

Marketing, Programme and Project Management: relationship building and maintenance over project lifecycles

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Abstract

Business development is in transition with its increasing focus upon relationship building and maintenance. Theoretically this represents a shift from the transactional marketing mix towards relationship marketing (RM). Four international main contractors were examined to identify the extent of transition. Semi-structured interviews were conducted amongst Directors with Marketing responsibilities, Business Development Managers, Heads of Procurement, Project Directors and Project Managers in each contractor. The analysis was conducted inductively and evaluation was made against the literature. The analysis presented draws upon three findings common to the four contractors: i) an emergent key account management function (KAM), ii) the lack of a RM system, iii) the absence of an internal relationship and system between procurement and business development (BD). The evaluation of the findings against the literature shows KAM to be partially conceived in different ways by each contractor both at project and programme management levels. It shows that all contractors lack integrated cross-functional systems over the project lifecycle, and the absence of a RM-cum-management systems means that the gaps between functions during the lifecycle are not overcome and RM as a function is compromised. Whilst the procurement function at a programme level was found to be well-developed internally, from which marketing could benefit, the systematic and behavioural dislocation between BD and downstream functions constrains marketing and inhibit the development of value propositions that aligns with RM. The conclusion is that international contractors are in early stages of transition towards RM. The consequence is that configuring and delivering coherent value propositions and quality service experience remain highly constrained.

Keywords: Business Development, Procurement, Key Account Management, Relationship Marketing, Systems Integration

1. Introduction

The twenty-five year shift from the marketing mix (MM) to relationship marketing (RM) in many sectors has marked a move from viewing exchanges as discrete transactions towards building long-term business-to-business (B2B) relationships (cf. Grönroos, 2000). A time-lagged transition is underway in construction (Skitmore and Smyth, 2007). Business

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development (BD) in construction increasingly focuses upon relationship building (Smyth and Fitch, 2009). This is part of a broader shift in project management towards an emphasis upon strategic front-end and “soft” management issues to support technical and engineering expertise (e.g. Walker, 2002). This is conceptually underpinned by strategic input from the corporate centre via portfolio and programme management to project management (Morris, 2013). Marketing and BD are located in this ‘hierarchy’ at the project front-end.

Firms have restructured since the 2008 “credit crunch”. The emergent pattern in construction has been to delay and reduce costs. The research investigates whether the downturn has affected marketing and BD practices in construction: (i) To what extent have there been any significant changes in marketing and business development since the 2008 “credit crunch”? (ii) To what extent do business development processes interface with other functions? (iii) How is business development evolving as an effective function? The prime focus centres upon serving client interests. Four international main contractors are examined using semi-structured interviews across a range of management roles. The analysis was conducted inductively and evaluation was made against the literature. The analysis particularly draws out the role of key account management (KAM) over project lifecycles as part of programme management, and upon the paucity of RM systems for marketing in relation to other key functions. Conclusions and recommendations follow.

2. Setting the Scene – a short literature review

2.1 Marketing mix and relationship marketing

Levitt (1983) defined marketing as creating and keeping a customer. Kotler *et al* (1996) adopted a catholic approach, as do many professional bodies and institutes. Definitions also arise from paradigm choice. The MM is based on the 4Ps, of product, place, promotion and price (Borden, 1964; McCarthy, 1964) and its variants. RM (Berry, 1983) is based on B2B relationships for intangible services.

The MM is transactional. It dominated project markets (Cova *et al*, 2002) and still remains a strong force where price is an overriding criterion (Skitmore and Smyth, 2007). BD is largely reactive, soliciting project pipeline information and engaging with clients to prequalify for projects. BD is project specific once market segments are identified, often defined in administrative “silos” by procurement routes and building type (Pryke and Smyth, 2006). RM is client focused. Tailor-made services are configured for segments of one. The objectives are to add product and service value through in-depth understanding of clients to induce improved satisfaction levels and loyalty. Increased repeat business and premium profit are direct benefits to the contractor (e.g. Grönroos, 2000). Suppliers are proactive market managers and shapers of projects (Cova *et al*, 2002). RM requires support from systems (Storbacka *et al*, 1994), procedures and through behavioural guidance across networks and interrelated markets (Christopher *et al*, 2002). Thus, links between the corporate centre and the project, articulated through portfolio and programme management down to the project management level, are necessary for effective RM.

