

**CREATING AND SUSTAINING LOYALTY IN THE RECRUITMENT
INDUSTRY BY MEANS OF INTEGRATED MARKETING
COMMUNICATION**

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Narita du Toit and Dalmé Mulder*

ABSTRACT

The highly competitive market-place of today has made relationship-building pivotal in the quest for marketing success. To have a relationship with a client an integrated approach incorporating the product/service, the packaging, the distribution, the price and all communication, are needed. Integrated marketing communication has become increasingly important as marketers (read: communicators) seek to enhance long-term relationships with clients, rather than concentrating on once-off transactions. Communicators need to regard each point of contact with a client as an opportunity to build and to create loyalty. (Relationships are based upon value-added, reciprocal exchanges of information.) This article's primary objective is to ground what, within the IMC perspective, creates and maintains client loyalty and how one could optimally understand why and how clients become and stay loyal in the recruitment industry. Through the combination of grounded theory and discourse analysis, this study indicates that a communicator in the recruitment industry should attempt to integrate the totality of his/her communication to guarantee a "one voice, one-look" strategy and a holistic approach.

* Narita du Toit is a Master's student in the Department of Communication and Information studies at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein. Dalmé Mulder lectures in the same Department.

INTRODUCTION

Today's marketplace necessitates the use of an integrated approach to marketing communication activities. In integrated marketing communication the focus of activities is shifted from merely obtaining clients to establishing long-term relationships (Schultz 2004:5; 2002:23). This in turn leads to loyal clients who help to promote an organisation or individual's service. Don Schultz, international authority on Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), assumes that loyalty is rooted in better attention to clients' wants and needs. Reichheld (in Van Reenen 2004:78) argues that loyalty and commitment are part of the same mindset that, in simplistic terms, relates to the fact that it is not only about short-term profit, but is rather the glue that is ultimately one of the most important ingredients thereof.

In the recruitment industry the recruitment specialist provides a service to organisations addressing their recruitment needs. The purpose of this study is to investigate ways in which a recruitment specialist can foster loyalty from clients in such a way that clients would want to continue using the individual's service.

This study could be viewed as a comprehensive perspective for a holistic communication process in which the recruitment specialist and client are considered to be mutually responsible for a concept called integrated marketing communication (IMC). It is based upon the doctrine that in the 21st century marketplace, clients need a dynamic and innovative approach to relationship communication, which is rooted in the integration of communication to provide a value added service, beneficial to both parties. The above statement blends in with the hypothesis that value is created optimally in satisfying client's wants and needs, subsequently creating long-term relationships, and ultimately fostering loyal clients.

Strictly speaking, traditional marketing communication was based upon a one-way, linear model in which communicators "deliver" communication to [read: at] clients (Schultz & Lindberg-Repo 2004:2; Schultz 2003(a):8). Lasswell's model (Koekemoer 1989:34) supports this notion by stating that *marketing communication is all about who says what to whom through which channel with what effect*. Paradoxically, the mentioned holistic IMC approach is based upon a reciprocal approach that is at the core of any relationship communication process (Schultz & Lindberg-Repo 2004:2).

Pertinent to the focus of this study then, is the introduction of a new, holistic perspective that illustrates how IMC could be applied in the current, highly competitive marketplace in the recruitment industry. The birth of IMC has triggered a need to rethink the relationship between clients and communicators, to develop the client not as an entity to be manipulated, but as a mutually responsible partner in the communication process (Schultz 2000:15).

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative research approach, more specifically grounded theory methodology, was followed due to the fact that this particular research would evolve in a natural setting ["the real world"] (Creswell 1998:14; Wimmer & Dominick 1991:139; Leedy

1989:102; Lindlof 1995:21; Cutlip, Center & Broom 1994:200). The term *grounded* refers to the idea that the theory is "grounded" in data that have been collected in the field rather than that taken from research literature (Leedy & Ormrod 2001:154). Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that grounded theory is a technique which can be used to develop a theory and to ground the theory in the data, which supports the existence of a theory.

