

Top 5 Best HR Consulting Firms in 2016(Ranking and Review)

2016 RANKING & REVIEWS TOP HR CONSULTING FIRMS

There are many reasons to use HR consulting firms, which are organizations offering services aimed at addressing a wide range of human resources management decisions and tasks.

An outside HR consultant would be someone who would come into a business and help its HR team and leaders develop more effective human resources processes and programs as well as potentially aiding in the development of new workflows.

The goal of hiring a consultant of this kind is to develop more strategic objectives relating to human resources and human capital and also to maximize performance based on the implementation of best practices.

Some of the areas that the best HR consulting firms focus their services include:

- Employee healthcare and benefits.
- Overall human capital, including the implementation of rewards and incentives. HR consulting firms can also assist in areas of recruitment and general talent management.
- If there are mergers and acquisitions on the horizon for a company, an HR consultant may come in to make the transition more seamless.
- HR consultants can also assist businesses with general communication and employee behavior issues.
- If a business needs to outsource talent, HR consultants can help them in doing so.

These are just a few of the places you may require the services of one of the top HR consulting firms.

Continue reading to see what to look for during the process of hiring a firm.



Award Emblem: Top 5 Best HR Consulting Firms

How to Select the Right HR Consulting Firm

If your goal is to address any of the needs listed above, you may have already decided to begin your search for the best HR consulting firms.

Here are some tips to help you narrow it down since the list of HR consulting firms tends to be one that's long and can be difficult to navigate:

- Reputation is key. When you're searching for a consulting firm, the first place to start narrowing down the list of the top HR consulting firms is to seek recommendations whenever possible.

If you can't find personal recommendations, look for reviews online that will indicate the professional reputation of any firm you're considering.

- Certifications are important in the HR industry. For example, you might want to consider looking at the firms which have consultants holding the Senior Professional in Human Resources Management (SPHR) certification.

This demonstrates that the professionals within that firm have knowledge on all of the most essential areas of human resources – at an executive level. You can check HRCI.org to determine whether or not individuals within a firm hold this designation.

- Abundant publications can also demonstrate that members of HR consulting firms have a strong, authoritative reputation in their industry.

You'll often find that some of the most sought-after professionals from top HR consulting firms in the world will have written extensively for trade publications and may have even written books or been part of regular writing and speaking engagements for HR-related professional associations.

- You may require an HR consulting firm that specializes in a particular area. For example, maybe you need help managing a mergers and acquisitions scenario.

In this case, this particular need would probably be a pivotal element of your search as you narrow down the list of HR consulting firms.

- Ask for references. When you're selecting a firm, whether it's one of the largest HR consulting firms or a boutique agency, it's important to ask for client references.

These firms should have a long list of clients they're willing to give you in order to demonstrate their quality of work, and, in particular, you should ask for those references of clients with work most similar to your needs.



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This list is by no means exhaustive but is meant to serve as an initial guide to help you as you begin your search. As we mentioned, it can be a challenge to even know where to begin, which is why we also created the HR consulting firms ranking list which follows.

We compiled not only the top three consulting firms, but we went on to actually rank the top five.

This will give you a clear idea of not only who we feel are the top HR consulting firms in the world but will also give you a framework of criteria that's important to look for in the selection process – even if you're not going to choose one of the companies cited on our list.

AdvisoryHQ's 2016 Top Rated Best HR Consulting Firms

Below is the list of this year's top five choices for the best HR consulting firms.
List is sorted alphabetically:

- [Aon Hewitt](#)
- [Deloitte Consulting](#)
- [Hay Group](#)
- [Mercer](#)
- [Oliver Wyman](#)

While we didn't include them in our reviews, we consider The Boston Consulting Group and Towers Watson, as part of the top 10 HR consulting firms in the world.

For the purposes of this ranking list, we'll cover the first five names in-depth, and we hope this guide will serve as a meaningful way for you to navigate the extensive list of HR consulting firms and choose one that works for the present and future needs of your business.

Aon Hewitt Review

[Aon Hewitt](#) is a global consulting firm focusing on risk management, insurance and reinsurance brokerage, and a variety of human resources and outsourcing services and solutions.

