The role of a business consultant in shaping sustainable growth strategies for companies

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Abstract: The article discusses issues related to the disclosure and justification of the role of business consultants in the process of forming sustainable growth strategies for business entities. Taking into account the manifested high dynamics of market changes, as well as global competition, the participation of these specialists in the development of a strategic link is becoming increasingly important. The relevance of the topic under discussion is confirmed by the need to find effective management tools that would allow companies to quickly and successfully adapt to challenges and maintain competitiveness. The purpose of the work is to study the key aspects of the activities of business consultants, including their impact on the development and implementation of strategies that ensure the prosperity of enterprises. The analysis revealed contradictions in the literature: there are no unified approaches to evaluating the effectiveness of counseling, and the specifics of implementing recommendations in different industries are poorly highlighted. It is noted that success in the characterized area depends on an interdisciplinary approach combining elements of financial, organizational, and technological management. At the forefront are: a deep understanding of the specifics of the industry, a systematic approach, interaction with the client, and a clear focus on results. The author's proposals for subsequent research are formulated. The article will be useful to scientists studying the problems of business consulting, heads of organizations striving for sustainable growth, as well as practicing consultants interested in improving the efficiency of their activities.

Keywords: business consultant, consulting, scaling, strategic management, sustainable growth.

Introduction

Modern economic entities operate under conditions of increasing competitive pressure, rapid technological advancements, and economic instability. These factors compel enterprises to develop strategies that not only ensure survival but also foster systemic growth. In this context, the role of business consultants becomes significant, as their activities focus on analyzing, formulating, and implementing solutions aimed at the long-term development of organizations.

The research problem lies in the absence of universal tools that enable an objective assessment of the impact of business consultants on the strategic development of companies, as well as the insufficient elaboration of methodologies for adapting recommendations to dynamic market conditions and the specific characteristics of individual enterprises.

Methods and Materials

The preparation of this article involved comparative analysis, systematization, synthesis, and generalization. The literature addressing the topic is categorized into key areas: the skills and competencies of consultants, strategic management and scaling, consulting in specific economic sectors, and innovative approaches and development prospects for the described field of activity.

The first category includes publications focusing on the functions of business consultants. A.I. Ampilogov [1] examines methods for modeling entrepreneurial processes, emphasizing the need for specific skills to ensure their successful application. Similarly, T.N. Syso and A.S. Syso [8] propose optimization tools requiring specialists to understand both a company's overall strategy and its operational specifics.

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The second group of studies highlights management. T.A. Korneyeva and K.V. Shuraseva [5] underscore the role of strategic consulting as a tool for developing long-term steps and actions that ensure sustainable prosperity for economic entities. N.A. Dimitriadi, L.E. Sizemova, and B.A. Fomin [3] analyzes the potential for improving the strategic management mechanism through consulting projects. This research context is supported by S.V. Dmitrieva [4], who identifies the specific features of business consultations in the development of business and competitive strategies.

The third category consists of works exploring consulting in narrower contexts. O.Yu. Antsiferova and L.M. Petrova [2] analyze information and advisory services in the agricultural sector, focusing on the unique needs of small and medium-sized businesses. M.E. Pligina [6] emphasizes the support of startups, which requires non-standard approaches.

The fourth group covers innovative approaches and the prospects for consulting. F.O. Faradov and T.N. Mikhnienko [9] assess the future in the context of the innovative economy, noting the need for specialists to adapt to modern challenges. K.V. Shirinkina [10] examines prominent trends in the development of business consulting services, particularly through the lens of digitalization and the integration of technologies into entrepreneurial activities.

Finally, R.I. Safin [7] highlights the role of consulting in business scaling, where understanding growth as both an economic and organizational process becomes crucial.

The literature review identified several contradictions. First, specific methods for evaluating the long-term effectiveness of consultants remain insufficiently studied. Second, approaches to consulting in various sectors are underexplored, complicating the formulation of strategies. Additionally, there is a lack of systematization of innovative methods in the context of digital transformation. These gaps open opportunities for further research aimed at developing universal models for business consultant interaction with organizations, considering the specifics of their operations and contemporary challenges.

Results and Discussion

Business consulting, as a professional activity, is based on a systematic approach to addressing organizational challenges. Its conceptual foundation comprises a set of theoretical principles, methods, tools, and principles that define the specificity and uniqueness of this field.