Discourse analysis [henceforth DA] was also employed. DA highlights the way society is produced in discourse (Billig in Belch & Belch 2001:326). One of the virtues of DA is the fact that it is natural, in the sense that it is not controlled by a researcher using an interview schedule. Paradoxically one may treat naturally occurring talk analytically. By the same logic one may argue that the advantage of DA is that it provides an enhanced perspective on research such as interviews. Therefore, it stands to reason that instead of treating an interview as raw data gathering, it may be treated as interaction in its own right, such as natural-interaction-in-interview. By combining multiple data-analysis methods (DA and grounded theory), it strengthens the grounding of the theory by triangulation of evidence and also enhances the internal validity of the study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this particular study the unit of analysis is the creation and maintaining of client loyalty in the recruitment industry. The data collection technique used in this study included in-depth personal interviews with line managers of various well-established companies. The research question was explored and investigated until saturation of the categories were experienced and no new information was presented. Data collection was obtained by using an audio-tape recorder to record each interview and a high-quality transcription was then produced.

The population included a client base with whom the consultant has communicated over a period of time. A *purposive sample* which included respondents selected on the basis of their knowledge [also called *theoretical sampling*] (Creswell 1998:58; Lindlof 1995:23; Cutlip, Center & Broom 1994:220) was drawn. In order to solicit optimum information, decision-makers responsible for recruitment were interviewed. The particular *theoretical sample* was chosen with the knowledge that it was not representative of the general population. The advantage of a *purposive sample* is that the units selected are especially qualified to assist in the investigation. Similarly, it ensures that group and/or population parameters found in the population can be represented in the sample.

In a grounded theory study, data analysis involves specific procedures (Strauss & Corbin 1990:155). Through *open coding* the researcher forms categories of information by segmentation. Within each category the researcher finds subcategories, and looks for data to give dimension to the subcategories. By applying *axial coding*, data is assembled in new ways after being open coded. *Selective coding* means that the researcher identifies a "story line" and writes a "story" that integrates the categories in the axial coding. All forms of coding enhance internal validity (Pandit 1996). This author also suggests that comparing emergent theory with existing literature improved

construct definitions, and therefore internal validity. It also improved external validity by establishing the domain in which the study's findings can be generalised.

CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY

For the purpose of this study, *clients* pertain to customers and prospects.

Communicator touches on an individual – in this particular study, a personnel consultant – whose expertise is the management of communication as a whole in order to influence clients positively, with the ultimate objective to be utilised as a service. When referring to a job specification [commonly called a *job spec*] it essentially means that a position is available. Consequently a candidate with the required skills, experience, demographics and culture, needs to be found.

THE RECRUITMENT INDUSTRY IN A NUTSHELL

Professionalism in recruitment marketing came to South Africa in the early 1970s (Sinclair & Barenblatt 1989:190). Recruitment is essentially a service whereby attempts are being made to persuade the ideal prospect to apply for a job vacancy. However, sourcing talent is no easy task. It takes extensive understanding of human motivation and the dynamics of the labour and employment market. A personnel consultant provides an employment-related service to organisations [henceforth clients]. Additionally, the consultant under discussion's main objective is to select skilled and suitable employees who would fit into the various clients' companies.

Many liaisons have to be done prior to closing a "placement". In order to achieve such a placement one has to advance through the process of obtaining a job spec, screening and interviewing candidates, together with selecting the perfect skills, experience and culture fit.

Knowing the market, understanding the employment conditions, and knowing what will motivate clients who had no intention of moving, are abilities that require the experience, commitment and knowledge available from, and offered by, professional recruitment specialists. But over and above the mentioned abilities, the personnel consultant must demonstrate effective marketing communication skills and knowledge of the IMC process.

INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION (IMC)

Schultz (2000) states that *IMC is the rapport, the empathy, the dialogue, the relationship and the communication with the client that makes the difference*. Together with Tannenbaum and Lauterborn, Schultz views IMC as "a new way of looking at the whole where once only parts (such as advertising, public relations, sales promotions, purchasing, employee communication, etc.) were seen" (Schultz, Tannenbaum & Lauterborn 1994: xvii).

IMC communicators coordinate all contacts to create synergy, meaning that each contact has more impact working together than it would have working independently. Whilst IMC is not a clear-cut phenomenon, many definitions or descriptions reflect

unique perspectives. However, according to a study done by Mulder (2004) the analysis of more than thirty definitions of IMC revealed ten fundamental principles of IMC. The identified principles outline the main values and philosophies of IMC. They are:

- *Holistic business approach*
- *Focused branding*
- *Client-centric*
- *Client-conscious employees*
- *Contact synergy*
- *Message consistency*
- *Use of technology*
- *Financial accountability*
- *Market segmentation*
- *Sustainable success*

According to Mulder (2004), IMC can therefore be defined as a holistic business approach to develop and implement consistent brand messages to selected stakeholders over time. It affords a customer-centric focus and customer-conscious employees who strive towards the creation of synergy at each contact point. The goal of IMC is to influence or directly affect the behaviour of selected stakeholder groups in a financially accountable way in order to build sustainable success.

