The Essence and the Essentials:
A Distillation of Relationship Marketing

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Summary
Much of the published work in the field of relationship marketing is normative and descriptive. Only a limited amount of empirical work has been conducted. That which has been carried out demonstrates the gap between the academic and practitioner domains. The "paradigm shift" widely proposed in the literature is not yet demonstrated in practice, with companies being shown to adopt a range of marketing stances ranging from transactional to relational.

This ongoing research project has elicited from the literature a series of constructs that summarise relationship marketing. These constructs have been developed into a tentative framework or model that describes relationship marketing. The objective is to offer a better description and explanation of observed practice.

It is proposed that a relationship approach is most appropriate and suitable for a business in a mature or declining market where customers and their retention is a more strategic issue. A detailed and comprehensive case study has been conducted in a mature, global manufacturing business. The results of the case study have been used to inform and modify the initial framework in order to arrive at a more comprehensive explanation of relationship marketing practice. This takes the form of an improved model and a set of theoretical propositions to guide further work, reported in this paper.

This research adopts a comparative approach to theory building and testing with the aim of developing a model within which company practice can be understood. It is also hoped that managerial guidelines within the context of a mature business can eventually be proposed.

Introduction
There is little doubt that the nature of marketing is changing. Many authors propose that the conventional 4Ps (Kotler 1991, Gronroos, 1994), transaction (Christopher, Payne & Ballantyne, 1991, Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995), marketing model (Doyle, 1995) or managerial school of marketing (Aijo, 1996) are all relevant as explanations of marketing in the post industrial, pre relationship marketing era. Yet Mattsson (1997) poses the interesting point that *"it is not very clear what the shift is from and even less clear what the shift is to"*. If the position from which we are shifting is not entirely clear, these authors all propose the concept of relationship marketing as a more comprehensive explanation. I argue that relationship

marketing is similarly subject to shades of interpretation along the central theme, as Earp, Harrison & Hunter (1999) note it is still "*ambiguous and non-specific"*.

This apparent transition is often discussed using the term "paradigm shift", and several articles refer explicitly to this (Kotler, 1991, Gronroos, 1994, Lehtinen, 1995, Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995, Peppers & Rogers, 1995, Aijo, 1996). Conversely, failure to see that change is taking place and to be able to conceptualise it runs the risk of myopia (Mattsson, 1997, Pels, 1999), a word laden with pejorative meaning for marketers due to the seminal paper by Levitt (1960).

However Pels (1999) extends the argument and suggests that the myopic tendency is not just failure to appreciate that change is occurring, but to understand the nature of the shift, *"...what the shift is to"* to use the words of Mattsson (1997). She argues that such an explanation is too narrow to explain the nature of the change. Hence myopia is also a risk if we rely on any one model of exchange be it relationship marketing or any other explanation, such is the complexity of the business environment.

Is the concept of the paradigm helpful in gaining understanding and explanation? As Kuhn (1970) states a paradigm shift occurs when a better explanation of the phenomena under investigation emerges. Some authors query if it represents a paradigm shift at all (Millman, 1993, Mattsson, 1997), and hence by inference a distinct theoretical framework. Others support the view that a paradigm shift has occurred (Aijo, 1996, Gronroos, 1994 and Ravald & Gronroos, 1996). However the unquestioning adoption of this natural science concept has been challenged (Hunt & Morgan, 1997), and perhaps this paradigmatic concept as applied to marketing should be discarded as unhelpful in understanding the nature of the postulated shift. The test should be if the concept satisfies the academic criteria of providing a better understanding and explanation.

The body of literature has been reviewed by myself (Palmer, 1999) and many others and a comprehensive review of the field has recently been published (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2000). It is not therefore the objective of this paper to discuss a further analysis of the field but to build on this by arguing two main points.

Firstly that the literature is normative and descriptive and that there has been insufficient theory building and testing. This is needed in order to develop and test the linkages between the academic and practitioner fields. Secondly that the field is so large that it is unlikely that there is one unified explanation of marketing that is likely to emerge in the complex business environment described by Pels (1999). I argue that the field can be narrowed by the definition of context in which phenomena can be investigated. I then present my own work conducted within the context of a mature industry from which a tentative theory and set of theoretical propositions are emerging.