The primary goal is to assist companies in achieving their strategic and operational objectives. This is accomplished through expert evaluations, recommendations, and practical assistance. A consultant helps organizations:

- identify hidden problems and obstacles;
- determine promising growth trajectories;
- optimize key processes and resources;
- adapt to changing external conditions [3, 8].

The principles of consulting (Fig. 1) form the foundation of professional ethics, shaping the methodological approaches applied in practice.

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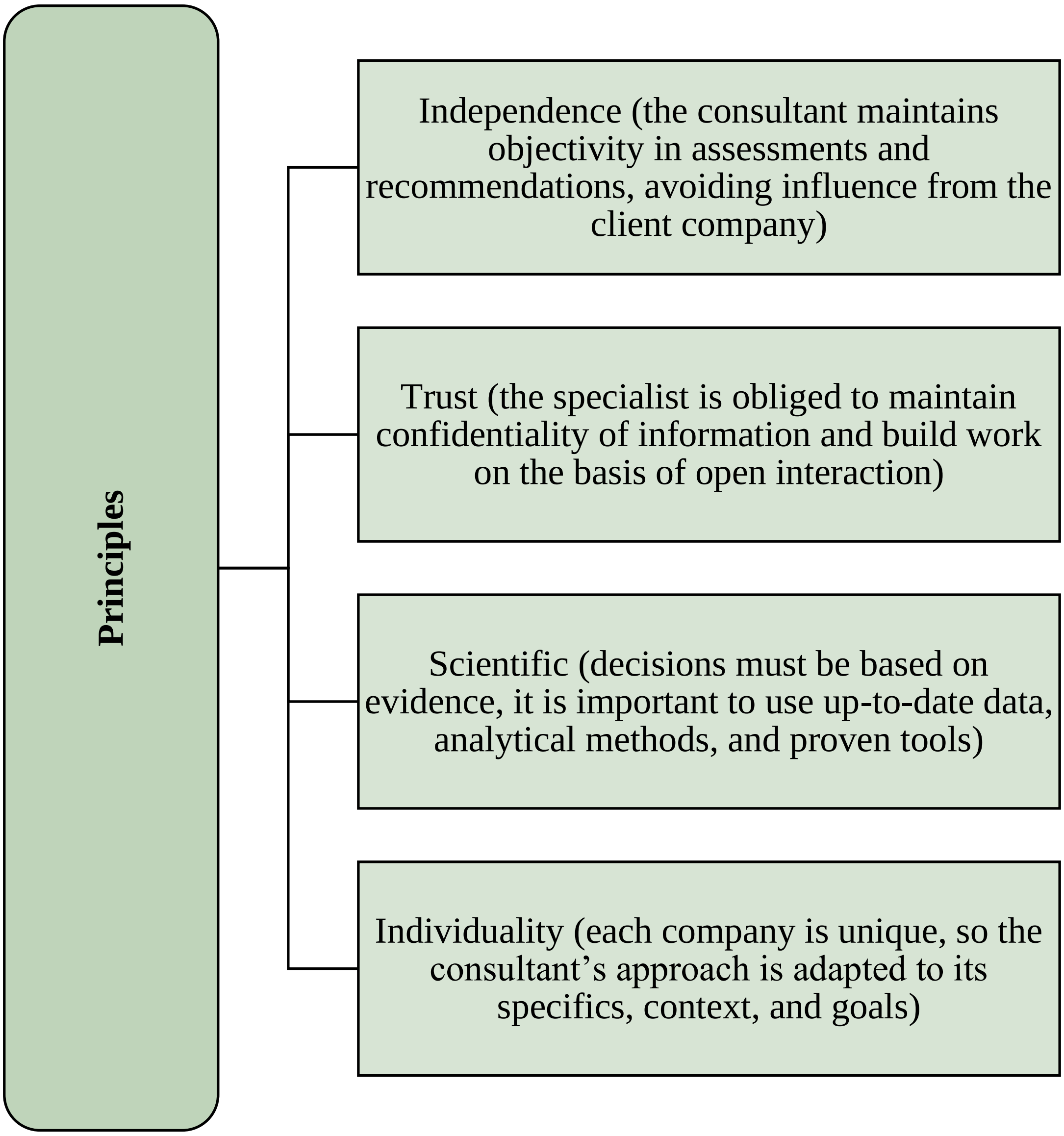

