction

The interview questionnaire (Appendix B) for exploring the potential of VR in the consulting industry was developed to cover a wide range of topics. The topics were divided into five main categories, with each category focusing on a specific aspect related to VR in consulting. Finally, questions covering demographic and other characterizing variables were included in a fifth category.

The first category aims to gain an understanding of the participant's current knowledge and perception of VR. This forms the basis for the following questions about VR in consulting.

The second category deals with potential challenges or barriers that can arise when introducing VR in consulting. This part of the interview addresses RQ2.

The third category of the study focuses on the main reasons for adopting VR in consulting, the factors that support this decision, and the trends that could influence it. The participants were then asked to compare the VR technology with the strategic goals of their consulting firm, to identify any previously unknown drivers, and to provide feedback on whether the adoption of VR in their consultancy is realistic and what skills and knowledge are required for a successful adoption of VR in consulting. The second category was created to answer RQ1.

The fourth category focused on applications of VR in consulting. The aim was to explore potential areas where VR could be used effectively in consulting services. Participants were asked questions to gather information on the potential application of VR in specific consulting services or areas, such as previous projects where VR was used. Additionally, the participants were asked to share their personal views on the future role of VR in consulting and their willingness to learn about VR technologies. The fourth category addresses RQ3.

The fifth category was created to analyze the impact of VR on consulting services and how it can differentiate businesses in the competitive landscape. The objective is to determine how the decision to implement VR technology can affect a company's competitiveness. This will help to answer the question of whether innovation plays a crucial role in the success of a consultancy or not and therefore addresses RQ4.

The final category covered all necessary demographic questions, including the interviewee's age, position, years of experience, and the number of employees of the consultancy. Following that, the interviewee was asked if they had any additional thoughts on the subject of VR in consulting. Lastly, the interviewee was thanked for their participation, and the audio recording was ended.

### 3.4. Conducting Interviews

The interviews were conducted in weeks 14 and 15 of 2024. The average duration of the interviews was 39:12 minutes. All interviews were conducted remotely using the Microsoft Teams application, as the participants were in different locations. Before the final interviews, a test run was conducted on 29th of March to check the efficiency and clarity of the interview questions using the first version of the questionnaire. Based on the feedback from the test run, the questions were refined. The questions were streamlined and rephrased to make them as neutral as possible so as not to indicate the direction of the answer. The results of the first test run were not used for further analysis. The revised questionnaire was then used in a second test run to ensure that the adapted questions were effective. The interviewee found the questions much more neutral and, as a result, responses were no longer biased. As the interview guide for the second test run was identical to that used for the rest of the interviews and no further changes were made, the results of the second test run were used for further analysis.

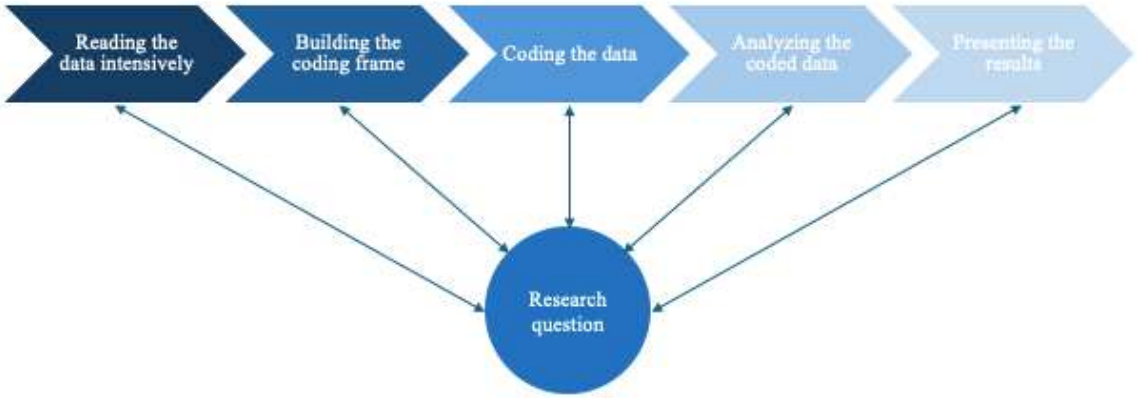
### 3.5. Evaluation of the Interviews

Before the interviews were analysed, they were transcribed using the "Transkriptor" software. The tool was chosen due to its efficiency and the ability to accurately convert audio data into text form. In addition, 30 hours were spent reviewing the transcripts and correcting linguistic ambiguities or errors without changing the meaning of the text. This improved the clarity and comprehensibility of the interviews, which is essential for a qualitative content analysis.

To facilitate the subsequent analysis, a series of codes, categories, and subcategories were introduced. These codes serve as a category construct and enable the identification and categorization of key themes and key aspects that emerged from the interviews. Appendix C provides an overview of the codes with the associated categories and subcategories. The analysis methodology is based on the Kuckartz model of qualitative content analysis. This approach enables a structured interpretation of written text to identify patterns or trends while maintaining scientific accuracy (Kuckartz, 2019). The qualitative content analysis according to

Kuckartz (2019) is based on the research questions and follows 7 specific steps, as shown in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Qualitative Content Analysis (e.g. Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2023)**




The first step is to carefully read and understand the underlying text. This is essential for a deep understanding of the text and its content in order to subsequently identify categories or themes that belong together (Kuckartz, 2023).

The second step involves the development of categories. Based on the underlying text, a set of appropriate categories is developed. The categories developed must be based either on the text (inductive) or on theoretical considerations (deductive). A combination of inductive and deductive is also possible (Kuckartz, 2023).

In the third step of the process, the textual material is coded and categorised. The relevant text passages are assigned to the predefined categories. In order to improve the category system, the transcribed interviews were reviewed from a different perspective and certain text passages were assigned to the higher-level categories and subcategories were created if necessary (Kuckartz, 2023). As a result, the final category system contained 81 categories including subcategories and a total number of 218 codes.

In the fourth step of the coding process, the categories and codes are again carefully examined to ensure accuracy and consistency. This may involve merging similar categories, converting overly broad categories into more specific ones, or re-coding certain passages of text (Kuckartz, 2023). MAXQDA software was used to facilitate the coding process and to help identify patterns in the text.

The final step is to analyse and interpret the coded material to identify patterns or relationships within the data. This involves relating the findings to the research questions and constructing a theoretical framework. The findings are then presented in a structured way, using quotations from the coded text to illustrate the main points (Kuckartz, 2023). In addition, graphs are used to visually represent the frequency of statements.

# 4. Results

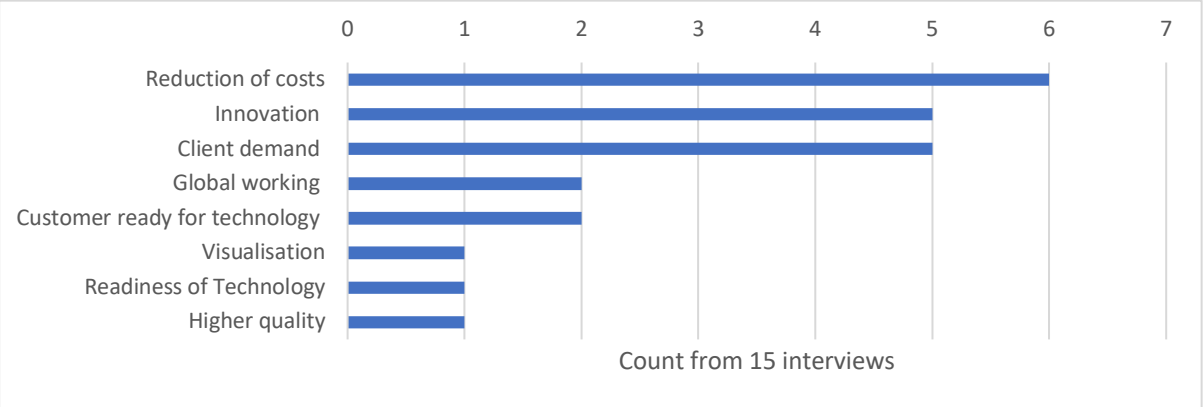
*The following chapter presents the findings of the 15 interviews, which were analysed using Kuckartz's (2019) qualitative content analysis. The analysis is divided into four main categories according to the research questions. Starting with the key drivers, the factors that favour the use of VR are explored. The second section looks at the barriers and challenges that may arise during the implementation of VR. The third chapter examines the potential applications of VR in consulting. The fourth and final chapter analyses the impact of VR on competitiveness. In each category and subcategory, only the most frequently mentioned topics are covered. The less frequently mentioned topics are only listed.*

## 4.1 Key Drivers

### *Key drivers of VR adoption*

The question of which drivers favour the use of VR resulted in a large number of different drivers. Figure 2 below lists all the drivers mentioned and shows the frequency with which they were mentioned in the interviews.

**Figure 2: Drivers x Adoption of VR**




The driver cost reduction was mentioned most frequently and covers several areas in which costs can be reduced (Interviewee_M, G). For example, travel and time costs can be reduced with the help of VR, as several customers can be trained at the same time and work can also be

carried out at different levels in different countries (Interviewee_G, 100). On top of that VR is seen as a cost-effective alternative to traditional consulting methods (Interviewee_M, 99).

Innovation is also seen as a driver of VR in consulting (Interviewee_M, C, E). Interviewee_M emphasises the importance of innovative thinking to win clients and attract the best talent (Interviewee_M, 93). It is also important to use “the latest technologies” (Interviewee_C, 94) to show clients that you are up to date and thus maintain client interest. Interviewee E also clarifies that the use of new technologies/innovative approaches drives VR´s use in consulting (Interviewee_E, 97).

Client demand was also identified as a relevant driver for VR adoption (Interviewee_H, G, F). It is also emphasised that "client demand is one of the main reasons why it's being introduced" (Interviewee_G, 84). Therefore, consultancies are forced to adapt to the wishes of their clients and "show them the possibilities and the benefits" (Interviewee_H, 83) of VR. It is important to meet customer needs to maintain the business, because "[consultancies] will do everything [...] as a service provider [...] to keep the customers" (Interviewee_F, 85).

The ability to work and interact with customers from anywhere is another key driver of VR (Interviewee_M, C). The importance of working remotely is emphasised, as consulting often involves working together in international project teams in different locations and thus offers the opportunity to network virtually (Interviewee_M, 90). The move towards a more digital world plays an important role here, because "up to now, consultants have been on site a lot and had to be here. That will change, because a lot of things can be done virtually, and can then be [implemented] in the [project] plan, or simulations can be designed and visualised for the customer." (Interviewee_C, 91).

Two interviewees mentioned the driver of customer readiness for technology (Interviewee_A, L). They described that clients are ready for VR technology and are waiting for appropriate use cases (Interviewee_A, L). As a result, customers are no longer just "buying a pair of glasses and putting them in some innovation lab and playing around [with them]" (Interviewee_L, 89), but are actively looking for suitable use cases themselves.

Furthermore, the interviewees mentioned visualisation, technology readiness, and higher quality as drivers for VR adoption, while each of those drivers were only mentioned once.

***Trends that influence the adoption of VR***

The AI trend was emphasized in connection with the adoption of VR in consulting (Interviewee_L, K, H), as AI is a “trend that goes hand in hand with VR and the whole topic has many points of contact” (Interviewee_H, 187). The importance of AI in the consulting industry is also mentioned, highlighting its increasing relevance: “[AI] is now very interesting and has a lot of potential, especially in consulting” (Interviewee_L, 185).

Sustainability initiatives influence business practices, especially regarding reducing carbon footprints (Interviewee_M, O, F). In particular, it is mentioned that consultancies try "to travel less for sustainable reasons" (Interviewee_M, 196). Therefore, several consultancies focus on campaigns such as "to be carbon neutral by 2040" (Interviewee_O, 197), which can be achieved with the help of VR, as the consultants have "more online meetings [and] less on-site meetings" (Interviewee_F, 198).

The Interviewee_B, E, F, A, H mentioned the trends of digitalisation, smaller projects, higher relevance in the near future, covid and cheaper hardware as trends that support the adoption of VR in consulting. However, these trends were mentioned only once each.

***Willingness to learn about VR***

Regarding the willingness to learn about VR, there is a clear positive attitude among consultants towards engaging with the new technology (Interviewee_N, G, J). It is emphasised that consultants "have to be at the forefront of [this technology] and be able to offer this to the clients" (Interviewee_N, 208). Moreover, consultants “never stop learning [and] always want to keep up with the time” (Interviewee_G, 213). Otherwise, [consulting firms] won´t be able to compete on the markets in the long term” (Interviewee_J, 211).