2.2 Marketing and project management

Marketing, which is conceptually strategic, (Preece et al, 2003) in practice is confined to communications and promotion in many construction companies (Preece et al, 1998). It is frequently separated from BD. BD traditionally has been isolated at the start of the front-end of projects (Pinto and Covin, 1992; Turner, 1995), terminating at prequalification or bid submission. BD under RM starts prior to a project being identifiable (Cova et al, 2002) and continues during execution beyond completion and final account towards seeking repeat business, that is, managing sleeping relationships (Cova and Salle, 2005). The relationship value or the client lifetime value to the contractor carries greater significance than project values. Project lifecycles therefore require management from project through programme to corporate management for developing competencies and capabilities that are articulated through the systems, procedures and behaviours (Smyth and Fitch, 2009).

BD is claimed to be transitioning from the MM approach towards RM (e.g. Preece et al 2003). The transition stage reached has yet to be established. The effects of the post-2008 “credit crunch” upon marketing need scoping. The extent BD interfaces with project management and other project lifecycle functions has yet to be empirically established. RM conceptually provides one system to be integrated with technical and functional systems for delivering solutions that satisfy clients.

2.3 Portfolio, programme and project management

Portfolio management administers bundles of assets (e.g. Morris 2013). Contractors' assets include technical, technological and social capital. Portfolio management develops fixed capital resources, competencies and capabilities, and their allocation to programmes and projects, including the development of RM systems and procedures (cf. Storbacka et al, 1994). Portfolio and programme levels overlap in order to assess and allocate resources for project management. Morris (2013) claims portfolio management is analytical, operating at a more strategic hierarchical level. Programme management is managerially directional on a day-to-day basis. Programmes have a pool of resources to share and trade-off, choosing between projects on an opportunity cost basis under MM and choosing between clients and their programmes under RM. Programmes focus on strategic coordination, projects focus on task outputs (Morris, 2013). Detailed resource allocation might include a programme of behavioural competencies to consistently serve clients and projects.

3. Methodology and Methods

An interpretative methodology was applied, respecting the information provided and emanating context (Denzin, 2002). Interpretation recognises subjectivity and embodied value judgments (Sayer, 1992), including how facts are selected and articulated in different ways (Krieger, 1979). It recognises respondents are subjective (Sayer, 1992). Respecting key actors' perceptions enriches understanding of attitudes present, the strengths and weaknesses of organizational artifacts, processes and behaviour, yielding meaning to generate patterns of events, draw out experiences, draw attention to outcomes of significance (Smyth and Morris, 2007). A case study method (Yin, 2003), specifically a case-based approach, was applied

inductively (Eisenhardt, 1989). The UK operations of four major international contractors were examined via semi-structured interviews conducted in the 1st and 2nd quarters of 2012. The number of interviews per contractor varied slightly; the aim being to cover a Board Member with responsibility for Marketing, Head of Marketing/Business Development, two Business Development Managers, Head of Procurement, and two Project Managers. All companies and personnel interviewed are kept anonymous as organizational rather than individual performance and business effectiveness provided the focus – see Table 1.

Table 1: Schedule of case study contractors and personnel

Contractor Alias	Ownership	Primary Activities	Divisions Interviewed	Interview Respondents
EUCo	EU country	Civil Engineering & Infrastructure and Specialist Subcontracting	Civil Engineering & Infrastructure	Chief Executive 2 Regional Business Development Managers (BDMs), 1 Senior BDM and 2 BDMs Head of Public Relations and Communications Contracts Manager Head of Business Processes & Sustainability
EuroCo	European	Building, Civil Engineering & Infrastructure and Specialist Subcontracting	Building, Civil Engineering & Infrastructure	Customer Solutions Director Head of BD Sector BDM BD Coordinator Head of Procurement Commercial Director Technical Service Director 2 Project Directors
AntCo	Antipodean	Construction and Development	Construction	Head of New Business Head of Procurement Bid Manager Head of Project Management
UKCo	UK	Building, Civil Engineering & Infrastructure, Consultancy	Infrastructure & Consultancy	BD Director 2 BDMs Head of Procurement 2 Project Managers

4. Findings from the Field and Inductive Analysis

4.1 Marketing and top down management

The case companies restructured post-“credit crunch”. Headcount loss was conducted by

hierarchical layering of BUs as opposed to considering markets and what capabilities were anticipated for future competitive advantage. Specialist BD capabilities were lost in AntCo and EuroCo. The claimed benefit is that others took up additional BD roles, resulting in becoming more outward facing. Yet important opportunities were lost, the understanding of clients needs was compromised, and ineffective gathering of pipeline information were consequences. For AntCo, the current aims are to “incubate” markets for entry, although capabilities to optimize this objective may be constrained.

