

**A STUDY OF HOW TO DEVELOP CLIENT RELATIONSHIP
IN REAL ESTATE AGENT INDUSTRY**



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entitled
**A STUDY OF HOW TO DEVELOP CLIENT RELATIONSHIP
IN REAL ESTATE AGENT INDUSTRY**

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STUDY OF HOW TO DEVELOP CLIENT RELATIONSHIP IN REAL ESTATE AGENT INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper are to let real estate agents explore the approaches to develop relationship with clients and retain those clients be more engage with a particular agency and also to share the useful knowledge about building client relationship in real estate agents to who are interested in this research.

In order to find a marketing practices to develop client relationship in real estate agents, the qualitative research method was used to collect the data from sample group. An interview was conducted with fifteen interviewees, who have been working in a leading real estate agency in different departments, to compare and contrast the client's relationship marketing practices in different real estate services and prove that research result can be applied in all levels and positions.

The findings of this study demonstrate that real estate agent is no specific pattern to develop relationship with clients. Different type of clients and different type of services are required different practices to dealing with the clients. The research result shown ten marketing practices are usually applied by agents in order to develop clients' relationship in each stages since a pre-relationship stage until a stable stage

KEY WORDS: Real Estate / Agent / Client / Client Relationship / Marketing Practices

52 pages

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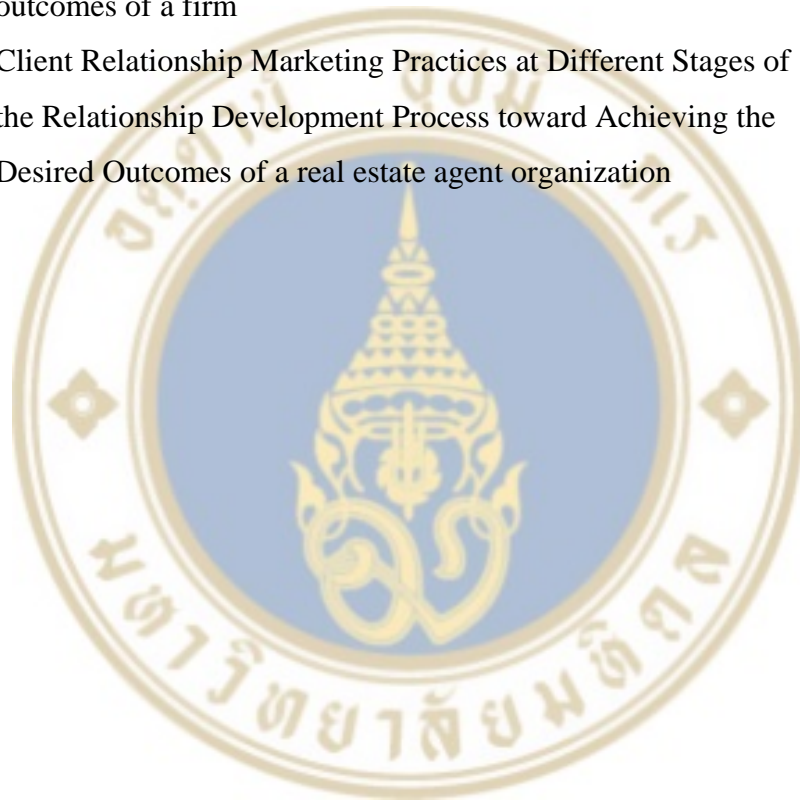
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Problem Statement

Services constitute an activity or series of activities of more or less intangible nature that normally, but not necessarily, take place in interactions between the clients and the service providers, which are provided as solutions to clients' problems (Gronroos, 1990). Johnson et al. (1988) categorized real estate agency as a service sector industry. Real Estate Agency is a service industry that provides full professional services in a real estate field. The organization positions themselves as a broker to break barriers between the clients and the landlord. A full-service that the agency offer the clients from the beginning till the end can increase more clients' satisfaction due to most clients prefer a one-stop service. This is support the words of Parasuraman, et al. (1985), services have become more and more important factor for organizations.

Nowadays, many agents lack of concern about the important of clients' retention which can lead to loss of market share. In order to create a sustainable business and a long-run profitability, building and maintain the relationship with clients is an important marketing strategy. Strong client relationships are particularly important in services because of their inherently interpersonal focus and the relative lack of objective measures for evaluating service quality (Czepiel, 1990). Relationship marketing practice is vital, especially for the professional service industry, because of its distinct nature (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014). Clients usually have difficulties evaluating professional services confidently not only prior to making a purchase commitment but also following purchase and consumption (Sharma & Patterson, 1999) because they often lack the technical knowledge, skill, expertise, and experience to do so (Bloom, 1984; Darby & Karni, 1973; Shemwell, Yavas, & Bilgin, 1998).

The paper will focus mainly on how real estate agents develop and maintain the relationship with their clients since at the initial stage until engage to be a long term relationship. This paper will be beneficial for real estate agents to explore the methods

or approaches to develop client relationship and retain the clients to be more engage with a particular agency.

1.2 Research Question

This study investigates how real estate agents develop the relationship with clients. How real estate agents build and maintain client relationship since a pre-relationship stage until turning to be partners in a stable stage.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To let real estate agents explore the approaches to develop relationship with clients and retain those clients be more engage with a particular agency.
2. To share the useful knowledge about building client relationship in real estate agents to who are interested in this research.

1.4 Research Scope

This study conducts a qualitative research approach by using the case study approach and interviews to facilitate an in-depth study of how to develop client relationship in real estate agent industry. The study conducts an interview within a leading real estate agent organization in the world which is also being the top rank real estate agency in Thailand in order to examine the methods or approaches that agents use to build and maintain relationship with their clients. Fifteen interviewees are the sample size of this study. In order to make the study be more valid, the research select the interviewees who are in a management level and have an experience over 3 years in this field.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Crew (1999) researched proved that buyers continue to choose a real estate organization because the organization had the services, people or product (home) that they wanted. Patterson and Marks (1992) determined the factor of service quality that can be applied to promote clients' satisfaction with services are consists of reliable services, responsiveness to the needs of the client, good communication between counsellors and clients, competent staff, and client involvement throughout the process. Timmons (2001) stated that client education is also important to encourage client involvement. The study of Araloyin and Olatoye, (2011) identified that real estate clients value and want service quality provided in the areas of courtesy, frequent communications, provided service as promised, exact time services would be performed, and personal attention. The real estate agents should improve their mode of service quality in these areas so as to have more clients' satisfaction.

Refer to Patterson and Marks (1992) and Araloyin and Olatoye, 2011, both researches showed that communication with clients is a factor that can be promoted clients' satisfaction. Communication plays a vital role in ensuring success in real estate agency (Susan, 2002). Frequent communicating with clients enables agent to deliver message to the clients so that those clients will react to it (Araloyin and Olatoye, 2011). This communication adds to the organization's value in the mind of the client and builds on their cognitive and emotional ties to the organization. In order to creating a good communication between agents and clients, the methods or approaches that agents use to develop clients relationship is very important. This had led to many professional services emphasizing their business not only on service delivery but also on the quality of their client relationship (Dibb & Meadows, 2001).

Relationship marketing is defined by Berry (1995, p. 236) as attracting, maintaining and – in multi – service organizations – enhancing client relationships. Borna (2000) mentioned that the relationship marketing was simply focus on client acquisition,

until organizations learned that its costs, on average, five to ten times more to find a new client as it does to sell to an existing one. Joseph Sparacino (2005) state that “Everyone had heard the statistic: Selling a product or service to a new client costs five times more than selling an additional product or service to an existing client. Moreover, Schwartz (1963) found that the cost of dealing with continuous contact is much less than that of casual contact; selling only to existing clients can reduce cost by 10-20 percent. Lastly, Ness et al. (2001) identified a thorough understanding of the value of existing client relationships is vital when considering that most companies reap 80 percent of their profit from 20 percent of their clients. All clients are important, but some are considerably more valuable than others (Ness et al., 2001). The focus of marketing has progressed from a simplistic idea of giving the clients what they want to building and maintaining mutually satisfying long-term relationships with clients and developing long-term strategies for client retention (Christopher et al., 2002; Reinartz & Kumar, 2003; Xu, Goedegebuure, & Van der Heijden, 2006). Liang et al. (2009) stated that enduring relationships with clients can provide organizations with a unique and sustainable competitive advantage.