Theory Building and Testing

Here I argue that there has been insufficient theory building and testing to enable correspondence with the field to take place. This would then form the basis for the development of parsimonious theory by academics (Whetten, 1989) and would also provide a better understanding of the *"heterogeneous reality"* (Pels, 1999) that managers face.

Webster (1992) notes that theory development is dependent upon aggressive programmes of research if marketing relationships are to be better explained. Evidence of such research in the field of relationship marketing is sparse. Mattsson (1997) notes that: -

"To what extent relationship marketing is built on systematic empirical observations of relationships over time is difficult to tell from the literature. I have not found any references to such studies in articles or books on RM."

Theory development and testing is therefore at a low level and is consistent with the comment by Gummesson (1996) concerning the rather ad-hoc frameworks, checklists and models that are proposed. For example we have seen the number of markets that relationship marketers should address increase from 6 (Christopher, Payne & Ballantyne, 1991) to 10 (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) and now 30 (Gummesson, 1996).

Does the future lie in conceptualising more markets, for example, as possible explanations of reality or should academic effort also be invested in testing these concepts against that which they attempt to explain? The answer lies between these two extremes. In the absence of grand or all encompassing theory the degree to which a window of theory explains the marketing practice observed would demonstrate both the opportunities to improve theory and the degree to which this emerging theory is confirmed, or at least not yet refuted.

This raises two points, firstly a theory can never, except in exceptional circumstances, offer a complete explanation of the phenomenon but seeks to offer a better or more comprehensive one than the theory it replaces. Theory testing and development is therefore a comparative and interlinked process (Sternthal, Tybout & Calder, 1987). Wolcott (1992) refers to this as "theory-first" or "theory-later", but Miles and Huberman (1994, p 155) note that the end result is the same in that through a process of gathering and analysing empirical data the researcher is either developing or testing a cause and effect map. The end point is that the map or model is substantiated by reference to the data. In this instance a model is a visual representation of a theory and indistinguishable from it (Whetten, 1989). I therefore propose that the balance between theory building and testing is inappropriate and that the field of relationship marketing would benefit by taking the ad-hoc outputs noted by Gummesson for example, and developing these into theory by means of the interlinking and informing of theory and practice.

Context and Theory

Gummesson notes the absence of context and theory to provide meaning to observations. This is a crucial point as facts only have meaning within context (Guba & Lincoln, 1982), and in turn theory should provide a way of linking such facts in ways that provides better explanations of the observations. In this section I propose that relationship marketing is a response to maturity and increased competition within markets and that it is this that represents the paradigmatic nature of the change. The degree to which relationship marketing is practised may be influenced by a number of other factors, which include the nature of the business and the attitude of the management.

The ubiquitous concept of the 4Ps was developed at a time of increasing consumer demand for a wide range of products and services representing growth and market expansion. The 4Ps have now become axiomatic as a fundamental concept of marketing based on a micro-economic framework of profit maximisation. Doyle (1995) discusses this and notes its shortcomings within the context of change in the business environment. In particular he notes that it is increasingly difficult to differentiate products, a characteristic of maturity, and discusses the change in emphasis towards the management of networks and relationships.

Pels, Brodie and Coviello (1999) in their discussion of the relational exchange paradigm note that numerous authors have identified that relationship marketing has emerged as a consequence of contextual change. They present an analysis of the reasons underlying this change. These are consistent with the change factors that were referred in a previous paper concerning this ongoing research project (Palmer, 1999) and are represented in the model presented in Figure 1 as the "drivers of change".

I propose that relationship marketing can be understood as a contextually based phenomenon, and that its most apparent manifestation will be in firms in mature markets.