Marketing was found to operate in two ways in the case companies. First, it is considered in terms of Communications and Promotion functions, which operated separately (cf. Preece et al, 1998). This is most evident in EUCo and EuroCo. Second, marketing focuses upon producing a marketing strategy. These are configured at board level as part of an integrated business plan or as separate documentation. Marketing options are constrained by the case companies being structured into BUs around procurement, contract and/or building types/construction types for ease of management. These become procurement and task driven market segments. For example, AntCo is structured around project execution, not around clients in a complementary fashion. Consequently, they are good at developing the “big picture”, but capturing and cascading the implications down the hierarchy and along the project lifecycle from the front-end through delivery is weak. There is an absence of programme management to facilitate coordination in all the cases with the consequence that BD is largely disconnected from marketing. BD is further subdivided by BU and coordination across BUs is sporadic: *They do work fantastically well together if they are joined together in the right way* (Interview with a Bid Manager, AntCo). Recognition of this problem at senior management and operational levels is described as a “silo mentality. These findings inhibit effective implementation and constrain the implantation of RM principles and systems.

BD is perceived as an information gathering to help the companies prequalify. A Senior Business Development Director in EUCo reported he briefs his teams: *Is there anything out there you think we should know?* The next step is to communicate information to the team producing prequalification documents; a division of labour between BDMs and prequalification. The extent to which BDMs were involved in the bid management process varied between the case companies. In all cases BDM is marginalised beyond prequalification, a constraint for service continuity where other managers are performing the marketing and BD functions in subsequent project stages. BDMs largely contribute to winning work as a confined transactional task. A comprehensive marketing management *system* to coordinate action from senior management to the operations level and across projects is absent. Coordination from the corporate centre or through explicit portfolio and programme management (Morris, 2013) is underdeveloped. Although EUCo is rolling out a customer RM initiative, it is said to be “fairly simplistic”, relying upon individuals taking responsibility. There is a rudimentary customer relationship database, a CRM software system, in place to support from below, yet no systematic coordination from above. CRM databases depend upon employee engagement. This is also left to individual responsibility in EUCo, AntCo and UKCo. CRM engagement levels are low.

All the companies stress the importance of relationship building in line with RM theory, which seems to arise from two sources. First relational contracting where several respondents in

AntCo and EUCo stress the benefits derived from internalising the lessons of partnering. Senior management in both companies said informal partnering is necessary to respond to clients, cost drivers and for effective project management. Second BD where relationship building is seen as key to increasing strike rates. There was recognition of its importance along project lifecycles amongst BDMs, in accord with previous claims that contractors are in transition from MM towards RM (Preece et al, 2003). Previous research has failed to clarify the stage reached. This research found that BDMs are a disparate group that understand and build relationships differently in each company. All BDMs cite the importance of relationships, using similar language: *It all about people and relationships* (Interview with a BDM, EUCo); *It boils down to some trusted relationships* (Interview with the Head of New Business, AntCo). The companies are not developing systems for managing relationships, i) for each relationship *type* within BD, ii) for *continuity* along project lifecycles, iii) for cross-functional *coordination* to ensure, a) the understanding of client organisational and project needs beyond stated requirements, and b) value propositions are passed along the project lifecycle for the development of win-strategies and for delivery in execution.

Although all BDMs cite the importance of building relationships, when asked what this entailed, phrases such as “understanding client drivers” are used. To all interviewed, “client drivers” meant building relationships to get information on the project pipelines and requirements, to some it meant understanding the motivations and considerations of the key decision-makers (clients and their professional representatives), to a few it meant understanding client business solutions or organisational purposes projects are addressing, and to one person alone it meant understanding the client’s own core business to get to the bottom of what they perceive as valuable. All levels are important in RM.