An Overview:

Aon's focus isn't just on human resources in general – the company specializes in managing areas of risk. It employs 72,000 people and is one of the top 10 HR consulting firms in the world, with a global presence in more than 120 countries.

Aon has been cited as one of the best companies of its kind in these specific areas:

- Brokering
- Insurance intermediary
- Captives management
- Employee benefits

With more than 500 offices around the world, Aon maintains a strong presence and is able to deliver a highly customized level of service to each company or business it partners with. Having a framework based on globalization makes Aon unique.

Aon combines not only a worldwide presence and a globally-driven mindset but also localized solutions: a diverse set of intellectual capital and innovative technology to create the solutions people need to achieve their goals.

The Aon Senior Management Team includes Gregory C. Case, president and chief executive officer; Stephen P. McGill, group president; and Christa Davies, executive vice president and chief financial officer.

Focus Areas:

While Aon is, of course, a comprehensive solutions provider and one of the largest HR consulting firms in the world, it does specialize in some areas, which include:

- **Reinsurance:** Working with Aon on issues surrounding reinsurance allows clients to manage risk with creative solutions.

A particular sub-area of focus within the larger area of reinsurance includes analytics, in which Aon provides catastrophe management, risk and capital strategies, and rating agency advisory.

Also part of reinsurance service offers are claims and contract wording as well as facultative reinsurance.

- **Risk Solutions:** Some of the areas that fall under this umbrella, in terms of Aon's services, include crisis management, directors' and officers' liability, environmental risk management, mergers and acquisitions, political risk management, and property risk management.
- **Human Resources:** Of course, as one of the top HR consulting firms, there is a focus on more general human resources topics.

Aon can help clients manage every aspect of their human resources strategy, including talent, rewards, performance, retirement and investments, and health and benefits.

Some specific HR solutions offered by Aon include talent acquisition and outsourcing, broad-based compensation, executive compensation, employee engagement, retirement consulting, health exchange solutions, absence management, and global benefits.

Structure:

Aon features something called Global Business Units, designed to create a sense of consistency across its corporate culture, which is beneficial in the face of its vast worldwide presence.

These Global Business Units are designed to provide a sense of localized solutions and service delivery to clients, but the company still maintains a strong sense of purpose and a shared vision, which are what contribute to the sense of cohesiveness and consistent quality delivery.



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There are stringent standards in place, and the company is fueled by a dedication to using the highest levels of technology.

All of these are elements allowing Aon to rise and become one of not only the largest HR consulting firms but also one of the top HR consulting firms in the world.

When Aon partners with a multinational corporation, that corporation is united with a strategic account manager who works to understand the company on an incredibly deep and personalized level in order to deliver the most tailored services and solutions possible.

If a company has operations only in one region, it'll work with a local representative.

Deloitte Consulting Review

Chances are, you've likely heard of [Deloitte Consulting](#), which is another one of the top HR consulting firms in the world.

An Overview:

Deloitte and its subsidiaries have more than 70,000 employees in the U.S. alone, with a single-minded dedication to helping clients tackle their most difficult challenges.

The company had a recorded revenue of \$16.15 billion for FY2015, and it's one of the leading professional services firms, offering solutions across more than 20 industries.

Advisory:

Deloitte offers a wide variety of services, including its Advisory options to help clients manage strategy, finances, operations, technology, and regulations.

Under the umbrella of its Advisory services are:

- **Financial Transactions:** Financial transaction advisory services from Deloitte are designed to help businesses grow while embracing change. They're also aimed at improving performance, even in the wake of disruptions, difficulties, and crises.

Some of the more specific areas of financial advisement services include accounting and reporting transformation, regulatory, forensics and compliance, mergers, acquisitions, and divestitures.

- **Regulatory, Forensics and Compliance:** In these areas, Deloitte's team of expert consultants can help businesses not just navigate but also anticipate industry-specific regulations and improve their internal audits.

The result is improved performance and value as well as the ability to successfully weather crises, controversies, and transactions. The result is a

more seamless experience even while disruptions are occurring.

