

THE COMPANY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP AND THE RETENTION OF STAFF IN
THE IT CONSULTING INDUSTRY: A PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT
PERSPECTIVE.

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**A research report submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business Science,
University of Pretoria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Business Administration**

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ABSTRACT

This paper will show the similarities in the overall perspective of the Polysem-employee's psychological contract with both their employing organisation and their client organisations, although in favour of the employing organisation. Over 100 IT employees active in client engagements from project implementations to support and outsourcing of varying periods of time were surveyed with a cross-sectional questionnaire to identify differences in psychological contracts and attitudes towards their client and employing organisations. We found that there were very few differences in the way the psychological contract is perceived from the perspective of the employee in the triangular relationship although marginally in favour of the employing organisation. Additionally we found that there was a significant relationship between the tenure with the employing organisation and tenure with the client organisation and that there were further indications that this was linked to an issue of life stage. We also conclude that generally the psychological contract of Polysem-employee's in the IT industry can be considered flexible or unstable, broad in scope, tangible and more relational in nature. The findings have implications for HR management practices of IT consultancies and outsourcing organisations operating in environments with unacceptably high rates of turnover.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Business Administration for the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

.....

Date:

James Drummond

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JOURNAL ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

This paper will show the similarities in the overall perspective of the Polysem-ployee's psychological contract with both their employing organisation and their client organisations, although in favour of the employing organisation. Over 100 IT employees active in client engagements from project implementations to support and outsourcing of varying periods of time were surveyed with a cross-sectional questionnaire to identify differences in psychological contracts and attitudes towards their client and employing organisations. We found that there were very few differences in the way the psychological contract is perceived from the perspective of the employee in the triangular relationship although marginally in favour of the employing organisation. Additionally we found that there was a significant relationship between the tenure with the employing organisation and tenure with the client organisation and that there were further indications that this was linked to an issue of life stage. We also conclude that generally the psychological contract of Polysem-ployee's in the IT industry can be considered flexible or unstable, broad in scope, tangible and more relational in nature. The findings have implications for HR management practices of IT consultancies and outsourcing organisations operating in environments with unacceptably high rates of turnover.

Key words: psychological contract, South Africa, contingent employee, Polysem-ployee, IT worker.

When Friedman (2005) asserted “the world is flat”, he struck a chord with his book by the same name, rising to the top of many a bestseller list and it still takes prominence in the business section of various bookstores around the globe today. He maintained that now, more so than at any other time in history, is the nature of competition about the individual. “Clearly, it is now possible for more people than ever to collaborate and compete in real time with more other people on more different kinds of work from more different corners of the planet and on more equal footing than at any previous time in history of the world – using computers, e-mail, networks, teleconferencing, and dynamic new software” (Friedman, 2005, p.8).

Long before Friedman, other authors were already questioning the assumptions that were held about work environments, if maybe not for the same reasons. Rousseau stated, “traditional employment contracts have been challenged by the restructuring of corporations and the decline in organised labour. Promises about the future are the essence of contracts – yet promises are increasingly difficult to make (and keep)” (2005, p.xi). What is apparent is that the pace at which changes are occurring and the flexibility with which organisations and people are required to react is increasing and has been for some time now.

“One of the greatest challenges in business today is articulating the changing contract between workers and employers” (Csoka, 1996, p.5).

THE MANY CONSTRUCTS

With many behavioural disciplines seeking to contribute to our understanding of the employee-employer relationship, from Psychology which seeks to measure, explain and sometimes change behaviour; Sociology which involves the study of people in relation to other people; with Social Psychology blending concepts from both; Anthropology studying societies to learn about humans and their activities; and Political Science looking in to the concept of power and conflict, it can be a daunting task to select and appropriate construct to try and understand the changing nature of the relationship. However, Rousseau maintains “a behavioural perspective on contracts is critical to understanding and managing change in contemporary organisations” (1995, p.xi). This perspective she proposes is the psychological contract. It refers to the expectations of employer and employee, which operate over and above the formal contract of employment (Argyris, 1960). This would suggest that it constitutes mainly the implicit elements of the relationship. A formal contract by contrast has a largely explicit nature. The psychological contract held by an employee consists of perceptions and beliefs about reciprocal obligations between employer and employee (Rousseau, 1998a; Schein, 1965).

Guest, in considering why the psychological contract is worth taking seriously gave three reasons, namely that “it captures the spirit of the times”, going on to say that “we now live in an era of employment relations rather than industrial relations” (1998, p.659). The second reason was the fact that he considered the Psychological Contract to have the ability to focus attention on the distribution of power and lastly he believes it has the potential to integrate a number of key organisational concepts. It is primarily for this reason that the psychological contract would seem to be a good construct to make use of to help create a better

understanding of the expectations and perceptions that exist between employees and employers.

Conway and Briner (2005) also identified several important, and what they describe as refreshing aspects of the psychological contract concept that do not feature strongly in other ideas used to understand behaviour at work. There is, in their opinion, a clear focus on the employment relationship, contrary to many other approaches. Secondly they maintain that this relationship is considered in terms of an exchange and lastly they highlight that because the psychological contract is about perceptions, subjective, existing in the eye of the beholder of a reciprocal nature of exchange and it implies that employee behaviour is best understood as an ongoing and dynamic process in which employees actively participate.

The Development of the Psychological Contracting Concept

What do we really know about what the psychological contract is and how it works? Conway and Briner (2005) contend that the two most dominant areas in this field are the contents of the psychological contract, and how the psychological contract affects work behaviour. The latter is more in line with the focus of this research project. The psychological contract concept has been around for the better part of half a century with many acknowledging Argyris as first formally using the term 'psychological contract' in 1960 (e.g. Roehling, 1996; Herriot and Pemberton, 1997; Guest, 1998a; Conway and Briner, 2005).

In reviewing the literature on the psychological contract it also becomes apparent that the development of the construct has enjoyed two distinct periods of progress. The first period lasting from around 1958 to 1989, started with the first recognised thoughts on the subject

being expressed by Karl Menninger as quoted by Roehling (1996) as having made a substantial contribution to the origin of the psychological contract construct. Conway and Briner (2005) also recognised Menninger as first introducing the idea that psychological contracts are involved in a range of interpersonal exchanges in his book *Theory of Psychoanalytic Technique*, focusing in particular on the explicit and unspoken contract between patient and psychotherapist. These early days of the development of the psychological contract were however characterised by somewhat disparate views on the subject with “little recognition by researchers that the psychological contract has been conceptualised in a number of ways” (Conway and Briner, 2005, p.19).

The second distinct period of research for the psychological contract was punctuated by what has now become known as Rousseau’s seminal work (e.g. Roehling, 1996; Conway and Briner, 2005) in 1989. Since then over a 100 articles, nearly all empirical (Conway and Briner, 2005) have been published on the psychological contract. Roehling maintains “the focus on promise based obligations sets Rousseau’s conceptualisation apart from every conceptualisation of the psychological contract that preceded her” (1996, p.205).

Defining the psychological contract

Although there is still some debate on the exact definition of the psychological contract there are several definitional terms on which many authors concur. There is also a consensus that the most widely accepted definition of the psychological contract, and hence the one adopted for this paper, is that of Rousseau’s “in which the psychological contract is considered to be an employee’s subjective understanding of promissory-based reciprocal exchanges between him or her self and the organisation” (Conway and Briner, 2005, p.35) which despite

criticisms has remained the most consistently in favour. See table 1 for a brief chronological list of the definitions of the psychological contract to demonstrate how it has evolved over time.

Insert table 1 here.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT IN PRACTICE

Conway and Briner, in trying to determine how the psychological contract is used in practice, noted, “we know very little about how or indeed whether practitioners use this concept” (2005, p.17). The only way they could pragmatically try to build an understanding of how much is practically understood of the psychological contract was to review the content of articles in practitioner publications. They concluded that there were three themes that emerged. Firstly practitioners seemed to be intrigued with the “old” and “new” psychological contract. Secondly were the considerations for whom the psychological contract could assist in understanding the effects of large-scale organisational change such as downsizing or restructuring. Lastly Conway and Briner (2005) saw a theme emerging of how changing government policy would affect the psychological contract. This would suggest that very little has been done to practically understand the psychological contract in what is becoming an increasingly “normal” employment arrangement constituting an increasing number of “contingent” employees, the concept of which is discussed later. “The popularity of outsourcing as a business practice is reflected in a substantial increase in the size of the contractor industry and the growth in the number of long-term contracted employees” (Coyle-Shapiro, Morrow and Kessler, 2006, p.562) and they maintain that “scant research has been

conducted on the organisations and employees affected by these arrangements” (Coyle-Shapiro, Morrow and Kessler, 2006, p.561).

