

Improving the quality of customer relationships

In recent years, the South African cell phone industry has seen a sharp rise in the number of subscribers. Some cell phone network service providers even experienced a 30% increase in customer subscriptions in recent years. With the intensity of competition between existing network operators increasing, cell phone network providers' relationship marketing efforts have become crucial as it enables them to create long-term beneficial relationships with customers.

Offering relational benefits (comprising social, confidence and special treatment benefits) and engaging relationship prone customers are possible strategies cell phone network providers can adopt to increase relationship quality between them and their customers. Doing so comes with the expectation that customers will stay with their specific cell phone network provider over time, particularly when contracts expire.

Faith Kasiyamhuru, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), conducted a study that investigated the relationships between cell phone customers' relationship proneness and relational benefits on relationship quality in the South African cell phone industry. Data was collected from 298 adult cell phone customers residing in the greater Pretoria area.

The results of the study revealed the existence of significant relationships between relationship proneness, special treatment benefits and confidence benefits with relationship quality. It is therefore important that cell phone network providers focus on offering special treatment and confidence benefits as these benefits are predictors of relationship quality of cell phone network providers.

It is therefore important for managers to not only identify relationship prone customers, but also to seek a greater understanding of relational benefits customers perceive to be more valuable to them. Doing so will effectively improve customers' relationship quality and result in more effective customer relationship management efforts.

This is 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 Faith Kasiyamhuru under the supervision of [Prof. P.G. Mostert](#).