Gronroos (1990) proposed that there is a spectrum of marketing activity, spanning relational to transactional. Along this continuum he proposed that business to business marketing be at the relational pole. Webster (1992), who notes that relationships are more evident in industrial markets, supports this. One of the main streams of the business to business relationship marketing literature, the IMP group, places relationships at the heart of the interaction model (Ford, 1997). More recent work by Earp, Harrison & Hunter (1999) has also proposes that relationship marketing is primarily a business to business phenomenon. This is a further contextual factor influencing relationship marketing.

Mattsson (1997) has proposed that there are various types of relationship marketing, these he refers to as limited and extended. In the limited view he proposes this is essentially an elaboration of the conventional marketing model. In his discussion of the extended view of relationship marketing he proposes that this is more aligned with a network or relationship perspective of marketing. Eggert & Stieff (1999) have built on this by introducing the idea that relationship marketing can be seen as behavioural or attitudinal. The behavioural approach involves a series of transactions on behalf of the seller designed to achieve repeat transactions, typically driven by economic goals rather than including some of the wider aspects of the exchange such as customer satisfaction. There is some empirical evidence to support this from the discussion of loyalty schemes by Hart et al (1999) and of purchasing clubs by Liebermann (1999). As a contrast to the behavioural approach Eggert & Stieff suggest the alternative is the attitudinal perspective. The relationship is characterised not by the desire of the seller to achieve a transaction or series of transactions but the motivation is to achieve a state of mutual acknowledgement that the relationship exists (Bliemel & Eggert, 1998).

The work of Brodie et al (1997) demonstrates a range of transactional and relational marketing approaches exhibited by the companies they studied, inconsistent with the paradigm shift concept. I propose that there has not been a "darkness to light" experience of the type implied by the use of the paradigm shift concept, but that there is a gradation and intensity of practices. I now seek to offer an explanation of this using the genetic analogy.

Theory Development

A series of constructs resulting from an analysis of the relationship marketing literature has previously been presented (Palmer, 1999), these are defined in appendix A. These constructs represent my interpretation of relationship marketing and have been used to guide fieldwork to test and develop theory.

I introduce here the concept of the genetic analogy. This extends the biological analogy, already well established in the management literature (Boulding, 1950, Penrose, 1952). The purpose of analogy is to aid understanding and provide a simple framework around which to structure thinking.

The genetic make-up of an organism is referred to as the genotype. This describes the totality of genes inherent within an organism. The phenotype describes the observable characteristics of the organism. The phenotype may or may not reflect the genetic make-up as this may be expressed or masked by other characteristics.

Taking a simple example, let us assume that hair colour can be either brown or blonde. Each parent has genes that determine characteristics such as hair colour in their offspring. In addition each of those genes may be dominant, able to exert its influence phenotypically, or recessive. The characteristic associated with recessive genes is only observed when two recessive genes occur in the same organism. If we assume that brown hair colour is dominant (B) and blonde recessive (b), then parents could have the genotype:

	E		Γ	
Parent generation	**B b** *brown hair*		**B b** *brown hair*	
These will recombine in the offspring as:-	BB	Bb	bB	bb
	brown	*brown*	*brown*	*blonde*

From this we can understand that a parent may have the potential, the recessive gene, for a characteristic such as blonde hair but, as in the case of these two parents, it is not expressed. Each brown haired child could die their hair blonde and change their appearance, their phenotype, but this does not change their genotype (Jones & Jones, 1987). However not all genes are simply dominant or recessive, as this illustration would imply. There are varying degrees of dominance and hence a cross of red and white flowered plants could produce plants that flower in colours ranging from red through to white. Hence a spectrum of characteristics are possible, analogous to the continuum of marketing practice proposed by Gronroos (1990) and the range of marketing styles identified by Brodie et al (1997).

Using this analogy I propose that there are some organisations that are intrinsically more capable of the practice of relationship marketing due to the underlying fundamentals of the business, their "genetic architecture". Whilst others attempt or adopt relationship marketing practices in a more superficial way, but which are not sustainable or optimal for either the company or the customer because of the lack of intrinsic resource.

