

# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROPOSITIONS: THE CASE OF A MAJOR CONTRACTOR IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE MARKET

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Following ownership change of a major contracting organisation and the integration of two distinct subsidiaries involved with infrastructure provision, a major re-evaluation of the marketing strategy and business development processes were undertaken. Part of the re-evaluation required in-depth, semi-structured interviews with business development managers and other business development staff, and with a selection of core customers, most of whom are repeat business customers. Using a combination of observation and action research methods, the paper presents findings concerning the extent of alignment between perceived customer and stakeholder experience on the one hand and business development service propositions on the other hand. The findings are categorised according to (i) appreciated value that is delivered yet not incorporated into propositions and service promises, (ii) value that is delivered yet is not generally valued by customers, (iii) value propositions that are required yet are overlooked or partially delivered. The findings are also categorised according to former subsidiaries from which business development managers originated in order to establish (a) the degree of consistency of approach across the former subsidiaries and the extent of diversity of business development approaches and (b) the compatibility with the general business strategy and specifically the marketing plan. Analysis of the findings is conducted with general reference to the overall organisational culture of the contractor and particular comparison with relationship marketing principles. The conclusions lead to recommendations for improving business relationships with the customer and for a broader range of stakeholders.

Keywords: business development, customers, relationship marketing, value.

## INTRODUCTION

Construction marketing has been emerging as a significant field of practice and research over the last fifteen years. Yet there remains a dearth of empirical research in general and on business development in particular. The *aim* of this paper is to address this issue to help develop our understanding of this area. The *objectives* of the paper are to examine value that is delivered and appreciated by customers, although not always incorporated into business development propositions and service promises; examine value that is delivered yet is not generally valued by customers; and, value

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propositions that are required yet are either overlooked or partially delivered. Within this picture the degree of consistency of approach the project business is considered and the alignment of practices with the general business strategy and specifically the marketing plan. The paper specifically focuses upon business development and customer experiences in divisions of the UK branch of Vinci SA. The context is provided by two companies: former Norwest Holst and Taylor Woodrow Construction, both of which were subject to acquisition and are in the process of integration.

The emphasis is upon empirical examination because of the lack of attention given hitherto to this research activity. The empirical examination is anchored in the conceptual marketing literature and the research methods combine observation and action research. The findings are interpreted through a broader range of literature. The paper concludes with a set of overall conclusions and recommendations, organised according to the six markets model (Christopher *et al.*, 2006).

## **BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

The field of construction marketing has received increased attention during the last 15 years, initially through the Centre for Construction Marketing at Oxford Brookes University in the late 1990s, and from authors such as Preece (e.g. winter and Preece, 2000) and Smyth (e.g. 2000). Whilst this stimulated attention upon the marketing strategy and processes, less empirical attention has been given to the detailed processes and activities of Business Development (Preece *et al.*, 2003).

There are two primary marketing approaches. The marketing mix (Borden 1964), with the so-called 4Ps (McCarthy 1964), is transactional. It is limited in theory and largely inappropriate in practice in project environments (Smyth, 2000). The paradigm shift in the mid-1980s ushered in a proactive approach of human agency called relationship marketing (Berry, 1983), particularly in business-to-business service markets (e.g. Grönroos, 2000; Gummesson, 2001; Ford *et al.*, 2003). Common themes are investment in and value from relationships (Ford *et al.*, 2003) to increase customer satisfaction. This is achieved through service improvement in general and specific areas of added service value that match customer needs and desires. The reciprocal market understanding is increased repeat customer business and referral opportunities. This requires developing close relationships to improve customer and stakeholder understanding, developing services that match expectations and delivering services to engender customer and stakeholder satisfaction (Smyth, 2000; Smyth and Fitch, 2009).

Some key relationship marketing tenets therefore include (i) developing close relationships to improve client and stakeholder understanding, (ii) developing services that match expectations, (iii) delivering services to engender client and stakeholder satisfaction, (iv) increasing long-term maintenance of relationships to induce loyalty, hence repeat business and/or referral business, (v) increasing the value of the firm in the market to its owners (Smyth, 2000). Some of the key business benefits include (a) increasing repeat business and referral opportunities derived from improved customer loyalty, (b) increasing profitability through adding relationship and service value, and (c) reducing sales plus other transaction costs (Smyth and Fitch, 2009).

Application of relationship marketing principles is reasonably pragmatic and context specific. Storbacka *et al.* (1996) provided a systematic model for guidance, which

have been developed for the project context by Pryke and Smyth (2008). However, the primary focus of this paper is empirical case material.