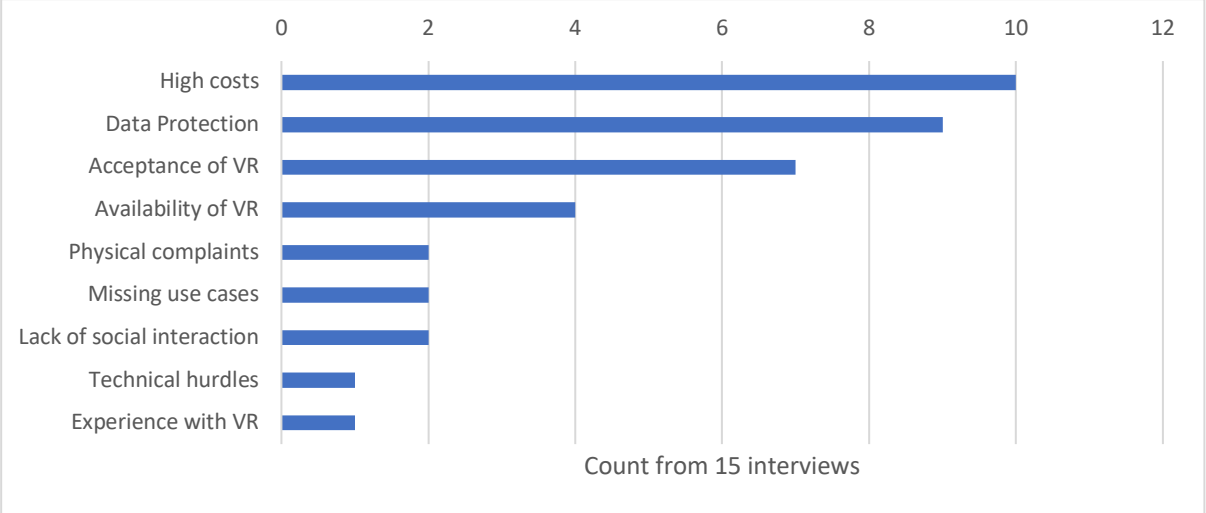
Only one interviewee mentioned that he would rather choose to learn about other topics such as ESG or Gen AI instead of VR (Interviewee_D, 207).

## 4.2 Barriers and Challenges

***Barriers and challenges that arise with the adoption of VR in consulting***

To answer the second research question, interviewees were asked about potential barriers and challenges associated with the adoption of VR in consulting. The frequency of responses is shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Barriers and Challenges x Adoption of VR**




The adoption of VR is a major challenge for consultancies, especially in view of the considerable initial costs involved (Interviewee_M, J, O, B). Since the VR glasses require regular updates and are also used by inexperienced people, increasing the likelihood of damage and subsequent replacement (Interviewee_J, 53), consultancies would generally face a "huge investment" (Interviewee_M, 52). With an average price estimated at around 500 Euros, this poses a significant barrier to adoption (Interviewee_B, 61). Furthermore, the cost-benefit factor is an important consideration: while there are already suitable use cases that illustrate the potential benefits of VR, many clients value its costs higher than the benefits (Interviewee_O, 54). As a result, VR's cost-benefit factor is perceived as too high (Interviewee_O, 54).

Next on, data protection was identified as one of the key challenges in the adoption of VR (Interviewee_I, H, G). This is because "data privacy always plays a role [in the adoption] of new technologies" (Interviewee_I, 43). The question of how to handle sensitive data in this VR context was identified as pertinent when considering customer data, since it has to be handled with confidentiality (Interviewee_H, 45). Additionally, there is the issue of the ineffectiveness of data processing and the lack of transparency regarding the final storage of collected data while using VR (Interviewee_G, 46).

Furthermore, when considering the adoption of VR, the challenge of acceptance was mentioned seven times (Interviewee_M, G, C). There seems to be a considerable degree of resistance to change, particularly among those who are reluctant to embrace new technologies and continue to rely on their established tools (Interviewee_M, 31). In particular, older individuals who are less adept at navigating new technologies present a significant challenge in persuading them to explore or even adopt these technologies (Interviewee_G, 32). Furthermore, it can be challenging to persuade both customers and employees of the merits of new technologies such as VR (Interviewee_C, 36).

Other challenges and barriers identified include the availability of VR, physical complaints, missing use cases, lack of social interaction, technical barriers, and previous experience with VR.

***Skills and knowledge that are required for VR***

As a basis, technological understanding is required for the adoption of VR in consulting (Interviewee_M, L, O). Consultants "really [need] to understand the use cases" (Interviewee_M, 143) and must have a good technical understanding of this technology in order to advise their clients in this regard. A "typical or classic basic understanding of technology is definitely required" (Interviewee_L, 144) in order to fully leverage the potential of VR.

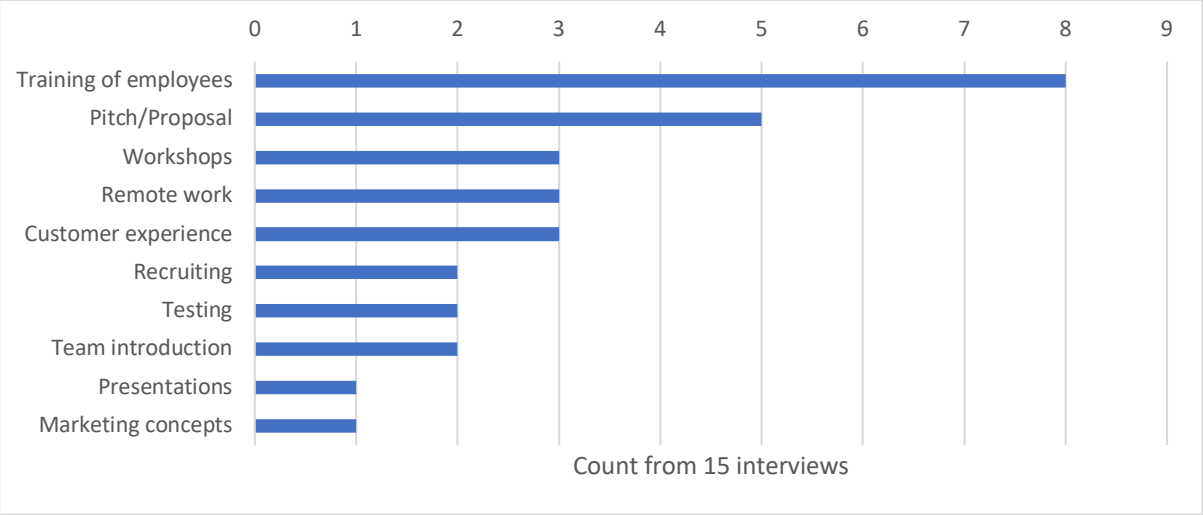
Only two of the interviewees indicated that no specific skills or knowledge are required to adopt VR in consulting (Interviewee_G, B).

## 4.3 Application Areas

### *Application Areas of VR in Consulting*

To address the third research question, the interviewees were asked about potential application areas of VR in consulting. The responses are illustrated in Figure 4, where the frequency of each response is indicated.

**Figure 4: Application Areas of VR in Consulting**




In the context of VR in consulting, the potential for staff training is a particularly prominent area of application (Interviewee_M, H, O). Especially the area of onboarding can be supported by facilitating the training and induction of new employees (Interviewee_M, 20). In addition, VR can be used to create "training content for projects for the customer" (Interviewee_H, 21), providing an immersive experience.

The use of VR in pitches offers consultancies another potential application area (Interviewee_N, J, E). Interviewee_E highlights the "wow factor" that arises for the client when VR is used in pitches, which "makes an offer seem cooler and more convincing", thus creating a competitive advantage (Interviewee_E, 9). If different concepts are presented in the pitch and a consultancy realises this with the help of “tangible VR, then of course [it] has a completely different effect” compared to conventional presentations and therefore enables a more convincing pitch (Interviewee_J, 7).

Next, remote work is also seen as one of the main areas of application for VR in consulting, as consultants "don't always have to be on site with the client" (Interviewee_F, 13) using VR. This way, consultants “can be available everywhere and interact and communicate with companies via the new technology” (Interviewee_C, 14). By using the newest technology in consulting

services, VR can act as a bridge to “tech-savvy” clients who want to be up to date with the latest technological trends (Interviewee_C, 14).

The interviewees also identified further areas of application, namely customer experience, marketing concepts, presentations, recruiting, team introduction, testing, and workshops.

***Future role of VR in consulting***

When asked about the future role of VR in consulting, seven interviewees described VR as a “supporting tool that can generate added value but does not contribute to the content aspect” (Interviewee_I, 122). Nevertheless, Interviewee H mentioned that VR can only be used as a tool in "a very small percentage of projects" (Interviewee_H, 114), like larger projects where VR is seen as an "add-on and a nice to have" (Interviewee_F, 115). Still, interviewee F believes that VR does not contribute to the success of a project (Interviewee_F, 115).

Apart from that, other interviewees mentioned that VR is not a standard tool and that it rather serves as a communication medium (Interviewee_A, N, B, D).

***VR compatibility with consulting***

The interviewees almost unanimously agree that VR can improve consultancy services. In particular, the compatibility of VR in consulting is emphasised, as interviewee J mentions: "if [VR] can make ideas more tangible and experiential, then that is a clear competitive advantage over others and suitable for the consulting industry" (Interviewee_J, 201). It is also mentioned that VR contributes to "achieving […] strategic goals" (Interviewee_A, 206), which are increasingly expanding in the direction of innovation. VR also makes an important contribution to greater sustainability thanks to the multiple possibilities of virtual working, as VR is "definitely in the spirit of sustainability" (Interviewee_F, 202).

### 4.4 Competitive Advantage

***Competitive advantage with VR***

On the one hand, ten interviewees state that the adoption of VR contributes significantly to creating a competitive advantage, as the timely adoption of the technology helps to differentiate from other players in a highly competitive environment. This is referred to as being a "first mover" (Interviewee_O, 82), which allows consultancies to "develop and discover new ways of using VR in different areas" (Interviewee_O, 82). VR can also be used to facilitate client acquisition, as the client's understanding of complex problems is improved by a "direct visual look at what the project should look like" (Interviewee_L, 76). On the other hand, two of the

interviewees said that they were unsure whether VR would contribute to a competitive advantage because they were sceptical about the immediate benefits and whether VR had progressed far enough to establish itself in consulting (Interviewee_F, D). Lastly, three interviewees were sure that the adoption of VR would not give them an advantage over their competitors due to the lack of use cases, the small number of VR projects and the resistance to adapt to new technologies (Interviewee_M, E, C).

***Competitive advantage with innovation***

Innovation is a key factor in gaining a competitive advantage, especially in the consulting industry. Innovative technologies and approaches can often be the deciding factor in winning or losing a project, by setting you apart from your competitors (Interviewee_K, 130). Just as important is the need to be up to date and to be able to provide clients with the latest and most innovative solutions (Interviewee_L, 129). In addition, demonstrating to clients that a consulting firm is well-informed about a new technology gives them an advantage over their competitors, and ultimately increases the likelihood of success and customer satisfaction at the end of a project (Interviewee_I, 131). Only one interviewee was unsure whether innovation can have an impact on consultancies' competitive advantage, as it is more important to focus on the big picture than solely on innovation (Interviewee_A, 140).

# 5. Discussion

*In this chapter, the literature findings are compared and linked to the results of the interviews, and the key theoretical and empirical findings are discussed and explained in relation to the research questions.*

## 5.1 Interpretation of the Results

To gain an overview of the potential of VR in the consulting industry, an interview guide was developed and conducted with 15 interviewees. The 15 interviewees are consultants from the Austria, Germany and Switzerland region working in a variety of industries.

The results of the first research question identified cost reduction, innovation, customer demand and global working as the main drivers for the adoption of VR in consulting. The second research question focuses on potential barriers and challenges to the adoption of VR in consulting and identified high cost, data privacy, acceptance and availability of VR as key concerns. The third research question focuses on potential areas of application in consulting, with employee training, creation of pitches/proposals, workshops and remote working

identified as the most suitable areas for VR. Finally, the fourth research question focused on the contribution of VR to gain a competitive advantage.

### 5.2 Key Drivers of VR Adoption

The interviewees identified cost reduction as a relevant driver, which is also supported by the existing literature, particularly Lawson et al. (2016) and Wohlgenannt et al. (2020), which discuss the general economic benefits of VR. The results of the interviews confirm this by identifying a number of mechanisms for cost savings in consultancy. Interviewee_M emphasises that VR is a cost-efficient alternative to traditional consultancy methods, particularly in terms of saving travel costs and time (Interviewee_M, 99). This reinforces the points made by Lawson et al. (2016), but also extends their framework by showing how VR can help to operate more efficiently in the consultancy sector, thereby reducing costs and increasing productivity. In addition, the literature by Badamasi et al. (2021) mentions that VR can help to eliminate material costs such as paper for flipcharts, which is consistent with the statements of interviewee K from a consulting perspective (Interviewee_K, 101).

