

# Client-Supplier Relationships

*and my personal 10 Commandments for maintaining a positive relationship  
with the Global Mobility Department*

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# Objectives

- To describe *how* the client thinks and acts
- To help you understand *why* the client thinks and acts the way he/she does
- To explain the client's thinking behind a client-supplier "relationship"
- To review the 3 year relationship cycle
- To learn the "relationship language" of the client
- To review my 10 Commandments of a healthy client-supplier relationship

# Introductions: The Suppliers

- “True wisdom comes to each of us when we realize how little we understand about life, ourselves, and the world around us.” - Socrates
- “Ah, but I was so much older then, I’m younger than that now” - The Byrds
- The Suppliers are the subject matter experts, NOT the client
- Acknowledge suppliers by service type
  - Relocation companies
  - Van lines
  - Temporary housing
  - Real estate
  - Banking/mortgage
  - Rental service- car/furniture
  - Immigration
  - Tax

# The Challenge Equation: Managing a Relocation Program

- Hiring is increasing +
  - Relocations are increasing +
  - Relocation spend is increasing +
  - Internal headcount remains flat =
  - Need for increased 3<sup>rd</sup> party assistance
- How does the mobility manager select service partners and how does he/she work with them?

# Relations or Relationship?

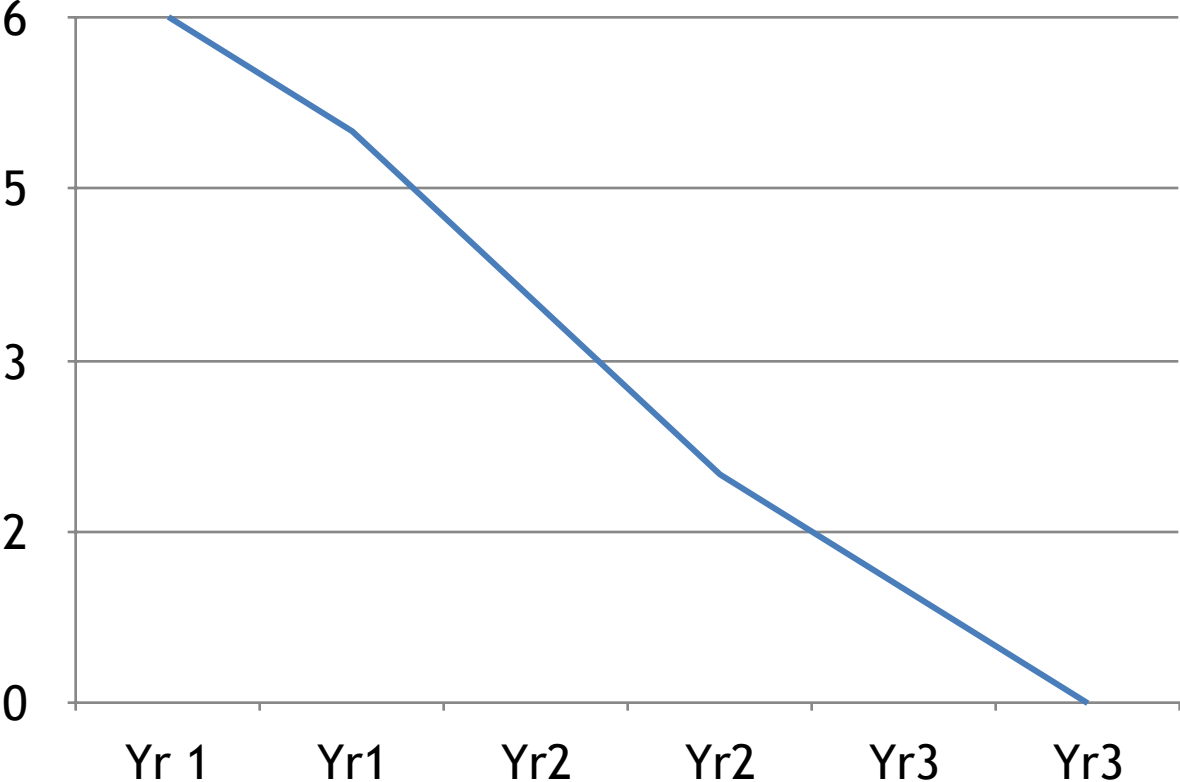
- Relation (def): an association or connection between 2 or more *things*
- Relationship (def): the connection 2 or more *people* or groups AND their *involvement* with one another, especially as regards the way they *behave* toward and *feel* about one another