## METHOD

This research uses a combination of observation and action research methods through an in-depth case study. Vinci SA is the largest contractor and concessionaire in the world and provides the empirical focus for this paper. Vinci Construction UK (VCUK) provides the specific context and data is drawn from the civil engineering, called “Civils Division”, and the “Air” sector which covers both building and civil engineering work for airport related worked. VCUK has grown through a series of acquisitions based upon regional contractors, the most well known being Norwest Holst until 2008 when Vinci SA acquired Taylor Woodrow Construction from the parent company, Taylor Wimpey plc.

The data sources were made up of internal company documents and semi-structured interviews. The company documents also comprised a combination of written strategy documentation from the Marketing Department (Vinci Construction UK, 2009a), questionnaire survey data of all staff (Taylor Woodrow, 2008), reports compiled from semi-structured interviews (Vinci Construction UK, 2009b) produced as part of a UCL and VCUK Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP), as well as semi-structured interview data (Customer Perception Survey, 2009; Staff Business Development Perception Survey, 2009) produced within the Marketing Department and as part of the KTP respectively.

The research in VCUK was undertaken as part of a KTP programme funded by the UK government. A KTP Associate was appointed by UCL to work with VCUK on developing relationship marketing in general and referral and influencer markets in particular (cf. Christopher *et al.*, 2006). The purpose of the review was to assess the results emanating from all the projects. The research methods for this paper combine action research (Dunnette, 1976) conducted by the KTP Associate with others in marketing and business development roles in VCUK as empirical case study work (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989). Following Danermark *et al.* (2002), social science explanation usually starts in the concrete with description of often complex and composite activities and events, using everyday language informed by established concepts. Description of business development and customer perceptions forms part of the scoping of the KTP work, offering data for this paper. Description leads to analytical resolution where the composite and complex is distinguished in terms of components, aspects and dimensions, which will lead to subsequent levels of analysis (cf. Sayer, 1992).

The research faced a series of methodological issues. Action research requires data that is of direct application to describing and potentially prescribing corporate action. Whilst the semi-structured interview content and format was reviewed from an academic purpose too, the motivation embraces corporate agendas, albeit in an academic-industry knowledge transfer context. On the one hand, concerning the Customer Perception Survey (2009) the aim was to conclude within the first quarter of 2009 the semi-structured interviews with key customers. It was still being completed during write up. On the other hand, the KTP gave privileged access to key data sources, which would not be possible with other research methods. The other reason for access is the perception within VCUK business development that they are “ahead of the game”; thus, competitors would take some while to catch up by which time the

company will have developed to the next stage. In addition, the company recognises the need for pan-sector improvement to service provision.

## FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

VCUK generally operates with good and effective customer relationships, customer satisfaction and loyalty in evidence (cf. Grönroos, 2001; Gummesson, 2001; plus Pryke and Smyth, 2006; Smyth and Fitch, 2009 for projects). This can of course be satisfied through a transactional approach where opportunism and adversarial behaviour are not part of the menu. However, in the “Civils Division” and the “Air” sector it is strategically important to developing and maintaining a more collaborative approach, perhaps more so in the wake of the “credit crunch”. The *Marketing Plan* for Vinci Construction UK (Civils Division) lends strategic significance collaborative working by employing relationship marketing. The focus is upon (a) retaining existing customers through continuous customer contact, (b) developing customer value over long time scales with a high customer service emphasis, and (c) a high commitment to meeting customer expectations. Thus, relationship quality and quality of delivery is a concern of all employees (Vinci Construction UK, 2009a). To achieve this:

*Our key challenges for 2009 are:*

- *To build a clear understanding of who Vinci Construction UK (Civils Division) are, our value proposition and our core differentiators in our external markets*
- *To build a company culture that engages and motivates our people to achieve our goals and objectives.* (Vinci Construction UK, 2009a, p.3)

*.....Our marketing and business development will only be as good as our understanding of the markets we operate in, and the customers we wish to build relationships with.* (Vinci Construction UK, 2009a, p.4)