The ultimate objective of IMC in the recruitment industry (from a consultant's point of view) is to influence clients to use a service again and again and again (Jones and Sasser 1995:90; Koekemoer 1998:30). These authors state that client satisfaction is the key to generating superior long-term relationships, eventually evolving into loyalty. Burnett and Moriarty (1998:15) opine that more and more companies are implementing IMC to secure success. Following this logic requires the final piece of the IMC equation, being the building of long-term relationships which subsequently fosters loyalty. Thus, the crux lies in communicators who favour long-term value over short-term returns (Schultz 2000:3; 2002:2; Mutch 1996:8). Today's highly competitive marketplace, perhaps even more so than in the past, necessitates the building of long-term relationships (Schultz 2002:23; Peltier, Schibrowsky & Schultz 2002:5; Simões & Dibb 2001:220; Grönroos 2000:3; Racine 1998:5) to ensure sustainable success.

FINDINGS

Nine respondents were interviewed, four males and five females. A heterogeneous collection of cultures (Whites, Blacks and Asians) represented the responses. Ages ranged between thirty-five and forty-four. Each respondent interviewed was actively responsible for employing staff in a particular company or division.

(To avoid confusion and since the decisive role player in this study is the consultant, for the remainder of the study, communicator will be called consultant, or alternatively personnel consultant.)

Service

All respondents unanimously voiced the significance of a personnel consultant offering an assiduous service in order to establish long-term relationships. To be more specific, all the respondents unambiguously stated that the level of service of a consultant is the *sine qua non* to use him/her again and again. One respondent declared, "*Good service builds loyalty*". Likewise, another respondent mentioned that adequate service would determine her using a particular consultant [respondent's emphasis]. In the course of responding, the respondent mentioned "*good service*" five times.

The conducted research endorses literature's emphasis on the domain of service. Jones and Sasser (1995:89) together with Koekemoer (1998:30) opine that one's ultimate objective is to influence clients to such an extent that they prefer to use a service again and again. Additionally, academics of the marketing genre emphasise that clients' satisfaction is the tool to fostering long-term relationships, evolving into loyalty (Schultz 2003(a):8; Reichheld 2002:64; Reichheld & Murphy 2001:100; Agee 2000:46; Jones & Sasser 1995:89).

Of particular interest is the fact that the majority of the respondents of the investigation unequivocally agreed that they would not want to wait days on end before a consultant responded to their requirements - such as forwarding CVs. Comments such as "*quick response*", "*speedy prompt service*" and "*quick turn-around time in terms of getting back to you (client) with quality CVs*" emphasised this fact. There seems to be little question that the greater number of the respondents are adamant that speed of service is imperative.

Simões and Dibb (2001:220) postulate that stiff competition these days relies heavily on added value, such as speedy service. On the basis of evidence presented, it is clear that the dynamics of service plays a progressively strategic role in the recruitment marketplace.

It may be argued that it goes without saying that the above responses on service offer a rich source of information which may well fill the void in literature identified by several marketing academics (Schultz 2003:9; 2002:23; 2000:3; 1992:2; Agee in Schultz 2000:2; Reichheld 2002:64). This void refers to the limited knowledge with regard to marketing communication activities that progressively contribute to the selling of a service, ultimately fostering loyalty.

Establishing relationships

Since Lovelock (Dibb & Simkin 1992:26) claims that service represents a relationship, the following findings demonstrate that the credentials of a relationship are hard to dispute. However, it would only be fair to note that with service being intangible, marketing archives state that the offering of a service cannot be defined as "clear-cut". The reason for this is that services cannot be touched, stored or acquired; it is either an experience or a process (Dibb & Simkin *ibid.*). Subsequently this research supports the

assumption made earlier that, depending on the quality of service rendered, the client's experience of that service would dictate the latter either excelling or dying (Schultz & Schultz 2001:3; Wood 2000:665; Szmigin & Bourne 1998:7).