Fig. 1. Systematization of the principles of business consulting [1, 4–6, 10]

This field encompasses a wide range of tasks, from strategy development to the implementation of specialized solutions. The most common consulting areas include:

- strategic consulting, which involves creating long-term growth plans, market entry strategies, and competitive advantage formation;

- financial consulting, focusing on cost optimization, profitability enhancement, investment management, and liquidity control;

- organizational consulting, aimed at improving corporate structures, personnel management, and the development of effective corporate governance models;

- technological consulting, involving the introduction of digital solutions, business process automation, and transitioning to innovative platforms.

The business consultant acts as an external analyst with the capacity for independent evaluation of the company's status. Unlike internal specialists, the consultant maintains objectivity, which is especially important when identifying critical issues affecting the organization. A core task is uncovering structural imbalances and weak points that create barriers to sustainable success.

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For instance, in the case of a medium-sized manufacturing company, a consultant might identify a misalignment between the pace of capacity expansion and the quality of local management, leading to disruptions in the supply chain. The consultant then proposes solutions aimed at synchronizing management processes and optimizing resource allocation.

Business consulting relies on interdisciplinary methods that combine analysis, diagnostics, modeling, and forecasting. The most commonly applied methods are depicted in Fig. 2.

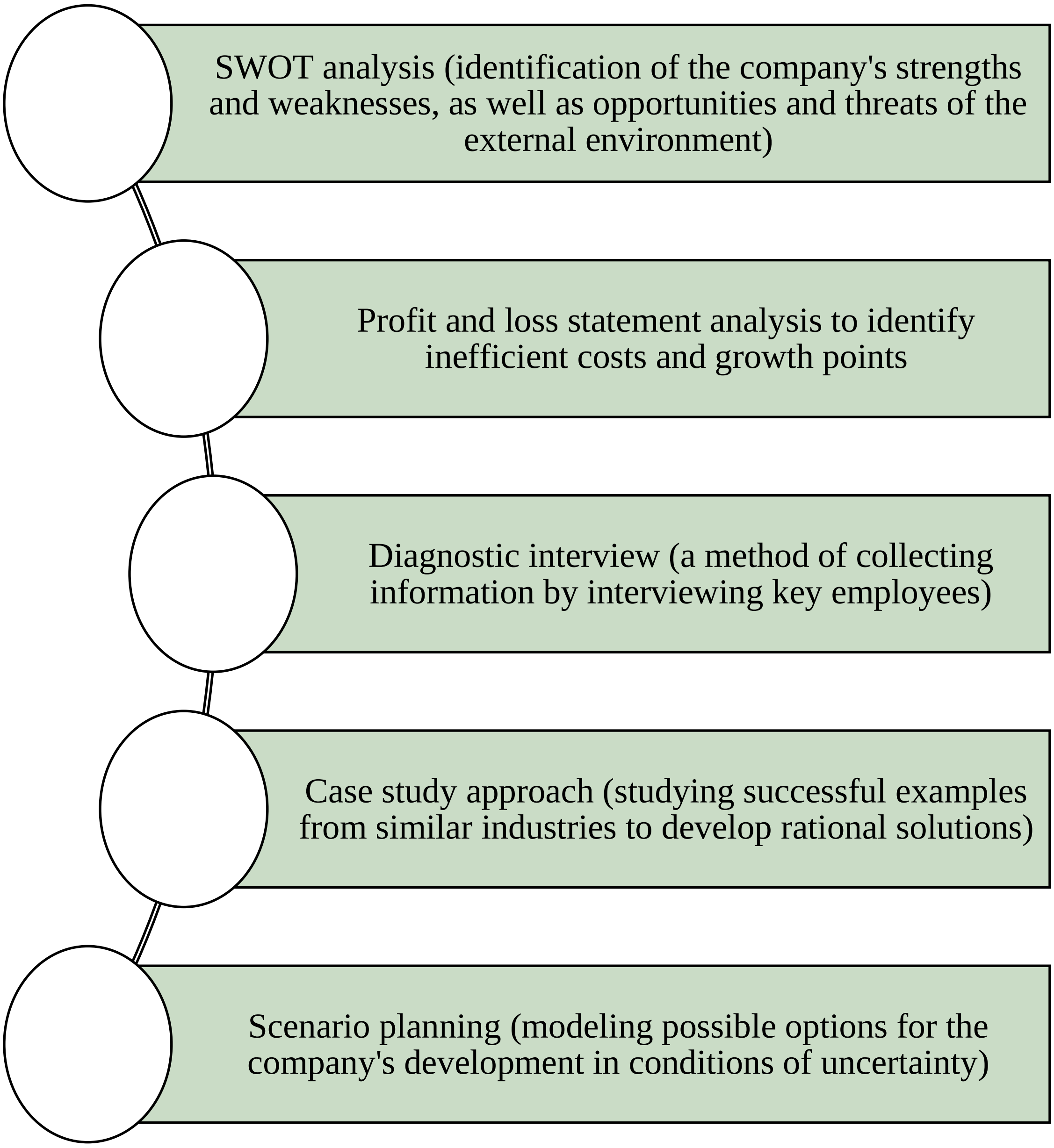

Fig. 2. Methodological foundations of the work of a business consultant [2, 7, 9]

To successfully develop a growth strategy, a business consultant employs both analytical and practical tools.

First, a detailed examination of the external environment is conducted. This includes:

- market trends,
- competitor behavior,

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- legislative changes,
- economic forecasts.

The obtained information is compared with the company's internal characteristics, such as cost structures, productivity levels, and the quality of corporate governance.