Furthermore, both the interviewees and the literature mentioned innovation as a key driver. Both mentioned that providing innovative solutions to customers is crucial to improving the customer experience and retaining customers (Di Stefano et al., 2012; Interviewee_M, 93). While interviewees also highlighted the benefits of innovation in attracting employees (Interviewee_M, 93), the existing literature tends to focus on a more general approach to innovative thinking in the consulting industry (Wedel, 2020).

Existing literature has not yet thoroughly identified client demand for VR in consulting. As the topic of VR is quite new, especially in this particular field, the interviewees provided relevant and timely new insights. In line with this, Interviewee_G emphasised that "client demand is one of the main reasons why it's being introduced" (Interviewee_G, 84) in consultancy practices (Interviewee_H, G, F, C, B). As consultancies, as service providers, take a proactive approach to meeting client expectations, this insight enriches the literature on client expectations and demand in the consulting industry.

Increased and improved remote working and interaction, especially with the help of VR glasses, is very relevant in the consulting industry and is driven by trends such as digital transformation. Wei et al. (2019) discuss how immersive experiences can be created with VR despite working digitally, which is extended by the findings of this study in relation to the consulting industry. For instance, C emphasises the role of VR in creating and visualising project results remotely,

improving both communication and the results of remote work (Interviewee_C, 91). The statements of the interviewees support and even extend the existing literature by showing how the ability of VR can help to improve complex projects in international teams by enhancing the interaction within the team and with the client.

Linking these results to the UTAUT2 model, the three components most frequently mentioned by the respondents were: performance expectancy, price value, and social influence. In terms of performance expectancy, respondents J, C, E and A (92, 105, 97, 104) mentioned VR's ability to improve output quality, efficiency, and innovative approaches, which can subsequently improve work performance. The value of the component price was mentioned by six respondents. For example, interviewee M highlights the cost effectiveness of VR, while interviewee K mentions in particular the savings in travel and material costs (Interviewee_K, 101). Finally, the social influence component was mentioned often as well. Client demand plays an important role in the adoption of VR in consulting. Social influence, for instance as discussed by F, shows the significant influence of client demand on the adoption of VR in consulting (Interviewee_F, 85). The facilitating conditions component, although very present in the literature, was barely mentioned in the interviews, suggesting a possible gap between its theoretical importance and practical considerations when adopting VR. This suggests that while performance, cost and social factors are essential, further research may be needed to better understand the role of facilitating conditions in the adoption of VR in consulting.

Trends such as the adoption of AI and sustainability, as well as consultants' positive attitudes towards learning with VR technology, support the above drivers and show that the consulting industry is ready to use new technologies to its strategic advantage. The insights from the interviews underline the willingness of the consulting industry to adopt new technologies such as VR to remain competitive.

### 5.3 Barriers and Challenges

The results of the interviews showed that the high initial monetary investment for the adoption of VR in the consulting industry is one of the main barriers. Contrary to that, the literature is very optimistic for the most part here. For instance, Masqoom et al. (2023) describe the cost-effectiveness in relation to the long-term viability of VR in various industries. Nevertheless, the authors still highlight the cost dynamics to be greatly dependant on the respective consulting area (Masqoom et al., 2023). While the literature acknowledges that, the interviewees' responses indicate a financial burden across all consulting areas, starting with the initial

monetary investment as well as the ongoing maintenance costs of the new technology (Interviewee_H, M, O). In particular, Interviewee_M highlights the “huge investment” (Interviewee_M, 52), which includes hardware costs and regular updates, as a significant barrier for consultancies.

Next, both, the interviewees and the existing literature identified data protection as a challenge in adopting VR in consulting. Tikkini Piri et al. (2017) discuss the very strict requirements of data protection laws, such as GDPR, and highlights the difficulties that technologies such as VR pose. This challenge is supported by the results of the interviews, such as Interviewee_N, who points out the difficulty of reconciling VR with existing data protection laws, given the large amount of client data that is processed when using VR (Interviewee_N, 43). These complaints are also reflected in the literature as Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson (2006) found it to be very complicated for consultancies to navigate the different regulatory environments. Consultancies are especially subject to that because of the many different industries their clients are in (e.g. Interviewee_D, 48).

Maqsoom et al. (2023) found that cultural resistance to VR in a business context is a major barrier to the adoption of VR. This is consistent with the findings of this study: there seems to be a general reluctance to embrace new technologies in the consulting industry, which has a negative impact on the acceptance of VR (Interviewee_M, 31; Interviewee_G, 32). In particular, older people are less familiar with new technologies and are unlikely to find VR useful or easy to use (Interviewee_G, 32). This is in line with the proposed Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which suggests that perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) are critical to technology adoption (Al-Gahtani, 1999). In addition, interviewees mentioned the challenge of convincing both clients and staff of the benefits of VR (Interviewee_C, 36), which relates directly to Maqsoom et al.'s (2023) concerns about the general readiness of the industries to adopt VR.

The results of the interviews also revealed that the issue of skills and knowledge is central to the adoption of VR. For instance, Interviewee_M emphasised that consultants "really [need] to understand the use cases and have a solid technical knowledge" (Interviewee_M, 143) in order to provide the best possible advice to their clients. The literature also highlights the importance of technical skills for the successful adoption of new innovative technologies in project-based industries such as consulting (Serrador &. Pinto, 2015). It is argued that a lack of solid technical

knowledge weakens the efficiency of the adoption of new technologies and inevitably leads to less efficient project results (Serrador & Pinto, 2015).

### 5.4 Application Areas

The interviews revealed that VR has great potential in the field of consulting, particularly for onboarding and training consultants (Interviewee_M, 20). This aligns with existing literature such as Jensen and Konradsen (2017), who emphasize the benefits of stress-free learning environments through VR, allowing consultants to practice and test their newly acquired skills. This indicates that VR is an effective tool for training and supports the idea that immersive learning environments enhance the understanding of complex topics. Additionally, the potential for providing specialized training to clients has not been thoroughly explored in existing literature, indicating a need for further research into the use of VR for client training.

The use of VR in the creation of proposals and presentations allows for the introduction of a "wow factor" (Interviewee_E, 9) that can potentially improve the overall impression of the proposal. This finding extends the existing literature, which generally focuses on the benefits of conveying and communicating information through VR (Dam & Simpson, 2002). The use of VR in pitches reflects a strategic use of the technology not only to improve the presentation of data but also to increase the understanding of potential customers at the proposal stage (Interviewee_J, 7). This is an indication of the potential of VR in conjunction with customer engagement strategies.

In line with the existing literature (Wei et al., 2019), the interviews confirm that VR in conjunction with remote work leads to a significant increase in efficiency through more visual work and increased interaction (Interviewee_F,13; Interviewee_C, 14). This finding extends the literature as it only focuses on the technical functionality of VR but does not take into account that the use of VR can also provide a sense of presence despite physical distance.

On top of that, most interviewees identified VR as a supporting tool that does not add value to the creation of project-relevant content (Interviewee_I, 122). This view is shared by some interviewees, such as interviewee F, who sees VR only as an add-on, not as a tool that contributes significantly to the project's success (Interviewee_F, 115). This is consistent with the literature, which suggests that VR will bring improvements in some application areas but will complement rather than replace traditional methods (Wei et al., 2019).

Finally, the prevailing opinion is that the use of VR is compatible with the consulting industry due to its ability to make ideas more tangible and experiential (Interviewee_J, 201). This is also in line with the literature, as Jensen and Konradson (2017) highlight the experiential learning capabilities of VR as a strategic advantage in consulting. Linking VR to the achievement of strategic and sustainability goals extends the literature by linking technological innovations such as VR to goals such as sustainability.

### 5.5 Competitive Advantage

The results of the interviews underline the important role of VR in creating competitive advantage through differentiation in the consulting industry. For example, interviewee N emphasised that VR “fits into our strategy [...] differentiates us from the competition” (Interviewee_N, 23), highlighting the potential to create a unique market position. This is consistent with the existing literature on differentiation strategy, which contributes to how this strategy allows companies to charge a premium for their unique services (Bredrup, 1995). Interviewee_K added that a new approach with VR "increases customer cooperation and satisfaction" (Interviewee_K, 31), emphasizing on the role of technology in improving customer relationships. This echoes the findings of Clark and Finchams (2002) and Nanda (1996) on the importance of reducing customer bargaining power by providing greater value to customers. This literature suggests that client satisfaction is crucial to creating competitive advantage in the consulting industry. It also emphasises the importance of early adoption of VR and a first mover position that enables effective differentiation from competitors (e.g. Interviewee_O, 47). This is consistent with Christensen et al.'s (2013) idea that early adoption and innovation can significantly improve competitive position by reducing the risk of substitution.

Innovation plays a central role in creating competitive advantage in consulting. Interviewee K mentions that innovative technologies and approaches "are often the deciding factor [between] winning [and] losing a project, as they set you apart from your competitors" (Interviewee_K, 130). This is in line with the literature describing how innovation can differentiate a company from its competitors and thus achieve a unique position in the market (Bredrup, 1995). Furthermore, it is crucial to continually offer the latest and most innovative solutions to clients (e.g. Interviewee_L, 129). This statement supports the findings of Kippings and Armbruster (2002) on the need for innovation to maintain competitiveness.

## 5.6 Implications

It is likely that the adoption of VR will continue to be relevant for consultancies in the coming years. It is therefore important for consultancies to think about adopting VR into their services. The findings of this study contribute to this understanding and provide insights into the key drivers, barriers, application areas and competitive advantages associated with the adoption of VR in consulting. While the general benefits of VR have been mentioned in the literature (Lawson et al., 2016; Wei et al., 2019), this thesis focuses on the consulting industry to provide a differentiated view in this area.

The use of VR in consulting offers a number of practical benefits, such as cost reduction, improved client engagement and remote working capabilities, as well as creating a competitive advantage through differentiation and increased client satisfaction. Despite high internal costs, data privacy concerns and resistance to change, the current research suggests that the strategic benefits outweigh the barriers if managed effectively. This research provides theoretical implications on the technology acceptance literature by highlighting the importance of the following three components in relation to VR: performance expectation, price, and social influence. It also introduces the role of customer demand as an additional driver for VR in consulting and highlights the positive influence of trends such as digital transformation and sustainability initiatives on the adoption of VR.

While high costs and privacy concerns are significant barriers, long-term benefits such as reduced travel and training costs may outweigh these challenges. The increasing focus on sustainability and positive attitudes towards new technologies constitute further support for the adoption of VR in consulting, suggesting that these trends will further facilitate adoption.

To realise the full potential of VR managerial implications for consultancies, organisations should include investing in training to ensure consultants have the necessary technical skills, implementing robust data protection measures to address privacy concerns, and engaging with clients by demonstrating the value of VR through successful use cases. By phasing in VR and highlighting the environmental benefits to attract new clients, consultancies can strategically position themselves to capitalise on the benefits of VR. In summary, despite the barriers and challenges, the strategic advantages of VR, including cost savings, innovation, and competitive differentiation, represent a valuable investment for consultancies.

This study contributes to the literature and practice on the adoption of new technologies in consultancy, particularly in relation to VR. Nevertheless, the research must be considered in the light of its limitations, which are outlined in the following section.

### 5.7 Limitations and further research

Several limitations, including the selection of participants, the methodology and the interview approach, limit the validity of this study. The sample, consisting mainly of consultants from Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, was relatively homogeneous despite efforts to achieve greater diversification. This may have limited the applicability of the findings to other sectors and companies. As most of the respondents had a similar background and specialisation, this may have skewed the results somewhat. In addition, the fact that the interviews were conducted virtually may have influenced the depth and quality of the responses.

The regional focus of the study limits the generalisability of the results for the consulting industry, as cultural or organisational differences may influence the adoption of VR. Future research should therefore include more diverse samples from different regions and consulting areas to improve the generalisability of this study.

Based on the findings of this study, it is suggested that future studies should also explore factors such as organisational culture, leadership styles and employees' willingness to adopt VR in consulting to provide a more comprehensive understanding of its implementation and effectiveness. Likewise, comparative studies across different countries/regions could provide useful insights into regional and cultural influences on the adoption of VR in consulting.

Moreover, a quantitative study could be conducted to compare consulting firms that use VR and those that do not. The study would help determine whether VR is a real competitive advantage, as indicated by respondents, by collecting measurable data on performance and customer satisfaction.

## 6. Conclusion

This thesis identifies the key drivers, barriers, applications areas, and competitive advantages of adopting VR in consulting. By conducting and analysing 15 interviews, it was found that cost reduction, innovation, client demand and the ability to work globally are critical to the successful adoption of VR in consulting. Conversely, high internal costs, data privacy concerns, resistance to change and the need for technical skills are significant barriers. These findings

confirm and add to the existing literature on the subject by demonstrating how the potential of VR can improve project outcomes and client engagement in consulting.