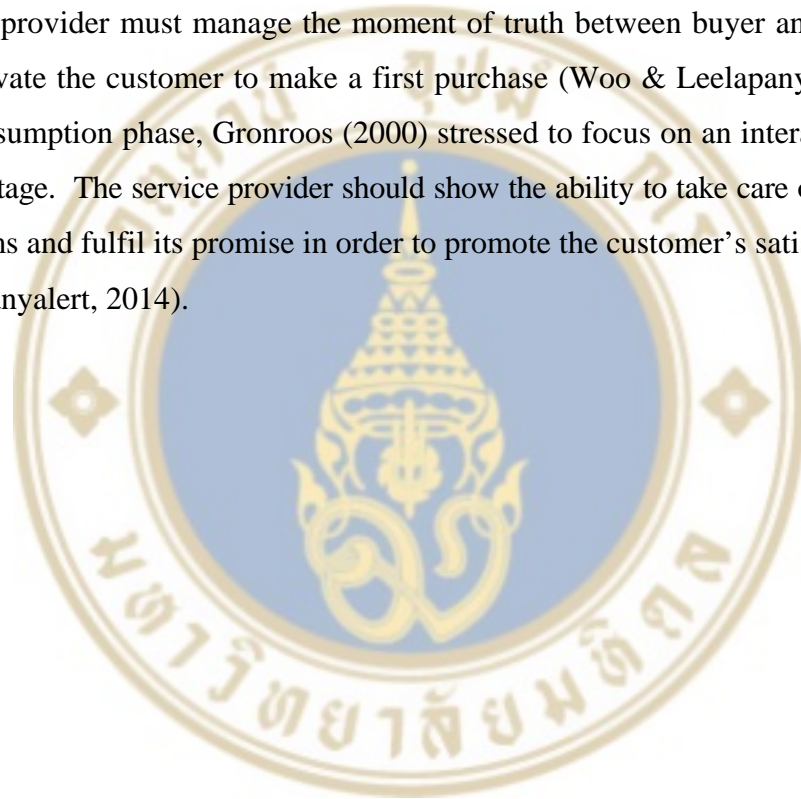
Nowadays, the expectations of performance have increased, making the development of a profitable relationship even more difficult (Wilson, 1995). To develop clients' relationship, there are many scholars have contributed and proposed in different conceptual models.

Table 2.1 Theoretical Underpinnings of the Conceptual Framework

Characteristic	Models of the Relationship Development Process			The Customer Relationship Life Cycle Gronroos (2000)
	Dwyer et al. (1987)	Wilson (1995)	Ford et al. (1998)	
Stages/Phases	Awareness Exploration Expansion Commitment Dissolution	Search and selection Defining purpose Boundary definition Creating relationship value Hybrid stability	Pre-relationship stage Exploratory stage Developing stage Stable Stage	Initial phase Purchasing phase Consumption/usage phase
Applying To	Buyer-seller relationship	Buyer-seller relationship	Buyer-seller relationship	Buyer-seller relationship
Focal Area	Industrial and consumer relationships	Collaborative relationships (mergers, acquisitions, and joint ventures)	Business relationships	Service industry
The Concept	This model offers sufficient generality to cover both interfirm and consumer relationships but lacks empirical detail to operationalize the key variables outlined.	Relationship variables are incorporated into this model, but characteristics of other forms of buyer-seller relationships that are not bounded by legal structures are not fully addressed, as the focus of this model is geared toward mergers, acquisitions, and joint ventures.	This model demonstrates the process and the benefits of moving a buyer-seller relationship from one stage to another.	This model highlights the importance of interactive marketing efforts at each phase of building and enhancing a buyer-seller relationship. It provides a useful guideline for incorporating the traditional marketing mix approach into interactive marketing efforts.

According to the table 2.1 Theoretical Underpinnings of the Conceptual Framework, Dwyer et al. (1987), Wilson (1995) and Ford et al. (1998) identified similar models of buyer and seller relationship development process. Dwyer et al. (1987) stated that there are five stages of buyer and seller relationship, which consists of awareness, exploration, expansion, commitment, and dissolution. This model is mainly focus on industrial and consumer relationships area. Wilson (1995) mentioned that the relationship development process between buyer and seller start with search and selection stage then, continue to defining purpose stage, boundary definition stage, creating relationship value stage, and end at the hybrid stability stage. The model is suitable for a collaborative relationship such as mergers, acquisitions, and joint venture relationships. Ford et al. (1998) also identified that the way to develop the buyer and seller relationship begin at pre-relationship stage, exploratory stage, developing stage, and finish with stable stage. Ford et al.'s (1998) model explicitly recognizes that managing business relationships is not merely about moving relationships toward the ideal state. It involves a considerable effort from both parties in coping with different circumstances that occur at different times, including managing varying aims and expectations (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014).

On the other hand, Gronroo's (2000) investigated the relationship development process by focusing on the buyer and seller relationship in services industry. The model names "Customer Relationship Life Cycle", which consists of three phases are initial phase, purchasing phase, and consumption or usage phase. In the initial phase, the traditional marketing mix approach is important to generate the interest of buyers toward the organization and its services (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014). The service provider should turn the general interest of a prospect into sales by giving promises or undertaking at purchasing phase (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014). This is a phase that service provider must manage the moment of truth between buyer and seller in order to motivate the customer to make a first purchase (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014). In the consumption phase, Gronroos (2000) stressed to focus on an interactive marketing at this stage. The service provider should show the ability to take care of the customer's problems and fulfil its promise in order to promote the customer's satisfaction (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014).



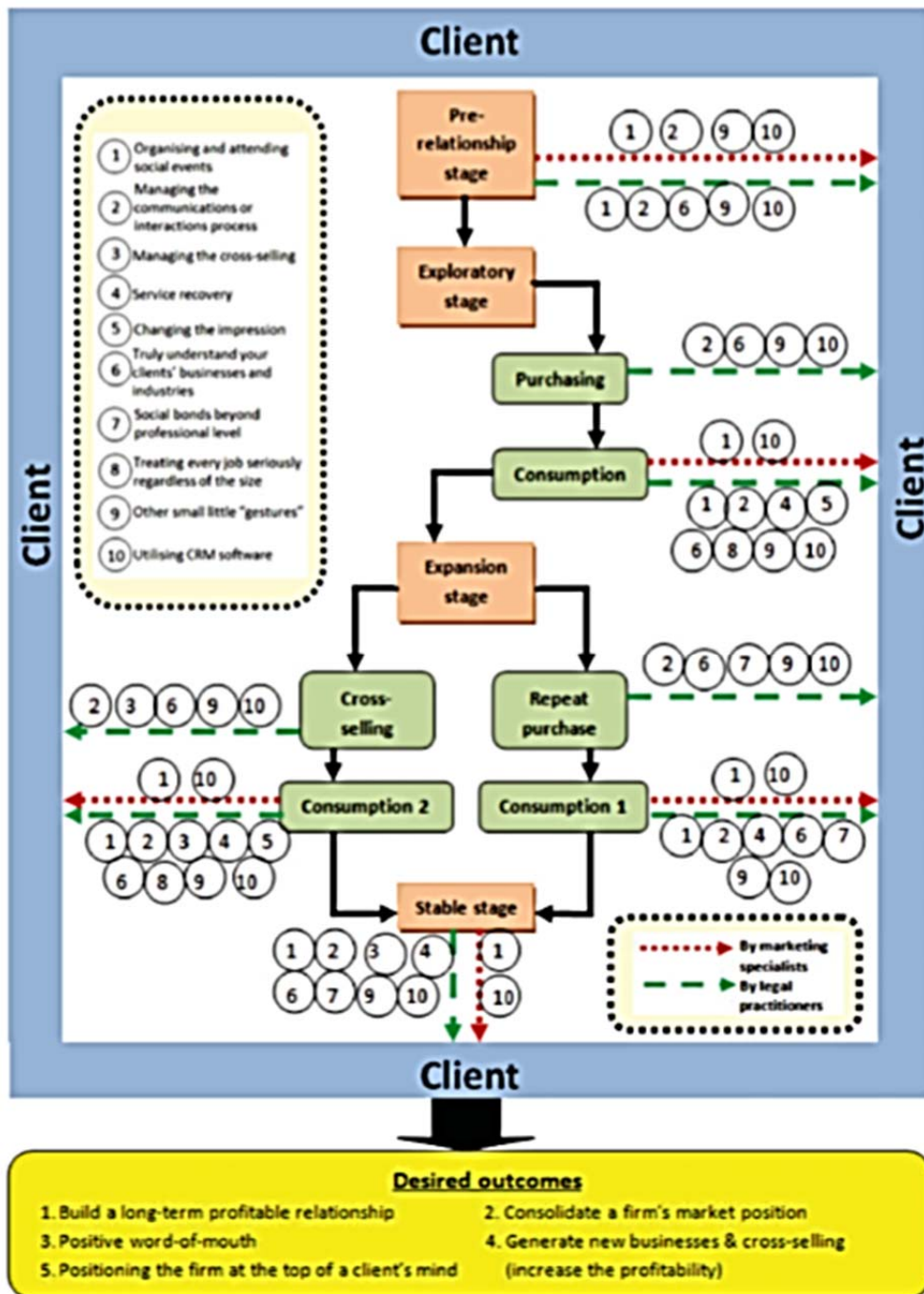


Figure 2.1 Client relationship marketing practices at different stages of the relationship development process toward achieving the desired outcomes of a firm

Source: Dwyer et al. (1987), Ford et al. (1998), and Gronroos (2000). CRM = client relationship management.

Referring to the journal of Client Relationship Marketing Practices: An Exploratory Study of the Legal Industry, Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014) identified that the relationship marketing practices used by marketing specialists and legal practitioners at different stages in the relationship development process are different. Marketing specialists are playing an important role at the pre-relationship stage by organizing social events in order to creating a platform for legal practitioners and potential clients and utilizing CRM software to organize big social events at each consumption stage (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014). Legal practitioners are playing an important role at purchasing and consumption stages by developing sustainable relationships with clients due to the fact that legal practitioners will have a broader interface with clients than marketing specialists (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014).

