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Deloitte summons big-game hunters in quest for experts

Edmund Tadros

Deloitte is one of several professional services companies that have been beefing up client proposals using a niche crowdsourcing outfit that specialises in tracking down experts from around the world.

The crowdsourcing firm, IOEQS, uses a virtual global network of 1000 contingent consultants to find and interview individuals who have specific experience working in a particular industry or with specific systems.

Projects usually run for two to three weeks, with the cost ranging between \$20,000 and \$100,000 for outputs such as a summary of the interview findings.

"Around 70 per cent of our work is for global professional services businesses," said Mark Donaldson, the Australia and New Zealand managing director of IOEQS.

"We take clients' issues, break them apart, find the right specialists for each piece, and put everything back together to provide a complete and customised solution."

Other clients of IOEQS include large consultancies and internal consulting teams at corporations.

IOEQS is one of a number of platform-based companies with a marketplace of consultants available for work, such as Internal Consulting Group and Expert360. Consultants typ-

ically use these marketplaces as another sales channel for their services.

Consultants who do work for IOEQS typically earn about \$US1500 (\$1941) a day for their work – the interviewees are paid a few hundred dollars for spending an hour or two answering questions, Mr Donaldson said.

IOEQS, a private firm, did 64 projects in Australia last year, meaning local revenue was upwards of \$1.3 million.

Deloitte partner Peter Overton used IOEQS when he needed to find firefighters and other experts from around the world with experience in using a range of incident management systems.

IOEQS was able to find 15 people from fire departments in the US, Britain and Asia who had all used the different types of technology in question.

"We wanted to know about the maturity, the costs associated with the technologies, the implementation risks and what they saw was the primary benefit of the systems," Mr Overton said.

Deloitte won the project, in part thanks to the input of the experts, and Mr Overton has since used IOEQS five more times on different proposals and projects. "I focus on emergency management projects – police, fire, ambulance departments and various supporting agencies – and they really appreciate input from a peer," he said.



Most of Mark Donaldson's work is for global professional services businesses.