

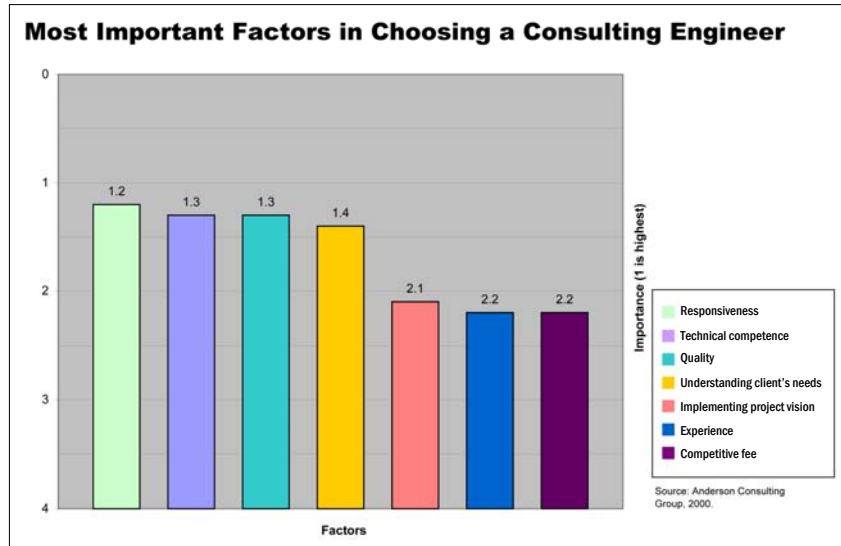
Survey Shows Clients Value Service over Fees

If a group of engineering clients were asked to name the most important factor in choosing an engineering firm, they would say, “the price tag,” right? Maybe not.

Anderson Consulting Group, an environmental and geotechnical consulting firm based in Roseville, California, recently polled a total of 2,500 residential and commercial developers, along with city, county, and state governments and other clients and contacts, to find out what motivates them to choose one consulting engineering firm over another. Overall, the respondents chose responsiveness and follow-through as their top motivators, closely followed by quality of work and technical competence.

“The results blew us away,” says Daron Anderson, the president of the 30-person firm. “We expected competitive fee to be ranked much higher than it was.”

The firm asked respondents—who also included architects, engineers, educators, and financial institutions—to rank 14 factors in order of importance to them, with 1 being the most important and 4 being the least. In addition to the four mentioned above, the



factors were flexibility, communications and presentation skills, cost-saving solutions, schedule performance, understanding the client’s needs, regulatory compliance, relationship skills, local knowledge, experience, and the ability implement the client’s project vision.

Although competitive fee fell toward the bottom, it still scored 2.2 on the 1 to 4 scale. To Anderson, this indicates that clients want the best possible service and competitive prices. “As engineers we tend to think in either/or mindsets, but our clients think in terms of the big picture,” Anderson says. “They expect us to do a lot of things really well.”

Civil Engineering, July 2000