In addition the genetic analogy helps to explain how firms may adopt a spectrum or continuum of behaviours ranging from transactional to relational. It may be inappropriate to consider companies as either transactional or relational in their marketing practice. This is proposed by Coviello, Brodie, Brooks & Collins (1997): -

"Neither relational nor transactional marketing fully capture the essence of current marketing practice."

Following this analogy we can understand that firms may or may not have advantage in terms of their resources or genetic architecture. We can therefore see that there will be a continuum of both capability and commitment to the principles of relationship marketing. I propose that the genetic analogy provides a potentially better explanation of the phenomenenon.

Fieldwork

The concepts of relationship marketing are operationalised in terms of the constructs (Appendix A). Functionally these constructs fulfil the same role for theory testing as theoretical propositions would for theory building (Eisenhardt, 1989). The theory testing nature of this work means that theoretical propositions are the output of the first stage of the research and not the starting point (Whetten, 1989). These are presented in a later section.

I therefore follow the comparative and interlinked approach to theory testing and subsequent development discussed earlier (Sternthal et al, 1987, Wolcott, 1992). The constructs were elicited and placed within an initial framework but a series of theoretical propositions were not developed at that stage. Theoretical propositions are presented as the output of the first case study together with a model adapted in the light of the findings.

The case study method was decided upon due to the relevance to the circumstances, *"you would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions"* (Yin, 1994). This focuses the discussion to the phenomenon versus the context, in this case marketing practices being the phenomena and lack of organic growth the context. Yin (1994) notes that in real life phenomenon and context are not always easily distinguishable.

Case Study – Du Pont Polyester Films

Du Pont Polyester Films was formed from the merger of ICI's *Melinex*™ business with that of Du Pont's *Mylar*™ business when Du Pont purchased ICI's assets in February 1998. Du Pont is a multinational chemicals business with headquarters in Wilmington, Delaware. Currently the business is formed into three SBUs these are - industrial, speciality and packaging. The subject of the case study is the packaging business that produces polyester films for the packaging of food and fast moving consumer goods.

The market became increasingly competitive with the entrance into the market of low cost producers based in India and the Far East, in particular Korea. There has been over supply within the market exaggerated by the collapse of Asian markets that led to a substantial drop in prices. This led the Du Pont business into losses, addressed through changes in corporate structure, cost management and the marketing strategy. In particular the attitude to new product development and the ways in which customer relationships are managed and serviced. The company identified a number of customers with whom they wished to develop a more co-operative and in-depth style of relationship. This has involved numerous changes in marketing practice, which have formed the basis of the case study.

Data Collection, Analysis and Validity
Data was collected over a period of 18/24 months. This has involved visits to the UK head office of the polyester business and to corporate headquarters in the US. In order to achieve triangulation a number of data collection methods were used: -

- Focus groups discussions
- A series of semi-structured interviews
- Participant observation
- Collection of company and industry data
- Regular, ongoing discussions with the Chief Executive

QSR NUD-IST was used as the primary analytical tool. This software package offers a number of additional benefits compared to a word processor for textual analysis, including a database facility in which a wide range of source material can be held, coded and linked. The coding scheme used was based on the constructs and poles outlined in Appendix A.

Conclusion Drawing and Verification is a problematic area and Miles and Huberman in their discussion note the importance of confirmability, which they directly equate to validity. They stress the importance of documenting the process and to continually iterate the conclusions against field notes and analysis in order that alternative explanations are examined and tested, as the conclusions become increasingly firm. In general terms confirmation/validation is provided by: -

- **Triangulation of data** (Jick,1979, Hirschman,1986) – Use of multiple data sources and respondents, cross check for consistency
- **Process development** (Yin,1994,Easton,1995) – Process of research managed and recorded
- **Respondent check** (Guba & Lincoln,1985) – The Chief Executive and a number of the management team have reviewed the case material
- **Use of serendipitous findings** (Eisenhardt,1989) – Every opportunity has been taken to gather information and analyse in various ways to develop insight
- **Trail of evidence** (Miles&Huberman,1994) – All data is catalogued and referenced for third party scrutiny using a qualitative analysis software tool
- **Iterative approach to use of theory** (Bonoma,1985) – The model is being developed and informed by the data
- **Objectivity/Confirmability** (Rose,1982, Hirschman,1986) – Appropriate parts of the research have been presented at for peer group comment and feedback

