

# A bird-eye view about cloud consulting

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# Disclaimer

The view points being discussed in this session are purely based on my personal experience and does not represent opinions from any organisations, including all my past and current employees. All information is based on publicly-accessible materials and does not contain anything that is commercial in confidence.

- Binqi Zhang

# About Me



Ph.D in C.S.  
ME & BS in E.E



**2** published  
books

**4** US patents

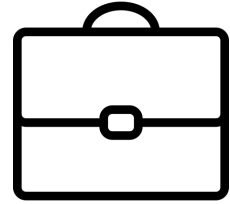
**5** conference &  
journal papers



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**7** aws certs

**2** google cloud  
certs



**18** years of  
experience

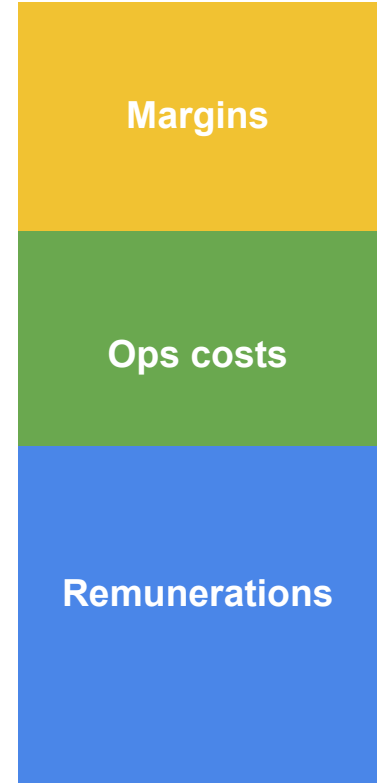
Leading **15+**

# Agenda

- Understand how consulting works
- Different cloud consulting models
- Skill sets and career advice

# Understanding consulting - Utilisation

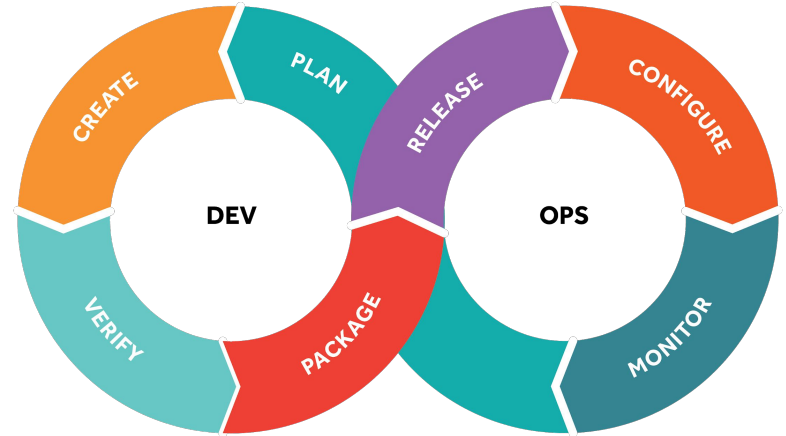
Utilisation is one of the key metrics for all consultants. Often it is also the most important one.



# Understanding consulting - Powerpoints vs Delivery

Cloud consulting is often not about Powerpoints (hopefully my PPTs are not too ugly), but deliveries.

Discovery - Design - Build - Operate



# Understanding consulting - Pricing Models

## Pricing, Pricing and Pricing !!!

### Time & Material

- Rate
- Terms of extension
- Showing the value

### Fixed Prices

- Scope management
- Assumptions and prereq's
- Sign-off process
- Variations

# SMALL consultancy



- Diversity of technologies & tools with full freedom
  - Signing up as new partners (e.g. New Relic, Looker)
- Engagement of defining the offerings
- Flexibility and great learnings
- Being trusted advisor of clients (heads)
- 2017 Re:Invent @Vegas - Global Meetup User Group Leaders; Cloud Warrior



- Client profiles (60% startups, 20% mid-sized enterprises, 20% government agencies)
- Difficult to break into large enterprise clients



- Complexity of projects was low
  - Both tech and non-tech
- Migration and DevOps pipeline work



# MEDIUM-SIZED consultancy



- Diversity of clients (all major e-commerce businesses, ASX200)
  - Being country-first (e.g. GCP MSP)
  - Very strong sales team, strong marketing & comms
  - Exposure to various forums (Ambassador, well-architected)
- 



- Strong alliance with AWS, Google, Microsoft, and VMware
  - Strong certification drive
  - Had to work within the framework of offerings (often global ones)
- 



- Complexity of projects was stuck at certain points

# LARGE consultancy



- High profile clients and projects and highly regulated (e.g. CPS234); ASX20
- Great presence in the market
- Closer to business, strategy, cyber and experience; end-to-end solution
- Very complex environments



- Very Strong alliance with vendors
- Opportunity to understand wider range of ecosystems (e.g. Salesforce)



- Too occupied with projects; struggling with time for personal connections and certification
- Lots of travels pre-COVID

# Why clients are looking for consultancy support

- Needing a second opinion or externalised opinion
- Augmented teams to accelerate the delivery
- Leaving the delivery risks to third party
- Lack of skills in-house
- Requirement for regulatory compliance or IPO
- Exclusions from managed services agreement

# Where the opportunities are

- Native and full-stack digital projects (Application, Cloud and Integration)
- Secure cloud deployment for regulated environments (PCI, CPS234, vendor specific frameworks e.g. well-architected)
- Data pipeline and data engineering (excluding data science)
- Massive scale of cloud migration (e.g. SAP)
- Integration with SaaS services
- Operational support and SRE
- Continuous “Everything”
- Backend of IoT & Edge

# Skill sets - Permanent Employees

Attitude

- Accountability
- Driving things to closure
- Providing solutions, not issues

Aptitude

- Being smart and rational
- Learning
- Experience of failure (so important for DevOps and SRE)
- Adoptive

# Permanent vs Contracting

	Perm	Contracting
Skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Being accountable</li><li>• Learning</li><li>• Leading &amp; coaching individuals or teams</li><li>• Negotiation skills</li><li>• The ability to handle clients</li><li>• Difficult conversations</li><li>• Driving a variety of agenda items</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Being fluent and able to hit the ground running</li><li>• Quick, quick learning</li><li>• Tech “Big Gun”</li></ul>
Financial & Career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paid leaves</li><li>• Other benefits</li><li>• Career advancement</li><li>• Relative stability</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Much higher rates</li><li>• Tax benefits</li></ul>

# Consultancy vs In-house

	Consultancy	In-house
Skills or Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Negotiation skills</li><li>• The ability to handle clients</li><li>• Difficult conversations</li><li>• Driving a variety of agenda items</li><li>• Handle the relationships with vendor</li><li>• Understanding the commercials</li><li>• Diversity of solutions</li><li>• Open-minded</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Driving continuous delivery of outcomes</li><li>• Often tied up with mid to long term goals or KPIs</li><li>• Subject to budgets</li><li>• Career path often unclear</li></ul>

# Consultancy vs Vendor

	Consultancy	Vendor
Skills or Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Product or vendor agnostic</li><li>• Keeping up with the latest trends</li><li>• Being exposure to commercials and market dynamics</li><li>• A pathway to run one's own business</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Great understanding of product in-depth</li><li>• World-class employers or fast-growing entities</li><li>• Often offering equities</li><li>• Focus could be narrow depending on the role</li></ul>



