

The "pushing" of skill dossiers: a deplorable practice by IT consulting firms harming the entire profession

Frédéric Le Pennec · 1 November 2024



The massive push of skill dossiers erodes client trust, degrades the reputation of IT consulting firms, and undermines the profession of Business Manager. This article explains why a targeted and qualitative approach is essential.

In the world of IT consulting firms and advisory companies, the practice of pushing skill dossiers—which involves sending profiles of consultants en masse to prospects or clients without real personalization—has become common. Although it might seem at first glance an effective method to increase placement chances, it is increasingly criticized. Not only does this approach undermine the trust relationship between clients and the IT consulting firms, but it also tarnishes the image of the entire profession. Why does this practice persist when its negative effects, though often invisible, are very real?

The pushing of skill dossiers: an approach that undermines the profession

The pushing of skill dossiers is perceived by many clients as an aggressive and disrespectful approach. Instead of investing in a fine understanding of specific needs, some IT consulting firms choose to send profiles en masse hoping one will fit. This method, focused on volume rather than relevance, gives the impression that Business Managers only seek to place consultants without genuinely caring about the

client's issues.

This approach undermines the credibility of the entire profession. Indeed, some clients go so far as to label Business Managers as "meat merchants," an expression reflecting the sentiment that they are more concerned with the quantity of consultants to "place" rather than the quality of the missions and the matching of skills to company needs.

Invisible but devastating effects: blacklisting and degraded reputation

One of the main dangers of pushing skill dossiers lies in its negative effects, often invisible and thus neglected by Business Managers. When clients repeatedly receive irrelevant profiles, they end up developing a certain weariness, even exasperation. This progressively leads to a phenomenon of **blacklisting**: the client does not make it formal by saying it, but simply stops responding, reading proposals, or considering the IT consulting firm as a potential partner. The Business Manager no longer receives feedback and merely thinks the opportunity didn't present itself, while in reality, they have permanently lost the client's trust.

This effect is invisible in short-term results, but its long-term impact can be devastating. It does not appear in performance KPIs, which pushes many IT consulting firms to neglect these consequences in their balance of pros and cons. Yet, the degradation of reputation with several clients can gradually exclude an IT consulting firm from certain market segments or limit its future opportunities.

"Through a misunderstanding, it may work": the mentality behind the push

On the side of Business Managers, this practice is often justified by a feeling of powerlessness. When they fail to secure an appointment with a prospect or have never met the person they are sending the dossiers to, they may consider that the push doesn't change their situation. In their mind, they have "nothing to lose" and "everything to gain" by sending a few CVs in the hope that "through a misunderstanding, it may work." It's this logic of "everything to gain, nothing to lose" that motivates this risky strategy.

This reasoning, although irrational, is a way for some Business Managers to justify inaction or the lack of direct relationship with the client. Sending profiles en masse allows them to feel like they are doing something to try to grab attention, even if this approach is doomed to fail in the long term. In doing so, they forget or ignore the negative effects on the company's image and their own credibility with clients.

When the push is enforced by management: a negative impact on Business Managers' motivation

It is also important to point out that this practice is not always the result of individual decisions by Business Managers. In some IT consulting firms, management imposes objectives for dossier push, sometimes without taking into account the real situation or the level of knowledge of the prospect. In these cases, Business Managers find themselves compelled to execute a strategy to which they do not necessarily adhere but have to implement to meet their quotas or avoid sanctions.

This imposition by management has deleterious effects on the motivation of Business Managers, who end up seeing their own profession devalued. Instead of feeling in a strategic advisor position, able to offer tailor-made solutions to clients, they feel like mere executors of a quantitative commercial policy. This creates a feeling of frustration and inadequacy with the vision they had of their profession, which can lead to a loss of meaning and to progressive disengagement.

A necessary alternative: towards a more targeted and qualitative approach

Faced with the excesses of dossier push, it is essential to adopt a more qualitative strategy, centered on understanding client needs. Rather than sending profiles in bulk, Business Managers should favor a more thoughtful approach, taking the time to meet prospects, understand the specific stakes of each mission, and propose perfectly suited profiles. This groundwork not only strengthens the client relationship but also optimizes long-term success chances.

Similarly, it is essential to maintain constant and transparent communication with consultants. Before proposing their profile to a client, it is crucial to ensure that the mission corresponds to their expectations and competences. This more respectful approach to human aspect will strengthen consultants' motivation and improve the image of the IT consulting firm.

While the pushing of skill dossiers may seem an easy short-term solution, it is a deplorable practice that degrades the image of consulting and so-called advisory companies, exhausts client patience, and demotivates consultants. Although some Business Managers justify this approach by thinking they have nothing to lose, the invisible consequences, such as blacklisting or trust erosion, are very real. When imposed by management, this practice can also harm the motivation of Business Managers themselves, reducing them to mere executors of unthinking commercial strategies. It is time to move towards a more qualitative strategy, focused on personalization and proposal relevance, to restore the legitimacy and value of the Business Manager profession.