Results
In presenting the results of the analysis they have also been compared with results generated by others, the body of relationship marketing literature and a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the case study evidence. Whilst the research is essentially qualitative in nature, the software tool used does allow for a simple count of the units of coded text. Whilst this is subject to a number of drawbacks, the quantitative results can be considered alongside the

other data. Tables 1 and 2 summarise the analysis of the genotypic and phenotypic constructs respectively.

Table 1 Genotypic Constructs – Decision Criteria Matrix

	3rd Party Empirical Research	Relationship Marketing Literature	Case Study Evidence - Quantitative	Case Study Evidence - Qualitative
TARGETS	✓	✓✓	✓	(✓)
INTERFACE	✗	✓	✗	(✓)
EXCHANGE	(✓)	✓✓	✓	✓✓
FOCUS	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓
STRUCTURE	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓

✗ - Not supported
(✓) - Some support
✓ - Supported
✓✓ - Strongly supported

The decision criteria matrix summarises the various forms of analysis conducted with respect to the genotypic constructs. From this it is concluded that all of the constructs with the exception of *interface* have been validated in this first case study.

Table 2 Confirmation/Validation of Phenotypic Constructs

Construct	No. of Text Units	Confirmation/ Validation		Overall	
		Quantitative	Qualitative	Confirmed	Denied
Measures	514	✓✓	✓✓	✓	
Intangibles	189	✓✓	✓✓	✓	
Decision Driver	182	✓✓	✓	✓	
Criteria	138	✓	✓	✓	
DIU	137	✓	✓✓	✓	
DIU Quality	131	✓	✓✓	✓	
Infoprocess	120	✓	✗	?	
Power	103	✓	✓	✓	
Customisation	101	✓	✓	✓	
Level	94	(✓)	✗		✗
Quality	72	✗	✗		✗
Timeframe	63	✗	(✓)		✗
Communication	62	✗	✗		✗

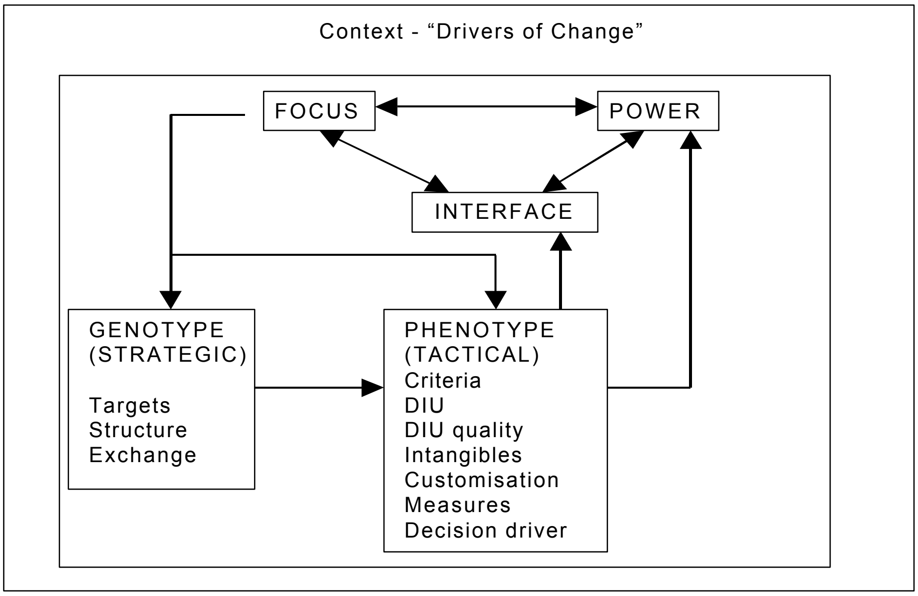
From this analysis all the constructs with the exception of quality, timeframe and communication have been initially validated.

