

Do you want to be successful? Then treat your customers well!

Today, cell phones have become a central part of most customers' life. It has become that *one* device customer's simply cannot live without. The introduction of smart phones in particular have resulted in customers becoming more reliant on their devices as these phones offer customers a wide variety of features including e-mail, global positioning system (GPS), games, instant messaging, applications (for almost anything you can think of), video and audio playback, a video camera, picture and video editing, web browsing and much more.

South African cell phone service providers, including Vodacom, MTN, Cell C, and Telkom Mobile, engage in intense competition to fulfil and offer customers better data package deals. These service providers need better understanding of what is most valuable to their customers in order to customise packages to suit their needs.

A research study was conducted by Zwelethu Magodiele, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), to determine how relationship proneness and relationship benefits influence customers' relationship quality with their cell phone service provider in South Africa. The study evaluated the importance of these indicators amongst 289 respondents, comprised of adult cell phone users residing in the greater Pretoria area.

The results revealed that special treatment benefits and confidence benefits are important predictors of cell phone users' relationship quality. Of these two, confidence benefits were found to be the strongest predictor of relationship quality.

It is in the best interest of service providers to build strong relationships with customers based on trust. Strong relationships are established where service providers keep their service promise, which in turn, minimises customers' insecurities. Furthermore, the service provider must enhance the special treatment benefits they offer their customers by offering price discounts and implementing time saving initiatives when interacting with the service provider and offering customising product offerings that customers feel are offered to them exclusively.

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 Zwelethu Magodiele under the supervision of [Prof. P.G. Mostert](#).