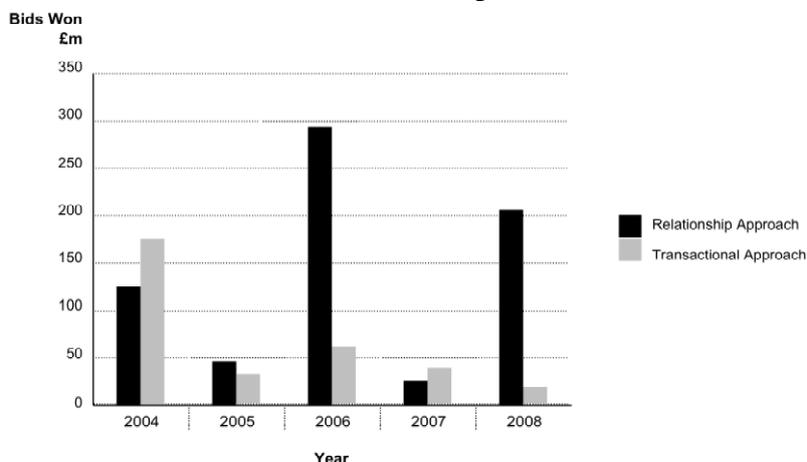


Figure 1: Comparison of Value of Bids Won Using a Relationship and Transactional Approach

A key conceptual starting point for relationship marketing is provided by the IMP Group six markets model (Christopher *et al.*, 2006). A stratified process is applied from the first stages of business development, through valuing the customer and developing project “Win Strategies” (Smyth and Fitch, 2009) and through operational delivery. Measurement evaluates the customer lifetime relationship value (Smyth and Fitch, 2009), evaluates customer satisfaction/retention during business development (including repeat business) and through reports using the Salesforce® customer database and tracking programme, as well as through delivery and post-delivery using “Heartbeats” for feeding back customer satisfaction reports (Vinci Construction UK,

2009a). There is ample evidence to date of the historical success between the relationship and transactional processes – see Figure 1.

### **Appreciated value that is delivered yet not incorporated into propositions and service promises**

According to 81% of Taylor Woodrow Construction employees around the time of takeover by VINCI SA believe the company delivers high quality products and services (Taylor Woodrow, 2008). Staff quoted in a survey made comments along these lines:

*“Being part of an organisation that is respected by clients and external people”*  
*“Sense of working for a company focused on delivering excellent products to its customers.”*

*“It’s a great company to work for in general. For the most part, forward looking, responsive to clients’ needs and expectations.”* (Taylor Woodrow, 2008, p.13).

Customers recently echoed this view, for example a customer Project Leader for a major airport facility stated they like the Vinci people, who are perceived to offer a strong consistent service. Another similar customer calls it a “can-do” approach, whilst a major infrastructure customer says they are trusted, deliver quickly and that they understand the business and deliver value (Customer Perception Survey, 2009). Customer understanding, trust and consistency are key relationship marketing propositions, endeavours being made to enhance this track record in the Civils and Air Sectors since the takeover. Customers and staff alike echo the importance of resource backing provided by and brand value of Vinci (e.g. Staff Business Development Perception Survey, 2009).

The market has been competitive during economic growth, even where strategic partnering and framework agreements were in place. Competition has intensified in the recession. One major competitor, for example, is perceived as really close to its customers hence the need to be seen according to a VCUK Project Director as “fighting for the customer”. Business development and operational teams have to understand customer goals and values and work to delivery to these. Certain project teams are stronger, improving bidding strike rate and facilitate building, developing and maintaining customer relationships according to one Commercial Director (Staff Business Development Perception Survey, 2009). Strong internal relationships help dyadic relationships (Pryke and Smyth, 2006; Smyth and Fitch, 2009). A customer Project Leader for a major airport facility stated they like the diversity of the people, including women on sites, which gives a very positive message, although this aspect has not particularly been built into sales pitches. Individuals show excellent levels of commitment. Another Project Leader says they collectively exceed expectations, scoring 85% against the supplier evaluation process. They are competent, especially technically, within a good organisation according to a major infrastructure customer (Customer Perception Survey, 2009). These aspects are in line with relationship marketing principles.

Promises and service commitments that are technical and service issues, that is non-contractual, pose a problem. To date they cannot be made during business development. The business development team has felt they have not had either the authority or the resource commitment. This is a compromising constraint for relationship marketing, specifically the ability to (a) differentiate the services offered, (b) develop Win Strategies, and (c) deliver service improvement (Vinci Construction UK, 2009b).