Discussion and Conclusions

A series of constructs elicited from the literature have now been tested via the medium of the Du Pont case study. As a result a model is now proposed (Figure 1). The model forms the basis for the development of a series of theoretical propositions.

The model describes a close interaction between the constructs of *focus, power* and *interface*. I propose that the type of relationship is strongly influenced by the approach and attitude adopted and the degree to which power is recognised and actively used in the relationship. This is illustrated very well in the Du Pont case where both the language and the actions of the seller demonstrate how opportunities arise to "win" over the buyer, in the knowledge that the seller will in turn use their power in different circumstances.

Figure 1 Theoretical Model



What the initial work has demonstrated is that there is what I term a "tidal effect", whereby power swings from the buyer to the seller and back again. Over and under capacity is such a factor that influences relative power and a cycle of competition ensues. This is therefore a "vicious triangle" – focus, power, interaction - to be involved in where each of these factors could be additive causing an increasingly competitive and transactionally oriented style of relationship.

The Du Pont case study illustrates the role of the chief executive in firstly stabilising and containing a difficult set of circumstances and then generating commercial success and the opportunity to seek to develop different styles of relationship.

Theoretical Proposition 1 – That a leader will be instrumental in leading and driving change in marketing practice.

If a change in marketing practice is to be effectively realised then the business unit needs to be reasonably stable and any changes that do occur need to be understood by the managers involved, who feel able to commit themselves to a successful outcome. Therefore if a change in the basis underlying the marketing activity, *focus*, is to take place then organisational structure and in particular the volume/margin balance needs to be under the control of the business unit.

Theoretical proposition 2 - That relationship marketing practice will be more effectively implemented where the business unit has control of the main business functions and autonomy to decide policy.

In a mature market there is an observed tendency for supply to exceed demand as managers are reluctant to remove surplus capacity. If this is combined with a lack of differentiation between competing products, then price becomes dominant in the conversation between buyer and seller. The naked threat of power can be quite evident in the discussion, with loyalty being substantially diminished. By breaking the vicious triangle Du Pont hopes to improve the mutual acknowledgement of the relationship and increase the level of trust and commitment

Theoretical proposition 3 - that the perceived abuse of power will diminish as the number of personal relationships, mutual trust and commitment develop over time.

The analysis demonstrated a reasonably high level of internal consistency of focus within the organisation. The decision-making group, the Global Packaging Team, is composed of managers from a wide range of functions. Before the recent structural changes functional managers reported on a hierarchical basis to central service groups at the head office. This internal consistency is felt to be important in the change in marketing practice being implemented by the organisation and is the basis for the next theoretical proposition.

Theoretical proposition 4 - That in order to develop a mutually acknowledged relationship internal consistency between functions is required.

A fundamental contained within the model is the distinction between the genotype and phenotype. The genotype describes strategic change based on a change in *focus*, whilst the phenotype describes tactical variables. It is therefore possible for a company to adopt relationship marketing practices as a "quick fix" route to increased sales. However unless there is a more fundamental, philosophical and attitudinal change within the company then it is proposed that it is unlikely that this will lead to either a sustainable approach to the market or the business success envisaged.

Theoretical proposition 5 - That companies can adopt relationship marketing practices but that these are unlikely to be successful or sustainable without an underlying change in managerial focus and marketing fundamentals.

Further work is currently in hand. A second case study has been conducted in co-operation with Pilkington Glass. A third case study has been arranged with an American manufacturer of flavours and fragrances.

It is planned that data collection and analysis will be completed by the end of this calendar year. After this point the data can be drawn together in preparation for the writing up phase of the project.