Second, the consultant actively involves the management of the business entity in the decision-making process. This helps align top managers' perspectives on key priorities and significantly reduces the risk of contradictions during the implementation of planned steps. Notably, successful growth strategies often rely on unconventional approaches, such as forming alliances with companies in adjacent industries or integrating management models that distribute responsibility across all levels.

A conditional example is a consulting project for a trading company where a sustainable growth strategy was achieved by implementing an omnichannel sales model. Following a detailed analysis of the customer base, the business consultant recommended not only expanding traditional offline stores but also leveraging online platforms. This approach increased the number of sales channels and enhanced consumer loyalty, positively impacting long-term profit growth.

The development of the strategies described in the article is closely linked to the necessity of structural changes within the company. In this case, the consultant acts as a coordinator of transformations, devising step-by-step algorithms for their integration. For instance, in the restructuring of large corporations, the consultant may recommend implementing project management systems to synchronize the actions of various departments.

Additionally, the consultant addresses resistance from employees, particularly in organizations with established traditions. A skilled professional mitigate these challenges by organizing staff training, conducting individual consultations with key personnel, and proposing motivational programs.

Sustainable growth strategies cannot be formed without evaluating their outcomes. To this end, the business consultant develops key performance indicators (KPIs) that measure the success of the strategy's implementation. These may include increased market share, growth in marginal profit, or cost reduction.

Long-term support becomes another critical stage of interaction with the consultant. Many business entities engage consultants after completing the main project to conduct regular audits of strategic initiatives. This helps adjust the development trajectory promptly and avoid undesirable deviations from established goals.

Based on the analysis of scientific publications, an authorial perspective has been formulated on the key factors that should be prioritized to achieve high results in business consulting (Fig. 3).