Besides the conceptual framework from Dwyer et al. (1987), Ford et al. (1998), and Gronroo's (2000), Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014) explore that relationship marketing practices at purchasing and consumption phases are quite different. Repeat purchase and cross selling phases should be separated from the expansion stage (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014). The ten client relationship marketing practices outlined are a prerequisite for the formation of long-term profitable client relationships (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014). The desired outcomes are to demonstrate positioning the firm at the top of a clients' mind, generating new businesses and cross-selling, increasing position word of mouth, and consolidating the firm's market position (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014). Even though social events create opportunities for interactions, managing the communications or interactions process, managing cross-selling, service recovery, changing the impression, truly understanding clients' businesses and industries, social bonds beyond the professional level, other small little gestures, utilizing CRM software, and treating every job seriously regardless of the size are also an important practice to contribute a strong client relationship (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014).

After considering on many relationship development process models, the author use the model from Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014) to be a conceptual framework of this study.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for this study was based on qualitative research. The interviews and case study are applied to identify the methods or approaches that real estate agents use to develop the relationship with clients since in pre-relationship stage until stable stage (Dwyer et al., 1987; Wilson, 1995; Ford et al., 1998; Gronroos, 2000; Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014) and also explore the approaches that real estate agents use to retain a long term relationship with clients. Qualitative research is a proper methodology to discover insight experience and opinion of interviewees.

In-depth interview technique is adopted to be a data collection approach due to the interview technique enables interviewer to explore the knowledge, feelings, opinions, and insight experience of interviewees. The interviewer would get the deeper information from interview technique than collecting data via using quantitative research techniques. This technique allow the interviewer interact with the interviewees by asking more specific questions and exploring unexpected topics that arise during the data collection (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014). The research designs the interview question as an open-ended question in order to let interviewees feel free to share or express their opinions without framing any answers. The interviewees can answer the questions in more details with creativity and freedom of speech. The interviewer would get more ideas from a question. The interview question is developed based on a necessity of finding out about how the real estate agents build and maintain relationship with clients.

The real estate agent industry was chosen as a study subject due to real estate agent is a job that always interact with clients. Relationship marketing is a very important strategy that real estate agents must use to serve the best service to their clients in order to be the top of a client's mind, increasing positive word of mouth, consolidating the organization's market position (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014), and creating a long run profitability. This study focused on a leading real estate agent

organization in the world and also being the top rank real estate agency in Thailand that provides full professional services in a real estate field with the intention that findings would be able to conduct the study relating to client relationship marketing practice in the real estate agent industry. The organization S was selected as an appropriate organization to study. The organization name is not allowed to public for reasons of confidential. The research aim to present an educative and constructive. However, this study still has some limitation due to the research was not designed to represent the entire real estate agent industry. The finding come from a single real estate agency.

In-depth data was collected by using three sources, which are semi structured interviews, observation, and secondary data. Not only were the reactions of the interviewees in answering the interview questions but also the way to communicate with clients in an organization observed. The author also record and take note during interviews. These observations were later examined with the secondary data collected in order to triangulate the data (Ghuri & Gronhaug, 2010; Lee & Lings, 2009b). The triangulation approach was adopted to increase the validity (Ghuri & Gronhaug, 2010; Lee & Lings, 2009b).

The sample size of this research are fifteen interviewees who have been working at organization S. The research is conducted face-to-face interviews in the length of approximately 40 minutes per an interviewee. In order to make the study be more valid, the research conducted with two vice presidents, a regional director, four local directors, three associated directors, three senior managers, a manager, and an assistant manager. All of interviewees had a vast experience in building and maintaining clients' relationship. Multiple interviewees from different departments and positions were selected to conduct the research not only to compare and contrast the client's relationship marketing practices in different real estate services, but also to prove that research result can be applied in all levels and positions.

From this study, the author designed the interview question into two sets. Due to there is a department names "Marketing Communication" that does not directly dealing with the clients, their works are responsible for taking care a corporate image in Thailand and also doing some marketing tools to support other departments in order to create a brand awareness and retain the relationship with clients. Thus, the research

result from this department would be different from others and also showing an interesting due to the answers would come from a different point of view.



CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The research was collected and proceeded in order to identify marketing practices that real estate agents use to develop relationship with clients at different stages.

Due to there are several services in real estate agent industry, the author conducted interview by select fifteen interviewees who are in management levels from ten different departments in order to prove that the finding from this study can be applied in all real estate agent service sections. All selected ten departments provided different types of service and serve different types of client. Five selected departments are in brokerage sections, three selected departments are in consultancy sections, one selected department is in operation and facilities services section, and the last selected department is a marketing department of organization S that responsible for taking care corporate image and public relation of organization.

In order to summarize the findings from the interview, the author provide an overview of the main results and avoid excessive quote. Refer to the results of interview, ten client relationship marketing practices were identified. Only six marketing practices are outlined in a previous study of Client Relationship Marketing Practices: An Exploratory Study of the Legal Industry by Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014) which are consists of organizing and attending social events, managing the communications or interactions process, managing the cross-selling, truly understanding client's businesses and industries, other small little gestures, and utilizing client relationship management (CRM) software. This study identify another four new marketing practices are cold calling, seamless services, professional advices, and being as a friend.

4.1 Organizing and Attending Social Events

Base on the findings from the data collected, social events were an important marketing practice to develop clients relationship in real estate agent in every stage since pre-relationship stage until stable stage. Social Events in this study are comprise of one-to-one meeting, group-type casual meetings, formal meeting, small seminars, and orientation. Twelve interviewees said that one-to-one meeting is the most effective marketing practice to develop client relationship. Due to it has an eye contact, agent can well understand clients' need from their gestures. The agent can adjust the way to build and maintain relationship with those clients in a proper way. This finding shows a significant with the previous study of Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014) which has identified that "One-to-one meetings are often organized by partners or associate solicitors and usually involve treating clients to a lunch or taking them out to dinner. The underlying intention is about being visible, being in touch with the client's thinking, staying in touch with clients, and fostering the relationship".

Most interviewees in a brokerage section use this practice to build relationship with clients in a pre-relationship stage by making an appointment with clients in order to present the scope of services. The meeting can be either a formal meeting or a personal meeting depend on the client's types and styles. Some services in brokerage section usually set small seminars or orientations to educate services and updated market situation in quarterly to their clients. The research results identify that the practice in an operation and facilities services section usually be a formal meeting. Due to there is a few clients know this kind of service, the meeting is usually set to educate the client's knowledge and also present the capabilities statement to clients. The proper practice in a consultancy section is indefinite. It depends on services' types and clients' styles. The service which has a high ethics such as advisory usually not to be closed with clients and prefer a practice as formal meeting.

In consumption stage, the findings show that agents usually use one-to-one meeting and formal meeting as marketing practices to update the work progress in periodically. Most services in brokerage section, agents usually attend social events to retain the relationship with existing clients and also searching for an opportunity to build relationship with new clients in expansion stage and stable stage. This can be supported by Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014) which stated that "the drinks event is

organized to build contacts and generate clients' interest in the service offerings. Team interviewees state that attending social events and setting small seminars are the marketing members from both parties can get to know each other better." Ten out of fifteen practices to maintaining relationship with clients in expansion stage and stable stage. This finding is consistent with Dwyer et al. (1987), Ford et al. (1998), and Gronroos (2000), and Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014).

4.2 Managing the Communications or Interactions Process

Besides organizing and attending social events, the research results identified that managing the communications or interactions process were also an important practice to build and maintain relationship with clients. Six out of fifteen interviewees state that strategic follow up is the effective marketing practice to develop relationship with clients. Strategic follow up practice will increase client's impression and help clients to stick with a particular agent. Clients will always remember agent and positioning the organization at the top of a client's mind. This can be supported by Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014). Woo & Leelapanyalert stressed that the good interactions can build trust and increase clients' satisfaction toward the organization and its service offerings, which in turn will prolong the relationship.

To managing the communication or interaction process, there are three main marketing practices that agents usually do develop relationship with clients which are sharing and updating useful information with free of charge, doing a strategic follow up, and doing public relation to build client's trust and create a good corporate image. The research results identified most services in brokerage section doing a strategic follow up by making a phone call and sending email or company brochure to clients at pre-relationship stage in order to introduce the services before doing a technical presentation. After they know each other, agents will keep follow up and maintain relationship with clients by making a phone call, sending an email to update the market situation in quarterly, and also sharing some useful information with free of charge. This practice will help agents know the client's future plan and can offer the right services to match client's needs. This finding shows the similar result with a previous paper of Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014) which stated that constant telephone calls is

applied to ensure that client's needs are met or to identify any changes in their interests and circumstances are necessary in enhancing the relationship. However, the interview results from consultancy section and operation and facilities services section show that agents in these sections often share some useful information and updated market situation in order to keep in touch with clients more than making a phone call.

According to the research results, even each real estate agent service section is focusing in different marketing activities, all of them are the marketing practice of managing the communications or interactions process in order to develop relationship with clients. This finding is consistent with Dwyer et al. (1987), Ford et al. (1998), and Gronroos (2000), and Woo & Leelapanyaalert (2014).

4.3 Managing the Cross-Selling

Cross-selling has been defined as “offering current clients’ additional products or services that can provide added value for them” (Jones et al., 2005). Refer to the research results, fifteen interviewees in all real estate sections state that they usually manage the cross-selling within an organization. The objective of cross-selling are to fulfill client's needs and to maintain relationship with clients. Some interviewees state that agents should be aware to do a cross-selling as a marketing practice to develop client's relationship by ensure that the new relationship will not jeopardize the existing one.