In addition, areas of application for VR in consulting include VR training opportunities, the use of VR in pitches and improved remote working, providing practical insights into how consultancies can use VR to increase efficiency and client satisfaction. The role of VR in creating competitive advantage by differentiating from competitors and improving client interaction demonstrates the strategic importance of VR.

In summary, this thesis provides valuable insights and practical advice for consultancies considering adopting VR. In particular, it emphasises that VR can contribute significantly to a competitive advantage in a rapidly evolving digital environment. Consultancies are encouraged to adopt VR into their services, ensuring they address the potential barriers to fully leverage the benefits.

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# Appendix

## Appendix A: Consent form


## Declaration of consent for the interview

| | |
|---|---|
| Research project: | Adopting Virtual Reality in Consulting. An empirical study on drivers, barriers, challenges, and competitive advantage of VR adoption in consulting |
| Implementing institution: | Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics |
| Supervision: | Professor Ana Filipa Martinho de Almeida |
| Interviewer: | Tim Hartmuth |
| Interview date: | dd.mm.yyyy |
| Interview acronyms: | |

I agree to participate in an interview as part of the aforementioned research project. I have been informed about the aim and the course of the research project

I agree that the interview may be recorded with a recording device and transcribed using the "transcriptor" tool. The audio files will be stored under a token and deleted at the end of the project on 30.06.2024. The transcripts of the interviews will be stored anonymously, i.e. without names and personal details. The scientific evaluation of the interview texts will be carried out by the researcher of this study (Tim Hartmuth).

I agree that individual sentences from the transcripts, which cannot be associated with me, may be used as material for scientific and educational purposes.

My participation in the interview and my consent to the use of the data as described above is voluntary. I have the right to withdraw my consent at any time. I will not suffer any disadvantages as a result of refusal or withdrawing my consent. I have the right to access, rectify, block and delete, restrict processing, object to further processing and data portability of my personal data.

| | |
|---|---|
| Place, date, signature of interviewee | Place, date, signature of interviewer |

## Appendix B: Interview questionnaire

**Understanding VR:**
1. What is your current understanding of VR technology?
2. What is your current understanding of VR in a business context?
3. Have you come across any discussions or information about VR in your professional network or industry news? What was the context?

**Key drivers:**
1. Can you describe any specific factors that might lead your company to consider or adopt VR technology?
2. Can you describe any specific trends that might lead your company to consider or adopt VR technology?
3. Consider your firm's strategic objectives, does VR technology align with those?
4. Does client demand play a role in your decision to use VR technology consulting services? If so, which?
5. Are there any skills and knowledge required to adopt VR? If so, which?

**Barriers and challenges**
1. Are there challenges a consultancy may face when adopting VR technology? If so, what are the main challenges?
2. How do you feel about the technology of VR?
3. Do you have any concerns or hesitations regarding VR?
4. How would you address the challenges or hesitations just mentioned?

**Areas of application**
1. Are there any specific consulting areas or services where you think VR could be adopted?
2. Can you provide an example of how VR has been used in a consulting project or initiative within your firm?
3. Does the use of VR influence the engagement with clients and their satisfaction with consulting services? If so, how?
4. How do you see the future role of VR in consulting services?
5. Are you willing to invest time or resources in learning about VR in the future?

**Competitive advantage**
1. Does VR technology help to differentiate your consulting services from those of your competitors? If so, how?
2. Do you think the decision to adopt/not adopt new technologies, like VR, may influence the competitiveness of a consultancy?
3. Do you think there is a short-term or long-term impact when adopting VR in consulting services? If so, what?
4. Is it important for a consultancy to be innovative in order to stay competitive?

**Demographic questions:**
1. How old are you?
2. How long have you been in your current position?
3. What is your position?
4. What part of your organisation do you work in?
5. How many employees does the organisation you work for have?

## Appendix C: Summary of interviews / category system

| Category: Application Areas of VR in Consulting | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category Description: Includes use cases of VR within the consulting industry** | | | | |
| **Subcategory** | **#** | **Interviewee** | **Segment** | **Frequency** |
| **Customer experience** | 1 | **B** | Yes, definitely custom experience themes. Especially in fashion, design and maybe automotive, where you don't want to stop at every store in the world, but you still want to give people the experience of touching it, or seeing it realistically, or seeing how it looks on people, so imitating a material in the digital world. I think that makes sense. I think it's more difficult with services. But if you have a custom experience department that looks at how you can make interfaces better or use cases for the beginning. | **3** |
| | 2 | **C** | But if, as I said, you specialise in custom experience design or something like that, then I think it will be a tool that will be used a lot. | |
| | 3 | **A** | Then, if we go a little bit in the direction of customer experience, maybe when you're developing a new store concept or something like that, you could have some test customers or something. | |
| **Marketing concepts** | 4 | **J** | Well, for me the biggest added value is definitely in the marketing concepts, in the product innovation areas, because I was just talking about these showrooms or marketing concepts that can be experienced, so before they are implemented, to show the customer what it can really look like and at the same time it can also help the consultant to see how my concept actually works before I present it to the customer. So I can also rethink my own proposal, how does it affect me, or I can also use resonance loops in companies without them having to read into big concepts. They can experience it quite quickly because they can go straight into the end product, even though it hasn't even been produced yet, it's already been created in the virtual space. | **1** |
| **Pitch** | 5 | **N** | When it comes to pitches, it's also interesting for management consultants to offer additional services, so to speak, or simply to do a lot of pitches. | **5** |
| | 6 | **I** | For example, you could use it when you are preparing a proposal or something like that, to be able to tell the customer exactly how you see things, how something like that might look, and to be able to convince the customer instead of just doing a standard PowerPoint, but maybe you could just use it as a competitive advantage. | |
| | 7 | **J** | And even if I am one step ahead of the offer, I can show that in the first pitches. If I'm pitching different concepts to another company and I'm the one doing it with a tangible virtual reality, then of course that has a completely different effect than if I'm presenting it to the other company with slides, for example. | |
| | 8 | **F** | So if the customer gets some kind of proposal from you, so to speak, that the customer puts on a pair of glasses and then instead of seeing a PowerPoint, for example, it's somehow done virtually step by step. As a PowerPoint alternative for the future, that would certainly be one thing, but maybe if you could somehow, I think it could also be a help for the consultants, because it's also a challenge for the consultants that they always have to put themselves in the customer's shoes first and understand how the customer's business works. | |

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| | 9 | **E** | What would be interesting to look at now is that with larger pitches you always build in a kind of wow factor. People actually like to do that because it makes an offer seem cooler and more convincing. Let's say it's a digital model or something and I bring VR glasses and the customer can look at it directly. That would be really cool, of course, and in that sense it could be a competitive advantage. | |
| **Presentation** | 10 | **L** | For example, I can think of areas where visuals are really important. In other words, if you're creating a communication strategy or something like that, there might be different visual elements built into it that you could incorporate into a VR area, or if I'm thinking about structures or something like that, I can also imagine a cool way to present a strategy or a role, I think it would make it even easier to present everything visually in a VR context. | **1** |
| **Recruiting** | 11 | **F** | Yes, internally I could imagine that it might be quite interesting, for example in the application process, because we consultancies always have a relatively fancy approach anyway. | **2** |
| | 12 | **B** | Maybe for job interviews, where you use it for attracting talents. | |
| **Remote work** | 13 | **F** | I think it can also ensure that advisors don't always have to be on-site with the client. | **3** |
| | 14 | **C** | In my opinion, the advantage of virtual reality in management consulting is that the consultant doesn't necessarily have to be on site and travel across the country to provide companies with the relevant expertise or advice, but can be available anywhere and interact and communicate with companies via the new technology and then also give advice. It should also be noted that the clients of management consultancies are becoming more and more tech-savvy, so they want to be kept up to date, they want to see and experience the new technology and they also want to know where this new technology can be used and put to good use. | |
| | 15 | **A** | I could imagine that if you've seen these fake faces, that would strengthen the customer relationship or customer loyalty more than if you were just talking on the phone via Teams or Zoom or whatever. So I could really see this being a point that would strengthen customer loyalty even more, especially in projects where there is actually a lot of remote working. | |
| **Team introduction** | 16 | **M** | I think it's only in the area of prototyping, or maybe to get to know each other, when you are introducing the team to your clients to give them a unique introduction. | **2** |
| | 17 | **F** | And that instead of a rather boring, simple, familiar PowerPoint, you put a pair of glasses on the client and they get to know the team, for example, and perhaps have a personal relationship with the consultants, even if not all of them are always on site. | |
| **Testing** | 18 | **C** | And you can realistically participate in the processes that take place in the company, intervene in certain circumstances, but not in real life, only in virtual reality, so you can simulate what happens if I do this and that, and also prevent it. | **2** |
| | 19 | **A** | So if one of our engineers is working on a project and they have to design a gearwheel for a gearbox, for example, they can look at it in 3D in the VR glasses to check if all buttons fit and are placed at the correct position. | |
| | 20 | **M** | Exactly, but I think it has a huge potential, especially in the area of training. I think that's why maybe you should be so driven, so I think probably | |

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| | | | really onboarding training is a good use case for VR. | |
| | 21 | **H** | One example would be in a training context, when you design training content for projects for the customer. | |
| | 22 | **L** | The first example that comes to mind is training. Giving training workshops. | |
| | 23 | **F** | For example, the consultants, especially when new colleagues start, interns start, are trained at the beginning with the help of these VR glasses. I think that's particularly attractive because it's very digital and you can probably get to know the consulting business relatively quickly, but you can also do further training. And I think it's particularly attractive for training in a technical context, for example training people on process automation or artificial intelligence, if I can do it with VR glasses and not have to write it down on paper. | |
| **Training of employees** | 24 | **C** | One of the advantages of VR is that employees can be trained much more quickly than in conventional ways. And the participants can put the training into practice in a much more meaningful way. This is also a big advantage. The training is a huge time saver because employees no longer have to travel so far, which also eliminates the cost of travel. certainly the fun factor that could be increased by using the new technology. | **8** |
| | 25 | **B** | Yes, for training, maybe something else that has just come to my mind is that you don't just have to watch videos that you just have on the site, and that you can actually do face-to-face training with people in national training courses and not always have to fly somewhere or get together in Frankfurt or somewhere to meet a thousand people. | |
| | 26 | **A** | In the training of employees in production, in manufacturing, for example, that they now build computer tomographs together, that they don't really look at it on paper and train for the first time, but then really get a virtual drill in their hands in a virtual environment, or a cordless screwdriver, and then just put this thing together. | |
| | 27 | **O** | Yes, so these initial training courses that are held, for example, would probably not arouse too much enthusiasm among most employees. | |
| | 28 | **E** | And the second big area would really be the digital workplace. Anything that goes in the direction of meetings that I can do more digitally, more virtually. I think there will also be an application area in the future if companies are open to experimenting with digital workshops. | |
| **Workshops** | 29 | **D** | One thing you could do as a management consultant is this classic workshop in a virtual space. You have the whiteboards up virtually and you can put notes on them and things like that. And you could do that instead of sharing screens with teams and provide the client a unique experience with workshops. | **3** |
| | 30 | **A** | workshops that you do together with the customer in dialog, where they can walk around a bit with the world and explore something, where it might just be a bit different to get people out of their everyday lives a bit and offer them a cool environment, which of course helps them to see Caprini in a more innovative light, also in the direction of events, so now somehow speaker events that no longer take place in some cool hotel, | |

| Category: Barriers and Challenges x VR | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Category Description: Barriers and Challenges associated with the adoption of VR | | | | |
| **Subcategory** | **#** | **Interviewee** | **Segment** | **Frequency** |
| **Acceptance of VR** | 31 | **M** | That's why I think, as with any new technology, there are still people who refuse to use it, who say I don't want to use the technology, I want to do it the way I've always done it. | **7** |
| | 32 | **G** | Of course, there is always the barrier of older people who are not so good with technology. It is also usually difficult for them to learn, or they are unwilling to learn. I don't think you have the technical limitations of VR yet. | |
| | 33 | **F** | Then there's the technical understanding and also the acceptance that colleagues, perhaps older colleagues in particular, who aren't quite as open to completely new technologies, will put up a bit of resistance. | |
| | 34 | **H** | And it's the same with the customer, the technical acceptance, it's often the case that it all sounds super fancy and then when the customers have to work with it they realise, oh, something doesn't work and then they get frustrated and don't want to do it anymore. | |
| | 35 | **O** | I would have a more general concern that it might not catch on in the company as a whole, because maybe a lot of people are still sceptical, because I don't think it's a technology that's super, super widespread yet. | |
| | 36 | **C** | I wouldn't have any reservations myself, but you have to convince the team behind you, the team behind all the processes. It is certainly difficult to convince the internal customers of the company that there is a new technology that simplifies certain things. Because companies have a stuffing mentality. Business as usual is going well, why should we do something new? We don't know the technology. There's always a certain reluctance where internal people say no, we won't do it. So it will certainly take a lot of convincing to get internal people to look at it and try it out. | |
| | 37 | **A** | I could imagine that acceptance by employees would be a problem in many customer companies. | |
| **Availability of VR** | 38 | **M** | Yes, I think the second challenge is simply the technical nature of the glasses, that they just have to be up to date and are available in the required number. | **4** |
| | 39 | **E** | I don't think there are 100 VR glasses around everywhere in consulting, but they also cost a lot of money, so you can somehow say we're going to use them now and take them to the customer. That's why I think a lot of people are still a bit prejudiced, it costs a lot of money and I would have to start with that. | |
| | 40 | **C** | And, of course, the key to using this VR technology is having the right equipment, i.e. VR glasses. These must be available to both the consultant and the client so that both can use, apply and visualise the technology. | |
| | 41 | **A** | The availability of sufficient technology is a bit of a problem. So I think for it to really be used on a large scale, it's not enough to have three VR glasses in some small room in some office across the country, but it's probably really the difficulty of getting the step of the technologies that everyone is trying out into the individual industries in a concrete way. So | |