The Polysem-ployee

To date the research into the psychological contract has overwhelmingly concentrated on more ‘traditional’ employee contracts focusing on those that involve the longer-term view associated with ‘full time’ employees. McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher suggested, “consequently, what we do know about psychological contracts may or may not extend into the realm of less traditional work arrangements. This apparent limitation is a weakness of the research area” (1998, p.699).

Another problem in this area has been the increasing number of definitions and categorisations of contingent workers. This is likely to prove increasingly more difficult over time and McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher (1998) suggest that focus be placed rather on a dimensional approach rather than focusing on the characteristics and classification of the contingent worker themselves.

Generally speaking, the contingent workforce consists of any worker that does not have either an implicit or explicit understanding that employment will be continuous or ongoing, assuming satisfactory performance by both the individual worker and the organisation (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998). See table 2 for examples of contingent employment arrangements.

Insert table 2 here

Contingent work in this paper shall be taken to include various types of work undertaken by employees that are required to fulfil “any job in which an individual does not have an explicit or implicit contract, long-term employment or one in which the minimum hours worked can vary in a non-systematic manner” (Polivka and Nardone, 1998, p.11) with regards to fulfilling a client obligation on behalf of an employing organisation for one or many clients, hence referred to as a polysem-ployee, reflecting the multitude of relationships that these employees may have in their work environment. This view would be considered appropriate when considering the nature of the relationship between the employee and the client organisation for which they work although not necessarily their legal ‘employing’ company and as such shall be taken to mean this.

This is typical of triangular relations of this nature that pose unique challenges and opportunities for example “issues of who should provide training to workers emerge as critical public policy questions as well as matters of concern to employers and their employees” (Kalleberg, 2000, p.358).

The knowledge worker

Specifically in this research most of the sample can be considered knowledge workers. “Many companies are beginning to feel that the knowledge of their employees is their most valuable asset “(Davenport, 2005, p.187). The traditional economy, during the industrialisation era, was capital intensive and required organisations with vast resources at their disposal to drive economies forward. Employees were seen in the traditional economic

sense as one of the inputs required to produce physical outputs. Today however, we find ourselves increasingly in a ‘knowledge’ economy in which knowledge is the product.

Knowledge based work activities are somewhat different from traditional forms of work. Despres and Hiltrop (1996) describe the difference in the following way as shown in the table 3 below.

Insert table 3 here

What is clear from this is that the link between the employee and their employing organisation is becoming increasingly more tenuous. They will job hop easily, going where they feel they can achieve the greatest satisfaction (Tissen *et al.*, 2000). This has implications for employing organisations in the triangular relationship, both positive and negative. The new breed of knowledge worker is looking for opportunities to increase their knowledge and by joining a consultancy or some other organisation that offers opportunities to work in many different environments, while maintaining some sense of a ‘normal’ employment contract offers definite benefits to both parties. However, there will always be the danger that the employee often pledges greater allegiance to their areas of expertise than to their employers (Despres and Hiltrop, 1996).

Psychological Contracts and the polysem-ployee

How employees view their psychological contracts between their ‘legal’ employer and their client organisation, what is referred to as the multiple-agency effect (McLean Parks, Kidder

and Gallagher, 1998; Coyle-Shapiro, Morrow and Kessler, 2006) or triangular system of employment (Kalleberg, 2000), is likely to be substantially different. The nature of this type of contingent work has some specific characteristics that are worth bearing in mind, namely they normally have a longer time horizon as the employee has some sense of belonging to a employing organisation and is thus free to concentrate more on the relational aspects of the client relationship and is less likely to view it as purely a transactional relationship. Employees who work under these multi-agency arrangements are the focus of this study.

In examining the Psychological contract, researchers have taken several different directions broadly speaking in three distinct areas, the content of the psychological contract (e.g. Rousseau, 2000), the study of the breach of fulfilment of the psychological contract (e.g. Robinson and Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau, 2000; Conway and Brinier, 2002), and violation (e.g. Robinson and Morrison, 2000). However McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher (1998) argue that it may be more fruitful to examine the underlying dimensions of the psychological contract. One of the reasons for this as discussed earlier is that there is no clear consensus on what constitutes a contingent worker and thus makes comparisons between studies that endeavour to classify works into categories impossible and it is hard to generalise these studies conclusions.

DIMENSIONS OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT

McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher (1998) building on the work of Rousseau and McLean Parks (1993) in which they identified five core characteristics or dimensions of the psychological contract specifically: stability, scope, tangibility, focus and time frame

suggested multi-agency and violation. They also noted that previous research has also identified particularism (i.e. the nature of the labour, skills, talents and loyalty) as an important dimension to the psychological contract (McClean Parks and Smith, 1993, 1998), which it is felt is also of significance to this study due to the characteristics of a knowledge worker highlighted previously and the fact that it is felt that the majority of employees included in this study could be classified as knowledge workers.

These dimensions are consistent with four of those presented by Sels, Janssens and Brande (2004) being tangibility, scope, stability and time frame to which they offered two further alternatives, exchange symmetry and contract level. Contract level was excluded on account of the fact that it refers to the degree to which employees perceive their contract to be individually versus collectively regulated as it is felt that due to the detachment of employees from their employers makes it for unions to organise and that the effects of triangular employment relations on collective bargaining and unionisation are particularly devastating (Kalleberg, 2000). This suggests that contingent employees as defined in this study would see their contracts being solely individually regulated. Exchange symmetry was not included as it refers to the degree to which the employee perceives the unequal employment relationship as acceptable (Sels, Janssens and Brande, 2004) and as it is not the intention of this study to consider cultural variables it was felt this would fall outside the scope of this study.

Although concerns have been raised about this approach, for example the list of features appears to be intuitive rather than theoretically derived (Guest, 1998) there has as yet been no rejection either of the approach or of the dimensions presented here. Conway and Briner (2005) maintain that due to the potential of this approach for comparing different types of

psychological contracts and employment relationships it clearly warrants further investigation.

Stability

Stability - the openness of contracts to constant review (Lee and Faller, 2005). It refers to the amount of changes either party can make to the psychological contract without consulting the other party or “the extent to which the terms of the psychological contract can change outside of an explicit or implicit renegotiation of the contract” (Conway and Briner, 2005). It is the degree to which the psychological contract is limited in terms of its ability to evolve and change without an implied renegotiation of the terms (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998). Thus a stable contract would suggest that no changes would be able to be made to the psychological contract without the express permission of both parties and an unstable contract would be able to be changed by either party unilaterally. A stable psychological contract could also be considered inflexible as apposed to a flexible unstable psychological contract (Sels, Janssens and Van Den Brande, 2004). Key to this is the element of trust. Robinson defined trust as “one's expectations, assumptions, or beliefs about the likelihood that another's future actions will be beneficial, favourable, or at least not detrimental to one's interests. As a social construct, trust lies at the heart of relationships and contracts” (1996, p.575). Trust could be a very good proxy for stability.

Scope

Scope can be considered “the degree to which work influences non-work life” (Lee and Faller, 2005). It is the extent to which the boundary between one's employment relationship and other aspects of one's life is seen as permeable (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher,

1998). The scope could be considered narrow or broad (Sels, Janssens and Van Den Brande, 2004) as seen by an employers concern for employees activities outside of the workplace or an employees involvement in extra role behaviour i.e. participating in voluntary company activities outside of normal work roles. A narrow scope would suggest that an employee sees a clear delineation between their work responsibilities and personal roles. It could be viewed as an indication of the level of commitment. Lee and Faller (2005) maintain that contingent work is generally more demarcated from the employee's personal life, which suggests a more transactional orientation, which may be true of the relationship between the employee and the client company.

Tangibility

Tangibility can be seen on a continuum as tangible or intangible (Sels, Janssens and Van Den Brande, 2004). Tangibility is the degree to which the employee perceives the terms of the contract as unambiguously defined and explicitly specified, and clearly observable to third parties (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998). The relationship between the client company and the contingent employee would tend to be more tangible due to the explicit nature of the work that normally forms the basis of the relationship whereas the relationship with the employing company would typically be intangible due to the typically longer time horizon and broader scope. Contingent workers often fill roles or positions that are more easily monitored by the client organisation and often preform the role away from their employing organisation at the clients' site. As such their psychological contract may be perceived as being far more tangible with the client organisation.