Managing cross-selling properly will position the organization at the top of client's mind, create positive word of mouth, generate the organization's profitability, and business sustainability. This view is supported by Levine (1996). Levine stated that when executed a cross-selling effectively, cross-selling can result in favorable outcomes such as increased sales, greater levels of client satisfaction, loyalty, and a higher overall level of spending per client. An associate director in brokerage section said that he usually manage a cross-selling with an advisory department due to the services from both departments are connected. Cross-selling with advisory department would help he provide smoother services to clients because dealing within an organization is easier to follow up and update the progress with an outsider.

The findings show that agents will do a cross-selling in an expansion stage. In order to manage a cross-selling effectively, fourteen interviewees from brokerage, consultancy, and operation and facilities service sections state that agent from existing department must share client's information and give hints to dealing with the client such as client's style, client's preferable practices, and practices that agent should be avoided to an agent from another department in order to support another department to easily manage a new relationship with client.

Due to the previous paper of Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014) also identified that managing the cross-selling is a client relationship marketing practice in the legal industry, this can be implied that managing the cross-selling is a marketing practice to develop clients relationship in a professional service industry.

4.4 Truly Understanding Client's Businesses and Industries

Base on the interview of fifteen interviewees from ten departments in organization S, the finding shows that each department in organization S providing a different kind of services and having a different type of target clients. Some departments have same type of clients, they dealing with clients in different approaches depends on a type of service that agents provided. A director from consultancy section state that agents should truly understand clients' business in order to fulfill the client's needs and provide a service to meet client's expectation. This practice will increase client's satisfaction and retain client's relationship in long-run. A manager from brokerage section also supported that agents should know some personal information of clients, such as clients' lifestyle, the background of clients' country, clients' hobbies and interest, to serve the right property's option to clients consider. The research results show that this marketing practice usually apply in a pre-relationship stage. When agents well understand the client's business and clients' style, agents will adapt their services and communication styles to match with those clients. To compare this study with the previous paper from Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014), it shows a similar result that truly understanding client's businesses and industries is a marketing practice to building and maintain relationships with clients not only in the legal industry but also in real estate agent industry.

4.5 Other Small Little Gestures

Remembering clients' important events or celebrations, sending a congratulations card to congratulate clients for an office opening, a job promotion, sending an electronic direct mail (EDM), and keep in touch via phone or email are counted as marketing practices that agents use to build and maintain relationship with clients. Refer to the research results, other small little gestures is a relationship marketing practice that is usually presented in expansion stage and stable stage. Thirteen out of fifteen interviewees state that they always make a phone call or sending an email to follow up the progress with clients in expansion stage and also doing this marketing practice to keep in touch with the clients in the stable stage.

All interviewees from brokerage section state that not only retaining clients' relationship by phone calls and emails, giving some gifts to clients in special occasions also be a marketing practice that they usually do in order to maintain clients' relationship. Some interviewees express that giving a gift can create a good impression with client. The reason is not because of gift's value but because this practice can represent a caring from agent. The interview result from a director of marketing communication also support these findings due to he usually get a request from other departments to send an EDM to greeting clients in special occasions such as Christmas, New Year's greeting.

This finding is consistent with Dwyer et al. (1987), Ford et al. (1998), and Gronroos (2000), and Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014).

4.6 Utilizing Customer Relationship Management Software

Customer Relationship Management is a popular marketing strategy that organization usually do to retain a relationship with the existing clients. Real estate agent is an industry that uses this marketing practice to maintain client's relationship. Base on the interview results, some department in brokerage section use CRM software to record clients' information to help them easy to recall and manage the data. Not only the clients' information is recorded, but also the stock of properties is managed by CRM software. The findings identified that a large property's stock encourage more clients to use the service. A variety of property stock create options to clients consider.

Agent can offer the property to match with client's requirement and fulfill the client's needs. This can increase the client's satisfaction and position the organization to be the top of client's mind. In corporate marketing's scope, the interviewees express that organization always use the CRM software to develop and maintain clients' relationship in expansion stage and stable stage.

To compare this study with the existing paper of Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014), even both industries utilize CRM software to develop relationship with clients, they implement this marketing practice in a different way. The research results from Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014) show that legal practitioners use CRM Software to update contacts, monitors the development of clients relationship, monitors and controls the business development budget, and generating cross-selling in order to develop relationship with clients in the legal industry. But, the results from this study show that real estate agents use CRM Software to record client's information and properties stocks in order to increasing client's satisfaction and develop client's relationship in real estate agent industry.

4.7 Managing the Cold Calling

Cold calling is a marketing practice that agent make a random call by selected from a page out of the telephone directory to get to know the client's business direction or client's plan in a near future. Agents can propose their services and start building a relationship with client since the first time call. Cold calling enables agents reach to several potential and prospect clients in a short time period. The greater number of calls, the greater chances for agent to getting new clients lists.

Managing the cold calling is a marketing practice that agents often do in a pre-relationship stage. The interview results identified that most agents in brokerage section usually make a cold calling with new clients in order to introduce their services. The difficulty to managing the cold calling is trying to reach to the right person. Some interviewees said they often meet with a gatekeeper in the first call. The way to reaching the right person is depend on agent's style. After agent reach to the key person, agent will arrange for a meeting to present the scope of service and walk through the further step.

This finding is discovered as a new client relationship marketing practice which has not been identified from the previous studies. Refer to the observation during interviews, the author found that the reason that managing the cold calling is not implemented in the legal industry is because of nature of business. Even both industries are counted as a professional services industry, the nature of business are different. Real estate agent industry require to do more marketing than legal industry due to normally, people contact the legal practitioners when they have a lawsuit or corporate issues. It is a must for them to find a legal practitioner to give an advice. But in real estate agent industry, clients consider the service as an option. It is not necessary to using an agent to find the property due to clients can search by themselves. The nature of real estate agent business is more aggressive than legal business. That why managing the cold calling is a new marketing practice that been explored in this study.

4.8 Providing Seamless Services

Providing seamless services is another new client relationship marketing practice that has not been identified in any existing papers. This marketing practice will increase more client's satisfaction due to the organization provide one stop sale service. Clients will be more convenient to dealing with a particular agent.

According to the organization S that the author select to study is a leading real estate agent organization that provide a full scope of real estate agent services, the organization can provide the services to fulfill client's unmet needs in a scope of real estate sector. The results from data collected identified that there are many clients that use many services within an organization.

Seamless services can build a long-term profitable relationship and business sustainability due to agents can offer another services to their clients. This marketing practice will be made clients more satisfied and create word of mouth if the services' quality meet client's expectation. Some clients turn to be partners and refer new clients to agent because they appreciate on the services. Many interviewees said that providing seamless services will benefit agents to serve the right services to meet client's needs at consumption stage.

Some interviewees in brokerage section state that there is a corporate solution team to pitching works and get an appointment from clients. Corporate solution team will forward the works to the agent's in those countries to continue taking care of clients. In case there is any issues or problems, corporate solution team will be ready to take an action in order to healing the situations and also maintaining clients' relationship.

4.9 Providing Professional Advices

After finished interview with the fifteen interviewees, the findings show providing professional advices is another important practice that agents always do in a consumption stage. The study identified that agents provide a professional service by reaching mutual benefit between buyers and seller as a negotiation's key, educating prospect clients to understand the services' benefit, and also reaching the insight of clients to fulfill client's needs with the right services. The clients will be more impress on the services and may switch to be partners. Not only Brokerage and consultancy sections, but operation and facilities services section also express that they provide a professional advices by work as promise and providing 24-hours service to the clients. Some interviewees state that service's quality is also important. Agents should provide services to meet clients' expectation. This view is supported by Gronroos (2000), the ability of the organization to take care of client's problems and to fulfill its promises will increase the client's satisfaction. Providing professional advices is a new client relationship marketing practice that explored from this study. It has not been identified in any existing papers. Due to real estate agent is a middle man to dealing between two parties, providing professional advice is a practice to build the client's trust.

4.10 Being as a Friend

Being as a friend is a new client relationship marketing practice that explored from this study. It has not been identified in any previous papers. Due to real estate agent is a kind of consultant that usually interact with people, sincerity is a key to win the client's heart. The findings from the data collected identified that the best practice to develop relationship with clients is building a friendship. Agents must

sincerely taking care of clients. Being a strategic partner by always beside and support clients in every stages. Sharing and updating market situation and some insight information will be made clients more satisfied on the services. Clients will not get lost and keep up with unforeseen situation due to agents always aware and support them in advance. An interview results identified that agents should work for relationship rather than commission to generate an organization long-run profitability. Some interviewees said that to build relationship with clients in the pre-relationship stage, agents should not directly offer the services at the first meet. Agents should try to offer the services in indirect way. A directors from consultancy section state that he usually treat clients for lunch or take them out to dinner. Clients will feel comfort and happy to share their needs. At this stage, sometime it can lead to do a cross-selling. Some interviewees in brokerage section mention that agents should be more flexible and honest with clients because some clients are in the top management level, they are always busy. In case there is a chance to meet those clients, agent must not excuse and be ready to meet clients. An associated director from brokerage section said that you will never know that when would be a second chance to reach the client. If you miss a chance, clients might switch to talk with another agent. So, being as a friend will help agents to retain clients' relationship and create a repeat purchase.