# Relations or Relationship?

- The Client can take one of two approaches
  - Relations: keep supplier at distance; treat as fungible commodity, use and discard as needed
  - Relationship: treat as a partner; extension of your internal team
- As the Client, the view you take will determine how your suppliers are chosen, how your program is run, and how often you shop for new suppliers
- Pros and Cons to each
  - Supply and demand favors the client BUT
  - “Breakin’ up is hard to-o-o do” - Neil Sedeka

# The 3 year life cycle of a supplier relationship

Client Satisfaction



— Client Satisfafa

# The 3 year life cycle of a “typical” supplier relationship

- Year 1: 1<sup>st</sup> 6 months honeymoon- “At Last” - Etta James
- Year 1: 2<sup>nd</sup> 6 months: ”Feeling Groovy”-Simon & Garfunkle
- Year 2: 1<sup>st</sup> 6 months :”Mama told me there’d be days like this, there’d be days like this my momma said”- Shirelles
- Year 2: 2<sup>nd</sup> 6 months: “Help! I need somebody, help” - Beatles
- Year 3: 1<sup>st</sup> 6 months: Fix it ! “I’m your handy man” - James Taylor **or** “Well there ain’t no cure for the summertime blues” - Eddie Cochran
- Year 3: 2<sup>nd</sup> 6 months: “You’re still the One!” - Orleans **or** “Bye, bye love” - The Everly Bros **and** “Papa’s got a brand new bag” - James Brown



# Non commercial break: Free bar game for later

- See how many song titles YOU can come up with to describe the six declining relationship periods
- For the *very* good, make the titles come from the same performer
  - All Beatles songs
  - All Eagles songs
  - etc

We now return you to your regular programming

- Year 2 ! What is happening with year 2 ???

# Year 2 - Relationship Breakdown!

- **What happened to the relationship???**
- Client and Supplier
  - Both working hard but neither feels appreciated or satisfied
  - Being taken for granted
  - Disenchanted, disappointed expectations
- Client
  - Thinks Supplier is incapable or unwilling to invest in relationship to deliver the “superior” service promised during the last RFP
- Supplier
  - Can’t believe how much the Client asks for, never-ending out of scope services are killing the budget

# 2 critical areas

## 1. Communication

- Are you speaking the same language?

## 2. Expectations

- Do you know what the other is hoping for?

# 1. Communication: The 5 languages of a relationship

- “The 5 Love Languages” by Dr. Gary Chapman
    - One party thinks they are communicating a message, but the other party doesn’t hear it
1. Affirmation
  2. Actions
  3. Time
  4. Touch
  5. Gifts

# The 5 languages of a relationship

## 1. Affirmation

- Positive acknowledgement-verbal and otherwise

## 2. Actions

- When it is what you do that matters

## 3. Time

- Dedicating time to the other w/out interruptions and distractions

## 4. Touch

- Being close and near to the other

## 5. Gifts

- Tangible tokens meant to communicate the importance of the relationship to the other

## 2. Expectations

- Communicated effectively ?
- In alignment? agreement ?
- Need to be reviewed *frequently and regularly*
- Well, here are my expectations...

# My Expectations: 10 Commandments

1. **Thou shalt have no other Clients before me- I'm #1**
2. **Thou shalt be accessible and responsive- Don't make me chase you**
3. **Thou shalt not steal -fair and honest pricing, invoicing-trust!**
4. **Thou shalt not bear false witness- honest & open communication**
5. **Thou shalt have staffing continuity- dedicated, continuing team**
6. **Thou shalt perform your duties faithfully and consistently- service delivery**
7. **Thou shalt keep your commitments and deadlines-timeliness**
8. **Thou shalt honor the client's entire staff- team concept**
9. **Thou shalt go the extra mile - sacrificial commitment**
10. **Thou shalt protect your Client at all times- Company, employees, and internal mobility team**



# Q & A

- Anything else you always wanted to know about the internal thinking and workings of the Client but were afraid to ask?