Focus

Focus is the relative emphasis of the psychological contract on the socio-emotional versus economic concerns (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998). In other words does the employee place greater importance on the financial rewards of a psychological contract or on the social aspects such as networking or respect? Contingent workers are less likely to expect or receive socio-emotional rewards, given their tenuous attachment to the client organisation (Rousseau, 1995). However, they are likely to look for this from their employing organisation. This term could be considered on a scale to be represented by either a narrow focus or opposing wide focus. This is similar in context to transactional versus relational contracting.

Transactional contracting results in the employer explicitly and implicitly promising to provide specific, monetary remuneration for certain services performed by the employee or contingent worker. This results in a short contract-like agreement between the two parties (Strong, 2003). In this case it is often brokered by a third party, hence the triangular relationship. The relational contracting by contrast emphasises a socio-emotive interaction between the employee and employer (Strong, 2003). This is more likely to develop between the employing organisation and the contingent worker as defined in this study due to the typically longer time period of the relationship.

Time Frame

Here two subcomponents are defined, namely Duration and Precision. Duration of the time frame is the extent to which the employee perceives the relationship to be short- or long-term. Precision of the time frame is the extent to which the employee perceives the duration of the

relationship to be finite (defined) or indefinite (undefined) (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998). In general it is thought that contingent workers are likely to have short time frames with finite terms when it comes to their relationship with their client organisations as opposed to the longer term undefined relationship with their employing organisation. The moderating factor here is that it is thought that the longer-term relationships on both subcomponents increase employee commitment and extra role behaviour.

Particularism

Particularism is the degree to which the employee perceives the resources exchanged within the contract as unique and non-substitutable (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998). For example, a psychological contract high on particularism may be where an employee has a unique set of skills, knowledge and abilities that the organisation could not find elsewhere (Conway and Briner, 2005). Lee and Faller (2005) maintain that particularism increases the likelihood of future interaction among the contracting parties and therefore the relational nature of the contract because specificity leads to a lack of substitutability of the resource (the worker in this case), and also necessitates increased communication. This causes a problem for the employing organisation in the triangular relationship.

Multi-Agency

A multiple agency relationship exists when an act by an employee simultaneously fulfils obligations to two or more entities, with full knowledge and sanction from both (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998). This definition excludes employees who simply hold two jobs that are mutually exclusive such as employees who hold two part-time jobs. McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher (1998) suggest that all else equal, multiple agency relationships

will increase commitment by diffusing an imbalance in one relationship. This may however highlight or cause a perception of imbalances in the relative terms of the psychological contract between the employee and the client and employer organisation. There are also other downsides such as having more than one ‘boss’, conflicting demands and overload. This is very relevant given the nature of the contingent employee relationship in the triangular relationship if the success of the psychological contract with their employer is perceived to be conditional on the success of the psychological contract with the client.

THE IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH

According to the ITWeb/CareerWeb 2007 IT Salary Survey, “A severe shortage in experienced IT skills fuels job-hopping, with over 50% of respondents having looked for a new job in SA, and about 5% ready to take up an overseas offer” and “Overall salaries are up by 25% on last year’s sample”, which might suggest that there are market forces driving turnover but this is at odds with the reported findings that “the top three areas of dissatisfaction within current employment environments were company culture, career, and boss, with 48%, 35% and 27% of the vote respectively”. This would suggest that there are many other reasons employees chose to leave a company which is born out by their comment that “although remuneration is still a concern for employees, these results point to far softer issues, which companies could work on as part of their retention strategies”. It is for these reasons that a better understanding of the employee-employer relationship in this industry is so important to organisations.

Currently there is a perception that staff turnover in the IT services industry (specifically in SA) is high by other industry standards and there are several theories as to why this is. The impact of this is thought to be an even greater threat to small and medium sized IT services business as it threatens their very existence. According to the South African Department of Labour's Labour Market Review (2005, p.30) "The most prominent areas of perceived concern were a lack of 'IT professional skills' followed by a lack of 'general IT user skills'. This suggests that specific/technical and general IT skills are thought to be underdeveloped within the professional occupations, and general IT skills are viewed as lacking across occupational categories." It is this 'lack' of skills that highlights the importance of trying to come to a better understanding of employee-employer relations in the IT industry within South Africa to try and assist in improving relations to the benefit of all concerned.

These trends coupled with the acknowledged changes in the employee contract (e.g. Roehling, Cavanaugh, Moynihan and Boswell, 2000) from the 'old' to the 'new', have created a great need for a better understanding of the relational dynamics that exist, especially in the triangular relationship that exists between the employee and their respective employing and client organisation.

This study endeavours to shed some light on the triangular relations that are so typical of the increasingly 'out sourced' (e.g. Coyle-Shapiro, Marrow, Kessler, 2006) work environment in which we find ourselves and in so doing contribute to the knowledge base in the area of psychological contract 'dimensions' (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998; Sels, Jannssens and Van Den Brande, 2004).

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

Our research aimed to determine if there were any differences in perceptions of the various groupings in terms of their:

- Perceptions of their psychological contracts with their employers,
- Perceptions of their psychological contracts with their clients.
- A difference in the way the psychological contract is viewed between the polysem-employee and their client organisation and their employing organisation from their perspective.

METHODOLOGY

A survey using several (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; L. Sels *et al.* 2004; Hopkins & Weathington, 2006; Rousseau, 2000) pre-tested quantitative questions (Zikmund, 1997) was designed and administered via a single combined questionnaire. Using a convenience sampling method (Zikmund, 1997) ten prominent IT consultancies and service providers were approached to participate in the research of which 7 eventually administered the questionnaire to a total of over 800 employees. The questionnaire was made available in both an online (website) and off-line (Excel spreadsheet) format. It was felt that due to the nature of the industry having a web-based questionnaire would increase possible response rates and would be the most appropriate form due to the assumed computer literacy of the sample. The Excel format was provided to accommodate those who may not have easy or reliable access to the Internet to allow it to be completed in an offline manner. Data was obtained from a total of 101 respondents (26 via Excel and 75 via online responses) giving a response rate of

a little over 12% which is not out of line with other response rates in this industry of 16.2% and is within the range of other mail surveys analysed as part of the study by Anne-Wil Harzing (2000). One of the contributing factors for the response rate could be the number of questionnaires received by the participants (Harzing, 2000) as many of the participating organisations have a number of annual surveys they participate in.

For consistency all questions used a five-point rating scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree). The level of trust (stability) was measured using a number of measures. The first an existing four item scale and has an alpha coefficient of 0.93 (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). These were similar to a scale used by Hopkins & Weathington (2006) with a reported alpha coefficient of 0.85. Reverse scoring questions were excluded to avoid any potential confusion in responses on the part of the respondents. Also used to measure stability (employer), was a three item scale with a alpha coefficient of 0.70, referring to the extent to which it is the employer's obligation to attend to earlier agreed arrangements (high stability) and three employee flexibility item scale with a alpha coefficient of 0.79, referring to the extent to which employees feel obliged to adopt a flexible and tolerant attitude towards internal organizational changes. The questionnaire also included two other items from this scale.

The individuals perception of scope in the relationships was assessed using five items (L. Sels *et al.* 2004) with three of the five items having an alpha coefficient of 0.80 (employer scope) which measures the extent to which the individual expects to be treated as a 'person' and not merely as an economic resource (broad scope). The employee scope, with three items with an alpha coefficient of 0.81 measures the extent to which employees will personally invest in the organisation (broad scope).

For tangibility three employer tangibility items with an alpha coefficient of 0.82, measuring the employer obligations regarding the clarity and transparency of the employee's rights, obligations and mutual arrangements (high tangibility) were used. The second three-item factor with an alpha coefficient of 0.78-employee tangibility, measures the extent to which employees will be clear and open with regard to all aspects affecting the employment relationship (high tangibility).

For focus seven items measuring the transactional nature of the relationship and seven items measuring the relational nature of the relationship as defined in Conway and Briner (2005) were used. The measures come from Raja, Johns and Ntalianis (2004) and are an abbreviated version of Millward and Hopkins (1998). Raja, Johns and Ntalianis (2004) reported alpha coefficient of 0.77 and 0.79 respectively for these. See table 4 for scale details and internal reliability.