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| | | | that people have enough time and skills to really think about what we can do. | |
| **Data Protection** | 42 | **N** | Yes, data privacy is certainly an issue. I think it's possible to track what a person is actually doing, or you can even sort of assume that the person is wearing it for an hour or so, which is a big intrusion into a person's visual perception. And yes, that's why there will be people who find it uncomfortable and awkward to wear VR glasses for long periods of time. | **9** |
| | 43 | **I** | Yes, I have the feeling that data privacy always plays a role in all new technologies in Germany. So it will play a role there too. Yes, it will. The thing is, of course, if you shoot real video footage beforehand or something like that, you have to somehow make the people unrecognisable or get their consent to use their faces and so on. And of course the same goes for some of the brands that show up, that's definitely the case. | |
| | 44 | **J** | As far as profiles are concerned, when I collect data, for example, about how the customer surrounds himself in this virtual reality and I analyse it, then of course I'm automatically doing something with customer data, and that always becomes a challenge. If I am working with American software, then they are not in Germany, and then many companies have inhibitions again. | |
| | 45 | **H** | The question is how to deal with sensitive data there in this VR world. How will the data be handled? Especially when it comes to sensitive content, like personal data. That would definitely need to be looked at more closely. And if that's not the case, or the data is not stored by third parties, then I think it's a tool that can be very attractive. | |
| | 46 | **G** | It would also be questionable from a data protection point of view, because who knows where all the data ends up. Maybe there is a lacquer. So it's a lot of data that can't be processed very well, and that's a big problem. | |
| | 47 | **F** | Then the issue of data protection, I could see that being an issue with these simulations, depending on what I show and to what extent and also the issue of the different regulatory environments the clients are based. Since almost each country has its own laws regarding data protection. | |
| | 48 | **D** | Yes, and then I don't know whether there are any legal issues, it's also a data protection issue, whether it depends on the provider in any way | |
| | 49 | **C** | One aspect of the new technology will certainly be that VR will transfer and process a large amount of data. This may cause problems with the existing IT infrastructure. It is important to make sure that the technical equipment can cope with this new technology and that the necessary investments are made in advance to ensure a certain level of reliability during operation. | |
| | 50 | **B** | What I can think of as a problem is that it's recorded or perhaps in paper documents that are also scanned, the question is where it is, where it's stored, who has access to it, who doesn't, what it's used for, especially when we're also talking about algorithms and training, training files, whether they're fed with it and how you can agree to that or be sure that it doesn't happen. | |

| | | | | |
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| **Experience with VR** | 51 | **C** | As I said earlier, it's a new technology with which there is still little experience, with which the advisers also have little experience, and they have to rely on their know-how, their great know-how, I'm sure. This means that they first have to familiarise themselves with this technology and know how to use it profitably, so that they can no longer afford not to jump on the bandwagon. | **1** |
| **High costs** | 52 | **M** | I think the biggest problem is that it's a huge investment, and I think you have to identify which use cases make sense for us, where we can deploy it, because it doesn't make sense if you have 500 consultants, for example, to say we're going to buy 500 pairs of glasses and we need the whole thing, because I think if you use a lot, then the business case is going to be profitable relatively quickly anyway. | **10** |
| | 53 | **J** | So, from a cost perspective, I'm convinced that it's going to be a driver of high costs because I have to be up to date with the latest technology so often. I have to update these glasses all the time, and if I give them to customers who have no experience with them, there is of course a high probability that they will be damaged again and have to be replaced. But the technical side of programming and installation also requires staff capacity, | |
| | 54 | **O** | There is of course the cost aspect for the customer. If I make it tangible for the customer in such presentations, then there is already the aspect that it will be more expensive, and the question is whether it will then be implemented as standard in every offer and I will simply become more expensive from the outset, or whether it will be offered as an add-on to the consultancy, but then again from the customer's point of view they can already assess the added value in advance. That is a rejection from a cost perspective, even though it is actually an added value for the customer. So I also have to embed it well in marketing and in order clarification to make the added value of this new consulting process clear". | |
| | 55 | **H** | I think what speaks directly against it for me is the high initial outlay that always goes hand in hand with these glasses at the moment. | |
| | 56 | **A** | Yes, there is the cost-benefit factor, which I don't think has reached the customer yet. Even though there are examples, use cases, where customers don't yet understand that this is a tool that gives them direct added value over and above the 2D experience if you just show it online. I don't think that's sunk in yet. And explaining that is definitely a barrier that exists at the moment. | |
| | 57 | **G** | But the acquisition costs, the training costs, that would also be a huge disadvantage. | |
| | 58 | **F** | Well, the cost factor is relevant. Cost-benefit, that you have to look, is it worth it? I don't think a simulation like this will be cheap | |
| | 59 | **D** | We used to do whiteboard workshops. You stuck the notes on the walls. Now you do the whole thing with screen parts. It might be cooler to do it virtually in a room. But that's too expensive. | |
| | 60 | **L** | Number one is cost. It's way too expensive. | |
| | 61 | **B** | I guess my big driver will be the cost factor. So right now these glasses are always 500, 600 euros as far back as I can remember. I mean, Apple's got something public now, but at 4,000 euros it's not exactly something you want to buy for the masses. | |

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| **Lack of social interaction** | 62 | **G** | The strength of an advisor lies in being able to respond personally and very individually. Direct customer contact is also important. Of course, this is better done in person. And VR takes away the human element. | **2** |
| | 63 | **B** | I just wouldn't find it as pleasant. I'm also a fan of face-to-face meetings. Of course, if you just need to discuss something. Online is totally fine, but I think it would be a bit of a shame if every meeting was in VR, for example, because you just say, OK, you can see each other at body size anyway and you can interact just because it's in VR. But it doesn't completely replace social interaction. | |
| **Missing Use Cases** | 64 | **E** | That it's not just used as a gimmick or like, wow, I've got fire goggles, but that it serves a purpose somehow. Because at least in my projects I can see the point of using fire goggles somewhere. I think the challenge for consulting is not just to have the fire goggles in your hand and show them to the client, but also to say, look, we've got the fire goggles and this is the use case and this is how they could get the benefit. | **2** |
| | 65 | **B** | I think it will be difficult to explain why they want to do VR now if there is not really an active use case that is useful to them. I find it hard to imagine, especially in consulting, that you will find a very big use case for VR, apart from holding meetings where you can see yourself in person. | |
| **Physical complaints** | 66 | **M** | And I also think it's important not to let these side effects, like motion sickness or the fact that the glasses are relatively difficult to take off your head, get in the way. I've heard that if you wear them for up to two hours, you can get some kind of neck problem. | **2** |
| | 67 | **G** | Many people also complain of nausea and dizziness when they spend an hour or more in this virtual reality. In other words, their concentration is much more impaired than when they're on microsoft teams or on site. | |
| **Technical Hurdles** | 68 | **M** | Exactly, I think the technology has incredible potential, but it's still a relatively new technology, but I think there are still a lot of technical hurdles to overcome before it can be 100% profitable. | **1** |

| **Category: Competitive Advantage x VR** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category Description: Perception of whether there is a competitive advantage to be gained from adopting VR** | | | | |
| **Subcategory** | **#** | **Interviewee** | **Segment** | **Frequency** |
| **No** | 69 | **M** | Augmented reality or other digital trends are actually easier to integrate than VR. I don't see that with VR now, simply because the fact that you're immersed in this completely virtual world means that it only makes sense for certain use cases. | **3** |
| | 70 | **E** | I would say not really, because I think the projects are still too rare. | |
| | 71 | **C** | It depends. Traditionally, finance and accounting are not change-oriented and cannot be fixed. Consultancies would have to invest a lot of persuasion to get the opinion or awareness that virtual reality can be used in accounting stronger. I don't see the areas and opportunities for using virtual reality being that strong in the next five years. From the experience I've had, I don't think it improves competitive advantage. | |

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| **Unsure** | 72 | **F** | I'm not sure it's enough at the moment. I think it will definitely be in the future and in ten years' time. At the moment, I'm not one hundred percent sure that would be the reason why I would choose a consultancy as a client. Yes, I'm rather skeptical as to whether that's really a real competitive advantage. | **2** |
| | 73 | **D** | If you are competing for these use cases that already exist, then yes. If you can show that we can do this and others can't, then you have an immediate advantage. If you look at the full spectrum of what a consultancy can do and what its competitors can do, I think VR is a small part of gaining competitive advantage. | |
| **Yes** | 74 | **N** | Yes, definitely. I think management consulting is in a very competitive environment. OK, hey, this really fits into our strategy and this fits into our offering, this is in demand and this differentiates us from the competition. If we invest and build resources there, that is certainly a competitive advantage and that is also what the client wants, | **10** |
| | 75 | **M** | I believe that as a management consultant you should always have a broader base. Even if the demand for technology has perhaps fallen a little at the moment, I think it will rise again in the next five to ten years. And then, of course, it's a huge advantage if you can get to grips with it early enough and maybe get a head start on the competition. But I think it really comes down to this know-how component. | |
| | 76 | **L** | Yes, I can definitely imagine that. As I said, I think it depends on the area, of course. But I would say that if one management consultancy uses a very similar approach and the other does not. I think that could definitely be an advantage because you say, okay, hey, they've got new technology, so we can have a direct visual look at how the project should look. I think that's mega. | |
| | 77 | **K** | So if you have a completely different way of working with the customer, which, as I said, increases customer cooperation and satisfaction, then of course that is a competitive advantage. So if you can somehow optimise it, make it better, make it more understandable for the customer, that's often the problem, that they can't imagine it or whatever, if you use all that, of course it's much more attractive and therefore definitely a competitive advantage for companies. | |
| | 78 | **I** | Yes, exactly, because it just sets us apart from the competition. And differentiation is always good and it supports the vision, and the better you can make your case, the more likely you are to convince customers, I think, because it's important that the customer understands what you want, that they understand what it's going to look like at the end of the day, and VR could play a big part in that. | |
| | 79 | **H** | I definitely think so. I've just mentioned that, and I think in our industry, with our IT focus, it's also important to be a pioneer with products that can also be used, because I even believe that if you don't do that, it could contribute to a loss of image, rather than if you do. Even IT companies - if they're asked to do something like this and they say, we don't know, as a public company, as a big company, we can't add value, I think it will damage our image more quickly than the other way around. So we have to do it. | |