### **Proposed value that is delivered yet is not generally valued by customers**

A Contracts Director, formerly of Taylor Woodrow, believes innovation to be the most important part of the offer – it is a matter of “selling technical skills” – closely associated and backed by specialisation of workload. Innovation particularly emanates from the Technology Solutions division. Innovation workshops are regularly conducted at pre-tender stage (Staff Business Development Perception Survey, 2009). Yet, there is little customer evidence to support that this is an especially valued part of the business amongst key customers in “Civils” and “Air” sectors (Customer Perception Survey, 2009). Doubtless innovation would be missed if not part of the offer. It has become expected (value added), with added value lacking at times. One key infrastructure customer Project Leader commented the company is not innovative by their standards. Another stated they require a different skills set – more strategic, creative with innovative problem solving (Customer Perception Survey, 2009). Other customers do perceive them as innovative. One major Building Division framework customer recently required the company to take part in an innovation “beauty parade” in order to transfer recent project innovations to other framework contractors. What emerges is a mismatch between perceived value delivered and customer satisfaction. Perhaps this mismatch about the role of innovation is based in a production orientation as opposed to a service orientation, that is, customers reverse the Pareto 80:20 rule of common industry perception that technical and task issues are paramount compared to service quality (Pratt, 1999).

Thus, there is scope for relationship marketing to improve understanding of customer needs. Operations Directors tend to be primarily project focused, actions to foster customer commitment being too low a priority at best and misdirected at worst. Project Directors and Managers tend to be task orientated (cf. Handy, 1997) rather than service orientated (Pryke and Smyth, 2006; Söderlund and Tell, 2009). Senior Management have thought in terms of projects first and customers second. This sets the tone and is a constraint to delivering value customers want (Staff Business Development Perception Survey, 2009). It is Marketing and Business Development team responsibility to ensure key customers are the prime focus during business development and project execution. Yet, the majority of the Business Development team still see the project focus as primary and the customer secondary. They also perceive expertise as largely technical rather than service matters. The business development process tends to build relationships around specific project opportunities, even for many repeat business customers, rather than starting with strategic customer relationships, their programmes and portfolio (Vinci Construction UK, 2009b).

Organisations and processes are seldom homogeneous. As the evidence above suggests, practices are uneven. Where it is good, relationship marketing principles are followed, customer relationships being built in networks in order to understand strategic and tactical requirements to match service capabilities to the requirements. This is a continuous and iterative dialogue about business and contractual commitments (Staff Business Development Perception Survey, 2009). Contractor examination of these production-task-service issues is part of the commitment to service enhancement. Where it is bad, there is a lack of awareness of current inconsistencies in the service experience across the company, too many believing ‘value’ delivered matches and customer expectations. Relationship marketing provides an important means to monitor emergent and growing customer expectations.

### **Value propositions that are required yet are overlooked or partially delivered**

VCUK, like many contractors who primarily subcontract all or the majority of site-related work, are essentially systems integrators. This service function is still in its development stages and within which significant gaps exist in contractor organisations (Pryke and Smyth, 2008) and VCUK is no exception in this regard. There are three relevant dimensions for improvement: (i) management systems and controls, (ii) supply chain management, and (iii) formalising the preferred consultants with which to work. The first issue is management systems and controls. One major “Civils” customer reported that the company would benefit from more formal controls and by following a professional project management model. This was echoed by the customer Project Leader for a major airport facility, who stated controls are lacking and that they need to improve. Specifically there is a need for better project reporting to give cost and time visibility (Customer Perception Survey, 2009). One of the reasons is a lack of effective cross-functional working, which relationship marketing considers by approaching integration from a customer and service perspective (Pryke and Smyth, 2006; Söderlund and Tell, 2009). Whilst this is present, it is recognised within VCUK as inconsistent and frequently marred by poor communication:

*Cross-functional working is inconsistent. Some said it is generally strong at Submissions. Some said there is not much cross-functional working with Estimating and Supply Chain Management. Planning does not collaborate a great deal. (Vinci Construction UK, 2009b, p.21)*

Another reason is a ‘natural’ inclination for informal and ad hoc arrangements (Staff Business Development Perception Survey, 2009). Typical for many contractors, a silo mentality between both divisions and also between functional departments traditionally helps to keep transaction costs at a low level in a sector that minimises overheads and investment to survive and compete (Smyth, 2009). Yet it constrains integration. It may be tempting in the wake of the “credit crunch” to restructure in ways that reinforce such arrangements, yet the evidence from the current market suggests such arrangements are obsolete. Acting counter-intuitively will prove a good way to build market share under intensified competition. The company culture tends to foster individuals taking responsibility for actions, sometimes in small groups, without systematically ensuring people work together. A Contracts Director in the Civil Engineering Division stated that customer loyalty is a personal rather than organisational matter (Staff Business Development Perception Survey, 2009). This has certainly registered with customers, who see the company as highly effective with responsible individuals, yet there are gaps in group work and systems working – the company is more like a “family” than a system (Client Perception Survey, 2009). The two need not be mutually exclusive (cf. Douglas, 1999; Cameron and Quinn, 2006), but that appears to be the current and recent cultural profile.