4.11 Discussion

The findings from data collection prove that the marketing practices to develop clients' relationship in real estate agent industry are different from relationship marketing practices in industrial and consumer relationships, collaborative relationships, business relationships, and other service industries such as legal industry. The literature review of Dwyer et al. (1987) identified model of the relationship development process are consists of awareness, exploration, commitment, and dissolution. Wilson (1995) identified the relationship development process are search and selection, defining purpose, boundary definition, creating relationship value, and hybrid stability. Ford et al. (1998) identified four stages of relationship development process between buyer and seller which are pre-relationship stage, exploratory stage, developing stage, and stable stage. Gronroos (2000) identified three stages of customer relationship life cycle

which are initial phase, purchasing phase, consumption or usage phase. Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014) identified four stages of relationship development process in a legal industry are pre-relationship stage, exploratory stage, expansion stage, and stable stage. On the other hand, the research result show that the stages of relationship development process in real estate agent industry is indefinite, the study were identified in four stages which are consists of pre-relationship stage, consumption stage, expansion stage, and stable stage.

According to the above four literature reviews except Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014), all authors studied about relationship development process between buyer and seller in different aspects. Dywer et al. (1987) focused on interfirm and consumer relationships. Wilson (1995) focused on collaborative relationships which are mergers, acquisitions, and joint ventures. Ford et al. (1998) proved the process and benefits of moving a relationship between buyer and seller from one stage to another. Gronroos (2000) shown the guideline for incorporating the traditional marketing mix approach into interactive efforts. Only the paper of Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014) studied the client relationship marketing practices by marketing specialists and legal practitioners.

Even organizing and attending social events, managing the communications or interaction process, managing the cross-selling, truly understanding client's businesses and industries, other small little gestures, and utilizing CRM software practices are client relationship marketing practices which can be applied in some professional service industries, some relationship marketing practices are not be able to applied in real estate agent industry. For example; the practices of service recovery, changing the impression, social bonds beyond the professional level, and treating every job seriously regardless of the size which were identified as the marketing practices in legal industry are not identified in this interview results. It means that these four marketing practices might not be able to apply in other professional service industry to develop client relationships due to there are different types of services and different types of target clients.

From the interview results, the author has found some new marketing practices that real estate agents use to develop clients' relationship which are managing the cold calling, providing the seamless services, and providing professional advices. The results show that providing a full scope of services can be increased a client's satisfaction and

bring an organization to be a top of client's mind. This marketing practice can reflect the positive word of mouth from client's side and can generate the organization profitability in a long-run. Because real estate agent industry is more aggressive than some professional service industries, managing the cold calling practice can lead agents to reach more new potential clients and create more opportunity to develop a new relationship with clients since a pre-relationship stage. Providing professional advices also is a relationship marketing practice that many interviewees are mentioned. Because real estate agent is a specialist that provided specific knowledge in real estate sector, the job is required to interact with people all the time. The agents have to be more professional in order to build the trust from clients. This practice can create a good organization image and consolidating the organization position.

Referring to the conceptual framework of the journal of Client Relationship Marketing Practices: An Exploratory Study of the Legal Industry, Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014) identified that building a long-term profitable relationship, consolidating an organization's market position, positive word-of-mouth, generating new businesses and cross-selling, positioning the organization at the top of a client's mind are the desired outcomes of developing clients' relationship in professional service industry, the results from this study were identified that clients satisfaction, information sharing, and business sustainability are also be the desired outcomes that real estate agent expect to achieve when they develop the relationship with clients in every stages.

TABLE 2 Client Relationship Marketing Practices by Real Estate Agent at Different Stages of the Relationship Development Process. Based on Dwyer et al. (1987), Ford et al. (1998), and Gronroos (2000), Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014). CRM = Client Relationship Management.

Table 4.1 Client Relationship Marketing Practices by Real Estate Agent at Different Stages of the Relationship Development Process

Stage/Phase	Real Estate Agents' Client Relationship Marketing Practices
Pre-relationship Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizing and attending social events - Managing the communications or interactions process - Truly understanding client's businesses and industries - Utilizing CRM Software - Managing the cold calling - Being as a friend
Consumption Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizing and attending social events - Managing the communications or interactions process - Providing seamless services - Providing a professional advices
Expansion Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizing and attending social events - Managing the communications or interactions process - Managing the Cross-Selling - Other Small Little Gestures - Utilizing CRM Software - Providing seamless services
Stable Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizing and attending social events - Managing the communications or interactions process - Other Small Little Gestures - Utilizing CRM Software - Providing seamless services

Source: Dwyer et al. (1987), Ford et al. (1998), and Gronroos (2000), Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014). CRM = Client Relationship Management.

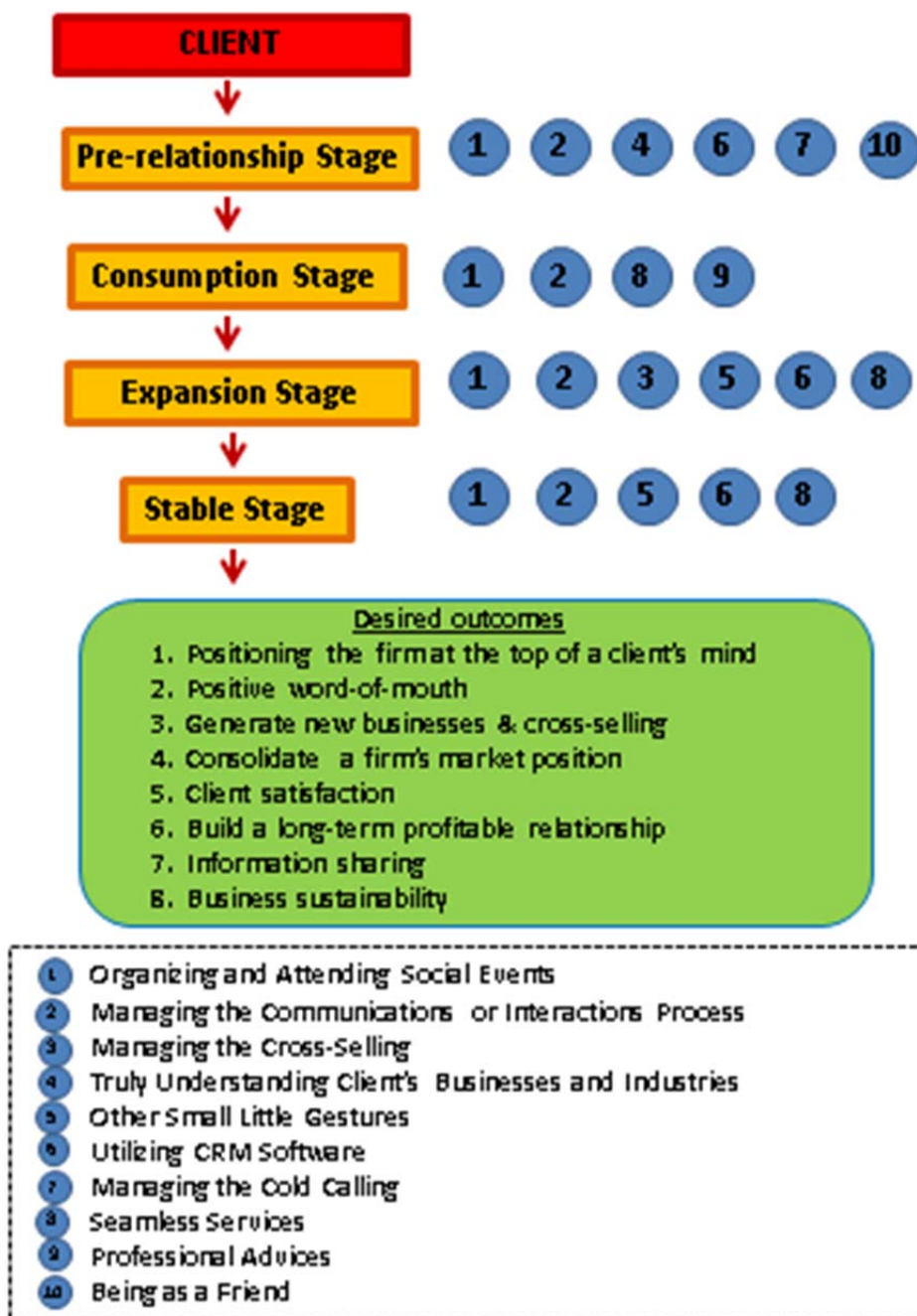


Figure 4.1 Client Relationship Marketing Practices at Different Stages of the Relationship Development Process toward Achieving the Desired Outcomes of a real estate agent organization

Source: Dwyer et al. (1987), Ford et al. (1998), and Gronroos (2000), Woo & Leelapanyaalert (2014). CRM = Client Relationship Management.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study has investigated how real estate agent develop and maintain the relationship with clients since a pre-relationship stage until turning to be a partners in a stable stage. The study has identified that client relationship is more powerful to make clients stick with a particular agent. This view is supported by Claycomb & Martin (2002) and West, Ford, & Ibrahim (2010) that eighty percent of a firm's new business comes from the top twenty percent of its clients. Agents try to build a good relationship with clients since a pre-relationship stage by organizing and attending social events, managing the communications or interactions process, truly understanding client's businesses and industries, utilizing CRM software, managing the cold calling, and being as a friend in order to breaking the barrier to developing the client's relationship. The literatures review from Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014) also express that a good impression will make future business interactions easier.