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APPENDIX A

Definition of Constructs
Derived From The Literature and Used for Case Analysis

CONSTRUCT	TRANSACTIONAL POLE	RELATIONAL POLE
FOCUS – *The basis underlying the marketing activity of the organisation. Primarily transactional, relationship services or value driven.*		
	Completion of the sale Maintained/improved volume	Improved volume Achieve customer satisfaction Create value
TIME FRAME – *Has the relationship with the customer endured, or is it intended to endure for a short or long time.*		
	Discrete transactions Deal focused Short trading history	Ongoing relationship Continuing transactions Long trading history
TARGETS – *What are the markets identified or addressed through the actions of the firm? This would include the customer market, perhaps also suppliers, internal market, influence groups etc. or maintenance of the relationship and network itself.*		
	Primarily or exclusively customer market orientated	Identify a number of markets Commit resources to these markets

STRUCTURE –***The organisational structure and work flow or processes within the firm.***

Hierarchical Functional authority and status important	De-layered organisation Authority devolved Team based Important processes identified

EXCHANGE – The actual basis of exchange to include physical product, services, warranties, reputation and other intangibles. That which the firm considers to be present and necessary for the relationship.

Physical product or discrete service focus Formal contracts Written specifications	Product and service integrated No formal agreement Trust and openness

QUALITY – ***Actions taken by the firm to improve or develop technology/ product quality, improve value by reducing cost of ownership.***

No quality measures No employee training Separate QC function	Product and service quality measures Employee involvement and training Quality information and reporting used

MEASURES – ***Ways in which the outcome of the relationship process is assessed. This would include financial and non-financial measures.***

Success measured by sales revenue, product volume and market share Sales bonus structure volume related	Service and quality levels measured Regular customer satisfaction surveys Customer related measures used as basis for bonus etc.

CRITERIA – ***Information concerning customers which is used to make strategic decisions.***

Previous sales history Assessment of likelihood of repurchase potential New customer focus	Customer information system Key customer value identified and monitored Customer plans known

INTANGIBLES – ***Activities and commitments made to improve intangible and time related aspects of the product offering.***

No complaints handling procedure Delivery and other service standards not monitored	Service recovery procedures Complaints and inquiry review process

	Service standards measure

CUSTOMISATION – ***The extent to which the product offering is different or unique for individual customers.***

One standard products offering Little customisation to specific requirements	Product and service flexible to meet individual customer requirements

POWER – ***The degree to which power is recognised and used in the relationship***

Win /lose style Highly competitive	Mutually seeking to generate value and satisfaction

DIU **- (Decision Involvement Unit). The parties or firms involved in the relationship between and perhaps beyond the supplying firm and the buyer.**

Few people involved Little senior management contact Mainly sales/purchasing contact	Multiple contacts Senior management involvement Cross functional contact

INTERFACE –***The extent to which the relationship is discrete or continuous and extended over a short or long time period.***

Infrequent contact Formal meetings Product/ technical focused discussions	High level of informal contact Frequent contact Extensive sharing of information

DIU QUALITY –***The intimacy of the relationship, whether it is arms-length or personal and face to face and the degree of trust and commitment which exists.***

Impersonal Competitive Low levels of trust and commitment	High-level of mutual respect Strong personal relationships High commitment to maintenance of the relationship

COMMUNICATION – ***The nature of the communication, whether it occurs in discrete episodes or continuously and the degree to which it is formal.***

Communication informal and infrequent Level of contact related to the stage of negotiation	Regular, frequent contact at a wide range of levels Commitment freely given, responsibility readily accepted

INFOPROCESS *–**The extent to which information is available, timely and relevant for decision making purposes. The investment made in information systems to improve the adequacy of information.***

Management information financial/ product orientated Little or no customer information available for marketing purposes	Effective marketing and customer information system Easily accessed by a range off employees Used for decision-making Used for customer contact management

DECISION DRIVER – ***The element(s) of the relationshiand exchange which are most important in driving strategic decisions.***

Price And contractual fulfilment Penalty and escape clauses	Share benefits Strengthen competitive position

LEVEL – ***The seniority and function of those involved in relationships and not just decisions***

Mainly at the same functional level Senior management involvement dependent on the size of deal, problems arising etc.	Contact at all levels Senior managers proactive and responsive Contact details known and used at all levels