A further and related reason is that the company is too reactive rather than being consistently proactive. Customers perceive there to be barriers arising in the hierarchy. This also relates to the general communication issues cited above as well as knowledge sharing for problem solving (Customer Perception Survey, 2009). This is confirmed by a VCUK Projects Director who noted that value added activities tend to be client driven. A Business Development Director suggested there is sometimes a lack of enthusiasm at the senior level to commit to service related improvements because they may raise costs and reduce profit margins in the short-term. Yet, the evidence is that bids which are insufficiently thought through, coordinated through effective cross-functional working and resourced in relation to customer expectations either tend to be lost or induce problems during execution (Staff Business Development Perception Survey, 2009).

Yet a further reason is the specific lack of service continuity at the Business Development-Project Operations interface (cf. Smyth, 2000; Pryke and Smyth, 2006). Prequalification is perceived as too early for formal cut off of Business Development management. Bid Planning/Submissions provide the bridge to Operations (Staff Business Development Perception Survey, 2009; Vinci Construction UK, 2009b). Continuity of personnel through a steady transition with a strengthened key account management function is needed to further improve relationship marketing and management (cf. Smyth and Fitch, 2009):

*The organisation lacks the values for integration and differentiation in the marketplace. The lack of integration from a BD [Business Development] perspective was evident in the interviews. Relationship marketing has the potential to increase the outward focus and to differentiate Civil Engineering and Air in the market, but a great deal more support from other areas of the business will be needed to achieve this. (Vinci Construction UK, 2009b, p.22)*

A smooth transition where the “baton” of relationship and information continuity is passed (cf. Smyth, 2000; Pryke and Smyth, 2006) can be built into the VCUK stepped approach, using the Tender Gateway process.

The second issue is supply chain management, which is a more specific management system of external control and influence of suppliers, and thus systems integration. Customer comments concern the need to demonstrate better control of sub-contractors. A small number of contractors are increasing vertical integration, for example Laing O’Rourke is trying to create a branded service of vertically integrated service and technology solutions. This company is a competitor in the Air sector. Thus, if the ‘buy’ solution is preferred over the ‘make’ solution, then supply chains need managing to effectively compete. There is little industry evidence that this has been happening beyond the first and second tier in the supply chain (e.g. Mason, 2006) or across projects conducted by the same company (Smyth and Olayinka, 2008). Company customers have tended to drive the choice of subcontractors and content. In one instance a key client took over the supply chain management involving an M&E contractor in order to ensure they got the desired quality. Therefore, lack of investment and pro-activity exists in VCUK supply chain management, although, there is evidence that pro-active supply chain management can substantially help win a project by giving the contractor an advantage (Staff Business Development Perception Survey, 2009).

The third issue is VCUK identification of preferred consultants with which to work. Key customers frequently have preferred consultants or the contractor has preferred consultants whom they bring to project opportunities. In both cases the contractor needs to identify and build relationships with the relevant consultants through relationship marketing in order to develop Win Strategies and deliver an integrated service of high quality. It is apparent that the Business Development team has been primarily liaising with consultants as a source of information rather than as part of either the customer decision making unit (DMU) or their own DMU (VINCI Construction UK, 2009b; cf. Smyth, 2000; Smyth and Fitch, 2009). There has been an informal set of preferred consultants, which has arisen in practice by repeated good working relationships. To consistently build consultant relationships, consideration is being given to developing a formal list of preferred consultants.

In parts of the business difficulty has sometimes been experienced linking with consultants because competitors can have stronger and prior relationships. Several Project and Contracts Directors perceived both Norwest Holst and Taylor Woodrow prior to and post-acquisition to be too slow aligning with consultants. A Project

Director in the Rail sub-sector stated that the company did not get shortlisted on an important contract because the preferred customer consultant expressed other contractor preferences. An Operations Director stated that the failure to be aligned with a preferred consultant recently resulted in the failure to secure a significant contract (Staff Business Development Perception Survey, 2009). This sheds light upon the tendency not to involve consultants earlier enough and see them as key influencers and referrers – two markets in the six markets model (Christopher *et al.*, 2006). In other words, the company is primarily project focused, rather than adopting both an earlier involvement in front-end strategy development for key customers with preferred consultants and having a programme management approach for bundles of projects for different key customers, which would be consistent with implementing relationship marketing.

