

AI Adoption in the Consultancy Industry: Student Project Scope & Brief

DICE Consortium · Stupreneurs Live Client Brief

Your consultancy team will research how consulting firms are adopting artificial intelligence (AI) for Valcon, a technology, data and consulting firm. You will produce four things: a research and analysis report, a pain points and opportunities analysis, a best-practice guide, and a step-by-step implementation roadmap for consulting firms adopting AI.

Project at a glance

Item	Detail
Project title	AI Adoption in the Consultancy Industry
Client	Valcon (https://valcon.com/en/), UK.
Client type	SME
Sector	Business Consultancy; Artificial Intelligence; Strategic Management and Best Practices. Digital Transformation
Project type	Live client brief on the Stupreneurs model
Scope	LLM Adoption Roadmap
UN SDG target	SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities; SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
Duration	DICE's pilot roadmap describes live CIP delivery as 8 to 12 weeks
Workspace	The team's own Basecamp area to support their work, link with partners and collaborate during the project
DICE contact	andrem@diceconsortium.com

About the client

Valcon delivers sustainable transformation by combining technology, data and consulting. Its core work is making sure companies are in their best possible operational condition: it identifies opportunities and helps bring them to life. It describes its consultancy services as thorough, fast and collaborative, from strategy, to implementation and from the boardroom, to the shop floor.

The challenge

Valcon wants to look at the adoption of AI in the consulting industry. It wants to know:

- how AI is used across consulting today, and how that has changed;
- what AI does to consulting firms and to their clients;
- what gets in the way of adoption, and where the opportunities are;



- what good practice looks like;
- how a consulting firm should adopt or expand AI, step by step.

Scope

Valcon's brief has four workstreams.

Workstream 1: Research and analysis

- Give an overview of existing research and articles on the use of AI in consulting.
- Analyse past and current trends, key technologies, major players, and theoretical frameworks related to AI in consulting.
- Analyse how AI technologies are currently used in the consulting sector, with:
 - detailed descriptions of the AI tools and platforms used;
 - case studies of consulting firms;
 - interviews or survey results from industry experts;
 - statistical analysis of AI adoption rates.
- Evaluate the effects of AI on clients and on consulting firms: its impact on service delivery, client outcomes, decision-making processes, operational efficiency and employee roles. Include both qualitative insights and quantitative data.

Workstream 2: Pain points and opportunities

- Identify the challenges and growth opportunities in adopting AI.
- Explore barriers in detail (for example ethical issues, resistance to change, high costs) and opportunities for innovation.
- Make strategic recommendations for overcoming the challenges.

Workstream 3: Best practices

- Develop a guide on best practice for integrating AI into business consulting.
- Base the recommendations on successful case studies, expert interviews and the literature review.
- Cover strategies for implementation, training needs, ethical considerations, and monitoring and evaluation of AI systems.

Workstream 4: Implementation roadmap

- Give a practical, step-by-step plan for consulting firms looking to adopt or expand their use of AI.
- Use a phased approach covering pilot phases, training schedules, resource allocation, risk management strategies and scalability plans.

Out of scope (proposed)

Further project expansion for solution development:

- Building, coding or buying AI tools.
- Assessing Valcon's own internal systems or confidential data, unless Valcon offers access.
- Legal advice on AI regulation. Summarise the issues and recommend specialist advice where needed.

Deliverables

The proposal form says the team must achieve the project objectives above and demonstrate an awareness of effective AI adoption methodologies, strategies and models in the consultancy industry. D1 to D4 follow Valcon's four workstreams; D5 and D6 are proposed. Agree formats with Valcon.

#	Deliverable	Must include
D1	Research and analysis report	Literature overview; trends, technologies, major players and frameworks; tools and platforms; firm case studies; expert interview or survey results; adoption-rate statistics; effects on firms and clients (qualitative and quantitative)
D2	Pain points and opportunities analysis	Barriers (ethics, resistance to change, cost, others found); innovation opportunities; strategic recommendations
D3	Best-practice guide for integrating AI into consulting	Implementation strategies; training needs; ethical considerations; monitoring and evaluation of AI systems
D4	Implementation roadmap	Phased plan: pilots, training schedules, resource allocation, risk management, scalability
D5	Client presentation to Valcon	Proposed
D6	Basecamp project record	Proposed

Assessment

The work should also give each student portfolio evidence. DICE's framework calls this Portfolio Proof of Work and Client Portfolio Deliverables. Keep copies of your contributions (subject to any confidentiality Valcon requires).