Insert table 4 here

DATA ANALYSIS

The Data was analysed using the NCSS system. Descriptive and inferential techniques were used. ANOVA, Chi Square, and Pearson correlations were used at the 0.05 significance level (Zikmund, 1997). Significant differences are indicated with an asterisk *. Items significant at 0.1 are also indicated with a double asterisk **.

Some of the limitations of this research include cautioning against assuming representivity as the sample was drawn predominantly from Gauteng. We cannot claim causality, as this was not a longitudinal study. The use of a cross-sectional questionnaire survey is designed to detect associations between attitudes at a very general level (Conway & Briner, 2005) and thus has limited use in studying the evolution of the psychological contract content.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Data from 101 usable questionnaires revealed the following findings. Because of some missing data on the questionnaires, some totals do not always equal 101.

Demographic groupings

The Demographics of the respondents can be seen bellow in table 5.

Insert table 5 here

Stability

Almost without exception the medians of the responses, as can be seen in table 6, would suggest that the respondents view the relation that they have with their employer no different to that which they have with their clients from the perspective of the degree of stability, suggesting a high degree of trust with both their employer and client organisations. This would also reflect that they consider their psychological contracts to be unstable and thus flexible.

Insert table 6 here

Scope

When comparing the medians for the factor of scope as seen in table 7, around half of the questions indicate that there is a difference in the responses with respect to perceptions as expressed in relation to either the employer or the client. Without exception the medians of the responses that differed were all in greater agreement with the statements in favour of the employer, which would suggest that the polysem-ployee participates in more extra role behaviour with their employer than their clients.

Insert table 7 here

Tangibility

The degree of tangibility between polysem-employees and their employers was indicated to be higher than with clients with just over a half of the median responses again in favour of the employer. This was not entirely unexpected as most employers in the industry follow fairly formal employment practices and conclude offers of employment and employment contracts in writing. However it was thought that they might have had a more tangible relationship with their clients due to the often explicit and short-term nature of many assignments however this was not the case with a third of respondents spending in excess of one and a half years at or supporting clients.

Insert table 8 here

Focus

In the case of the factor of focus less than one third of the medians of the responses to the questions as shown in table 9 differed, suggesting that there is very little difference between the ways respondents view their relation with their employers and their clients from the perspective of monetary and non-monetary perspective. The median analysis would suggest that there was leaning on the part of the respondents more towards non-monetary aspects of the psychological contract and that growth and future benefits or socio-emotional (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998) were more important.

Insert table 9 here

Demographic analysis

The probability level in all of the following tables is the output of the ANOVA for between group differences on the factor scores. Significant differences at 0.05 are indicated with an asterisk and significant differences at 0.1 are indicated with a double asterisk. All questions used a five-point rating scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).

Table 10 shows the factor scores (means) for the three demographic groups for tenure with employing organisation for questions that revealed a significant difference only.

Insert table 10 here

Table 11 shows the factor scores (means) for the three demographic groups for the average tenure with a client organisation for factors that revealed a significant difference only.

Insert table 11 here

A cross tabulation of the three groupings by tenure with employer and the three groupings by tenure with client was drawn up. A Chi Square (Zikmund, 1997) test of dependency on the resulting data revealed a chi-square statistic of 27.2 at 4 degrees of freedom, which had a probability level of 0.000018, indicating that there is a significant relationship between the tenure of employment and the tenure with the client. Cross tabulations were then compared by the various demographic groupings and the groupings for tenure with employer and clients. This revealed significant relationships between the age groupings of sample and both tenure with client and tenure with employer with a chi-square statistic of 13 at 4 degrees of freedom, which had a probability level of 0.011047 and a chi-square statistic of 14.5 at 4 degrees of freedom, which had a probability level of 0.005949 respectively. This suggests that this may have something to do with the life stage of employees with younger employees being overrepresented in the short-term (0-6 months) assignments space. The older groups were over represented in the longer term assignments suggesting that more senior staff tend to be spending longer periods engaged at clients and are more stable (less turnover at the client).

Table 12 shows the factor scores (means) for the three demographic groups for gender for factors that revealed a significant difference only.

Insert table 12 here

Table 13 shows the factor scores (means) for the three demographic groups for the average number of client organisations served at any given time for factors that revealed a significant difference only.

Insert table 13 here

Table 14 shows the factor scores (means) for the three demographic groups for age for factors that revealed a significant difference only.

Insert table 14 here

Other demographic groupings had six or fewer factors with a significant difference out of ninety and it was felt that they did not warrant further investigation.

CONCLUSIONS

The psychological contract is a complex construct, that although enjoying renewed interest is by no means fully understood. When considering the increasing rate at which the nature of the employer-employee relationship is changing coupled with the added dimension of the contingent or polysem-ployee it is clear that there is a need to increase our understanding of the dynamics at play. Despite some differences in the factors between the responses to how the employer and client organisations are viewed by enlarge the relationships from a psychological contract point of view were remarkably similar and positive from the employer's point of view. Most respondents expressed a feeling that their psychological

contracts were unstable or flexible in nature suggesting that they are open to changes in expectations of work roles or functions without the explicit need to renegotiate contracts in writing. They also indicated that they have the same attitude towards clients.

The degree to which the respondents viewed their employment relationship and other aspects of their life, could be interpreted as being broad in scope with their employer, and less so with their client. This would also suggest that they do not see a clear delineation between aspects of their life and that of the role they play in the employing organisation. This would be viewed as positive from the perspective of the employer as it indicates that respondents felt more engaged with their employing organisation than with their client organisations.

The psychological contracts of the respondents were indicated to be more tangible between their employing organisations than that of their client organisations. This would suggest that the respondents feel that their employers are better at explicitly and unambiguously defining their expectations and that they feel they reciprocate. This was unexpected as it was thought that the longer term relationship with an employer may lead to it being less and less tangible over time as both parties make allowances. Again this could be viewed as positive for the employer as there appears to be less ambiguity in their relationship with employees and thus perhaps a stronger bond than with client organisations.

There were more positive outcomes for the organisations when looking at the focus of the psychological contract. The respondents generally indicated that they felt their relationships with their employing and client organisations were more relational in nature. This would suggest that non-monetary issues are of greater importance to them, for example long term gains rather than purely higher remuneration as expressed by this years ITWeb survey. This

would suggest that it is still important for employing organisations to focus on company cultures and career development.

Generally speaking though there were not many differences in the opinions expressed between the demographic groups and the only noted dependency was that of the age groups of the respondents with the younger group spending less time at each client and older respondents having longer client engagements which would suggest a life stage issue.

As with many of these studies an alternative approach, for example a longitudinal or daily diary study (Conway and Briner 2002), may help to overcome several of its limitations. This study did not make any attempt to understand factors outside the organisation and future efforts to understand how client cultures and values affect the psychological contract in contrast to the employing organisations would be of great interest.

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TABLES

Table 1: Chronological definitions of psychological contracts (Conway and Briner, 2005, p.21).

Definition of the psychological contract	Author, year
'Since the foremen realize the employees in this system will tend to produce optimally under passive leadership, and since the employees agree, a relationship may be hypothesized to evolve between the employees and the foremen which might be called the "psychological work contract".'	Argyris, 1960, p.97
'A series of mutual expectations of which the parties to the relationship may not themselves be dimly aware but which nonetheless govern their relationship to each other.'	Levinson <i>et al.</i> , 1962, p.21
'An implicit contract between an individual and his organization which specifies what each expect to give and receive from each other in the relationship.'	Kotter, 1973, p.92
'The notion of a psychological contract implies that there is an unwritten set of expectations operating at all times between every member of an organization and the various managers and others in that organization.'	Schein, 1980, p.22
'The term psychological contract refers to an individual's belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between the focal person and another party. Key issues here include the belief that a promise has been made and a consideration offered in exchange for it, binding the parties to some set of reciprocal obligations.'	Rousseau, 1989, p.123
'In simple terms, the psychological contract encompasses the actions	Rousseau and

employees believe are expected of them and what response they expect in return from the employer.'	Greller, 1994, p.386
'The psychological contract is individual beliefs, shaped by the organization, regarding terms of an exchange agreement between the individual and their organization.'	Rousseau, 1995, p.9
'The perceptions of both parties to the employment relationship, organization and individual, of the obligations implied in the relationship.'	Herriot and Pemberton, 1997, p.45
'An employee's beliefs about the reciprocal obligations between that employee and his or her organization, where these obligations are based on perceived promises and are not necessarily recognised by agents of the organization.'	Morrison and Robinson, 1997, p.229

Table 2: Working definitions of contingent employment arrangements (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998, p.702).