- **Risk & Resilience:** Risk & Resilience services and solutions from Deloitte allow businesses to manage risks in all areas – including cyber, strategy, IT, supply chain, and operational – while uncovering new opportunities and sources of value.

Audit:

When using audit services from Deloitte, businesses and clients can improve their levels of trust when they invest in both public and capital markets, and the focus is on both quality and innovation.

The professional audit team works to give clients independent financial statements and control audits that are in-line with the most updated standards.

Consulting:

Consulting services fall into three main categories: human capital, strategy and operations, and technology.

Regardless of the complexity or difficulty of a business solution, Deloitte works to find answers that will keep an organization moving ahead with strong actions that deliver results, ensuring it remains one of the most respected HR consulting firms.

In terms of human capital, Deloitte has a team dedicated specifically to this area to help manage talent and create programs that will maximize employees, develop strong leaders, and create programs that improve not just performance but also revenue.

Specific human capital focus areas include benefits, culture, and training.

Strategy and operations services are designed to give senior executives a platform from which to approach and solve their most difficult problems. Some of the subcategories within this service area include business model transformation, finance, and mergers and acquisitions.

Regulatory:

Businesses continue to face an environment dominated by increasingly complex regulations. Deloitte has services that help businesses not only ensure that they are compliant but also to manage the impact these regulations have on them.

Rather than viewing regulations as an obstacle, it's the hope of Deloitte's regulatory specialists that they're able to help businesses view these as potential opportunities.

Specific regulatory service areas include energy and resources, enterprise compliance, and financial services.

Industries:

Industries served by Deloitte, one of the top HR consulting firms, include:

- Consumer businesses
- Energy and resources
- Financial services
- Life sciences and health care
- Manufacturing
- Public sector
- Real estate
- Technology, media, and telecommunications

Now that we've covered number two on our list of the best HR consulting firms, let's move on to Hay Group, which ranks at number three.

Hay Group Review

[Hay Group](#) was founded in 1943 and, since then, has been providing outstanding global service based on a combination of great people and innovative technology.

An Overview:

Hay Group is billed as one of the top HR consulting firms in the world, and it helps businesses within all areas of its "people strategy."

This includes delivering insight into how people work, as well as how they should be paid, and how companies can both attract and retain the very best talent.

Its solutions are designed to deliver a workforce that is engaged and productive.

As well as being people-centric, Hay Group ranks on our list of the best HR consulting firms because it's driven by data. It has one of the most comprehensive HR databases in the world which is used to leverage talent and create solutions rooted in the numbers.

Hay Group employs more than 3,000 people – based at 88 offices in 50 countries – which is what compelled us to name it as one of the top 10 HR consulting firms in the world.

Challenges Addressed by Hay Group:

Hay Group offers services and solutions that are driven by common challenges faced by businesses, whether they're located in one region or maintain global offices.

Some of these primary challenges include:

- Attracting and retaining employees
- Encouraging innovation
- Employee engagement
- The management of a family-owned business
- Change management
- Taking strategy and making it into real results
- Management in matrix organizations
- Mergers and acquisitions
- Performance management
- Strategic workforce planning

It's from within the framework of these challenges that Hay Group offers a wide range of customizable services.

Services:

Services offered by Hay Group, one of the world's best HR consulting firms, include:

- **Evaluation:** Hay Group will look at each of the job roles in your business to uncover not just the how's but also the why's and the where's. This helps to create appropriate reward structures.
- **Recruitment:** Recruitment is key to business growth and success in any industry. Hay Group helps companies not just source but also attract the talent they need and want.

It's a highly scalable service, so whether you're simply looking for one employee or thousands around the world, it has the sources and expertise to guide your search.

- **Pay:** This is a hot-button issue in the corporate world right now, and having the right pay structure is essential for attracting and retaining as well as engaging employees. The team at Hay Group can help you find a balance between budget and good employees.
- **Development:** Just finding top talent isn't enough. Great employees need to be developed to maximize their talent, and Hay Group can help businesses make the most of their talent through development that's in-line with strategy.
- **Engagement:** Disengagement in the workplace is a leading cause of business problems, including lack of productivity and high turnover rates. Hay Group can help you uncover new sources of engagement and make sure your employees are motivated and are an asset to your organization.
- **Activation:** One of the elements we found to be really about Hay Group and which led us to name it as one of our top HR consulting firms is its focus on actionability.

