

SPI Research Publishes its 19th Annual Professional Services Maturity™ Benchmark Report

Landmark Study Reveals How High-Performing Professional Services Organizations Are Rebounding, Leveraging AI, and Driving Sustainable Growth.

KNOXVILLE, TN, UNITED STATES, February 24, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Service Performance Insight](https://spiresearch.com/), LLC (SPI Research), the leading global authority on professional services performance, today announced the release of its 2026 Professional Services Maturity Benchmark™, the industry's most comprehensive, data-driven analysis of professional services performance, maturity and operational excellence. The report includes over 300 figures and tables to help professional services organizations (PSOs) improve performance. Now in its nineteenth edition and coinciding with SPI Research's twentieth anniversary, the 2026 Benchmark provides a clear, evidence-based view of how PSOs are navigating economic uncertainty, geopolitical disruption, and rapid technological change - while positioning themselves for long-term growth and profitability.

<https://spiresearch.com/reports/2026-ps-maturity-benchmark/>

The Industry's Most Comprehensive Professional Services Benchmark

The 2026 Professional Services Maturity Benchmark™ is based on survey data collected in 2025 from 509 professional services organizations worldwide, representing more than 245,000 employees and \$63 billion in professional services revenue. The study builds on a five-year dataset of more than 2,700 participating firms, ensuring statistical rigor, trend continuity and global relevance.

The report evaluates organizational performance using SPI Research's Professional Services Maturity Model™, which measures maturity across five integrated Service Performance Pillars™:



2026 PS Maturity Benchmark Cover - over 500 firms participated in this 19th annual report

- Leadership
- Client Relationships
- Talent
- Service Execution
- Finance & Operations

Together, these pillars provide a holistic framework for understanding how strategy, people, processes and technology interact to drive business outcomes.

Key Findings: Challenges Remain, but Recovery is Underway.

The benchmark reveals that 2025 marked a cautious recovery year for

professional services following several years of volatility. Average professional services revenue growth improved to 5.2%, with headcount growth increasing to 2.8%. Project margins rose modestly and profitability stabilized after prior declines.

However, the data also highlights ongoing structural challenges. Billable utilization declined to 66.4%, the lowest level recorded in SPI Research’s 19-year history, underscoring persistent pressure on workforce productivity and capacity planning. Overall profitability remains below historical norms, reinforcing the need for stronger execution discipline and better integration between sales, delivery and financial management.

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This report provides the core operational metrics and guidance to help professional services organizations achieve higher levels of productivity and profit.”

R. David Hofferberth

peers.

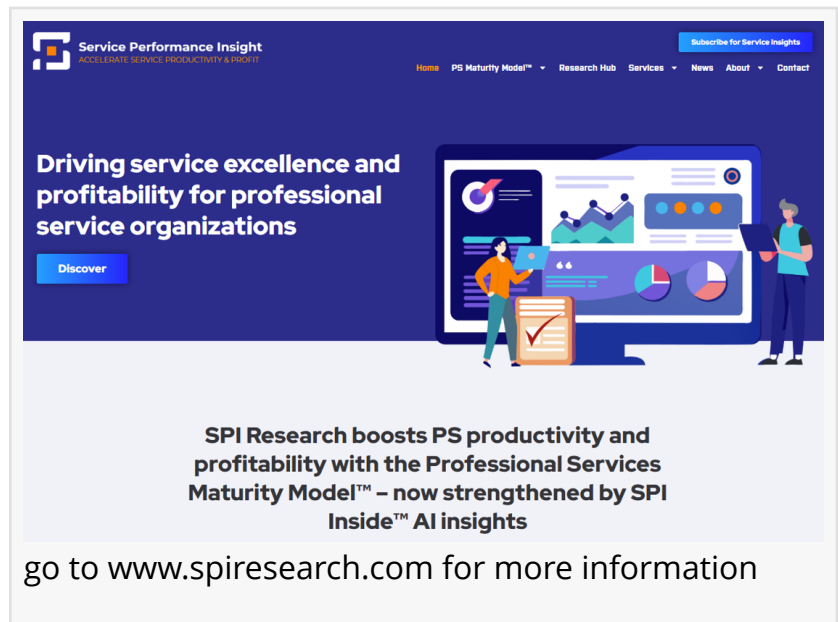
Compared with the rest of the market, High Performance PSOs achieved:

- More than double the revenue growth
- Substantially higher billable utilization
- Significantly larger and more predictable sales pipelines
- Profitability more than twice that of lower maturity firms

These organizations consistently demonstrate stronger leadership alignment, better workforce planning, tighter service execution controls, and deeper integration of core business systems.

The results reinforce SPI Research’s long-standing conclusion: higher maturity directly correlates with better financial and operational outcomes.

Artificial Intelligence moves from Experimentation to Execution



One of the most notable findings in the 2026 Benchmark is the accelerating role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in professional services.

- 27% of projects now incorporate generative AI, a year-over-year increase of approximately 40%.
- 40% of firms sell AI related services, signaling that AI has moved beyond internal efficiency gains to become a market facing revenue opportunity.
- AI adoption is most advanced among SaaS, software, and management consulting organizations, with larger firms rapidly scaling deployment.

The research shows that AI is beginning to deliver measurable benefits across all five service performance pillars - improving forecasting, resource management, service delivery consistency and decision making. At the same time, the study identifies workforce readiness and change management as the single greatest barrier to realizing AI's full potential.

Technology Integration Emerges as a Critical Success Factor

The 2026 Benchmark underscores the importance of integrated business applications in driving the performance of professional services. High-performing organizations are far more likely to deploy and integrate:

- Business Planning solutions
- Client Relationship Management (CRM)
- Human Capital Management (HCM)
- Professional Services Automation (PSA)
- Corporate Financial Management (CFM)

Organizations that successfully integrate these systems gain real-time visibility across the entire Plan to Profit lifecycle - enabling better forecasting, improved utilization, higher project margins, and stronger profitability.

A Global, Multi-Market Perspective

The benchmark reflects broad participation across regions, organization sizes, and service markets. These markets include: IT and management consulting, SaaS and software professional services, architecture and engineering, and value-added resellers. Firms range from boutique consultancies to global enterprises with thousands of employees, making the results relevant across the professional services landscape.

Conclusions

The 2026 Professional Services Maturity Benchmark™ confirms that there is no single lever for success. Sustainable growth and profitability require balanced improvement across leadership, client engagement, talent management, service execution and financial discipline.

SPI Research recommends professional services leaders:

- Commit to continuous, data-driven benchmarking
- Invest in leadership alignment and communication
- Strengthen workforce planning and utilization
- Standardize and scale service execution
- Leverage AI responsibly while prioritizing workforce enablement

- Integrate core business systems to improve visibility and control

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