Exemplar categories	Definition
Core	Permanent full-time and part-time workers with either an implicit or explicit understanding that employment will be continuous or ongoing
Floats	Full-time employees who are moved around within different departments or divisions within the organisation as a regular part of their job
Networked	Individuals whose work is performed outside the boundaries of their home organisation
In-house temporaries	Workers hired by the organisation to meet variable scheduling needs, listed in a 'registry' (i.e., performs function of temporary agency)
Direct-hire or seasonal temporaries	Workers for whom organisations advertise and recruit for the purpose of filling position vacancies as needed
Leased workers	Employee leasing company effectively 'rents' an entire workforce to a client employer
Temporary firm workers	The temporary is the employer, rather than the client organisation who utilises the workforce
Subcontracted workers	Work is transferred to another organisation whose employees perform the tasks on or off the premises of the client company
Consultants	Organisation either contracts with a professional consulting firm or with independent consultants for the completion of a project
Independent contractors	Brought into the firm to supply specific skills, from manual labour such as plumbing to software and other engineering applications

Table 3: A Comparison of knowledge work and traditional work (Despres and Hiltrop, 1996)

	Traditional work	Knowledge work
Career formation	Internal to the organisation through training, development, rules and prescriptive career schemes	External to the organisation through years of education and socialisation
Loyalty	To the organisation and its career systems	To professions, networks and peers
Skills/Knowledge	Narrow and often functional	Specialised and deep, but often with diffuse peripheral foci
Locus of work	Around individuals	In groups and projects
Focus of work	Task, objectives, performance	Customers, problems, issues
Skill obsolescence	General	Rapid
Activity/feedback cycles	Primary and of an immediate nature	Lengthy from a business perspective
Performance measures	Task deliverables	Process effectiveness
Impact on company success	Little but regular and dependable Many small contributions that support the master plan	Potentially great but often erratic A few major contributions of strategic and long term importance

Table 4: Scale details and internal reliability statistics

Scales	Source	No of items	This sample α
Psychological contract			
Perspective of employer relationship			
Stability	Robinson & Rousseau (1994)	4	0.83
	L. Sels <i>et al.</i> (2004)	3	0.76
	L. Sels <i>et al.</i> (2004)	5	0.82
Scope	L. Sels <i>et al.</i> (2004)	5	0.89
	L. Sels <i>et al.</i> (2004)	5	0.69
Tangibility	L. Sels <i>et al.</i> (2004)	5	0.77
	L. Sels <i>et al.</i> (2004)	4	0.75
Focus	Raja, Johns & Ntalianis (2004)	7	0.78
	Raja, Johns & Ntalianis (2004)	7	0.82
Perspective of client relationship			
Stability	Robinson & Rousseau (1994)	4	0.82
	L. Sels <i>et al.</i> (2004)	3	0.74
	L. Sels <i>et al.</i> (2004)	5	0.86
Scope	L. Sels <i>et al.</i> (2004)	5	0.90
	L. Sels <i>et al.</i> (2004)	5	0.69
Tangibility	L. Sels <i>et al.</i> (2004)	5	0.75
	L. Sels <i>et al.</i> (2004)	4	0.67
Focus	Raja, Johns & Ntalianis (2004)	7	0.79
	Raja, Johns & Ntalianis (2004)	7	0.77

Table 5: Sample demographics

Source	N	Cumulative %
Tenure with employing organisation	Med = 24 months	
0-12 Months (Short term)	35	34.65
13-36 Months (Medium Term)	30	64.36
>37 Months (Long Term)	36	100
	101	
Tenure with client organisations	Med = 12 months	
0-6 Months (Short term)	36	34.65
7-18 Months (Medium term)	31	64.36
>19 Months (Long term)	34	100
	101	
Average No. of Clients serviced at one time		
1	38	37.62
2 to 3	37	74.26
4 or more	26	100
	101	
Highest level of Education		
Primary and secondary education	26	25.74
Tertiary diploma (eg Technikon)	23	48.51
Tertiary education	52	100
	101	
Age Groups		
20-30	46	45.54
31-40	28	73.27
>41	27	100
	101	
Race		
Asian	15	14.85
Black	10	24.75



Coloured	2	26.73
White	74	100
	101	
Gender		
Female	68	67.33
Male	33	100
	101	

Table 6: Medians comparisons of stability factor

	Employer perspective		Client perspective	
Stability		Median		Median
My employer is open and upfront with me	4	4	4	My client is open and upfront with me
I believe my employer has high integrity	4	4	4	I believe my client has high integrity
In general, I believe my employer's motivations and intentions are good	4	4	4	In general, I believe my client's motivations and intentions are good
I can expect my employer to treat me in a consistent and predictable fashion	4	4	4	I can expect my client to treat me in a consistent and predictable fashion
My employer sticks to agreements despite changing circumstances	4	*	3	My client sticks to agreements despite changing circumstances
My employer is flexible in applying agreements	4	4	4	My client is flexible in applying agreements
My employer considers made agreements	4	4	4	My client considers made agreements
I adjust easily to changes in my employer's work situation	4	4	4	I adjust easily to changes in my client's work situation
I tolerate change when introduce in my employer's firm	4	4	4	I tolerate change when introduce in my client's firm
I am able to deal with unpredictable events in my work situation with my employer	4	4	4	I am able to deal with unpredictable events in my work situation with my client
I adopt a flexible attitude with my employer	4	4	4	I adopt a flexible attitude with my client
I accept if agreements are being revised with my employer	4	4	4	I accept if agreements are being revised with my client

Table 7: Medians comparisons of scope factor

Scope	Employer perspective		Client perspective	
	Median	Median	Median	Median
My employer personally supports me in difficult periods	4	*	3	My client personally supports me in difficult periods
My employer appreciates me for what I do and for who I am	4		4	My client appreciates me for what I do and for who I am
My employer considers not only the end result but also my personal effort	4	*	3	My client considers not only the end result but also my personal effort
My employer treats me as a person, not as a number	4		4	My client treats me as a person, not as a number
My employer allows me to be myself within their firm	4	*	3	My client allows me to be myself within their firm
I am concerned about my employer's firm even outside working hours	4	*	3.5	I am concerned about my client's firm even outside working hours
I Work extra hours when necessary	4		4	I Work extra hours when necessary
I Bring own ideas and creativity into my employer's firm	4		4	I Bring own ideas and creativity into my client's firm
I want to develop myself in my employer's firm	4	*	3	I want to develop myself in my client's firm
I invest time and energy in my employer's firm	4		4	I invest time and energy in my client's firm

Table 8: Medians comparisons of tangibility factor

	Employer perspective		Client perspective	
Tangibility	Median		Median	
My employer sets agreements regarding my work down in writing	3		3	My client sets agreements regarding my work down in writing
My employer makes specific agreements regarding my work	4	*	3.5	My client makes specific agreements regarding my work
My employer is very clear about opportunities for advancement in this firm	3		3	My client is very clear about opportunities for advancement in this firm
My employer specifically describes the performance appraisal criteria used in this firm	4	*	3	My client specifically describes the performance appraisal criteria used in this firm
My employer unambiguously describes my rights within this firm	4	*	3	My client unambiguously describes my rights within this firm
I Clearly state what is important to me in my job with my employer	4	*	3	I Clearly state what is important to me in my job with my client
I explicitly indicate my career wishes and plans to my employer	4	*	3	I explicitly indicate my career wishes and plans to my client
I clearly indicate if problems arise to my employer	4		4	I clearly indicate if problems arise to my client
I make explicit agreements with my boss at my employer about work	4		4	I make explicit agreements with my boss at my client about work

Table 9: Medians comparisons of focus factor

Focus	Employer perspective		Client perspective	
		Median		Median
I work only the hours set out in my contract with my employer and no more	2	2	I work only the hours set out in my contract with my client and no more	2
My commitment to my employer is defined by my contract	2	2	My commitment to my client is defined by my contract	2
My loyalty to my employer is contract specific	2	2	My loyalty to my client is contract specific	2
I prefer to work a strictly defined set of working hours for my employer	2	2	I prefer to work a strictly defined set of working hours for my client	2
I only carry out what is necessary to get the job done for my employer	2	2	I only carry out what is necessary to get the job done for my client	2
I do not identify with my employer's goals	2	2	I do not identify with my client's goals	2
I work to achieve the purely short-term goals of my job for my employer	2	2	I work to achieve the purely short-term goals of my job for my client	2
I expect to grow in my employers organisation	4	*	I expect to grow in my clients organisation	3
I feel part of a team in my employer's organisation	4	*	I feel part of a team in my client's organisation	3
I have a reasonable chance of promotion if I work hard for my employer	4	*	I have a reasonable chance of promotion if I work hard for my client	3
To me working for my employer is like being a member of a family	3	3	To me working for my client is like being a member of a family	3