After agents can reach to the clients, they will implement the marketing practices of providing seamless services and providing professional advices in a consumption stage. In expansion stage, agents start to manage the cross-selling, doing the other small little gestures, utilizing CRM software, and providing seamless services in order to generate more new businesses & cross-selling, creating positive word-of-mouth, consolidating an organization's market position, increasing client satisfaction, and also sharing an information with each other.

In stable stage, clients are turn to be partners. Agents use other small little gestures, utilizing CRM software, and providing seamless services as the marketing practices to maintain relationship with clients. These practices will generate a long-term profitable relationship; make the organization to be the top of a client's mind, and create business sustainability.

According to ten relationship marketing practices in real estate agent industry, organizing and attending social events and managing the communications or interactions process are the two practices that agents use to develop client's relationship in every stage. As mentioned that real estate agent is the work that interacts with people. Agent is required an interpersonal skill to managing the communications or interactions with the clients. The greater understand clients' insights or client's needs, the greater commissions that agents can gain because building a close client relationship centered on clients' interests will potentially bring in business to the organization (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014).

5.1 Managerial Implication

According to the study of "How to develop client relationship in real estate agent industry", the manager can use the client relationship marketing practices from this paper to apply in an organization in order to increase more client's satisfaction, creating positive word-of-mouth, exchanging an information, positioning the organization at the top of client's mind, consolidate the organization's market position, generating new businesses & cross-selling, building a long-term profitable relationship, and creating a business sustainability. The manager can apply ten marketing practices to dealing with clients in order to develop a good client relationships and also maintain those clients to be more engage with an organization.

5.2 Theoretical implication

Due to the previous papers of Dwyer et al. (1987), Wilson (1995), and Ford et al. (1998) are shown the models of the relationship development process in many aspects. Gronroos (2000) is focused on the customer relationship life cycle model. Only Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014) has focused on the client relationship marketing practices in the legal industry which is a particular aspect. Because legal industry is a kind of professional service industry same as real estate agent industry. This study use the paper of Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014) as a conceptual framework.

In order to explore some new knowledges, the study is designed to interview the real estate agents who are in a management level and have an experience over 3 years in this field from different departments, the study results shown a several point of view due to different departments provide different type of services and dealing with different type of clients. The research results can be compared and contrasted the client relationship marketing practices in different real estate services and also prove that this study can be applied in all levels and positions. Not only managing the cold calling, providing seamless services, providing professional advices, and being as a friend's client relationship marketing practices are found, this study also explored two new factors that affect the way to develop client relationship in real estate agent industry which the previous papers have not been identified are types of client and types of service factors.

The research results found that real estate agency is a professional service industry that is no specific pattern to develop relationship with clients due to the work always has to interact with people. The different type of clients is required a different practice to dealing with. Because some clients already expert in the business and have lots of product knowledge, agents have no need to educate more about the product knowledge. They require only proposing some attractive or hot properties, updating market situations, and keep in touch via phone or email in periodically. Some clients required a fast response and accurate information, agents have to be more active and work as a professional.

The different type of services also is a factor that effect agents to implement different relationship marketing practices because there is different level of client's relationship development. Some services such as an operation and facilities service section and some consultancy sections, agents required to educate clients more regarding their services are very specialize and still not well-known in the market. Some brokerage sections, agents usually use informal relationship marketing practices such as one-to-one meeting, meeting for lunch or dinner in order to build a close relationship with clients. The clients will be more relax and easier to talk with agents due to a friendship has built. This can be proved that the good relationship marketing practices at every point of client interaction are essential in building client relationships (Theron and Terblanche, 2010).

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

From this study, even though the author already use a several research support and select all interviewees who works in a top's management level in order to make the findings is reasonable, there is still some limitation on this study. Firstly, this study is an in-depth interview which looking specifically at a single real estate agent. Even the selected organization is a leading agent company in the world that provide the full scope of services in real estate agency, the findings may not represent the entire real estate agent industry and might not able to apply in other professional services industries. The real estate agencies which are in the same position and provide the same scope of services will be more benefit from this study. Secondly, as the author design an interview to cover all scope of real estate agent services in order to make the findings can be applied in this industry, one professional service in this field was not able to be included in this study due to the prospect interviewees were not available for interview during a data collection period. Thirdly, due to the time limitation, the author can collect the data from only fifteen interviewees and because there is a several scope of service in this industry, fifteen interviewees may not able to represent all agencies practices. The findings can only explore an ideal about how real estate agents develop the relationship with clients to persons who are interested in this field and all agents who are in real estate sector.

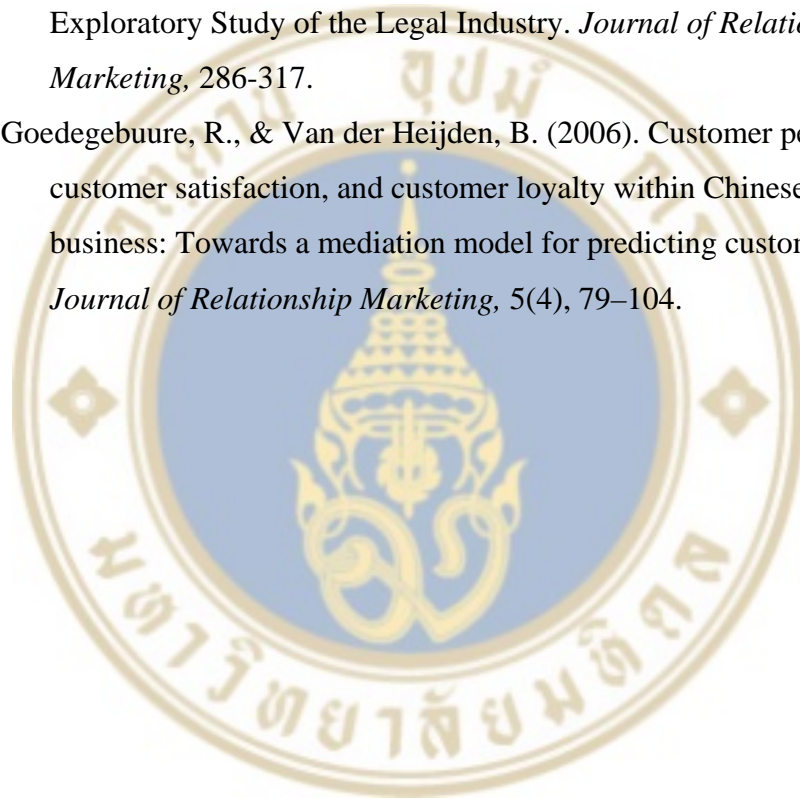
To recommend for a future study, the author would suggest using the conceptual framework in this paper as a basis to study clients' relationship marketing practices in real estate agent industry. The future research should design to interview in different real estate agencies in order to explore the validity of this conceptual framework. The further interview should be select agencies in both organizations that are in the same position and have a similar scale and also organizations that are in the different position in order to prove that the marketing practices can be applied to overall agent market as a general.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions 1

Introduction

1. How long have you been working for this organization?
2. Can you tell me about the scope of your roles and responsibilities in the organization?
3. How your roles and responsibilities are interact with clients?

Try to extend the discussion in detail for each practice

Try to link each practice to different stages/phases by interpreting

Do not forget to ask for an examples

Part 1: To explore individual perceptions of client relationship marketing

4. In your opinion, is it important for your organization to practice client relationship marketing? How important is it and why?
5. How important are building and maintaining relationships with your clients? Why?

Part 2: To understand client relationship marketing practices

6. How do you build relationships with your clients? Can you please give some examples?
7. How do you maintain relationships with your clients? Can you please give some examples?
8. What kind of activities would you normally do to build relationships with clients?? Can you explain in detail?

Do not forget to find out at what stage it happens.

9. What kind of activities would you normally do to maintain relationship with clients? Can you explain in detail?

Do not forget to find out at what stage it happens.

10. Who is involved in building and maintaining relationships with clients? Can you please give some examples?

Tips: Find out why he or she said so

Do not forget to ask for examples

11. Do you think different department have different marketing practices in building and maintaining relationship with clients due to each department has a different kind of service? Why? Can you explain in detail?

12. Do you work with other departments to build relationships with clients?

If yes, how do you work with them in order to achieve better results? Can you please give some examples?

If no, why do you think this is the case?

13. Do you work with other departments to maintain relationships with clients?

If yes, how do you work with them in order to achieve better results? Can you please give some examples?

If no, why do you think this is the case?

14. Do you have any teams involved with maintaining relationships with clients? Can you explain in detail?

15. Is there any support or encouragement from the organization to build and maintain relationships with clients? Why do you think the organization is doing that?

16. In your opinion, what is the most effective marketing practice in building and maintaining relationship with clients? Why?

Do not forget to find out at what stage it happens.

17. Is there any other information you would like to add to our discussion?

Appendix B: Interview Question 2

Introduction

1. How long have you been working for this organization?
2. Can you tell me about the scope of your roles and responsibilities in the organization?
3. How your roles and responsibilities are interact with clients?

Try to extend the discussion in detail for each practice

Try to link each practice to different stages/phases by interpreting

Do not forget to ask for examples

Part 1: To explore individual perceptions of client relationship marketing

4. In your opinion, is it important for your organization to practice client relationship marketing? How important is it and why?