According to Szmigin and Bourne (*ibid.*) the rule of thumb is that service is offered directly – face-to-face. Lovelock (in Dibb & Simkin *ibid.*) states that, holistically speaking, the one who is offering the service is essentially explicitly and implicitly involved in the “production” of the service.

Most of the respondents regarded the relationship with the consultant as of the utmost significance. One of them mentioned that with a consultant cold-calling, it eventually builds up to a relationship and he subsequently uses her service. Furthermore, he made known that it is actually a personal relationship that develops over time. Another respondent revealed that she always goes back to the consultant with whom she has built a relationship. Clearly the ethos of service derives from carefully nurtured relationships (Schultz 2003:2; 2000:42; Seymour & Rifkin 1998:41).

Effective two-way communication

Respondents agreed about the pre-eminence of two-way communication. One participant adamantly declared that, “...if there is no two-way communication I would not use them again...” Another respondent believed in a “balanced two-way conversation”. He felt it was pivotal to “actually listen to each other”. Yet another claimed that she attended only to a few with whom she has established a “good sound relationship”, meaning effective two-way communication. In general one may conclude that considerable emphasis is placed upon *effective* two-way communication.

As discussed, the strongest view of this study includes the doctrine of building relationships with the ultimate objective of fostering loyalty. Similarly, as already mentioned, IMC attempts to deviate from traditional one-way communication to two-way communication. Viewed in this way Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn (1994:123) claim that clients are interested in more than just a response. As a result it stands to reason that the consultant needs to cater for communication that would add value (Peltier, Schibrowsky & Schultz 2002:5; Simões & Dibb 2001:217; Agee 2000:3; Szmigin & Bourne 1998:1; Schultz, Tannenbaum & Lauterborn 1994:88). Following this logic, publications of the marketing genre maintain that establishing a relationship, building a rapport, showing empathy with clients is the essence of *effective* communication (Peltier, Schibrowsky & Schultz 2002:4; Agee 2000:3; Schultz, Tannenbaum & Lauterborn 1994:83) [personal emphasis]. Given the discursive intent it could be argued that the research in question supports the literature. Equally important is the fact that the above responses support the literature in that communication adds value to a service (Dall 'Olmo Riley & Lacroix 2003:98; Schultz 2002:7; Schultz & Schultz 2001:35; Kotler in Simões & Dibb 2001:218; De Chernatony 1999:170).

Efficiency in screening candidates

The full complement of respondents unequivocally stated that in their opinion, the prerequisite for loyalty to a specific consultant is his/her screening of candidates

appropriately and discreetly. Remarks such as “*if they send CVs not related to the job, I refuse: I won't ever use them again*”, “*...don't send me ten CVs...*”, “*I expect her to...see what I want before she sends me CVs*”, “*don't send me CVs that are unrelated to the position*”, “*send me the calibre of people that I need*”, “*don't flood me with CVs*”, and “*...send people that are reliable, quality people...*” stress this fact.

Another was more specific in disclosing that the consultant should attempt to screen the candidates in such a way that she eventually places “*the correct person in the correct job in the correct environment*”. All the respondents were of the same mind that CVs should not be sent for the sake of being sent. All unanimously affirmed that consultants should select CVs applicable to the skills and experience of the requirements of the particular job spec and client.

Expertise of personnel consultant

A respondent voiced that she appreciated a consultant's expertise, since the consultant “*works daily with people*”, as opposed to herself who is a “number cruncher”. She added that the consultant “*knows people more*” and “*knows what skills*” she is looking for. Further she added, “*I need that*”. She furthermore explained that she had a limited knowledge of “*people*”.

Another respondent remarked that the consultant, whom she prefers, makes it easier for her, in that the consultant actually conducts “*the interview for her*”. She elaborated that the consultant would inform her about her particular skills, as well as some weaknesses, such as nervousness. After scrutinising the responses, one may argue that it goes without saying that the groundwork done on efficiency is supported in literature (Dall 'Olmo Riley & Lacroix 2003:98; Moorthi 2002:10; Grace & O 'Cass 2002:2).

Knowledge

It may be claimed that the following response demonstrates client's high ranking regarding knowledge – “*...consultants need... to have...good knowledge of the job...*”. The above quote leads to another point raised in the interview. The respondent in question revealed that he prefers dealing with a consultant who has some qualifications. The consultant's “*knowledge of the candidates*” and her ability to “*read*” candidates are decisive factors for another.