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| | 80 | **G** | Of course, the competition remains innovative. VR in general would be very innovative. A larger market sharea s well. As an individual, as a consultant, you also have certain capacities. VR also allows you to expand certain capacities and you can save time and costs by running several workshops. And that offers an immense advantage. | |
| | 81 | **B** | Not in principle, but as I said, if we assume that VR will be used more in the future, then definitely, because as the user base expands, it becomes more attractive for consulting, has programmers, has developers, has people who already know the use cases or have already developed them. | |
| | 81 | **A** | Selling to clients in a way that makes the project cheaper, faster and better can certainly be a competitive advantage. The challenge is to really show the client what makes us different as a consultancy. But I think we are going a long way because we have competitive qualities. So presenting that USP, I think that's the difficult part. But if we can do that, it can certainly be a competitive advantage. | |
| | 82 | **O** | Yes, I think, especially now, as a first mover advantage, if you start to adapt the whole thing early on and perhaps also develop and discover new ways of using VR in different areas, I think you can differentiate yourself very, very well. You should probably just make sure that the whole thing is of an appropriate quality standard. | |

| **Category: Drivers x Adoption of VR** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category Description: Factors that favour the use of VR** | | | | |
| **Subcategory** | **#** | **Interviewee** | **Segment** | **Frequency** |
| **Client Demand** | 83 | **H** | I think at the end of the day, because we are a service provider, the customer factor is always the deciding factor. If the customer wants it, we're not going to force it on them. But we have to show them the option and the benefits. | **5** |
| | 84 | **G** | I think customer demand is one of the main reasons why it's being introduced. Otherwise it's not at the level and cost of virtual reality at the moment. | |
| | 85 | **F** | Yes, of course, because if my customers want it, then I think I'll do everything I can as a service provider to make sure I do it somehow. I want to keep my customers. So, definitely. | |
| | 86 | **C** | Yes, that will certainly play a role. Consultancies are following the trend. Clients are also looking at what's new, how they can simplify their processes, make them faster, more efficient and more cost-effective. Demand from clients will certainly increase and therefore also our purpose for adopting VR. | |
| | 87 | **B** | We can see that if it becomes an issue with our customer base beforehand, then they would definitely bring in people who are familiar with it. And if you're already doing it, then they'll probably automatically push you to use it internally so that you can understand the customer. | |
| | 88 | **A** | Yes, so what I think is definitely a driver, especially in consulting, is that clients are ready for it and are waiting for suitable use cases. | |

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| **Customer ready for technology** | 89 | **L** | I think that customers are now slowly starting to see that the technology is getting richer, the glasses are getting better, they're getting cheaper, the acceptance is perhaps also increasing because maybe employees are already using the whole thing privately to play games in some way, so that the first customers are not just buying a pair of glasses and putting them in some innovation lab and playing around a bit, but now actually have a concrete idea. | **2** |
| **Global Working** | 90 | **M** | Yes, I think the biggest driver is probably working globally, which is particularly important in management consulting, where you work in international teams in different locations. At our consultancy, for example, very few of our teams are actually based in one place, they are spread across Germany. And I think that's definitely an opportunity to network in a hybrid or virtual way. I think it makes less sense to talk to people virtually, and I think if you somehow communicate with avatars, it could be twice as fun and twice as exciting. | **2** |
| | 91 | **C** | Okay, yes. So the benefits and opportunities for consultancy will increase dramatically. Up to now, consultants have been virtually a lot and had to be here. That will change, because a lot of things can be done on site, and a lot of things can then be played out clearly in the plan, or simulations can be designed and visualised for the customer. | |
| **Higher Quality** | 92 | **J** | Yes, definitely. If only because the customer is much closer to the end product in terms of how they can evaluate it, as if it couldn't be experienced through VR. And so, of course, before the customer gives the go-ahead, they can also say, "When I look at it now, I think I would like to change this or that. And then that can be integrated back into the consulting process, and the end product is of much higher quality for the customer, because they have already noticed in advance that there is an optimisation that might otherwise be too late to incorporate. So there is a clear added value. | **1** |
| **Innovation** | 93 | **M** | But I think, above all, I would say, in the planning sector, if you are somehow perhaps the second biggest driver of consulting, you want to be innovative, you want to present yourself in the market in an innovative way, which of course has a pull effect, if you as a university graduate see, hey, company XY is working on such and such a technology, maybe they also offer that I can test the technology, that can definitely increase the attractiveness. | **5** |
| | 94 | **C** | Attracting customers, because of course you also want to show customers, hey, we're using the latest technologies, it's important that we have experience with them. | |
| | 95 | **L** | You might know something along the lines of, it doesn't really matter now, but maybe something along the lines of making it more visual, just a bit of a gimmick, that the management consultancies might want to polish up their services a bit, maybe something like that. | |
| | 96 | **J** | And when the wow effects, let's call them that, the special features of a consultancy stand out from the rest, then that's something that naturally drives companies forward and pushes them to use those new technologies | |

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| | 97 | **E** | I would say because it's innovative, because it's an approach that's not very common in the industry, and because it's easy to use from the consulting side. So we also have partnerships with Google, where we work together on projects around the digital workplace or something like that and then use it in a very cool way in front of consulting plans. So I would say that this innovative approach favours its use. | |
| **Readiness of Technology** | 98 | **A** | The technology, which is getting richer. Just because the displays or whatever are getting better, the batteries, the glasses are getting lighter. The software is probably a lot better now than it was a few years ago and there fore more potential | **1** |
| **Reduction of Costs** | 99 | **M** | Then there are the cost issues, where I just think VR is a really cost-effective alternative to traditional consulting methods. | **6** |
| | 100 | **G** | I definitely mean cost reduction. As a consultant you have a lot of clients, a lot of international clients. And what is an immense advantage is simply to save costs, time costs. You can also, how shall I put it, train several clients at the same time, you can work at different levels, in different countries and it can definitely create a lot more opportunities for you. | |
| | 101 | **K** | Of course, you save a lot of costs if you're already familiar with the topic. You no longer need to travel, you save time and also material costs by saving a lot of paper. | |
| | 102 | **F** | I think you can also save costs. | |
| | 103 | **C** | I can imagine in the sense that it is very dependent on finance and accounting, which is a very high cost factor for any company. Virtual reality is obviously much cheaper. So in terms of cost considerations, I could see people jumping on the bandwagon to save on staff. | |
| | 104 | **A** | Cost pressures on the development departments of some companies. And so companies are thinking, hey, how can we maybe develop our products more cost-effectively in the future? And then they look at virtual reality, because it might mean that they don't have to make real models. Or it might mean that you can get engineers to understand each other more quickly than you can with a 2D or 3D plan in any other CAD program on a 2D screen. | |
| **Visualisation** | 105 | **C** | One driver of virtual reality is that it allows you to quickly and easily map and visualise business developments in any area and make them accessible to everyone, so you can quickly identify trends and directions and therefore an intersting tool for consultancies | **1** |

| **Category: Future Role of VR in Consulting** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category Description: Perception of the future role of VR in consulting** | | | | |
| **Subcategory** | **#** | **Interviewee** | **Segment** | **Frequency** |
| **Improving communication** | 106 | **A** | As a medium for improving communication with each other. | **2** |
| | 107 | **N** | I don't really think we'll all be talking to each other with avatars in the future, but I can see the idea, if implemented, having potential. | |
| **No Standard tool** | 108 | **B** | I think it will play a smaller role internally in consulting. Maybe more training would be a good idea. Or even meetings. But I don't think it will become a standard tool. I think on the client side it | **2** |

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| | | | also depends on what the consultancy specialises in. | |
| | 109 | **D** | I don't think it's going to be in a centralised mode like the computer is now. I think it will be more like a headset or like a smartphone that is just supported to use. | |
| **Supportive role** | 110 | **M** | I really think that VR is another support medium that gives you even more opportunities to connect people across standards, that you have new opportunities, and I think VR is just good in that respect because you can easily present scenarios that are otherwise not so easily accessible. Whether it's fictional training scenarios or, as I said, you can really show people things during onboarding that you just can't do that way. And, of course, you might be able to deliver better content through this immersive nature. | **7** |
| | 111 | **K** | Support. Well, I don't see it replacing anything or anything else, but it will give us new ways of interacting and designing, so it will make things a bit easier and provide support. | |
| | 112 | **I** | In other words, it can simply be more persuasive, visualise better and so on for the typical consultancy advice or conceptualisation and so on. Exactly, which is why I would definitely see it as a supporting tool that can generate added value, but not really contribute to the content aspect, in my opinion. | |
| | 113 | **J** | The role of VR will be an additional service that will provide great added value, especially when it comes to convincing customers. Be it in the pitch or in the presentation of results. And when we talk about agile project management, it's natural to talk about prototypes that are improved in iterative loops, and that's where I can always pick up. I can briefly experience my product or my result and I send the team, the project team, into the next agile loop, into the next iteration. It gets improved and I can experience it again. | |
| | 114 | **H** | I think it's a supportive tool to be used in a workshop format. But in most projects, our whole project portfolio suggests that it's used in a very small percentage of projects. And I also believe that not every consultant needs to be able to do it. I believe that we have specialists who have the technical understanding to do it and who, together with the partner we have involved in virtual reality, provide the support. I don't think that in 15 years every consultant in our company will know how to use virtual reality in a targeted and perfectly tailored way for the client. | |
| | 115 | **F** | Yes, I don't think every consultant will be using VR every day of the five-day week, but rather on a case-by-case basis. I could also see it being used for large projects. For example, we could say that above a certain bid amount we will use a VR simulation for the client as an add-on and a nice-to-have. But I can't really see it being used for every small job and every project, because it might not be worth it and the cost of creating it would be too high. | |
| | 116 | **C** | On the one hand, it will be supportive, because consulting is a very labour-intensive area where the consultant should be on site. But it will also be a separate area. In financial and technical terms, the younger people will be more technically minded than the older people. | |

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| **Topics more tangible** | 117 | **A** | The role of VR as a medium to make things tangible, to simply show things to customers so they can really experience them. | **1** |

| Category: Impact of VR on Customer | | | | |
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| **Category Description: The potential impact of VR on customer** | | | | |
| **Subcategory** | **#** | **Interviewee** | **Segment** | **Frequency** |
| **Better understanding** | 118 | **N** | Yes, I would definitely say that it can give the customer a better idea of certain topics, especially when it comes to very complex topics. | **4** |
| | 119 | **L** | Especially aspects that are very visual, that you have to present visually. I think it could just help a lot of customers if they could somehow see it with VR glasses and have it in front of their eyes. | |
| | 120 | **J** | To make things tangible and holistic, so that they can feel and understand what the solution will look like in its entirety. | |
| | 121 | **G** | Of course it can. So it would be modern, it would be something new. Data can be visualised much better. It could optimise processes, but the customer has to be ready. | |
| **Depends on customer** | 122 | **F** | I think it depends on the customer. If it's a very, very traditional client with a low level of digitalisation, then I think there's always a risk that it's going to meet with a bit of resistance and maybe even have a potentially negative impact. If it's a very modern, new, digitalised client who might even be using something like this themselves, then I think it always has a positive impact because it shows that the advisor is technologically up to date and familiar with such technologies. | **2** |
| | 123 | **A** | It depends, I would say. It depends very much on the customer. If I were to imagine an Eastern organisation and say we're going to do our workshop in virtual reality and I don't know what the reaction will be, I think it would be quite difficult. And it might also make the interaction with the customer more complicated. It is a better option, especially in virtual collaboration, according to Covid in the consulting environment, when you're out there. | |
| **Higher customer loyalty** | 124 | **K** | I think it definitely opens up new opportunities to do a completely different kind of training, workshop or whatever. If you can guarantee safety and do it well, I can see it being something that will generate a lot of interest on the customer side, which will of course increase satisfaction. | **3** |
| | 125 | **O** | Yes, I can imagine that collaboration could change, especially if you are an early adopter and use VR technology in consulting, that you can simply strengthen a customer relationship with it, because the customer sees that you have gone the classic extra mile, have really thought about something, have exactly the target image in mind, where the customer can then also react specifically, has a better understanding of how you have to implement something, realise it or what it should look like in the end. I believe that you can convince customers very well and that customer satisfaction always strengthens a customer relationship at the end of the day. | |

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| | 126 | **F** | And especially when I'm doing technology consulting, it's also important for my own credibility that I'm using something like this myself. So I think it can be very positive. In general, it can also be an advantage for customer retention, because if the customer is happy with it, then of course they are more likely to stay with me as a consultant. And yes. | |
| **No impact** | 127 | **H** | I don't think they take it for granted and at the moment it's not going to increase satisfaction in the long term because I think that barrier you mentioned is still there with the customer, they're still a bit cautious because I don't think the cost-benefit ratio is that attractive yet. | **1** |
| **Remote Work** | 128 | **C** | The way we deal with them will certainly be different. The remote possibility of virtual reality and this time independence will certainly change the way we deal with them. In the past, consultants would go to the customer's site and intervene in the production process or hold up the customer's staff. But now, with the new use of these capabilities, that will certainly change, because you no longer necessarily have to be on site. | **1** |

| **Category: Innovation x Competitive Advantage** | | | | |
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| **Category Description: The question of whether innovation is critical for a competitive advantage** | | | | |
| **Subcategory** | **#** | **Interviewee** | **Segment** | **Frequency** |
| | 129 | **L** | Yes, VR could definitely play a role here. It also shows that you are dealing with new topics and I think that you are only really starting to look at existing use cases and what else you can do with them, i.e. when you really start this thought process, sit down and think about how VR could be interesting for the corporate sector. I think there will be many, many more ideas, which will of course have a positive effect on the innovation areas. | |
| | 130 | **K** | Very important, because in the end it is often innovation that wins, so you often have a tender or an idea from the customer about what they want, and the better and more innovative approaches you have, the more you can stand out, of course, and the more interesting you are, and then you are likely to be shortlisted. often some cost savings, efficiency gains or other content. So it's always a good thing. | |
| | 131 | **I** | Yes, absolutely. I think it depends a lot on how you meet the customer and also show the customer that we have our finger on the trend. We are also looking at new technologies. In fact, I think we should show the customer that we are already one step ahead, that we already know these technologies, that we already use them, that we may have already implemented them for other customers, that we already have the know-how, that we have trained people in these areas. Because that builds credibility with the customer. When we say we've never done this before, but we want to do it with you for the first time. Of course there has to be a first project at the beginning, no question about that. But the more experience you have with it, the better you get with subsequent projects because you can simply sell it better. And then the experience, the avoidance of mistakes and so on that comes with it also increases the chances of success and customer satisfaction at the end of the project". | |