My employer develops/rewards employees who work hard and exert themselves	4	*	3	My client develops/rewards employees who work hard and exert themselves
I feel my employer reciprocates the effort put in by me	3		3	I feel my client reciprocates the effort put in by me
I am motivated to contribute 100 per cent to my employer in return for future benefits	4		4	I am motivated to contribute 100 per cent to my client in return for future benefits

Table 10: Tenure with employing organisation

Factors	0-12 Months	13-36 Months	>37 Months	Probability	
With relation to employer					
My employer sets agreements regarding my work down in writing	3.74	3.27	3.06	0.011	*
With relation to client/s					
My client sticks to agreements despite changing circumstances	2.74	3.00	3.37	0.014	*
My client is flexible in applying agreements	3.20	3.38	3.57	0.084	**
I tolerate change when introduce in my client's firm	3.86	4.17	4.09	0.079	**
I am able to deal with unpredictable events in my work situation with my client	3.80	4.10	4.23	0.064	**
My client personally supports me in difficult periods	2.60	3.21	3.29	0.012	*
My client appreciates me for what I do and for who I am	3.06	3.34	3.71	0.024	*
My client treats me as a person, not as a number	3.00	3.21	3.83	0.002	*
I am concerned about my client's firm even outside working hours	3.20	3.52	3.59	0.073	**
My client sets agreements regarding my work down in writing	3.29	3.64	3.06	0.051	**
My client is very clear about opportunities for advancement in this firm	2.38	2.86	2.82	0.039	*
I explicitly indicate my career wishes and plans to my client	2.29	2.72	2.68	0.087	**
I feel my client reciprocates the effort put in by me	2.53	3.10	2.91	0.045	*

Table 11: Tenure with client organisation

Factors	0-6 Months	7-18 Months	>19 Months	Probability	
With relation to employer					
I believe my employer has high integrity	4.19	3.97	3.71	0.030	*
My employer sticks to agreements despite changing circumstances	3.81	3.55	3.26	0.043	*
My employer is flexible in applying agreements	3.92	3.68	3.42	0.044	*
My employer makes specific agreements regarding my work	3.81	3.45	3.24	0.024	*
I feel part of a team in my employer's organisation	4.08	3.77	3.44	0.010	*
With relation to client/s					
My client is flexible in applying agreements	3.19	3.29	3.69	0.017	*
My client personally supports me in difficult periods	2.53	3.10	3.50	0.001	*
My client appreciates me for what I do and for who I am	2.92	3.58	3.69	0.004	*
My client considers not only the end result but also my personal effort	2.69	3.23	3.50	0.007	*
My client treats me as a person, not as a number	3.00	3.35	3.75	0.008	*
I am concerned about my client's firm even outside working hours	3.23	3.39	3.69	0.037	*
My loyalty to my client is contract specific	2.97	2.73	2.06	0.002	*
I feel my client reciprocates the effort put in by me	2.53	2.93	3.10	0.039	*

Table 12: Gender

Factors	Male	Female	Probability	
With relation to employer				
My employer is open and upfront with me	3.65	3.97	0.035	*
My employer is flexible in applying agreements	3.54	3.97	0.044	*
I adopt a flexible attitude with my employer	3.99	4.30	0.014	*
I accept if agreements are being revised with my employer	3.69	3.88	0.091	**
My employer appreciates me for what I do and for who I am	3.50	3.91	0.026	*
My employer considers not only the end result but also my personal effort	3.31	3.91	0.002	*
I want to develop myself in my employer's firm	4.26	4.52	0.087	**
I have a reasonable chance of promotion if I work hard for my employer	3.44	3.79	0.091	**
To me working for my employer is like being a member of a family	3.09	3.45	0.094	**
I feel my employer reciprocates the effort put in by me	3.03	3.48	0.023	*
With relation to client/s				
My client considers not only the end result but also my personal effort	2.97	3.45	0.040	*
I feel my client reciprocates the effort put in by me	2.71	3.10	0.081	**

Table 13: Average Number of Clients

Factors	1	2 to 3	4 or more	Probability	
With relation to employer					
I adjust easily to changes in my employer's work situation	3.84	4.22	4.12	0.029	*
I am able to deal with unpredictable events in my work situation with my employer	3.76	4.19	4.12	0.023	*
My employer personally supports me in difficult periods	3.32	3.53	3.85	0.048	*
With relation to client/s					
I am able to deal with unpredictable events in my work situation with my client	3.78	4.22	4.15	0.029	*
My client personally supports me in difficult periods	2.67	3.11	3.38	0.020	*
My client appreciates me for what I do and for who I am	2.92	3.59	3.69	0.006	*
I am concerned about my client's firm even outside working hours	3.19	3.38	3.84	0.011	*
I work to achieve the purely short-term goals of my job for my client	2.61	2.16	2.20	0.024	*

Table 14: Age

Factors	20-30	31-40	>41	Probability	
With relation to employer					
I am able to deal with unpredictable events in my work situation with my employer	3.76	4.21	4.22	0.007	*
With relation to client/s					
My client sticks to agreements despite changing circumstances	2.78	3.46	3.04	0.007	*
My client is flexible in applying agreements	3.16	3.61	3.54	0.009	*
My client considers made agreements	3.36	3.82	3.46	0.021	*
My client personally supports me in difficult periods	2.71	3.39	3.15	0.009	*
My client appreciates me for what I do and for who I am	3.04	3.50	3.81	0.009	*
My client treats me as a person, not as a number	3.02	3.79	3.46	0.005	*
I am concerned about my client's firm even outside working hours	3.20	3.39	3.88	0.003	*
I work to achieve the purely short-term goals of my job for my client	2.58	2.07	2.19	0.018	*

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Date:

James Drummond

GIBS Literature Review

1.1. Ways of Understanding Behaviour at Work

1.1.1. The Changing Nature of Competition

When Friedman (2005) asserted “the world is flat”, he struck a chord with his book by the same name, rising to the top of many a best seller list and it still takes prominence in the business section of various book stores around the globe today. He maintained that now, more so than at any other time in history, is the nature of competition about the individual. “Clearly, it is now possible for more people than ever to collaborate and compete in real time with more other people on more different kinds of work from more different corners of the planet and on more equal footing than at any previous time in history of the world – using computers, e-mail, networks, teleconferencing, and dynamic new software” (Friedman, 2005, p.8).

1.1.2. The Changing Nature of Employment

Long before Friedman, other authors were already questioning the assumptions that were held about work environments, if maybe not for the same reasons. Rousseau stated that “traditional employment contracts have been challenged by the restructuring of corporations and the decline in organized labour. Promises about the future are the essence of contracts – yet promises are increasingly difficult to make (and keep)” (2005, p.xi). What is apparent is that the pace at which changes are occurring and the flexibility with which organisations and people are required to react is increasing.

“One of the greatest challenges in business today is articulating the changing contract between workers and employers” (Csoka, 1996, p.5).

1.1.3. The Many Constructs

With many behavioural disciplines seeking to contribute to our understanding of the employee-employer relationship, from Psychology which seeks to measure, explain and sometimes change behaviour; Sociology which involves the study of people in relation to other people; with Social Psychology blending concepts from both; Anthropology studying societies to learn about humans and their activities; and Political Science looking in to the concept of power and conflict, it can be a daunting task to select and appropriate construct to try and understand the changing nature of the relationship. However, Rousseau maintains that “a behavioural perspective on contracts is critical to understanding and managing change in contemporary organizations” (2005, p.xi). This perspective she proposes is the psychological contract. It refers to the expectations of employer and employee which operate over and above the formal contract of employment (Argyris, 1960). This would suggest that it constitutes mainly the implicit elements of the relationship. A formal contract by contrast has a largely explicit nature. The psychological contract held by an employee consists of perceptions and beliefs about reciprocal obligations between employer and employee (Rousseau, 1998; Schein, 1965).