### **Implementation of Business Development Strategy**

Relationship marketing is a key element of the business development strategy. Relationship marketing can conceptually be seen as part of the resourced based view of the firm (Wernerfelt, 1984) and hence as a core competency (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994). The VCUK “Civils” and “Air” sectors are seeking to build close relationships through relationship marketing. The majority of the “Air” sector implicitly demands this as an established norm that has emerged out of and transitioned from partnering. “Civils” has chosen a relationship marketing strategy with attendant relationship management requirements (Vinci Construction UK, 2009a). This is demanding in terms of allocating resources (cf. Wernerfelt, 1984; see Smyth and Pryke, 2008 for projects), developing aligned systems and procedures (cf. Söderlund and Tell, 2009) plus routines (cf. Nelson and Winter, 1982) and cultural norms (e.g. Auch and Smyth, 2009) to support and embed relationship marketing processes as emergent dynamic capabilities (cf. Teece *et al.*, 1997; Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000) and core competencies (cf. Hamel and Prahalad, 1994).

Former Norwest Holst had been largely transactional and former Taylor Woodrow Construction had been generally more proactive in relationship development (Vinci Construction UK, 2009b), increasingly transitioning from relational contracting to relationship marketing and management (Pryke and Smyth, 2006; Smyth and Fitch, 2009). Implementation is a process – developing behaviours of integrity that line up with the strategy, systems and processes as formal and informal routines to implement relationship marketing principles. In such transition to relationship marketing, particularly in the wake of a takeover with integration requirements, there is inconsistency amongst business development team members and on project teams due to the mix of people. These inconsistencies are evident to repeat business customers. Inconsistencies extend beyond customers to the other stakeholders, including consultants and supply chain members (Customer Perception Survey, 2009).

Whilst the analysis has drawn attention to a range of weaknesses, VCUK has started to implement relationship marketing and management principles in “Civils” and “Air”. The strategy has yielded results (see also Smyth and Fitch, 2009). A range of strengths are in evidence and VCUK is seen as good and a preferred contractor. Even the critical customers held the certain expectation they will work and want to work with the company again (Customer Perception Survey, 2009).

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The case study project businesses, VCUK “Civils” and “Air” Divisions, have used the IMP six markets model (Christopher *et al.*, 2006). This provides a reasonable a conceptual frame of reference under which to review the findings and analysis, especially given the balance of action research and traditional qualitative methods applied.

The overall conclusions and recommendations under each of the six markets reviewed are as follows:

1. *Customer markets* are usually considered the most critical. The principle finding is that relationship marketing is a key concept for this market, which is undergoing implementation. Yet there are areas of weakness and areas of strength that require enhancement:
  - a. The focus remains too project specific, thus the recommendation is to reinforce front-end strategy and develop VCUK programme management;
  - b. There is a lack of systems integration in three related areas:
    - i. from Business Development to Operations for project delivery
    - ii. in cross-functional and inter-Departmental working
    - iii. within project teams;
2. *Internal market* requirements are closely related to “1bii” above. In hierarchical terms the primary weaknesses concern the allocation of resources to and alignment of systems with routines, including relationship behaviours to deliver the business strategy and marketing plan.
3. *Supplier markets* were not always managed with as much rigour as key customers were expecting and is an area that is probably weak compared to the competition in some customer markets.
4. *Referral markets* primarily addressed consultants in this paper, although this is not the only category of referrer. To the extent there were preferred consultants, these had not been sufficiently identified and the company perceived these primarily in relation to project tactics rather than as strategic market players that form part of customer DMU whether preference for consultants arises from the customer or VCUK.
5. *Influencer markets* is covered in this paper through overlap with supplier and referral markets. These players network with a wider range of internal and external customer and project players and so indirectly influence the reputation and selection of VINCI generally and VCUK particularly in ways that were not traced in this study.
6. *Recruitment markets* constitute the final market in the model, which is not directly addressed. However, building market share and profitable project business in ways that are rewarding for both VCUK and for employees is an important way of recruiting better employees that match the needs of the company in its customer markets.

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