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| **Yes** | 132 | **J** | We are in a market with a lot of big players. We are becoming more and more independent of location, especially in consulting, where I can have consulting firms from all over the world. That's why it's one of the most competitive markets and therefore every benefit should be chased. | **11** |
| | 133 | **H** | Absolutely. Like I said, you have to do it because otherwise you're going to lose your image, as I said before. That's why you have to jump on these bandwagons. You can see what a big market it is. | |
| | 134 | **G** | Yes, definitely. To get a bigger market share, I think it's really important to be innovative. To show innovation to our clients. | |
| | 135 | **F** | Yes, definitely. Because that would be a bit of a contradiction in terms. I advise clients on how to improve, but I'm not an innovator myself. So that's definitely the case. | |
| | 136 | **E** | Yes, but I always believe that the customer has to support this idea of innovation and prioritise what is most important to them. If AI is the most important thing for the customer right now, then we are moving all the way towards AI. | |
| | 137 | **D** | Very important. You have to do that. If you want a new brand, you have to create new things. The client wants to see new things. And you also have to measure, even if the projects are often 10 years old, percentage activation and things like that, you still have to stay innovative. | |
| | 138 | **C** | Definitely. That's what consultancies are for. Consultancies are there to advise companies to make them better, to give them an edge over their competitors. So they have to jump on the bandwagon to stay on top, to stay on the cutting edge. So they have to jump on the bandwagon and have something in their bag that they can use to advise and convince clients. | |
| | 139 | **B** | Yes, I think for consultancies it's less a question of technology and more a question of how you listen to how you use it in consulting. | |
| **Unsure** | 140 | **A** | I'm not sure you really need to be innovative. You have to have an image, and it's important to be perceived as a consultancy that does things in a different way, for example by incorporating virtual reality into the project, without it being my speciality. I've always tended to be against inventory, I usually say that a little bit. There's probably a bit of product management in innovation. I'll give you an example, Simon Kucher or That should be as efficient as possible, but not always innovative. It depends on the context of the consulting firm. | **1** |

| **Category: Skills and Knowledge x VR** | | | | |
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| **Category Description: Required skills and knowledge when adopting VR** | | | | |
| **Subcategory** | **#** | **Interviewee** | **Segment** | **Frequency** |
| **No specific knowledge required** | 141 | **G** | I mean, maybe you have to be a digital nomad. But I think if you're up to date, you don't need a lot of skills. | **2** |
| | 142 | **B** | I don't think specific skills. I just think you have to be used to doing a lot of digital work, because if you're used to printing out a lot of Excel spreadsheets and then working with them and working manually, then you're not going to have as much fun with VR and you're not going to be as inclined to just set that up. | |

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| | 143 | **M** | Okay, so I think as a user you definitely need a technical understanding. I think you need to know, quite well, you don't need to know how it all works in detail, but I think you should definitely know, yeah, I think there's the app that I can use with my fingers, then there's the, I think, the Meta-Quest where you have sticks in your hand. I think you definitely need a technical understanding of how to use it.. I think it should definitely be made clear which use cases make sense. I think with a lot of glasses it's always a question of price, but the resolution isn't there yet where you can put the glasses on and feel like you're seeing in 4K or really feel like you're standing in Africa and somehow make that clear to people. So I think those are definitely technological requirements. And I think the most important thing as a consultant is to be able to explain that to the client when you deliver the technology to the client, to be able to say directly how the client can explain the whole thing. And I think the most important thing as a consultant is to really understand the use cases and have a solid technical knowledge. |
| | 144 | **L** | I would say that a typical or classic basic understanding of technology is definitely required. In other words, I think for a very traditional company that still does a lot with paper, for example, and is also very traditional and bureaucratic in its structure, this might be less interesting for the company than for a start-up that also has very young employees, is very modern, very flexible, very tech-savvy. I think it might be easier for them to introduce something like that. |
| | 145 | **I** | Oh yes, absolutely. Like I said, you have to design virtual reality in some way. First of all, of course, you have to have the experience to know what things you need to pay attention to, what you need to consider, what information you need everywhere, and then, of course, you have to have a software developer - an engineer, whatever - who can implement it in such a way that it can be visualised in the end. So of course you need the expertise. Absolutely. |
| | 146 | **J** | Definitely. Because the customer will clearly notice if something is used just for the sake of using it. I need a very clear understanding of what I am trying to do with this technology in order to actually use it. If the customer realises that it's just pretending to be modern, you know how there are companies that want to be all fancy and modern and trendy, but it's not authentically the product or the solution. And to have an understanding of what it can be used for, so that I can use it there, but not put it somewhere superfluous, so that it actually raises more questions. And then, of course, the technical aspects. Then, of course, the advice becomes even more complex. I can imagine having to think about how to make it tangible in virtual reality. And then, of course, I need all the designers or programmers who can make it come alive for me in this virtual world. |

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| **Technological understanding/ knowledge** | 147 | **H** | I think the technical understanding on the one hand, especially the software for the use cases that you then do with the glasses themselves, is crucial for a customer-specific use case. There will certainly be general business models that you can buy from vendors. But I think as a management consultancy focused on this, it will not be enough to use generic tools. I think you have to develop the event and the development work, the technical understanding to build this software yourself, will be necessary for a consultancy of our size. So we can't rely on another vendor, I think we really have to develop our own solution or work very closely with a vendor in a partnership. | **10** |
| | 148 | **F** | Yes, for sure. Well, I don't know, it probably depends on how VR is introduced. I could imagine that there are different variants, so either I can buy the technology from a service provider, and in the best case I could have a service provider as a consultant, for example, to do the technical setup for me, because otherwise I need technical know-how internally in consulting. I need to know how to put these glasses on, what to do if something doesn't work, how to set up these scenarios. | |
| | 149 | **D** | You have to be able to use it, you have to be able to start your desktop somehow, you have to find your way around, you have to navigate thorugh the virtual world. I think you need to have played with it for a couple of hours before you go into your first meeting to get a feeling for it. That you have that basic knowledge, that's probably the few hours you need to get to grips with it, that's what you need most. In other words, if you take people to the customer, we'll have the meeting here and there, and they've never used it before, then it's going to go wrong. If they've had a day to play around with it, then it will work. | |
| | 150 | **C** | Knowledge will certainly be required, or additional knowledge will certainly be required, because the consultants, this is also a relatively new area for the consultants, even if the young consultants come from universities and have some familiarity with it, but it is still a new, relatively new technology that the consultants have to be trained in, and for which the consultants also have to learn the necessary tools and techniques and then also communicate them to the customer in such a way that the customer says, yes, this is the right thing for me. | |
| | 151 | **A** | Of course, technological understanding or technological knowledge. So I think that's the foundation. We should be able to develop more applications using the technology. We definitely need to have the skills to understand the technology, to explain the technology in an understandable way, and to understand the technology well enough to be able to come up with possible use cases ourselves to take full advantage of the technology. | |
| | 152 | **O** | Yes, I would definitely be interested in broadening my personal skills, being able to use the whole thing and perhaps also implement something with it, and now specifically in relation to my area of expertise, how I can perhaps also use the whole thing in cooperation with the customer. | |

| Category: Strategies for Adoption of VR in Consulting | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category Description: How the perceived barriers and challenges can be addressed** | | | | |
| **Subcategory** | **#** | **Interviewee** | **Segment** | **Frequency** |
| **Design Thinking/Workshops** | 153 | **A** | Well, if we're talking about a theme now. I think these are the classic design thinking workshops and all these onnovative inventions or something like that in a room somewhere and just brainstorming together and thinking about something together using these kinds of innovation methods, rather than having a quarter of an hour between two meetings and briefly flushing out a few use cases on some website. | **1** |
| **GAP Analysis** | 154 | **N** | Yes, or certainly, which is always helpful, to do a kind of gap analysis in terms of what I, as an entrepreneur, or the customer, am missing in order to make the technology ready for use. | **1** |
| **Mentoring** | 155 | **L** | I think that goes pretty much hand in hand with what I was saying earlier, that information that you might provide in advance could help in terms of how to deal with it, that you reduce fears through training for example, that you communicate these challenges and then also provide solutions to them. I can imagine, for example, a mentoring programme or something like that from somebody who has a lot of experience and uses it. Exactly, and then it would be shown to someone who maybe doesn't have that much knowledge yet, so that you can have an exchange. That would be one idea. | **1** |
| **Partnerships** | 156 | **M** | And perhaps one approach could also be to work directly with the manufacturers, for example. Apple, Meta, ... to solve technical problems. | **1** |
| **Pilot Project** | 157 | **F** | Well, I'm always a fan of pilot projects, because I think you just have to look at the maturity level of the company, because if it's a company that's still working on paper and where digitalisation in general is still a long way off, then I'm pretty sure that a project with VR is doomed to fail, because it's a high-end digitalised project. That's why I think it's never a bad idea to take a general look at how digitised the company is. And then start with a small pilot project, just test it with a few people in different areas. Then maybe do a survey to see how it was received. Maybe some KPIs so you can measure something, has it achieved anything, has it changed anything? | **2** |
| | 158 | **O** | But first of all, of course, in a pilot, testing it with a very specific use case, preferably a simple use case that is also successful, so that you have a success story, so to speak, that you can tell in the company, so that there is a generally positive mood and people are then more open to dealing with it or getting to grips with it. I think that's really important. Yes, maybe with an internal project. So if you introduce this in consulting, I wouldn't go straight to the client with it, but really internally, that you take a process, I don't know, a personnel process for example, where there's no high risk involved. | |
| | 159 | **M** | I think the most important thing is transparency right from the start, talking to people at the beginning, identifying the use cases, as I said. And I think that also varies from consulting firm to consulting firm, because of course there are smaller firms that may only have two locations, where there are fewer of them. But I think the larger and more international the firm, the more sense it can make. | |

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| **Use Cases** | 160 | **K** | I would provide training and courses, of course. But I would also create transparency about the possible use cases in advance, so I think that was my goal, to create transparency. To create transparency and then maybe not implement it completely for everyone at the beginning, but maybe only for those use cases where it makes sense, so that we can already point to positive experiences, so to speak, and promote specific success stories in order to increase acceptance in general or reduce uncertainties and provide a lot of information, transparency, use cases, experiences, news cases, success stories and guidelines on how to use it well. | **7** |
| | 161 | **J** | That means going into test phases, going into development loops, before I implement specific applications with customers. And then it is already an investment for a company to first link its business cases in which it will be used. And then you have to accept the costs at the beginning. | |
| | 162 | **H** | I would then do various use case tests and learning by doing and definitely try to create transparency for the customer. For example, if you now have the sensitive data, you need to discuss this with the provider and then make it clear to the customer before the workshops what the current situation is. I think that's crucial, this close cooperation. | |
| | 163 | **E** | Well, I would actually focus on what the specific business cases are, when I can solve them and what value I can add with the VR glasses. And I think that's a good way of approaching the challenge of successively working through what my product can do, what problem it solves, and then approaching the customer and saying I have possible teams here, maybe a process mining or something, where I can say I can take a better look at the process digitally, more transparency. | |
| | 164 | **C** | When introducing and using Virtual Reality, it makes sense to first construct or present various use cases, business cases, and then use them to try to introduce Virtual Reality and get an overall picture of which opportunities, incidents and business transactions I can use Virtual Reality for and how. This way VR can be tested and accordingly adapted to the specific requirement that exist in the consulting industry. | |
| | 165 | **A** | That's certainly a possibility or an approach to get really concrete and innovative use cases that really bring more value to the customer. | |

| **Category: Suitable Consulting Industries** | | | | |
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| **Category Description: Suitable consulting industries for VR adoption** | | | | |
| **Subcategory** | **#** | **Interviewee** | **Segment** | **Frequency** |
| **Fashion industry** | 166 | **B** | For example, if 3D models of your shoes are created when you go shopping, you can imagine being able to upload a picture of yourself and then create a model of yourself to try on clothes or scan your room. | **1** |
| **IT Industry** | 167 | **F** | Well, if I'm doing IT consulting as a consultant, I have to deal with the latest IT, the latest technologies, otherwise I have no credibility at all. That's why I think there's no way around it in IT consulting if I want to win or keep clients in 10 or 20 years' time. | **1** |