Guest, in considering why the psychological contract is worth taking seriously gave three reasons, namely that “it captures the spirit of the times”, going on to say that “we now live in an era of employment relations rather than industrial relations” (1998,

p.659). The second reason was the fact that he considered the Psychological Contract to have the ability to focus attention on the distribution of power and lastly he believes it has the potential to integrate a number of key organizational concepts. It is primarily for this reason that the psychological contract would seem to be a good construct to make use of to help create a better understanding of the expectations and perceptions that exist between employees and employers.

Conway and Briner (2005) also identified several important and what they describe as refreshing aspects of the psychological contract concept that do not feature strongly in other ideas used to understand behaviour at work. There is, in their opinion, a clear focus on the employment relationship, contrary to many other approaches. Secondly they maintain that this relationship is considered in terms of an exchange and lastly they highlight that because the psychological contract is about perceptions, subjective, existing in the eye of the beholder of a reciprocal nature of exchange and it implies that employee behaviour is best understood as an ongoing and dynamic process in which employees actively participate.

1.2. The Development of the Psychological Contract Concept

1.2.1. A brief history

What do we really know about what the psychological contract is and how it works? Conway and Briner (2005) contend that the two most dominant areas in this field are the contents of the psychological contract, and how the psychological contract affects work behaviour. The later is more in line with the focus of this research project. The psychological contract concept has been around for the better part of

half a century with many acknowledging Argyris as first formally using the term 'psychological contract' in 1960 (e.g. Roehling, 1996; Herriot and Pemberton, 1997; Guest, 1998; Conway and Briner, 2005).

In reviewing the literature on the psychological contract it also became apparent that the development of the construct has enjoyed two distinct periods of progress. The first period lasting from around 1958 to 1989, started with the first recognised thoughts on the subject being expressed by Karl Menninger as quoted by Roehling (1996) as having made a substantial contribution to the origin of the psychological contract construct. Conway and Briner (2005) also recognised Menninger as first introducing the idea that psychological contracts are involved in a range of interpersonal exchanges in his book *Theory of Psychoanalytic Technique*, focusing in particular on the explicit and unspoken contract between patient and psychotherapist. These early days of the development of the psychological contract were however characterised by somewhat disparate views on the subject with "little recognition by researchers that the psychological contract has been conceptualised in a number of ways" (Conway and Briner, 2005, p.19).

The second distinct period of research for the psychological contract, was punctuated by what has now become known as Rousseau's seminal work (e.g. Roehling, 1996; Conway and Briner, 2005) in 1989. Since then over a 100 articles, nearly all empirical (Conway and Briner, 2005) have been published on the psychological contract. Roehling maintains that "the focus on promise based obligations sets Rousseau's conceptualization apart from every conceptualization of the psychological contract that preceded her" (1996, p.205).

1.2.2. The Definition of the psychological contract

Although there is still some debate on the exact definition of the psychological contract there are several definitional terms on which many authors concur. There is also a consensus that the most widely accepted definition of the psychological contract, and hence the one adopted for this paper, is that of Rousseau's "in which the psychological contract is considered to be an employee's subjective understanding of promissory-based reciprocal exchanges between him or her self and the organisation" (Conway and Briner, 2005, p. 35) which despite criticisms has remained the most consistently in favour. See Table 15 for a brief chronological list of the definitions of the psychological contract to demonstrate how it has evolved over time.

Table 15: Chronological definitions of psychological contracts (Conway and Briner, 2005, p.21).

Definition of the psychological contract	Author, year
'Since the foremen realize the employees in this system will tend to produce optimally under passive leadership, and since the employees agree, a relationship may be hypothesized to evolve between the employees and the foremen which might be called the "psychological work contract".'	Argyris, 1960, p.97
'A series of mutual expectations of which the parties to the	Levinson et

<p>relationship may not themselves be dimly aware but which nonetheless govern their relationship to each other.'</p>	<p>al., 1962, p.21</p>
<p>'An implicit contract between an individual and his organization which specifies what each expect to give and receive from each other in the relationship.'</p>	<p>Kotter, 1973, p.92</p>
<p>'The notion of a psychological contract implies that there is an unwritten set of expectations operating at all times between every member of an organization and the various managers and others in that organization.'</p>	<p>Schein, 1980, p.22</p>
<p>'The term psychological contract refers to an individual's belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between the focal person and another party. Key issues here include the belief that a promise has been made and a consideration offered in exchange for it, binding the parties to some set of reciprocal obligations.'</p>	<p>Rousseau , 1989, p.123</p>
<p>'In simple terms, the psychological contract encompasses the actions employees believe are expected of them and what response they expect in return from the employer.'</p>	<p>Rousseau and Greller, 1994, p.386</p>
<p>'The psychological contract is individual beliefs, shaped by the organization, regarding terms of an exchange agreement between the individual and their organization.'</p>	<p>Rousseau, 1995, p.9</p>

'The perceptions of both parties to the employment relationship, organization and individual, of the obligations implied in the relationship.'	Herriot and Pemberton, 1997, p.45
'An employee's beliefs about the reciprocal obligations between that employee and his or her organization, where these obligations are based on perceived promises and are not necessarily recognised by agents of the organization.'	Morrison and Robinson, 1997, p.229

1.2.3. The psychological contract in practice

Conway and Briner, in trying to determine how the psychological contract is used in practice, noted that “we know very little about how or indeed whether practitioners use this concept” (2005, p.17). The only way they could pragmatically try to build an understanding of how much is practically understood of the psychological contract was to review the content of articles in practitioner publications. They concluded that there were three themes that emerged. Firstly practitioners seemed to be intrigued with the “old” and “new” psychological contract. Secondly were the considerations of whom the psychological contract could assist in understanding the effects of large-scale organisational change such as down-sizing or restructuring. Lastly Conway and Briner (2005) saw a theme emerging of how changing government policy would affect the psychological contract. This would suggest that very little has been done to practically understand the psychological contract in what is becoming an increasingly “normal” employment arrangement constituting an increasing number of “contingent” employees, the concept of which is discussed later. “The popularity of outsourcing as

a business practice is reflected in a substantial increase in the size of the contractor industry and the growth in the number of long-term contracted employees” (Coyle-Shapiro, Morrow and Kessler, 2006, p562) and they maintain that “scant research has been conducted on the organisations and employees affected by these arrangements” (Coyle-Shapiro, Morrow and Kessler, 2006, p.561).

1.3. The Contingent worker

To date the research into the psychological contract has overwhelmingly concentrated on more ‘traditional’ employee contracts focusing on those that involve the longer term view associated with ‘full time’ employees. McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher suggested that “consequently, what we do know about psychological contracts may or may not extend into the realm of less traditional work arrangements. This apparent limitation is a weakness of the research area” (1998, p.699).

Another problem in this area has been the increasing number of definitions and categorisations of contingent workers. This is likely to prove increasingly more difficult over time and McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher (1998) suggest that focus be placed rather on a dimensional approach rather than focusing on the characteristics and classification of the contingent worker themselves.

Generally speaking, the contingent workforce consists of any worker that does not have either an implicit or explicit understanding that employment will be continuous or ongoing, assuming satisfactory performance by both the individual worker and the

organisation (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998). See Table 16 for examples of contingent employment arrangements.

Table 16: Working definitions of contingent employment arrangements (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998, p.702).

Exemplar categories	Definition
Core	Permanent full-time and part-time workers with either an implicit or explicit understanding that employment will be continuous or ongoing
Floats	Full-time employees who are moved around within different departments or divisions within the organisation as a regular part of their job
Networked	Individuals whose work is performed outside the boundaries of their home organisation
In-house temporaries	Workers hired by the organisation to meet variable scheduling needs, listed in a 'registry' (i.e., performs function of temporary agency
Direct-hire or seasonal temporaries	Workers for whom organisations advertise and recruit for the purpose of filling position vacancies as needed
Leased workers	Employee leasing company effectively 'rents' an entire workforce to a client employer

Temporary firm workers	The temporary is the employer, rather than the client organisation who utilises the workforce
Subcontracted workers	Work is transferred to another organisation whose employees perform the tasks on or off the premises of the client company
Consultants	Organisation either contracts with a professional consulting firm or with independent consultants for the completion of a project
Independent contractors	Brought into the firm to supply specific skills, from manual labour such as plumbing to software and other engineering applications

Contingent work in this paper shall be taken to include various types of work undertaken by employees that are required to fulfil “any job in which an individual does not have an explicit or implicit contract, long-term employment or one in which the minimum hours worked can vary in a non-systematic manner” (Polivka and Nardone, 1998, p.11). This view would be considered appropriate when considering the nature of the relationship between the employee and the client organisation for which they work although not necessarily their legal ‘employing’ company and as such shall be taken to mean this.