Concluding from the responses, one could assume that clients expect consultants to have knowledge of her database, the KPAs (Key Performance Areas) of various positions, clients' needs and the marketplace. For one respondent industry knowledge is of considerable substance. Equally important for the respondent in question is the level of knowledge the consultant has in terms of her candidates, such as personal information on her candidates. Another reported that it is pivotal for a consultant to have knowledge of the marketplace, and her candidates, together with knowledge of the positions for which she is recruiting. Similarly, she felt strongly that personnel consultants have to know about her as the client as well as the type of positions with which she is dealing.

Culture

All the respondents except one, supported the culture question. The responses explicitly confirmed the necessity of a culture fit. One respondent felt it is vitally important for a consultant to “*get a feel*” for his company’s culture. According to him, the only way in which a consultant would be able to “*exactly*” understand the culture of his specific company is by “*coming to visit...to see what’s happening in the company*”. In such a way – he believes – one would be able to select a personality fitting to the particular culture of his company. Yet another respondent agreed with the significance of understanding a company’s culture in the fostering of loyalty. She described it as the understanding of the kind of people who fit into her company’s particular culture. According to her, whilst one is building a relationship with a consultant, the consultant would eventually “*come to know*” which candidates would culture-fit optimally into her specific company. Another believes a prerequisite for instilling loyalty is the consultant’s knowledge of what culture of candidates to select for her. Simply put: candidates who would represent her particular company.

Client-centric

Satisfaction equals long-term relationship equals loyalty. The majority of responses illustrate the high value that is ascribed to satisfying needs. Responses such as “*...that they actually meet my requirements...*”, and “*...your (consultant’s) understanding of my requirements...I do feel it’s my right to tell you what I want...and that... you understand what I need...*” emphasise the importance of a client-centric approach.

Schultz (2003:9) together with a number of other marketing experts states that adhering to clients’ needs is of exceptional importance in order to breed long-term relationships, eventually evolving into loyalty (Peltier, Schibrowski & Schultz 2002:6; Reichheld 2002:2 & 64; Seymour & Rifkin 1998:89; Szmikin & Bourne 1998:7; Koekemoer 1998:30; Jones and Sasser 1995:89). Academics suggest that the process of taking cognisance of clients’ needs, distinctively differentiates IMC from traditional marketing communication (Schultz, Tannenbaum & Lauterborn 1994:107). All the respondents wholeheartedly supported literature on the issue in question. Publications convey that a prerequisite to successful IMC is for the consultant to develop a client-orientated approach (Schultz, Tannenbaum & Lauterborn 1994:154; Grönroos 2000:3).

Feedback

All the respondents demonstrated an overall consensus of the far-reaching extent of feedback. All believed strongly that feedback breeds loyalty, irrespective of the way feedback is offered. The responses epitomised the strong feeling regarding feedback.

The issue of feedback as such has not been explicitly discussed in the relevant literature for this study. Nonetheless, one could argue that feedback could be considered inherently part of *effective* communication. Thus it is not unfair to suggest an implicit agreement on feedback.

Importance of the individual

Regarding the controversy of choosing the services of a well-known recruitment agency instead of a specific consultant rendering an effective service, all the

respondents unanimously agreed upon the latter. Responses such as "...definitely the service of the recruiter...", "...more the individual because you get to know the person and that's what it's about", "...they (big companies) are not as personal; they don't know what we require..." and "...from experience I have realized that one becomes a number (at big companies)" support this statement. One respondent reported that it goes without saying that she would utilise a consultant with whose service she is satisfied.

Since communication academics equate the branding of a service to an individual, and since literature holds that service today is part and parcel of clients' lives (Schultz 2002; 2000:2; Moorthi 2002:268; Peltier, Schibrowski & Schultz 2002:7; Percy 1997:23; Schultz & Schultz 2001:3; Simões & Dibb 2001:220; Szmigin & Bourne 1998:7) it follows that the above responses support the literature referring to this study. In addition Gale (in Moorthi 2002:259) describes a service as a name that means satisfaction, quality and value to a client.