It won't just help you create strategies, but it'll also help you realistically put them in place. Strategy is nothing without activation, and that's something Hay Group has a firm grasp on.

Hay Group creates people-centric strategies and implements action by taking the following steps: assessing your employees, designing your organization in a way that reflects strategy, developing your people, conducting employee

surveys, evaluating your jobs, managing your people, and rewarding your employees.

Hay Group rounds out our list of the top three consulting firms. We'll now move on to number four on our HR consulting firms ranking, which is Mercer.

Mercer Review

[Mercer](#) is another one of the top HR consulting firms in the world, with a strong global presence and a reputation spanning more than 70 years.

An Overview:

Mercer approaches HR consulting from within the framework of a dedication to innovation.

We also find it's one of the top HR consulting firms because of its comprehensive, holistic approach that pairs with specialized knowledge and experience.

It's driven by deep analytics to provide a basis for each of its solutions, and it has partnered with more than 28,000 companies during its history.

There are two values that provide a foundation for Mercer, which are:

- People are at the heart of everything, driving innovation, solutions and passions.
- The future is made in the action taken today.

Mercer is led by a global leadership team that includes Julio Portalatin, president and CEO; David Anderson, president, growth markets region; Ilya Bonic, president, talent; and Michelle Bottomley, chief marketing and sales officer.

This dynamic team leads more than 21,000 worldwide employees.

Health and Benefits:

One of Mercer's primary service areas is employee health and benefits, delivered to everyone from small businesses to multinational enterprises.

Within this service, subcategories include:

- Private health exchange
- Global benefits
- Employee benefits
- Health Benefits Administration, including retirement benefits
- Affinity benefits

Mercer will work for your company to create valuable, realistic health and benefits packages and strategies that are always in-line with your strategic goals and objectives.

Wealth and Investments:

We like Mercer and have named it as one of the best HR consulting firms for many reasons, but one of those includes its focus on the management and growth of investments.

Under the larger category of wealth and investment, Mercer services include:

- Retirement plan administration
- Pension risk management
- Defined benefit pension plans
- Defined contribution plans
- Employee financial wellness
- Alternative investments
- Endowments and foundations
- Financial intermediary partnerships

Workforce and Careers:

This area of Mercer's service offerings really speaks to the heart of what human resources encompasses.

Services include:

- Talent strategy
- Executive compensation
- Workforce rewards
- Talent mobility
- HR transformation

- Employee communication

All of these people-related services are backed by robust data and analytics for an objective strategy rather than people management which is subjective.

Mergers and Acquisitions:

Other Mercer service areas include the management of mergers and acquisitions.

- M&A due diligence
- PMO
- Post-merger integration
- Private equity advisory

Mercer approaches M&A well before the negotiations begin and continues well after the deal is completed. Mercer can provide both the financial and technical due diligence as well as in-depth project management and seamless post-merger integration.

Who Mercer Helps:

Mercer can partner with a wide variety of entities within a business, including CEOs and boards, CFOs, talent managers, benefits managers, financial advisors, trustees and foundations, and employees.

Types of organizations served by it – one of the top 10 HR consulting firms in the world – include corporations, multinational corporations, endowments and foundations, affinity, public sector, wealth management, and private equity firms.

Industries this HR consulting firm specializes in are:

- Energy
- Insurance
- Health care
- Financial services
- Higher education
- Retail



Image Source: [BigStock](#)

As we wrap up Mercer, number four on our list of HR consulting firms with the best reputation and services, we move on to the last review on our list, which is of Oliver Wyman.

Oliver Wyman Review

We're concluding our rankings and reviews of the best HR consulting firms with [Oliver Wyman](#): a firm focused on helping innovators and free thinkers develop the people strategies that are needed to succeed.

An Overview:

Oliver Wyman is a purpose-driven company, and that purpose is to bring together the best people to create value, ending in lasting contributions to clients as well as entire industries and societies.

