

Well-known names: the major players

Even companies operating in other sectors are increasingly interested in offering business services. Some of the major players include IT and telcos such as Dell and Siemens, British Telecom and Fujitsu – the boundaries that used to separate different sectors are becoming blurred.

Top 5 IT and Business Services In Western Europe (2005)

1. IBM Global Services
2. Accenture
3. HP Services
4. Capgemini
5. Atos Origin

Source: IDC 2006

New Recruiting Grounds for Trade Unions

Knowledge-intensive business services offer trade unions a large pool of potential members. To attract these highly qualified employees it is important to offer them a broad range of sophisticated and high quality services.

Services

- *Individual services:* information, counselling, support
- *Collectives services:* collective agreements

Influencing policy-making

- Shaping the framework conditions applicable to our members

Building communities

- Creation of networks; providing support to members: exchanges, self-organisation



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Literature on the subject:

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Robert Huggins Associates, 2006: Trends and drivers of change in the European knowledge-intensive business services sector: Mapping report, EMCC, Dublin

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Knowledge-Intensive Business Services

Outside Experts:
A New Target Group
for the Trade Unions



Knowledge-intensive business services: a sector with a future

The weight of knowledge-intensive business services in the economy is growing. In order to keep up in this competitive environment, companies are increasingly relying on outside specialists. The contribution they make to corporate success is often vital as there are very few companies that have all the critical knowledge-based skills in-house.

The need for outside expertise has become more acute because of:

- the rapid pace of technological change
- shorter and shorter product life cycles
- the complexity and confusion of markets.

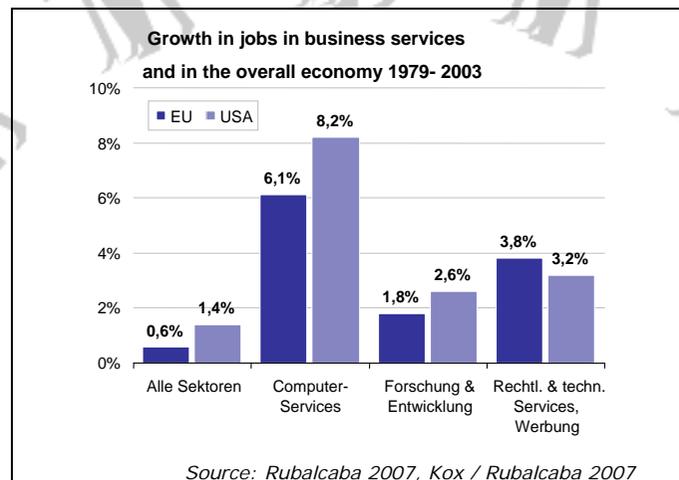
An Overview of Specialist Services

Highly qualified services play an increasingly important role in all business sectors. The most important of these include:

- IT services
- Research and development
- Architecture and engineering
- Legal services
- Accountancy, auditing, tax consultancy
- Market research and advertising
- Management consultancy
- Staff procurement

Growing call for complex knowledge

The use of highly specialised services has been growing since the 1970s. Growth rates have far outstripped that in other sectors, and there is a general consensus that they will become the driving force of employment in the future.



Approx. 15 million persons worked in knowledge-intensive business services in the EU of 25 countries in 2003 – that is 7.4% of all employees. At the same time, this sector represented about 7.6% of economic output.

Compliance with the law: Companies are subject to a variety of different regulations. This is increasing the demand for external services. In order to ensure conformity with tax, labour or copyright laws, companies often need to bring in the necessary expertise. Legal experts are also needed to deal with environmental protection standards, company law, as well as import and export regulations.

Employees are the most precious resource

Demanding services need qualified and motivated workers. Therefore employers invest heavily in order to attract and to retain skilled experts.

- Qualified knowledge workers are usually paid above-average salaries.
- They are often allowed a great deal of freedom to organise and carry out their work.
- Surveys confirm that this category enjoys high job satisfaction and identifies strongly with the job.

About 20% of business service workers are self-employed. Not all are top-earners. Many find it hard to make ends meet even when they have a large number of assignments. Young creative workers are a case in point: they are often only able to survive by accepting a number of jobs on the side. They have thus become the representatives of a new breed of “digital bohemians”.

Stretching Workers ... to Breaking Point

The jobs experts carry out are highly stressful. They are under pressure to perform, have to work within tight budgets, and must respect strict deadlines. This can often seriously impair the quality of their private lives and their health. Many of these specialists also complain frequently about restructuring, cost-cutting measures and an uncertain future, all of which undermines employee motivation and loyalty.