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| **Operations** | 168 | **L** | I think the biggest, especially in very, very visual areas, something like process optimisation or a lot of operational business, where you can really see, okay, if we take out this process or this machine and put in this automation instead, then we would get this and that benefit. | **2** |
| | 169 | **H** | I think in the whole logistics, supply chain, these are the areas where virtual reality puts you in a situation, a hypothetical situation, where you can train the customer well on the one hand, but on the other hand you can also show, for example, a pain point in the supply chain, show what the customer can pay particular attention to in order to improve, save costs or increase production performance. | |
| **R&D** | 170 | **M** | All those industries where people are physically making larger products in some way are probably where the greatest value is added. | **2** |
| | 171 | **C** | On the other hand, virtual reality has certainly emerged in the company itself, but not in financial accounting, more in R&D or in production, but not in finance. | |

| **Category: Temporary Impact** | | | | |
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| **Category Description: Whether the impact of VR is short term or long term** | | | | |
| **Subcategory** | **#** | **Interviewee** | **Segment** | **Frequency** |
| **Long term** | 172 | **M** | It is my contention that the long-term benefits will outweigh the short-term gains. I am of the opinion that if the technology in question truly delivers on its potential, then it will also be applicable in the long term. Furthermore, I believe that management consultancies will be able to achieve long-term benefits. It is, of course, necessary to consider the possibility of opening up a completely new sector, given that if technology becomes a broad medium that every company uses, then the potential for long-term benefits is considerable. | **11** |
| | 173 | **L** | I think the long-term effects make collaboration easier by adding visual animations. The customer can visualise it better. This is less of a short-term issue now and should be worked on in the long term. | |
| | 174 | **I** | I think it could be used in the long term, but it won't catch on right away. We'll probably use it a lot in the future to visualize and present things. But first, we need to train our employees. In consulting, everyone should know what data they need to implement something like this. | |
| | 175 | **J** | They're long-term because customers won't want to miss out on the results. If I get involved and spoil the customer, they'll want to experience it again next time. This is a competitive advantage if I'm competing with others or the one who can't deliver it. | |
| | 176 | **G** | If it happens, it will have a long-term impact because it is the future. | |
| | 177 | **F** | In the long term, every consultancy will have to deal with it. They will have to bring in more technical specialists to use and apply the technology. Perhaps there will be a dedicated team that only deals with these simulations. In other words, a shift in competence towards a more technical direction. Unless an external service provider does it, consultancies will just buy it. | |

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| | 178 | **E** | I would say both, but I would have said more long-term because AI tools will change the way we work the most in the near future. In the long term, meetings will also change. Sometimes teams have also suggested a kind of 3D environment. | |
| | 179 | **D** | VR glasses aren't ready for use yet. Keep testing them to see what they can do. Then you can publish a white paper, which means they're not ready yet. They might become more common in the future. I can imagine them being used in the medical and engineering sectors. You wear the glasses for an hour or two, then take them off. | |
| | 180 | **C** | In the long term, the VR sector will grow. Consultancy, industry and providers will have to get used to this technology first. They will see what others are doing and how the technology is developing. | |
| | 181 | **B** | In the long term, yes. But I don't think it will happen soon. People said it was good because everything was digital. But now, people are coming back to the office or companies are saying they want to have an office two or three days a week again. I don't think it will happen that quickly. | |
| | 182 | **A** | It's more about the space. It's a long-term issue. If I think about it now, what else sounds good? Maybe you gain more with one project and less with another. It's more of a long-term issue with another. | |
| **Short term** | 183 | **H** | If you can do something better than the competition, you have a competitive advantage. We are the only provider that can do what others can't, so we get a large market share. Look at projects with VR glasses. We can do it in the short term, unlike others. As time goes on, more and more players will enter the market, making it harder to compete. This is more likely in the short term than in the long term. | **2** |
| | 184 | **F** | In the short term, it's important for consultancies to stay up to date with new technologies and follow trends. Who knows what tomorrow will bring? Consultants should keep an eye on new technology. | |

| **Category: Trends x Adoption of VR** | | | | |
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| **Category Description: Trends favouring the adoption of VR** | | | | |
| **Subcategory** | **#** | **Interviewee** | **Segment** | **Frequency** |
| | 185 | **L** | The topic of technology is coming up and people, maybe especially in the consulting industry, are thinking about how to integrate new technologies in general, because this is now very interesting with AI for example, and has a lot of potential, especially in consulting. And then I can sort of see VR being used in a way where they say, okay, hey, AI is working really well at the moment, let's look at other areas like VR, and that has a bit of an impact. | |
| **AI** | 186 | **K** | So, apart from VR, this AI thing is quite extreme, I see, but also the idea of somehow using more of these graphical things. Maybe it's going a little bit in that direction. Creating images, creating video, creating a world relatively quickly to tell a story. Of course that would also be a use case for this pickup. So this trend, this tendency towards more of these images, more immersion in worlds or something else, I think is going in the direction of VR, which we already have at the moment, these trends. | **5** |

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| | 187 | **H** | Yes, I think one trend, generative AI, is certainly a trend that goes hand in hand with virtual reality. And the whole topic has many points of contact, I think, that will support the trend in the future. | |
| | 188 | **J** | I also think that with all the digital changes that are taking place and that are happening faster and faster with AI, with Gen AI, I think that tools like virtual reality will also be necessary in the future. | |
| | 189 | **G** | Artificial intelligence is definitely a big topic at the moment. I think there was an interview recently about AI being smarter than the smartest person in the world, so I can see that trend developing. | |
| **Cheaper** | 190 | **B** | On the other hand, of course, VR, especially as it gets cheaper, and it will get cheaper in the future, more people will probably use it in their spare time, and people may be much more open to using it, even as the technical processing capabilities of the glasses themselves improve, you can also display it better graphically, it looks less awkward and you have a bit more reason to use it just like that. | **1** |
| **Covid** | 191 | **E** | Well, you have to say that, but it's actually been the case since Corona that you can stick things together, I think that would be a cool use case. Especially when it comes to international projects, you no longer have to travel around the world to do it. | **1** |
| **Digitalization** | 192 | **F** | Yes, the topic of digitalisation in general. Of course, I think that the marketing or the public image of a company is quite good if I can say that VR is somehow used, because that somehow means that the company, the consultancy is a bit tech-savvy if it uses something like that and maybe also implements a certain degree of digitalisation internally, which has a positive external effect on customers, on others, on the share value, depending on the case. So I think so. And of course, depending on how you integrate it, you can automate one or two processes. It probably depends on how much you use these VR glasses and what exactly you do with them. | **1** |
| **More relevant in the near future** | 193 | **F** | My guess is that they will become more or less standard at some point, but it will probably be another five to ten years before they become standard. | **2** |
| | 194 | **A** | I feel like we've heard a bit more about it in the last month, two months, three months. So I don't think the trend has really peaked yet, but I think it's starting to pick up a little bit. | |
| **Smaller Projects** | 195 | **H** | On the other hand, consultants are going to be selected more and more specifically in the future. The trend is towards smaller projects, or consulting is shrinking in certain areas at the moment, or the project situation is looking increasingly difficult at the moment and virtual reality projects are a nice to have, not a must. And in difficult times you would probably do less of it than in times when the project situation looks very good. | **1** |
| **Sustainability** | 196 | **M** | I think management consultants want to travel less for sustainable reasons. | **3** |
| | 197 | **O** | Well, I'm not one hundred percent in favour of sustainability. I think we also have an initiative, I think it was 2040, to be carbon neutral. Which brings us back to the whole issue of travel. | |
| | 198 | **F** | I'm sorry, that's perhaps also an important point, because I think you can also promote sustainability quite a lot with the glasses, because you save a lot of travelling and have more online meetings, fewer on-site meetings, and the sustainability aspect is also quite a big trend in the company at the moment. | |

| Category: VR Compatibility with Consulting | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category Description: Whether VR is compatible with the consulting industry** | | | | |
| **Subcategory** | **#** | **Interviewee** | **Segment** | **Frequency** |
| **No** | 199 | **G** | Not really. I mean, one advantage is that we can do without virtual reality at the moment. Also in terms of New Work. You don't really need to be in the office all the time. That would be an advantage that could be used to make working from home even easier. But it's also possible via video chat, it's also possible via Teams. Virtual reality is not there yet and at the moment not suitable for the consulting industry | 1 |
| **Yes** | 200 | **I** | Yeah, I would see that. In my opinion it's not directly, at least it's not directly reflected in our goals, I think there's just a different focus at the moment. But I think it could be very well supported and used to achieve the goals. | **7** |
| | 201 | **J** | Yes, definitely, because I think the consulting service, how it is evaluated, is ultimately also a subjective experience for the customer. And if I can create emotions, if I can create experiences, if I can make it more tangible, which is often the case with abstract concepts, or if I can make ideas tangible and experiential, then that's a clear competitive advantage over others and suitable for the consulting industry. | |
| | 202 | **F** | Yes, well, it's not an easy question. On the one hand, I would have said yes, because I think it saves a lot of travel and, especially when you're talking about long-haul flights, it's definitely in the spirit of sustainability. If you take a very broad view, I don't know what resources are needed to produce these glasses, whether they are sustainable. But I can't imagine that it's worse than travelling all the time. So I would say it is. | |
| | 203 | **O** | As I said, I don't think it's cheap to do these simulations. But I think it will get cheaper and cheaper in the future, so it will become an integral part of consulting. | |
| | 204 | **D** | One goal that you could sort of point to is that you want to be CO2 neutral. I don't know what the calculation is. You have to host through the cloud and so on. Whether it's significantly less than if we met in the same city where we live. I don't know. It's probably more CO2 efficient than if we all travelled to the same city. | |
| | 205 | **C** | Almost all companies that want to develop in a forward-looking way are jumping on the bandwagon. No company can afford to ignore this ideology and not have the latest developments at hand. | |
| | 206 | **A** | We also stand for innovative ideas to a certain extent, so of course you have new technologies that are driven by technology, which I think is always something that fits very well with our book and our strategy in the market. So I think the use of virtual reality is an important part of achieving our strategic goals. | |

| Category: Willingness to learn about VR |
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| Category Description: Personal assessment of the interviewee's readiness to move forward with VR training | | | | |
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| **Subcategory** | **#** | **Interviewee** | **Segment** | **Frequency** |
| **No** | 207 | **D** | At the moment, if I had to choose, there are other topics, like ESG or Gen AI, where it's worth continuing my education, because I think there's more flying into the future than the virtual reality thing. | **1** |
| **Yes** | 208 | **N** | Yes, I could well imagine that. I think it's simply a technology that we, as management consultants, have to be at the forefront of and be able to offer to our clients. | **11** |
| | 209 | **M** | Personally, definitely. I think it's fun, it's something different. I think the fact that you're often actively doing things yourself makes the curve much higher than just watching some training or, oh I don't know, I've probably had to do all this compulsory training where nothing sticks and it's just a waste of time. And I think it's more likely that if you do half an hour of training every month, you're probably going to get more out of it than if you do five hours of normal training. And I think you have to think again, training on site with a real trainer is probably even more effective. | |
| | 210 | **I** | Absolutely. Yes, I would really like to. | |
| | 211 | **J** | Yes, definitely. Otherwise you won't be able to compete on the markets in the long term. | |
| | 212 | **H** | Absolutely. I don't think as an IT management consultancy we can get away from it. I think it's also a USP that we have, these new technologies, to play a kind of pioneering role. And that's why I think we should invest heavily in it. | |
| | 213 | **G** | Of course I would. A person never stops learning. Someone has to deal with it, someone has to start with it. And you always want to keep up with the time. | |
| | 214 | **F** | Yes, I'm definitely interested in that personally. | |
| | 215 | **E** | Yes, I would. I have to say, I actually find it exciting. | |
| | 216 | **C** | It's definitely getting stronger and stronger. You definitely have to know what the possibilities are, what the advantages and disadvantages are. Then you have to weigh up what's good for your area, what you can use, what you can't use. | |
| | 217 | **B** | Yes, of course. Why not? Well, if the company thinks it wants to use it, of course. | |
| | 218 | **A** | Well, if I see added value, either I see it in my work, if I see great added value for the client or for Capgemini, then yes. If it's just a matter of me having to spend a lot more time on it because the return is quite low, then I would also think, come on, yes, that's all well and good, but I've got more important things to do now. | |