

IBM Consulting Advantage: Hybrid-AI Delivery Platform with Agents

Hybrid-AI delivery platform running behind 150,000 consultants and 4,000+ digital workers across roughly 200 live client accounts, then productized and sold to clients as software — priced against the productivity it creates rather than the hours it replaces.

Award standing: **3rd Place**

IBM Consulting secured 3rd Place in the 2026 HFS SaS Awards, from more than 250 submissions across the awards program. The recognition centers on IBM Consulting's submission, "IBM Consulting Advantage: Hybrid-AI Delivery Platform with Agents", in the category of Best 'Services Eating Software'.



The challenge behind the IBM Consulting entry

IBM Consulting set out to solve two problems that stop enterprises — and the firms delivering for them — from turning AI into financial results. The first is making AI improve the whole delivery process rather than isolated tasks: most organizations now see people working 25–40% faster with AI, but that speed rarely reaches the bottom line because the gains sit in fragments of a workflow. The second is governing and orchestrating AI at enterprise scale. Both are structural problems, which is why the response was a platform rather than a point solution.

Results

- **~70% average productivity across the end-to-end SDLC** — the single metric IBM puts forward as the most compelling measure of ICA's impact, attributed to the engineering plane's codified methods, studios, and workbench, and materially above copilot-class gains.
- **Productivity gains of up to 50% across IBM Consulting's delivery overall**, evidenced in IBM's own business before the platform went to market — the client-zero proof.
- **Roughly 900 accounts running ICA in live delivery**, including named-tier global enterprises: a global food and beverage manufacturer, a global brewer, and two UK financial-services institutions. Client-level outcomes include Providence Health, where hiring steps fell 90%, and Riyadh Air.
- **Roughly 10 Enterprise Advantage accounts buying the platform as software**, One client identified as a rapidly growing US electronics manufacturer — using IBM Enterprise Advantage to build its own enterprise AI platform and AI use cases.
- **Cross-industry replicability, confirmed**. The same IP is deployed across sectors rather than confined to one industry, speaking directly to this category's reusability criterion.

What they built

- **IBM Consulting built IBM Consulting Advantage (ICA) to transform its own delivery first**, putting a hybrid-AI platform and AI agents behind every engagement. It is now used by over 150,000 IBM consultants, with more than 4,000 digital workers alongside them in live client delivery.
- **The platform separates two planes, addressing both problems in one architecture**: a control plane that governs and orchestrates AI across models, agents, and workflows; and an engineering plane that drives lifecycle productivity, running on codified delivery methods ("method as code") plus Context Studio, Process Studio, and the product/PDLC workbench.
- **That engineering plane is designed to carry work end to end** rather than accelerate it task by task, which is where copilot-class tooling stops.
- **The platform is charged out of the productivity it creates, not absorbed as an unpriced enabler**. Where client work would have been estimated at 100, ICA lets IBM deliver it for, say, 50, and a portion of that saving becomes the platform fee. This asset-plus-labor model runs across roughly 200 accounts.
- **Clients who saw IBM delivering their engagements on ICA asked for the platform itself**. IBM launched Enterprise Advantage in late 2025 to sell it as software directly; the offering went to market in early 2026 and now runs in roughly 10 accounts.

Bottom line

IBM Consulting's entry backs up its claims with production evidence rather than a roadmap: the platform was proven on IBM's own delivery at a scale few firms can match, priced against the productivity it delivers rather than the effort it consumes, then sold to clients as software. That is the kind of evidence this category was built to reward.

Learn more about IBM Consulting at www.ibm.com

Appendix: About the Category and the Awards

Best Services Eating Software

This category tracks what HFS Research calls services codified as software: traditional, people-led services (in areas such as finance, IT operations, and back-office processing) broken down into repeatable workflows, bots, and AI agents, then repackaged as modular, platform-enabled, subscription-style offerings. Entrants are judged on how far they have moved from billing for effort toward delivering software-defined, observable outcomes.

Every submission in this category was evaluated by HFS analysts and board members against five shared criteria:

- AI-driven delivery – is the solution genuinely autonomous, or is AI still assisting humans doing the work?
- Agentic adaptability – does the platform learn and orchestrate across workflows, or does it execute fixed rules?
- Outcome orientation – are commercial terms tied to results? Is there a quantified business case?
- Scalable architecture – is the IP reusable across clients and industries, or bespoke to one engagement?
- Proven enterprise success – verifiable, production-scale evidence with named or named-tier clients.

The HFS Services-as-Software Awards recognize the enterprises and technology providers leading the shift from labor-based delivery to AI-native, software-defined operations. Finalists in each category were selected by the HFS analyst team following a structured review of submissions against the criteria above. Winners were then determined by the HFS board of external advisors, who scored and ranked the finalists to reach a final result.

About HFS Research

HFS Research is the leading global analyst firm focused on business operations, digital transformation, and enterprise modernization.

For over a decade, HFS has shaped market language – from OneOffice to Services-as-Software – helping enterprises and providers understand where operating models are headed.

We work with global enterprises, IT and business services providers, software and cloud vendors, investors, and innovators.

The Services-as-Software Awards extend that leadership by recognizing organizations delivering measurable transformation in the market.