Leaving relationship building to individual responsibility has consequences: *You do end up living in an area of ambiguity a lot of the time* (Interview with the Head of New Business, AntCo). There is a lack of awareness and partial implementation of RM principles. There is a great deal of evidence of hiding behind business jargon, such as “right behaviours”. For example it was stated: *It’s all about behaviours and culture* (Interview with a Regional BDM, EUCo); *Behaviours are key to making this a success* (Interview with a Project Manager, EUCo). This lends a false impression of standardization, yet the meanings held for these terms are different and action is inconsistent. BD was repeatedly described in terms of “instinct”. There is no guidance about how to build and manage relationships i) through *relationship systems*, ii) through *procedures* to address types, continuity and coordination of relationships, and iii) *behavioural codes of conduct* to establish norms and specific guidance on behaviour. A code provides a baseline upon which the interpersonal skills of BDMs can flourish. There is sporadic evidence of trying to manage behaviours at a micro-level. It was stated: *There’s a lot of behavioural-cultural work that goes on* (Interview with the Head of New Business, AntCo), which was described as mobilising propositions by “socializing the idea”. This seems reliant upon informal routines and is reactive. This research found weak interface linkage between functions, confirming other research (Roberts et al, 2012).

4.2 KAM, programme and project management

Key account management (KAM) is being adopted in the case companies. KAM is an RM

concept for coordinating client interests across the internal actors responsible for customer contact and service delivery (e.g. McDonald et al, 1997). AntCo first introduced KAMs in the boom market pre-2008. They were appointed from Project Managers with responsibility for client programmes. KAMs are client facing. The ability to resolve client issues was hampered by a lack of an independent budget. The result was inward facing vying for resources and it was abandoned. It was recently reintroduced with the title of Key Account Holders and a banner of “Loving the Customer”. Key clients are provided a single contact point and a consistent approach, supported by “correct behaviours”. The AntCo approach is fragmented. Awareness creation, training and induction for the role have not been addressed. Internal systems and procedures are absent for coordinating KAM. Bidding teams are put together project-by-project. Although a more centralized resource and support are being developed, bid development does not relate to KAMs to generate value propositions of technical and service value. KAMs are not guided as to how to build relationships.

UKCo’s Managing Director of the Civil Engineering & Infrastructure division has sought to build relationships. Core clients have been allocated KAMs. KAM is described as “quite open and loose”, aligning with the lack of formal guidance for relationship building. Information feedback is sought to improve responses in reactive ways, complying with MM rather RM principles. EUCo takes a selective approach to KAM, only allocating “key customer contacts” to key clients. The aim is to improve coordination, however, formal procedures are lacking and informal processes are hampered because some KAMs are BDMs who occupy isolated positions over the project lifecycle. EuroCo adopts a lower profile, the Customer Solutions Director assigning Directors to counterpart key client contacts. Reports at Monthly Board Meetings include monitoring and scoring content to assess attractiveness and progress with the key clients. In practice reports are inconsistent in timing and content.

For project businesses KAM has a twin function: coordination across the interface with clients on and across projects. It covers programme management and project management, potentially providing relationship feedback to inform strategic resource allocation from the portfolio management level. KAM is partial in the companies and without linkage to programme management. There is an absence of resource consideration and how costs can be defrayed against other BD and bid costs by increasing repeat business, improving strike rates and enhancing reputation in the longer term. There also seems to be a lack of awareness throughout the hierarchy as to the conceptual contribution KAM can make to RM and project execution. A stronger integrating function could be developed, extending KAM across project lifecycles for each project and coordinating a programme from the client perspective. Whilst KAM is not an essential component of RM, it could make a significant contribution because the companies have commenced implementation.

4.3 Marketing and the project lifecycle

The companies are structured around projects rather than clients. It was found that project management during execution provides the primary focus, constraining the ability to link client interests identified through BD to the execution phase. Morris and Hough (1987) drew attention to the importance of the front-end to secure project success, and therefore, inductively analysing how this is manifested in marketing and BD is important. EuroCo states

the organisation is structured around project execution and not around clients in a complementary fashion. This is echoed in UKCo, evident in underdeveloped portfolio and programme management. The integration of different BUs is described as a work-in-progress. The company is highly decentralised and tends to focus efforts upon internal matters, inhibiting service integration: *There is an aura of 'we don't like our client and they are very difficult to work with'* (Interview with the Business Development Director, UKCo).

