

# A pathway through customer values towards loyal customer relationships in IT outsourcing

## The project

Technological innovations resulted in a growing role of information technology (IT) within organizations. The alignment of IT with their business strategies and goals became important to sustain competitive advantage.

This changed the role of IT -outsourcers, from secondary activities into core, strategic business functions. IT outsourcers became more involved in the business of their customers and the importance of the relationship between the outsourcer and the customers grew.

The goal of this master thesis is to help Schuberg Philis (SBP), an IT outsourcer to transition from IT-driven relationships towards business outcome-driven partnerships by establishing loyal customer relationships.

Literature research into the evolution of IT, IT outsourcing, and B2B relationship values created the foundation for this project.

Three interview rounds were conducted to identify the steps towards B2B relationships between SBP and their customers. A value framework based on the relationship values involved in this process guided the design of a pathway through customer values.

Loyalty		
Relationship atmosphere		
Cooperation		
Quality		
Satisfaction	Commitment	Trust
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivering quality service</li><li>• Distance/power imbalance</li><li>• Efficient service</li><li>• Get an important job done</li><li>• Knowledge determines performance</li><li>• Longevity</li><li>• Meet deadlines</li><li>• Meeting objects of all parties</li><li>• Mutual benefit</li><li>• Mutual goals</li><li>• Objectives are met</li><li>• Skills contact person</li><li>• Stay within budget</li><li>• Understand and adapt to customer needs and goals</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication</li><li>• Creativity</li><li>• Customer orientation</li><li>• Effort</li><li>• Extensive person to person contact</li><li>• Financial issues</li><li>• Flexibility</li><li>• Frequency of contact</li><li>• Fulfilling promises</li><li>• Interaction</li><li>• Involvement</li><li>• Joint working</li><li>• Knowledge exchange</li><li>• Long-term salesperson-customer relationship</li><li>• Motivation</li><li>• Mutual exchange and fulfilling promises</li><li>• Offerings that align with customers goals</li><li>• Openness</li><li>• Stability</li><li>• Uncover expressed and unexpressed needs and align with customers goals</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Actors' perception of each other</li><li>• Behavior</li><li>• Comparison level of alternatives</li><li>• Competence</li><li>• Cultural fit in relationships</li><li>• Emotional connectivity/bond</li><li>• Emotions</li><li>• Experience</li><li>• Expertise</li><li>• Interpersonal dynamics</li><li>• Interpersonal trust</li><li>• Knowledge exchange</li><li>• Level of self-efficiency of salesperson</li><li>• Openness</li><li>• Personal chemistry</li><li>• Personal interactions</li><li>• Risk sharing</li><li>• Safety</li><li>• Salesperson characteristics</li><li>• Transparency</li></ul>



## Key findings:

- A context-driven B2B value framework, showing the key values influencing loyal B2B relationships between SBP and their customers.
- An overview of events and interactions affecting the establishment of loyal B2B relationships.
- The correlation between B2B values, events, and interactions
- A shared future vision enables SBP to transition from loyal B2B relationships to business outcome-driven partnerships.



## The design

The playbook guides its users through the establishment of business outcome-driven partnerships. the playbook provides insights and knowledge on the values influencing the establishment of loyal relationships and guides the creation of a shared future vision. This shared future vision functions as the bridge between a loyal customer relationship and a business outcome-driven partnership.

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