Part 2: To understand client relationship marketing practices

5. Could you please describe the marketing process to building and maintaining client relationships in corporate scope?
6. How is it different in doing marketing practices in corporate scope and business lines?
7. Could you share some support requests from other business lines?
8. What are limitations of marketing practices to support business lines?
9. Could you please describe the marketing practices to maintain client relationships in corporate scope? Can you explain in detail and why you doing that?

Do not forget to find out at what stage it happens.

10. What is the most effective marketing practice in maintaining client relationships in corporate scope?
11. What is the most effective marketing practice in maintaining client relationships in business lines?

Do not forget to find out at what stage it happens.

12. What are your thoughts on future client relationship management strategies?
13. Is there any other information you would like to add to our discussion?

Appendix C: List of interviewees

Brokerage Service Section

1. Regional Director
2. Local Director
3. Local Director
4. Senior Manager
5. Senior Manager
6. Associated Director
7. Vice President
8. Manager
9. Senior Manager

Operation and Facilities Service Section

10. Associated Director
11. Assistant Manager

Consultancy Section

12. Local Director
13. Associated Director
14. Vice President

Marketing Communication

15. Local Director

Appendix D: Interview Transcript

Operation and Facilities Service Section – Associated Director

Introduction

1. How long have you been working for this organization?

I works at Integrated Facilities Management for 12 years

2. Can you tell me about the scope of your roles and responsibilities in the organization?

My work is about back office for corporate or general businesses. Back office tasks means the building facilities works that not related to income generated works. All tasks are in a supporting function. The responsibility is maintenance the building that wholly own by one company such as IBM. IBM is a building owner. We are responsible for taking care the whole building system and all supporting functions within clients' organization such as cleaning works, messenger works, and security works.

3. How your roles and responsibilities are interact with clients?

In case we already got an appointment contract from client, we have to interact with them every day because our clients are the users or all employees of client's company. But for the clients, who are responsible for look after our contract, or we call "client's representative", those client's representative might be human resource manager, IT manager, or any person who is assigned to look after our services by measuring our service level and KPI that we had commit in a contract. We have to interact with those clients in officially a monthly basis, weekly contact for a site manager, and daily contact for all employees of client's company. All clients will effect to us when we conduct a survey at the year end. They will effect to our service level and KPI that we have set and promised in the contract.

Part 1: To explore individual perceptions of client relationship marketing

4. In your opinion, is it important for your organization to practice client relationship marketing? How important is it and why?

It is very important because our task is about a kind of service that always interact with client all the time. Also, our service is in a middle stage, we still have to educate our service to the clients and create a brand awareness to present that we are exist in the market.

5. How important are building and maintaining relationships with your clients? Why?

Yes, it is very high important to building and maintaining relationships with clients. It is a number one factor that agent should consider as I already mentioned before.

Part 2: To understand client relationship marketing practices

6. How do you build relationships with your clients? Can you please give some examples?

In case it is a new client, due to our service is a middle generation, some people still have not known our service. Therefore, it is required to create awareness by managing a cold calling some large organizations that still use an in-house team to manage the building. This practices aim to create our brand awareness in the market and also educate our service to clients by tell them the scope of service and the benefits that clients will get after using our service.

7. How do you maintain relationships with your clients? Can you please give some examples?

We usually have a monthly meeting such as weekly meeting, monthly meeting, quarterly meeting, evaluation, and improvement plans to closed gap after doing an evaluation. For new clients, we try to set one-to-one meeting or formal meeting in order to educate our service to the market because only leaflet and presentation pack is not enough.

8. What kind of activities would you normally do to build relationships with clients??
Can you explain in detail?

Firstly, we have to make an appointment with client to present the capability statement in a pre-relationship stage. The client will understand the scope of service, the benefits and costs that client will get when comparing with managing by their in-house team. We also managing the cold calling and do a kind of referral or managing the cross-selling between the business line head. Sometime, our existing clients also refer our service to other clients which we called a decision maker or a sponsor power of other organization. For a new client, we usually use one-to-one meeting as a marketing practice because it is necessary for us to educate client regarding our service. Only leaflet or presentation pack is not enough, it is required to give more explanation into the details.

9. What kind of activities would you normally do to maintain relationship with clients?
Can you explain in detail?

We try to maintain the contract with our current clients by make sure that our process and procedure is achieve the target as promises such as sending a daily report, having a weekly meeting with a client's representative, and a monthly meeting with a head office manager. We also do a yearly plan to explain our implementation plan for the whole year and also do a quarterly meeting support to client. Finally, we conduct a survey to evaluate our performance and get a feedback from clients in the year end. All our services have to meet the service level and KPI as we promise since the first meeting. After we got an evaluation results, we would do an improvement plan to close the gap of those results.

10. Who is involved in building and maintaining relationships with clients? Can you please give some examples?

Firstly, a site manager. Secondly is an account site manager. Lastly is me, the head of project. Actually, our employees are also involved in develop client's relationship but, three persons that I mention are the key person to dealing with clients.

11. Do you think different department have different marketing practices in building and maintaining relationship with clients due to each department has a different kind of service? Why? Can you explain in detail?

Yes, I think different department use the same marketing practices to develop relationship with client because our service is end-to-end product.

12. Do you work with other departments to build relationships with clients?

Yes, we usually work with other departments to build relationships with clients because we are end-to-end real estate service as I already mentioned. So, a corporate can use many our service such as firstly, client dealing with office leasing department to find the property. The client deal with project development service department to do a fit out process. After finish all process, the client deal with us to look after their property.

13. Do you work with other departments to maintain relationships with clients?

Yes, we are also do a cross-selling to maintain relationships with clients between business lines head. The process is same as a cross-selling to building relationships with clients as I already mentioned.

14. Do you have any teams involved with maintaining relationships with clients? Can you explain in detail?

We have not a direct department to responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with clients. Marketing Communication department support us to do some events in periodically but, they are not the salesperson to sell our services to the clients. However, we plan to have an own marketing team to knock door, do a research, create the database as a clients' list, sell our service, and also educate the service to clients.

15. Is there any support or encouragement from the organization to build and maintain relationships with clients? Why do you think the organization is doing that?

Our company has marketing communication department to set a real estate expo.

16. In your opinion, what is the most effective marketing practice in building and maintaining relationship with clients? Why?

Because our clients are not mass market as a consumer produce, the clients list and more direct marketing is the most effective marketing for us to develop relationships with clients. In the meantime, we have to integrate all our service to clients in order to educate the service to the market. Managing the cold calling is not effective to our service due to it is a very early stage. We have to educate more knowledge to new clients. But for some clients who used to be use our services, it is more effective to managing a cold calling as a marketing practice because they already know our service and believe in our capability. Only pricing is a factor that they are concern. Gaining more market share is better than create a new market. For new clients who have not ever used our service is take time to developing a relationship because they already have in-house teams and internal process that have to consider.

17. Is there any other information you would like to add to our discussion?

An organization should has a client's hunt as a team centered to sell all our services and purely develop relationships with clients.

Consultancy Section – Vice President

Introduction

1. How long have you been working for this organization?

I have worked in this industry for 13-14 years.

2. Can you tell me about the scope of your roles and responsibilities in the organization?

For Business Valuation Consultancy, I am working in many scopes since doing a market study, feasibilities study, managing operation struction and asset management.

3. How your roles and responsibilities are interact with clients?

Starting with new clients, we managing the cold calling as a marketing practices by introducing that we are a real estate agent, explaining our scope of service

to client, and trying to arrange for a meeting. After we got an appointment, my team and I will go to meet with client and present the capability statement to show our scope of works, track record that we had done before, how our service can support client's business, and where we can add value to client. This is an approach that we do. Secondly, we may invite clients to join our small seminars or sharing and updating knowledge within real estate industry. We also team up with the lawyer such as [company] to updated H&A agreements or regional market situation in order to build and maintain relationship with clients.

Part 1: To explore individual perceptions of client relationship marketing

4. In your opinion, is it important for your organization to practice client relationship marketing? How important is it and why?

Building and maintaining client's relationship is important not only for agent ourselves, but also for an organization. It will be benefit together. A good client's relationship will create repeating clients by knowing from understanding the client's needs and realizing more client's assets. We can truly understand insight of clients and client's style. Then, we can manage the marketing practices to match with client's style and also propose the right service to match with client's requirement. We can serve our service to meet client's expectation faster and also faster turnaround the process.

5. How important are building and maintaining relationships with your clients? Why?

It is quite very important because the greater client's relationship will create a greater regular work basis and also being an update the market situation within an industry. It is a way to share an information to each other. Not only the commission fee that we got from them, we also have a mutual benefit from developing relationship with clients. Secondly, a good relationship will create a client's referral. We will gain more new clients from our existing client's word-of-mouth.

Part 2: To understand client relationship marketing practices

6. How do you build relationships with your clients? Can you please give some examples?

We managing the cold calling and send the publication to new clients. We might invite client to have lunch in sometime in order to build the relationship with them. Normally we always conduct a research and update the market quarterly as a publication and send to clients to update market in each area such as Bangkok, Phuket, etc. After we sent publication to client, we make a phone call to client to follow up and update client's situation in order to offer the right service to client.

7. How do you maintain relationships with your clients? Can you please give some examples?

Normally, we usually make a phone call to follow up with clients, talk with them as a general topics, call to celebrate them in occasionally such as New Year, and also have a one-to-one meeting or personal meeting to have coffees, have lunches, or have dinners with clients in order to update the current market situation and also get to know client's direction or their future plan. Often having meeting with clients will make clients always remind us and position our organization to be the top of mind. When there is a new project, we will be the first agent that client think about.