How BD is structured affects handovers between functions along project lifecycles. In EuroCo there has not historically been a strong lead from the centre. This is changing and solutions development is part of the central enabling pre-construction function. Yet, BD is not part of that function. Estimating, bid management and front-end planning are formally and informally dislocated from BD – an absence of formal understanding and informal dialogue. The situation is described as “confusing”. Board members have an “engagement process” with counterparts in key client organisations and “Customer Plans” to scope a 5-10 year pipeline and procurement routes. BDMs are not always linked to this action. Relationship or client lifetime value are not considered by EuroCo. EUCo BDMs do not produce the prequalification documentation. Whilst this may be ‘efficient’, it relies upon effective coordination. Formulating value propositions for win-strategies is poor. EUCo’s Chief Executive stated that value identification is now conducted during business development, yet BDMs do not see themselves as identifying value. Prequalification producers, bid managers and subsequent functionaries along the lifecycle do not see the need to work with BDMs to develop value propositions: *It is hard to shoehorn those things in post-prequalification* (Interview with a Regional BDM, EuCo). In UKCo, BDMs focus upon project pipelines and bid opportunities. UKCo BDMs do not consider relationship value or client lifetime value. Bid managers, procurement and project managers address projects from their respective areas of expertise. It is a task orientation rather than a service or client focus. Portfolio and programme management are underdeveloped, the net result being a lack of systematic integration along the project lifecycle. A similar pattern is found in AntCo. One respondent used the analogy that the company needs to move *from an Encarta to a Wikipedia approach to information and relationship management* (Interview with the Bid Manager, AntCo). The same respondent reports the bid team process is rather chaotic, “it’s a mess”, yet a general belief exists that it is more coordinated than it is. Self-interest amongst BDMs is present: *They want to be able to say, 'I won that job!'* (Interview with the Bid Manager, AntCo).

BDMs are involved marginally in subsequent stages. They do not shape projects towards developing specific win-strategies (cf. Cova et al, 2002). Other functions are insufficiently involved to shape the value proposition at prequalification stage. It is found that bid management and project management are not perceived to add value in later stages. Bid management takes place without reference to the KAM function, lacking detailed understanding of clients and projects at the front-end. The front-end and project management lack integration. Project Managers have no direct involvement or coordinating linkage with BDMs across the case companies. All companies have a cut-off between BD and project management. In every case the procurement and supplier systems are amongst the most robustly developed on their own terms, yet are not linked to other stages and client needs are not specifically linked to procurement. Project managers do not receive guidance on value propositions from marketing and procurement.

Risk is a major consideration for all the contractors, especially EUCo. At tender stage EUCo had a “Financial Bid File” and have recently introduced a “Technical Bid File” to brief project managers. Yet, they do not have a “Service Bid File” to standardize and add value to the service component of project management. The Director of Business Process stated he is *not quite sure what that would look like*, showing a lack of focus upon service consistency on projects and continuity for (implicit) programme management (Interview with a Director of Business Process, EUCo). In general EUCo think value is lost between prequalification and bid submission. This perception probably arises from regularly coming first or second at prequalification, yet a lower strike rate at bid stage. Inductive analysis suggests the lack of integrated systems, including relationship management systems, is a large contributory factor. Bid teams become locked into the minutiae of operations rather than responding to customer understanding and developing aligned value propositions. Bid managers can be Estimators, Planners or Project Managers. They do not necessarily understand the bigger picture. There is a *tendency for a bid to develop its own strategy* based upon the logic of expertise of engineering and procedures (Interview with a Contracts Manager, EUCo). EUCo knows that bids won are those where they understand the client in detail, yet action to improve this is lacking. Project management focuses upon “the sharp end”. A Contracts Director states there is still work to be done to convince Project Managers that they are “marketeters”. This and other case companies exhibit a project task focus (cf. Handy, 1997) rather than a complementary customer focus now prevalent across most sectors.

At AntCo bid teams are put together *ad hoc* and typically without consideration for carrying forward client understanding, nascent value propositions and requirements. Nor do bid teams engage with KAM functions. There are tensions between Operations Directors that hold the resources and other functions, especially BDMs wishing to have further input. Operations Directors in EuroCo appoint Estimators and Project Managers without reference to BD or bid management. Procurement talk to Bid Managers and Project Managers in response mode rather than proactively. Although EuroCo has not developed an explicit KAM function, there is awareness of the need for integration. A Project Director stated that marketing and BDM have improved and are recognized in project management: *We are just being more professional in our tenders, presentations and all we are putting forward*. Yet the approach tends to be somewhat transactional, pushing information and ideas into its marketplace rather than drawing the client to them. It is described as tactical with a “very short-term view”. The value of a client over extended timescales is selectively addressed, yet the primary focus remains project specific. Project Managers on both the Building, and the Civil Engineering and Infrastructure divisions appear to value relationship building more than their counterparts in other case companies, although how this is achieved is left to individual responsibility. At UKCo BD stops at prequalification and bid management is conducted via estimating and tendering under the commercial management. There is scant evidence of cross-functional working for this case company. Project briefing for UKCo starts with workshops during the bid stage and post-bid briefings before starting on site. There is no direct link for relationship continuity. The project management perspective is that early contractor involvement (ECI) helps align design with construction planning and project management methodologies. Project Managers also perceive ECI to be central to developing effective relationships for execution.