Skills this project develops (from the proposal form)

The form assumes every Consultancy in Practice student already shows professionalism, commitment to outcomes and deliverables, ICT skills (word processing, spreadsheets, cloud applications, remote communication tools), problem solving, numeracy and group work. The project then develops:

- Understanding the business objective
- Analytical and critical thinking
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Negotiation and cost-benefit analysis
- Decision-making skills
- Funding and finance
- Reporting, monitoring and evaluation
- Documentation and presentation
- Agile methodologies
- Research and technical skills

The form maps skill areas to graduate outcomes:

Skill area	Graduate outcomes
Social Enterprise Knowledge	Broad & Integrative Knowledge; Ethics & Engagement
Technical	Deep & Distinctive Knowledge; Communication
Finance & Funding	Deep & Distinctive Knowledge

Skill area	Graduate outcomes
Project Management	Ethics & Engagement; Cultural Competence
Interpersonal & Cross-cultural Communication	Collaboration; Communication; Cultural Competence
Business Development	Deep & Distinctive Knowledge

Timeline and milestones

The phases follow DICE's Stupreneurs process (Skills Audit & Registration, Basecamp Teams, Live Client Brief, Solution, Output) within the 8-to-12-week window. The workstreams build on each other, so run them roughly in order. Enter agreed dates as To-dos in Basecamp.

1. **Set-up.** Skills audit and registration; form the team; set up the Basecamp; agree roles. *Milestone: roles agreed.*
2. **Client kick-off.** Meet Valcon; confirm scope (all AI or LLM-focused), the type of consulting firm the roadmap is for, access to Valcon experts, and confidentiality. *Milestone: scope agreed in writing.*
3. **Research and analysis (Workstream 1).** Literature review, tool and case-study research, adoption statistics; design and run expert interviews or a survey. *Milestone: D1 draft shared with Valcon.*
4. **Pain points and opportunities (Workstream 2).** Analyse barriers and opportunities from the research. *Milestone: D2 draft.*
5. **Best practice and roadmap (Workstreams 3 and 4).** Write the guide and the phased roadmap. *Milestone: D3 and D4 drafts reviewed by Valcon.*
6. **Output.** Final report and presentation to Valcon; files archived in Basecamp. *Milestone: D1 to D5 delivered.*

Ways of working

Your client is itself a consultancy, so it will judge your work by professional consulting standards.

- **Basecamp is the project's home.** Use the team messages for quick chat, To-dos for milestones and owners, for decisions and client updates. Keep all files there.
- **Client contact.** Agree one point of contact on each side. Send agendas before meetings and notes after.
- **Roles.** For example: project manager, literature and trends lead, case-study and tools lead, interviews/survey lead, data analyst, roadmap lead, editor. Record them in Basecamp.
- **Agile working.** The form lists agile methodologies as a skill to develop. Consider short sprints, with a check-in with Valcon at the end of each workstream.
- **Confidentiality.** Ask whether an NDA applies. Do not quote named firms' internal information without permission.

Research ethics and responsible AI use

- ☐ Check with the module lead whether ethics approval is needed for the expert interviews or survey, and obtain it.
- ☐ Give interviewees an information sheet and get consent; agree whether they and their firms can be named.



- ☐ Store interview and survey data securely and in line with UK GDPR.
- ☐ Follow the university's rules on using AI tools in your own work. State where and how you used them, and check every AI-generated fact against a source.
- ☐ Cite every statistic and case study, with its year.

Resources

Need	Resource
Client brief	Valcon_23-24 proposal form; https://valcon.com/en/
The consulting market	Consultancy Thoughts of the Day: Types of Consultants; The Value of Consultants to Clients; Main Market Areas for Consultancy; Understanding the Private Sector Market for Consultancy
Consultancy basics	Introduction to Management Consulting; Consultancy_Case Study_New Media; Developing an Effective Consulting Process; Providing Value as a Consultant
Research	Introduction to Research Methods and Tools in Business; References List
Planning	Introduction to Project Management; GPT_GANTT_Example; Project Scheduling; Strategic Planning
Working with the client	Navigating Client Meetings; Effective Meetings; Professional Email Etiquette; Communicating on Basecamp; Effective Presentations

Open questions to confirm

Settle these before or at the client kick-off.

#	Question	Ask
1	Module title, assessment components, weightings and submission dates	Module lead
2	Start date and duration within the 8-to-12-week window	Module lead
3	Is the 2023/24 brief still current?	Valcon
4	All AI, or a focus on LLMs / generative AI?	Valcon
6	Is the roadmap for consulting firms in general, for firms like Valcon, or for Valcon itself?	Valcon
7	Can Valcon introduce experts for interviews, or share any internal data?	Valcon
8	Which additional UN SDG(s), if any, should the project map to?	DICE
9	Is ethics approval needed for interviews or a survey?	Module lead
10	Is an NDA required, and can students use the work in their portfolios?	Valcon