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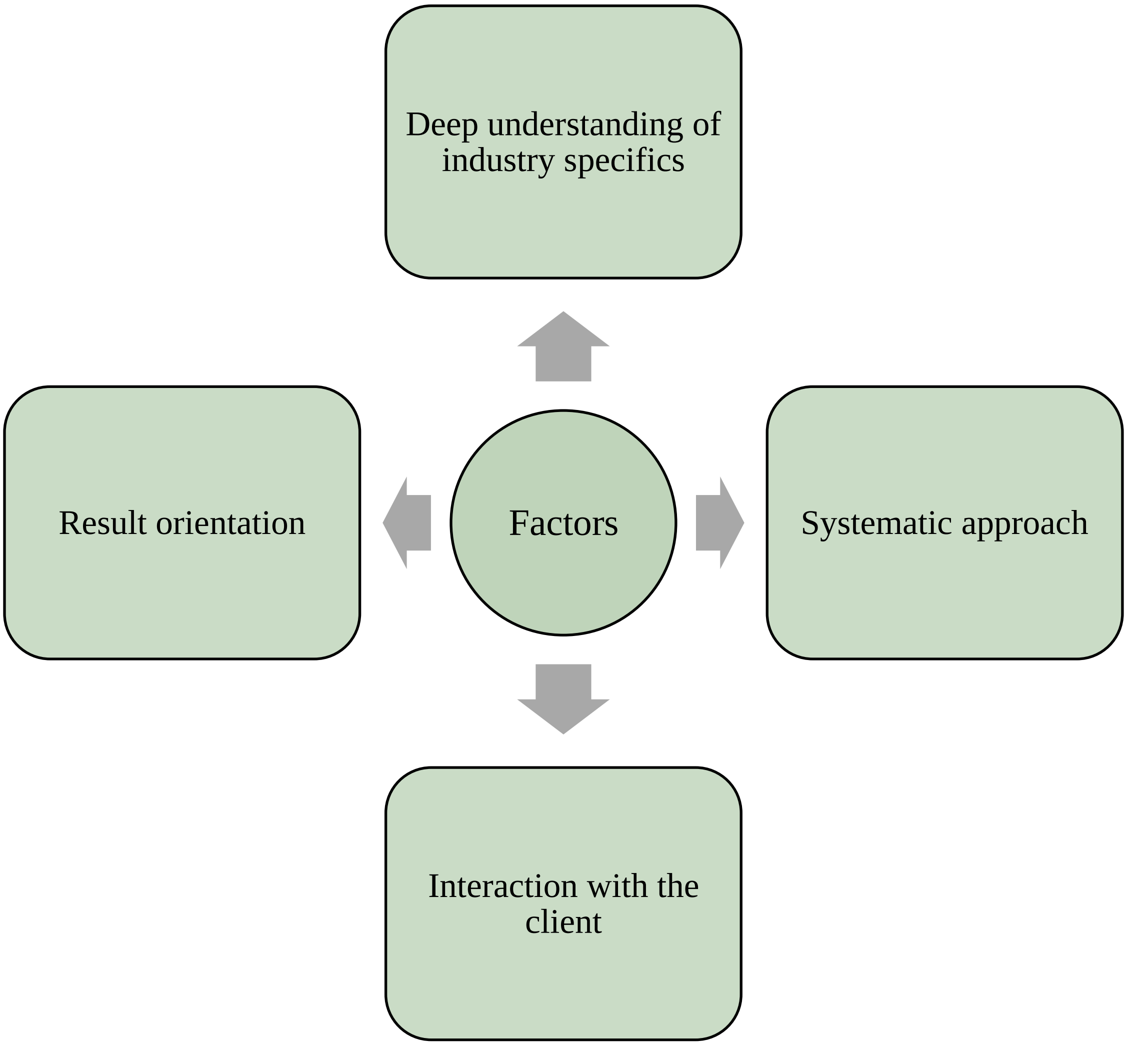

Fig. 3. Identification of key factors for achieving high business consulting results [1–3, 5–8]

Only a detailed understanding of a business's unique characteristics enables a consultant to develop practical recommendations. Regarding a systematic approach, the specialist views the company as an integrated organism, where success relies on the interconnection of all departments. Effective consulting also requires collaboration with leadership and employees to establish a shared vision of tasks and goals. Finally, work in this field should focus not on abstract proposals but on measurable changes.

Conclusions

Business consultants play a critical role in developing growth strategies that consider a wide range of internal and external determinants. Their function extends beyond standard consulting to encompass areas such as risk analysis, the implementation of innovative solutions, and change management. Through their independent perspective and professional expertise, these specialists contribute to enhancing an organization's competitiveness and laying the foundation for its long-term development. This is intrinsically linked to key success factors: a deep understanding of industry specifics, a systematic approach, active collaboration with clients, and a clear focus on results.

Organizations willing to invest in consulting services gain both a detailed action plan and a valuable external perspective on their prospects. This synergy ensures the resilience and adaptability of strategies, which is particularly vital in the face of dynamic changes in the business environment.

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Future research should focus on developing more detailed methods for evaluating the effectiveness of consulting and the impact of implemented recommendations on the long-term development of organizations. Promising directions include analyzing interdisciplinary approaches that integrate elements of financial management, organizational psychology, and digital technologies. Additionally, greater attention should be given to examining the specifics of consulting across various economic sectors and developing new interaction models in the context of global challenges, such as digitalization and environmental constraints.

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