Contact synergy equates presentation and speech

Duncan and Moriarty (1997:97) claim that the benefit of IMC dwells in the ability to manage planned and unplanned communication optimally in order to create synergy. Similarly Percy (1997:87) purports that everything one does constitutes synergy. Also, above all, literature holds that contact encompasses a myriad of amplitudes. Evidently, it is not unreasonable to assume that a professional look and voice instils positive synergy. Many authors argue that the need for synergy is to understand how each contact operates independently and synergises together (Belch & Belch 2001:4; Burnett & Moriarty 1998:14; Percy 1997:87; Koekemoer 1998:4; Skinner 1994:25).

The majority of respondents unambiguously advocated that being well-presented secures a high level of importance which influences others' perception of loyalty. It is worthwhile mentioning for the purpose of this study that the concept of being well-presented does not mean to say one is either pretty or slim, however it does encompass attentiveness to personal appearance.

Holistic communication, inclusive of non-verbal communication, is important in generating confidence (Schultz, Tannenbaum & Lauterborn 1994:80). After all, on the assumption that a personnel consultant is attempting to enhance confidence, the tone of the holistic communication is vital to encouraging confidence (Schultz, Tannenbaum & Lauterborn (1994:80). The following response regarding the above is well worth mentioning: "*It is very important that (tone of voice, pitch and speed of speech) sometimes makes or breaks the situation*". Another believes that confidence is reflected in one's voice and in the way one speaks. In contrast with the above, she also believes that someone who speaks slowly and with a low voice represents low self-esteem. One respondent felt that tone of voice, pitch and speed of speech reflects professionalism. Additionally, she believes that this is imperative to the first few interactions. The conducted research reinforces the literature's emphasis on the domain of contact synergy. As already mentioned, publications of the marketing genre overwhelmingly affirm that every contact with a client is a communication (Schultz 2003:9; Schultz & Schultz 2001:20; Burnett & Moriarty 1998:9; Schultz, Tannenbaum & Lauterborn 1994:53; 114).

Transparency

Fifty percent of the respondents considered the transparency problem worth mentioning. In tune with issues raised previously, this essential ingredient in IMC plays an important role in the fostering of long-term relationships (Schultz 2003:8; 2002:23; Reichheld 2002:4; 2002:65; Peltier, Schibrowsky & Schultz 2002:25).

Professionalism

A number of respondents affirmed that professionalism cultivates loyalty. One particular respondent stated that he would liaise with a consultant on the prerequisite that *"you are in yourself professional"*. Yet another respondent equated the level of a consultant's service to professionalism with personal appearance. She concluded, *"professionalism sums up everything"*. Some respondents simply declared that professionalism is expected from consultants. A small number of respondents did not comment on professionalism as an issue.

The matter of professionalism has not been examined exclusively in the relevant literature. Nonetheless, marketing authorities (Simões & Dibb 2001:218; Moorthi 2002:10) maintain that when labelling a particular service, clients have the overwhelming tendency to classify certain tangible features (such as physical form) with that particular service. Evidently this becomes inherently part of the service.

Personal contact

Although respondents' preference to channels of contact varied from e-mail, landline to cell-phones, the following responses warrant attention:

- *"I prefer the personal contact."*
- *"I prefer the more personal...we meet."*
- *"I prefer personal contact."*
- *"I just prefer the more personal contact."*
- *"...ideally I want to see you."*

Only two respondents did not comment on their preference for personal contact. The authors wonder whether the delight of interaction, the excitement of meeting people and the challenge of building relationships disappear with mere technological interaction. A large number of the respondents unequivocally side with the literature in preferring personal interaction.

Access to service

All the respondents demonstrated an overall consensus of the value of accessibility to consultants. Accessibility to consultants carries such weight with one of the respondents that he invited the consultant to call him anytime - even on his cellphone - since he valued communication with the consultant so highly. Others merely said that accessibility was a crucial factor.

SUMMATION

This study has revealed that in order to form long-term relationships, which would mature into loyalty, clients expect excellent service, *effective* two-way communication,

a relationship with, and efficiency from a personnel consultant. Additionally, clients prefer the service of a consultant who possesses knowledge, the ability to culture-fit candidates, and who are themselves perfectly transparent and professional. An interesting point was raised in the investigation, namely that clients regard a well-presented appearance, a sound tone of voice and well-modulated speech as equivalent to providing a quality service. Equally compelling is the fact that clients prefer dealing with a specific consultant, whose service has proved to be satisfactory, to dealing with a well-known recruitment agency.

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