

Relationship intention is key to long-term customer relationships

Providers of personal tax services operate in an increasingly competitive environment as their customers constantly search for the best service providers that will best serve their needs. With changing demographics, an over-supply of tax service providers, constant legislative changes and constraints that stem from the South African Revenue Service's operations, the core tax service offering required by customers appear to be changing. Pertaining to the latter, there has been a recent increase in the demand for a more consultative tax service offering, which places tax service providers in the role of business advisor or strategic business partner, rather than transactional services provider.

The implementation of a relationship marketing approach plays a fundamental role in enhancing long-term relationships and customer loyalty. However, not all customers desire to enter into relationships with service providers, thus leading to valuable resources going to waste if relationship marketing strategies are not applied to customers who actually desire a relationship with the organisation.

Thelma Roodt, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), conducted a study to determine the relationship between personal tax service customers' relationship intentions, service quality perceptions and customer satisfaction. Data were collected from 368 respondents from a prominent South African temporary employment agency.

The results indicate that where there is an increase in customer relationship intentions, subsequently there will be an increase in service quality expectations, perceptions, and levels of satisfaction. Furthermore, it was established that customer relationship intention was a significant predictor of customer satisfaction.

It is thus recommended that personal tax service providers would benefit from focusing on customers with higher relationship intentions. By focusing on those customers displaying greater relationship intentions, tax service providers stand a greater chance of building long-term relationships and customer loyalty, thereby increasing profitability and establishing a competitive position.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2015 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Thelma Roodt under the supervision of [Prof. P.G. Mostert](#).