Summarizing, there is a lack of linkage and alignment of systems, added value development and relationship management across the stages of the project lifecycle. Further, there is a similar lack of cross-functional working for support functions such as procurement. This questions whether there is any effective feedback loop into marketing and BD upon project handover and completion. Feedback in the form of key performance indicators (KPIs) and other lessons learned can be seen as purely operational functions. Yet, lessons can be the raw material for improving value propositions from a marketing perspective. In addition, there is a need for relationship continuity to enhance opportunities for repeat business, especially from an RM perspective. Several of the case companies use marketing and BDM personnel to solicit KPI data. Customer feedback for UKCo, especially from a major infrastructure client, shows the company as offering generic services, lacking the specificity to give “confidence” at prequalification and bid stages. This is a management concern at multiple levels; continuous improvement and investing in capabilities is reported as being poorly understood by top management. The decentralized structure and absence of cross-functional working also results in proposed improvements meeting resistance down the hierarchy. AntCo’s KPI processes tend to focus upon contract and client compliance rather than embedding feedback and applying lessons learned for developing and delivering value propositions. EuroCo do not apply KPIs as learning opportunities to develop enhanced technical and particularly service value propositions.

Client and consultant relationships that EuroCo claim to nurture during projects tend to “disappear” during defects liability – closing the loop with BDMs is largely absent. A Project Manager recognized this as “a huge inefficiency in the industry”. This is because junior staff tend to close out projects, lacking awareness of the benefits and the link with repeat business. It is not picked up in BDM, probably as it detracts from meeting targets on prequalifying for new opportunities.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

International contractors were found to be in early stages of transition towards RM. Some partial understanding and implementation of the main concepts and principles were found. Relationship building and KAM were most prevalent, but were not linked into investment and capability development from the corporate centre. Relationship management systems to support RM were absent. Other functional systems and procedures did not enable formal or informal integration. Explicit and implicit portfolio and programme management systems were not in place. This was apparent in the partial implementation of KAM as a programme function. Configuring and delivering value propositions remain highly constrained.

Main contractors have become less responsible site production. There were some in-house capabilities, but these were exceptions. In-house providers were treated as ‘subcontractors’. Main contractors have become systems integrators. Integrating a range of professional, supplier and subcontractor activities requires integration between contracts and work packages to deliver value whilst spreading risks. It requires internal integrations, which was found to be absent. They may be selling systems integration (Davies et al, 2007), but delivery falls short of solutions that go beyond requirements compliance. A task focus rather than enhanced and complimentary service orientation and value was lost or compromised.

There have been changes in marketing and BD since the 2008 “credit crunch”, yet reversion to a transactional MM under cost driver pressures in the downturn has not occurred. Cost drivers have encouraged the case companies to internalize relational contracting benefits, even where formal partnering has ceased. This trend informs a gradual transition to RM practices. Those firms that effectively embed processes are likely to be the most successful.

BD processes remain disconnected to other functions hierarchically, cross-functionally and over project lifecycles. Functions operated under distinct and separate systems that constrain delivering effective value propositions. Marketing and BD were organisationally isolated, not only due to a lack of systems integration but also poor understanding of marketing and BD amongst senior management, other management and amongst many BDMs. Appropriate systems for RM were lacking. In the absence of “hard” systems to integrate stages on the project lifecycle and ensure cross-functional working, the “soft” systems of RM become more significant to counterbalance hard system deficiencies (cf. Storbacka et al, 1994). This was another aspect of the lack of awareness amongst senior management levels. The task focus resulted in the service value component being overlooked. Adding service value continues to be something of an anathema, which is rather telling for a sector classified as a service industry. This research confirms a number of claims and suppositions about the way marketing and BD are organized (e.g. Preece et al, 2003). In-depth comparative case studies have not been developed previously. This study also maps for the first time the extent of transition from MM to RM approach in construction.

The primary recommendations for research are to i) extend study into construction in several nations and contractors of different sizes, including SMEs; ii) extend study into other project sectors. The primary recommendations for contractors are to: a) improve awareness of marketing and BD functions; b) introduce systems, procedures and behavioural processes to coordinate marketing along the project lifecycle and from the senior management level through portfolio and programme management to project level (front-end and execution).

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