



Consulting: KLB Group, a French middle-market company shaking the established order

"It is important not merely to foresee the future, but to bring it about". Did Flavien Kulawik and Jean-Marc Le Breton draw inspiration from these words of Saint-Exupéry when they decided to found KLB Group in 1995? It is safe to assume, at least, that from the outset the two tenors of implementation understood the importance, in the eyes of the leadership, of strategic implementation of their major projects. Similarly, it is also a way to equip yourself with a differentiating value proposal in a time when people often blame the consultancy business for charging top dollar verbiage.

Flavien Kulawik



Beyond consultancy: implementation

Big companies are fond of consultancy services. At times because they really need tailor-made brainpower, and other times to legitimise an iconoclastic strategy a posteriori for which the board must seek approval from wayward shareholders. Often experts and sometimes strategists, consultants eruditely apply a methodology that is standardised yet with the rise of academic chairs funded by consultancy leaders, and their procession of management handbooks reproducing, over and over, dies cast from the same mould.

To such an extent that the consultancy value chain is harmed? For [many industry professionals](#), significant transformations in the market force players to reinvent their processes. *"Companies no longer want silo-based approaches, they want solutions"*, says Jean-Paul Alibert, CEO of T-Systems France. And concrete solutions they can implement. But therein lies the problem: there are many companies that stumble over the need to create value when it comes to "taking action" on the recommendations of the top names in finance or strategy gurus.

It is a fact that Flavien Kulawik, co-founder and CEO of KLG Group, regularly reports on the ground: *according to him, "Consultancy is worthless without implementation". Urging companies "to boost their implementation capacity", he states that "for a leader, transforming an idea into a strategy represents 10% of the path to take. The remaining 90% consists of transforming a strategy into a reality. Implementation is to give the leader the guarantee that the plan will be implemented despite the unexpected, thanks to the intelligence infused in implementation".*

With his business partner of over twenty years, Jean-Marc Le Breton, they have implemented a core business art in its own right: *"implementation is carrying out a project, its idea or its objective, fully and intelligently (...) implementation requires a suitable disposition made from insight, agility, perseverance and creativity. Intelligence in implementation makes the difference, since the commissioning of a project never goes according to plan."*

A unique corporate culture

Specifically, KLB Group mobilises a team of experts on every mission: *"We do not limit ourselves to advising a customer on what they should do. We carry out the project with them, providing all the implementation skills and the operational know-how required to deliver results. It is this unique mix of expertise in design, implementation and operation that sets us apart",* said Flavien Kulawik, who defines his company not *"as a consultancy firm, but as an implementation specialist."* It is an approach that challenges to a certain degree the consultancy market insofar as KLB Group is associated in the corporate decision-making processes or administrations with which it operates. *"We can present ourselves as guarantors of strategic execution",* suggests Flavien Kulawik.

KLB Group positions itself in two types of projects: operational projects and improvement



Jean-Marc Le Breton

projects, and in a variety of sectors ranging from agribusiness to the media, aeronautics and the public sector. And since their first customer, the automotive supplier Valeo, the group has come a long way: *"From procurement, we have evolved into the supply chain, quality, engineering, finance, and IT. From the automotive sector, we moved into other sectors. We have also enhanced the types of projects that we support: price-reduction projects of course, but more generally those involving performance improvement, transformation, organisational transition, and all types of operational projects relating to business development and production."*

Regarding the method, Flavien Kulawik says that the group has developed a hybrid approach between consultancy and outsourcing. A dream team -made up of experts in the sector and functional experts- comprises the customer teams in terms of the model of the extended enterprise. An *"implementation partnership"* that enables total command combined with the agility of stakeholders. This approach involves an ambitious HR policy: the **"implementers"** are recruited according to highly specific criteria (KLB has devised the method **Strong Mind Action Relational Thinking**, or **"SMART"**) and are coalesced around an entrepreneurial culture and strong values in terms of performance and pragmatism, but also ethics. At the heart of this is the training of **"intrapreneurs"**, an approach which is now emulated in both academic journals and in the CAC40 executives.

A great future

With over 600 employees worldwide, KLB Group has, today, become a true middle-market consultancy firm in eleven countries around the world, from China to the Americas (USA, Canada, Mexico and Brazil) to Morocco, Mauritius, and of course Europe. *"This year we will strengthen our presence in North America supporting a strategic customer in the USA and*



Mexico", adds Flavien Kulawik. And in France, the group is gaining ground in the public sector, notably through a five-year partnership with teams from SNCF Réseau, the French rail network manager. The goal? To significantly reduce the total cost of the rail system. This expenditure optimisation process also attracted more and more local authorities in a context of budgetary restraint and expenditure control.

**Implement
smartly**

And when we asked Flavien Kulawik on his vision of the future, he said, optimistic, having *"the ambition to build the world leader in*

project implementation for the benefit of international groups and the public sector. KLB Group hopes to surpass 1,000 employees within three years... and "Why not one day go beyond 10,000 personnel worldwide"!

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