8. What kind of activities would you normally do to build relationships with clients?? Can you explain in detail?

To build relationships with clients, we usually managing a cold calling by introducing our service to clients and trying to arrange for a meeting because face-to-face meeting is better than making a phone call. Moreover, we are invite clients to attend small seminar in order to educate our service in sometime.

9. What kind of activities would you normally do to maintain relationship with clients? Can you explain in detail?

In order to maintain relationship with clients, we usually do other small little gestures such as give a gift in special occasions, managing the communications

or interactions process with clients such as follow up the progress in quarterly to be an after sales services until we can close the deal.

10. Who is involved in building and maintaining relationships with clients? Can you please give some examples?

Actually, all of our team members are involved in developing relationship with clients. It depend on who is client that we have to dealing with. We match senior staff to deal with client who is in a senior level and junior staff to deal with client in junior level in order to build a good relationship to each other.

11. Do you think different department have different marketing practices in building and maintaining relationship with clients due to each department has a different kind of service? Why? Can you explain in detail?

I think different department may use a similar marketing practices to build and maintain relationship with clients.

12. Do you work with other departments to build relationships with clients?

I am not quite sure have other department managing a cross-selling. But for our department, when we go to introduce ourselves, we always tell clients a full scope of service that our organization provide despite of the service that we offer you. So, in case those services is a service that client is looking for, client can use the service from other departments also.

13. Do you work with other departments to maintain relationships with clients?

Yes, I have worked with other departments to maintain relationships with clients, for example; a hotel owner, who is our client, would like to renovate the hotel structure. He let us set up the strategy and estimate the cost for him. During the work, I known that the client afraid that the construction plan might not be finished on time. So, he was looking for a project manager to manage his construction project. After I know his inquiry, I offered our service to the client that our company also has a service to draw and design the layout and also manage the construction work to complete follow the timeline. The client interested in this service and use the service in the final.

14. Do you have any teams involved with maintaining relationships with clients? Can you explain in detail?

From my understanding, there is no team directly responsible for maintain relationship with clients. We have only a marketing team that looking after the corporate scope. However, all departments in our company will provide a service to retain relationships with client in the same direction such as coordinate with another department to send the gift to clients in special occasions or attend the meeting or seminar together.

15. Is there any support or encouragement from the organization to build and maintain relationships with clients? Why do you think the organization is doing that?

The organization support us to build and maintain relationships with clients by doing special gifts to let us send to clients in special occasions such as New Year, Chinese New Year.

16. In your opinion, what is the most effective marketing practice in building and maintaining relationship with clients? Why?

The most marketing practice is managing the communications or interactions process by keep in touch with clients and always follow up client periodically with a sincerity. Organizing and attending social events such as setting a small seminar in order to sharing knowledge to each other and other small little gestures are effective marketing practices to build and maintain relationship with clients also.

17. Is there any other information you would like to add to our discussion?

Sincerity is the most important. The way to develop clients' relationship is depend on personal style of agent, clients, and type of business. There is no pattern to dealing with clients.

Brokerage Section – Senior Marketing Executive

Introduction

1. How long have you been working for this organization?

This December I have been working here almost 4 years.

2. Can you tell me about the scope of your roles and responsibilities in the organization?

The scope of my work is looking after corporate client accounts who have a good relationship with our company from regional. Our regional will send the enquiries which their lease going to expire or have a plan to relocate the office to me to proceed for a further step.

3. How your roles and responsibilities are interact with clients?

Actually, I have interacted with clients at every stage since in a pre-relationship stage until in a stable stage except the cases that I got an enquiry from the regional. I have not interacted with clients in a pre-relationship stage.

The develop relationship process is starting since we got an enquiry, we have to contact our regional or our clients in order to confirm the requirement. Then, we will discuss about the timeline of each task to see the completion date. In case of relocation, we have to do the list of building option for client to consider and also arrange a site inspection. We also provide a building comparison by weighted both quantitative and qualitative sides to support client decision. After client make a decision, we will help client to negotiate on the term and condition with landlord and recheck the agreement before client execution. After client execute the agreement, we still being a consultant in a handover process and doing an evaluation form when the work is completed. The qualitative and quantitative analysis which I have mentioned are analyzing NPV, IRR, cost of office relocation, and doing a building comparison. In office renewal case, normally the process is shorter than office relocation process. However, even the client plans to renew the contract, I often recommend client to work for office relocation together with renewal plan in order to increase more bargaining power with the landlord because the existing landlord may aware that the client may not renew the contract and move out to the new building.

Part 1: To explore individual perceptions of client relationship marketing

4. In your opinion, is it important for your organization to practice client relationship marketing? How important is it and why?

Actually it is very important for an organization to practice client relationship marketing but, the marketing practice might be do in different ways depend on a personal agent's style. Some agents may invite clients for lunch or dinner in order to build a relationship with client but for me, I feel comfort to use formal marketing practices to build and maintain relationship with client due to my personal style. When I service client, I usually think what client needs and do beyond their expectation in order to increase more client satisfaction. The service that I provide to client is more than money that I receive. I always share and update the useful information which I think it will benefit for them to know with free of charge and also being a strategic partner with client. These practices will bring our organization to be the top of a client's mind and create positive word-of-mouth due to we create the friendship with client. It is more than providing the real estate services.

5. How important are building and maintaining relationships with your clients? Why?

Building and maintaining relationships with clients is the most important for me because it is a way to create trust and sincerity with clients. It make the communication with clients is easier and smoother than talking in business way. Another reason is the standard leased term is 3 years. It takes time for client to come back to use our service again. A good relationship with client will make our organization to be a top of client's mind when they think about real estate services. A good performance and a strong relationship with client will build a long-term profitable relationship.

Part 2: To understand client relationship marketing practices

6. How do you build relationships with your clients? Can you please give some examples?

Two keys to build relationships with clients are doing beyond client expectation by working for relationship not for commission and doing a small little gestures to client in order to create a respect and sincerity.

7. How do you maintain relationships with your clients? Can you please give some examples?

Due to my work is related to regional scope, my regional team will talk to client's regional team as it's a global deal. Relationship will be built at this level before it is cascade down to local level. The practices that my regional team do to maintain relationship with client are such as assigning a person to in charge of each client's account to look after and provide service to client. This person have to know client plan and direction also being as a strategic partner. When client have any real estate plans, this person is prompt to service them. We call this team as a corporate solution. The corporate solution team does not look after in a particular service but, they are key contact from our organization to build and maintain relationship with clients.

8. What kind of activities would you normally do to build relationships with clients?? Can you explain in detail?

In local level, our organization usually organize a small seminar and invite clients to attend a seminar in quarterly in order to update current market situation and share some useful information to clients. This practice create a positive word-of-mouth from clients and position an organization to be the top of a client's mind.

9. What kind of activities would you normally do to maintain relationship with clients? Can you explain in detail?

Normally my team maintain relationship with clients by invited client to have lunch or dinner to be keep on touch with clients.

10. Who is involved in building and maintaining relationships with clients? Can you please give some examples?

Actually all member in our team have a responsibility for building and maintaining relationships with clients in different levels and in different ways not only with clients but also with landlords such as operating staff build relationship with clients in operating level.

11. Do you think different department have different marketing practices in building and maintaining relationship with clients due to each department has a different kind of service? Why? Can you explain in detail?

It may different in details of marketing practices but, the main relationship marketing practices are same due to the objective of building and maintaining clients relationship is to build trust and being a top of client's mind in real estate sector.

12. Do you work with other departments to build relationships with clients?

Yes, I have worked with other departments to build relationships with clients. The main objective is to providing a full scope of real estate agent services to clients. Therefore, clients always appreciated our seamless services due to clients can contact only an agent and that agent will coordinate with other departments to service them. In order to get the better result from cross-selling, it depends on an organization culture and incentive for referral. An attractive incentive will persuade more cross-selling within an organization.

13. Do you work with other departments to maintain relationships with clients?

We often get projects that we not prefer to do but, we cannot reject them such as some projects which have gaps between result that client expect to get and result that we can deliver to client or sometime partners of other departments request us to do some projects with free of charge, we also willing to service them in order to maintain relationship with clients.

14. Do you have any teams involved with maintaining relationships with clients? Can you explain in detail?

There is no team which directly responsible for maintaining relationships with clients. However, I believe that maintaining client relationship is a task of all real estate agents. In an organization scope, there is a department which look after a mass communication. This team is not directly responsible for maintaining client relationship but, they look after a corporate marketing scope such as public relation, organizing events. Maintaining client relationship is a part of task which a mass communication team is responsible.

15. Is there any support or encouragement from the organization to build and maintain relationships with clients? Why do you think the organization is doing that?

An organization rarely support us to build and maintain relationship with clients such as organizing events in occasionally.

16. In your opinion, what is the most effective marketing practice in building and maintaining relationship with clients? Why?

I am not quite sure that it can be defined as a marketing practice or not but the best approach to maintain client relationship is being as a friend by being a strategic partner for clients, working beyond expectation, keep in touch, and providing a small little gestures to client to maintain a good relationship with them.

17. Is there any other information you would like to add to our discussion?

Relationship marketing practice in real estate agent industry is no format, intangible, and not one hundred percent visibility but, it is in a part of service that we provide.