One of the big reasons we cite Oliver Wyman on this list is because it's dedicated to not only hiring exceptional people but also to thinking outside the box and reevaluating the status quo to develop truly unique solutions.

Oliver Wyman defines its approach as being a partnership, and it's also one based on high levels of expertise.

It works to develop close, deep bonds with clients, ensuring collaboration across every level of an organization to solve even the most difficult and complex challenges.

Values and Mission:

Oliver Wyman explicitly outlines its purpose, which is to bring together the best people to create long-term value, contributing to shared success.

Part of its values-driven approach relies on having a business structure that isn't based on traditional hierarchies but is, instead, about respect and helping everyone realize their full potential.

When searching for consultants to join the Oliver Wyman team, the emphasis is not only on finding that rare combination of innovators with fresh thinking, who can uncover insights contributing to HR-related transformations, but also people that can work collaboratively since a team approach is vital to what this HR consulting company does.

Services:

Oliver Wyman offers a broad range of services, and we'll highlight a few of the primary ones:

- **Actuarial:** Under the umbrella of Actuarial services, the Oliver Wyman specialists work with businesses to manage property, casualty, life, annuity, and healthcare risks.

They can qualify risk and loss exposures, provide guidance on external strategies and internal risk management, assist with mergers and acquisitions, and work on new product development.

- **Business and Organization Transformation:** If a company is undergoing significant change, Oliver Wyman will help manage the transition and make it more seamless.

Areas of focus are structure and operations, workflows, and organizational capabilities.

- **Corporate Finance and Restructuring:** Under this service category, subservices include mergers and acquisitions, structured finance, project finance, restructuring, and post-merger integration.
- **Digital:** Oliver Wyman brings expertise to a variety of digital performance issues within banking, communications, distribution and wholesale, and more.
- **Oliver Wyman Labs:** The Oliver Wyman Labs are a signature offering from this HR consulting company, which allow clients to leverage technology to implement real, attainable business impacts.

Using Wyman Labs lets clients use the power of the information they already hold to develop a sustainable competitive advantage.

- **Operations and Technology:** Operations and technology services at Oliver Wyman are centered on Lean Six Sigma principles. Partnering with this firm allows you to create a greater level of efficiency in your business while improving performance and delivery.
- **Pricing, Sales and Marketing:** The level of economic competition is growing at a staggering pace. That makes it more challenging for businesses of all scales to determine the right way to increase their revenue.

Working with Oliver Wyman will allow clients to create customer-centric planning and implement commercialization strategies to improve margins and profits.

- **Risk Management:** Oliver Wyman paves the way for executives and business leaders to identify risks and address associated challenges with tailored solutions.

Within the realm of risk management services, there are subcategories of services which include Finance & Risk, Global Risk & Trading, and the Global Risk Center.

- **Strategy:** The consulting team at Oliver Wyman designs tailored strategies by taking an outsider perspective. This lets it identify new challenges as well as opportunities to harnesses resources and drive growth.

- **Sustainability Center:** The Sustainability Center at Oliver Wyman helps businesses maintain financial success while simultaneously identifying ways to be more environmentally conscious and efficient with their use of natural resources.
- **Value Sourcing:** Clients of Oliver Wyman can take their procurement strategies into new territory that will allow them to derive more value.

Oliver Wyman has more than 20 partners and over 200 consultants throughout the globe who are part of the Sourcing Expertise Center.

Industries served by Oliver Wyman are:

- Automotive
- Aviation, aerospace, and defense
- Business services
- Communications, media, and technology
- Distribution and wholesale
- Energy
- Financial services
- Health and life sciences
- Industrial products
- Public sector
- Retail and consumer products
- Surface transportation
- Travel and leisure

One of the many things about Oliver Wyman that led to our inclusion of this HR consulting firm on our list is the wide range of industries it serves.

It doesn't just serve diverse industries, it specializes in them, so it's able to drill down to the specifics of each and deliver consulting services that aren't just HR-driven but are also industry and sector-driven for the most personalized, tailored results possible.

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