This is typical of triangular relations of this nature that pose unique challenges and opportunities for example “issues of who should provide training to workers emerge

as critical public policy questions as well as matters of concern to employers and their employees” (Kalleberg, 2000, p.358).

1.4. The knowledge worker

“Many companies are beginning to feel that the knowledge of their employees is their most valuable asset “(Davenport, 2005, p.187). The traditional economy, during the industrialisation era, was capital intensive and required organisations with vast resources at their disposal to drive economies forward. Employees were seen in the traditional economic sense as one of the inputs required to produce physical outputs. Today however, we find ourselves increasingly in a ‘knowledge’ economy in which knowledge is the product.

Knowledge based work activities are somewhat different from traditional forms of work. Despres and Hiltrop (1996) describe the difference in the following way as shown in the table below.

Table 17: A Comparison of knowledge work and traditional work

	Traditional work	Knowledge work
Career formation	Internal to the organisation through training, development, rules and prescriptive career schemes	External to the organisation through years of education and socialisation
Loyalty	To the organisation and its	To professions, networks

	career systems	and peers
Skills/Knowledge	Narrow and often functional	Specialised and deep, but often with diffuse peripheral foci
Locus of work	Around individuals	In groups and projects
Focus of work	Task, objectives, performance	Customers, problems, issues
Skill obsolescence	General	Rapid
Activity/feedback cycles	Primary and of an immediate nature	Lengthy from a business perspective
Performance measures	Task deliverables	Process effectiveness
Impact on company success	Little but regular and dependable Many small contributions that support the master plan	Potentially great but often erratic A few major contributions of strategic and long term importance

What is clear from this is that the link between the employee and their employing organisation is becoming increasingly more tenuous. They will job hop easily, going where they feel they can achieve the greatest satisfaction (Tissen *et al*, 2000). This

has implications for employing organisations in the triangular relationship, both positive and negative. The new breed of knowledge worker is looking for opportunities to increase their knowledge and by joining a consultancy or some other organisation that offers opportunities to work in many different environments, while maintaining some sense of a 'normal' employment contract offers definite benefits to both parties. However, there will always be the danger that the employee often pledges greater allegiance to their areas of expertise than to their employers (Despres and Hiltrop, 1996).

1.5. Psychological Contracts and Contingent Employment

How employees view their psychological contracts between their 'legal' employer and their client organisation, what is referred to as the multiple-agency effect (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998; Coyle-Shapiro, Morrow and Kessler, 2006) or triangular system of employment (Kalleberg, 2000), is likely to be substantially different. The nature of this type of contingent work has some specific characteristics that are worth bearing in mind, namely they normally have a longer time horizon as the employee has some sense of belonging to a employing organisation and is thus free to concentrate more on the relational aspects of the client relationship and is less likely to view it as purely a transactional relationship. Employees who work under these multi-agency arrangements are the focus of this study.

In examining the Psychological contract, researchers have taken several different directions broadly speaking in three distinct areas, the content of the psychological

contract (e.g. Rousseau, 2000), the study of the breach of fulfilment of the psychological contract (e.g. Robinson and Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau, 2000; Conway and Brinier, 2002), and violation (e.g. Robinson and Morrison, 2000). However McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher (1998) argue that it may be more fruitful to examine the underlying dimensions of the psychological contract. One of the reasons for this as discussed earlier is that there is no clear consensus on what constitutes a contingent worker and thus makes comparisons between studies that endeavour to classify works into categories impossible and it is hard to generalize these studies conclusions.

1.6. Dimensions of the Psychological Contract

McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher (1998) building on the work of Rousseau and McLean Parks (1993) in which they identified five core characteristics or dimensions of the psychological contract specifically: stability, scope, tangibility, focus and time frame suggested multi-agency and violation. They also noted that previous research has also identified particularism (i.e. the nature of the labour, skills, talents and loyalty) as an important dimension to the psychological contract (McLean Parks and Smith, 1993, 1998), which it is felt is also of significance to this study due to the characteristics of a knowledge worker highlighted previously and the fact that it is felt that the majority of employees included in this study could be classified as knowledge workers.

These dimensions are consistent with four of those presented by Sels, Janssens and Brande (2004) being tangibility, scope, stability and time frame to which they offered

two further alternatives, exchange symmetry and contract level. Contract level was excluded on account of the fact that it refers to the degree to which employees perceive their contract to be individually versus collectively regulated as it is felt that due to the detachment of employees from their employers makes it for unions to organise and that the effects of triangular employment relations on collective bargaining and unionization are particularly devastating (Kalleberg, 2000). This suggests that contingent employees as defined in this study would see their contracts being solely individually regulated. Exchange symmetry was not include as it refers to the degree to which the employee perceives the unequal employment relationship as acceptable (Sels, Janssens and Brande, 2004) and as it is not the intention of this study to consider cultural variables it was felt this would fall outside the scope of this study.

Although concerns have been raised about this approach, for example the list of features appears to be intuitive rather than theoretically derived (Guest, 1998) there has as yet been no rejection either of the approach or of the dimensions presented here. Conway and Briner (2005) maintain that due to the potential of this approach for comparing different types of psychological contracts and employment relationships it clearly warrants further investigation.

1.7. Stability

Stability, the openness of contracts to constant review (Lee and Faller, 2005). It refers to the amount of changes either party can make to the psychological contract without consulting the other party or “the extent to which the terms of the

psychological contract can change outside of an explicit or implicit renegotiation of the contract” (Conway and Briner, 2005). It is the degree to which the psychological contract is limited in terms of its ability to evolve and change without an implied renegotiation of the terms (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998). Thus a stable contract would suggest that no changes would be able to be made to the psychological contract without the express permission on both parties and an unstable contract would be able to be changed by either party unilaterally. A stable psychological contract could also be consider inflexible as apposed to a flexible unstable psychological contract (Sels, Janssens and Van Den Brande, 2004). Key to this is the element of trust. Robinson (1996) defined trust as “one's expectations, assumptions, or beliefs about the likelihood that another's future actions will be beneficial, favourable, or at least not detrimental to one's interests. As a social construct, trust lies at the heart of relationships and contracts” (p.575). Trust could be a very good proxy for stability.

1.8. Scope

Scope can be considered “the degree to which work influences non-work life” (Lee and Faller, 2005). It is the extent to which the boundary between one’s employment relationship and other aspects of one’s life is seen as permeable (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998). The scope could be considered narrow or broad (Sels, Janssens and Van Den Brande, 2004) as seen by an employers concern for employees activities outside of the workplace or an employees involvement in extra role behaviour i.e. participating in voluntary company activities outside of normal work roles. A narrow scope would suggest that an employee sees a clear delineation

between their work responsibilities and personal roles. It could be viewed as an indication of the level of commitment. Lee and Faller (2005) maintain that contingent work is generally more demarcated from the employee's personal life, which suggests a more transactional orientation which may be true of the relationship between the employee and the client company.

1.9. Tangibility

Tangibility can be seen on a continuum as tangible or intangible (Sels, Janssens and Van Den Brande, 2004). Tangibility is the degree to which the employee perceives the terms of the contract as unambiguously defined and explicitly specified, and clearly observable to third parties (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998). The relationship between the client company and the contingent employee would tend to be more tangible due to the explicit nature of the work that normally forms the basis of the relationship where as the relationship with the employing company would typically be intangible due to the typically longer time horizon and broader scope. Contingent workers often fill roles or positions that are more easily monitored by the client organisation and often preform the role away from their employing organisation at the clients site. As such their psychological contract may be perceived as being far more tangible with the client organisation.

1.10. Focus

Focus is the relative emphasis of the psychological contract on the socio-emotional versus economic concerns (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998). In other words does the employee place greater importance on the financial rewards of a

psychological contract or on the social aspects such as networking or respect? Contingent workers are less likely to expect or receive socio-emotional rewards, given their tenuous attachment to the client organisation (Rousseau, 1995). However they are likely to look for this from their employing organisation. This term could be considered on a scale to be represented by either a narrow focus or apposing wide focus. This is similar in context to transactional versus relational contracting.

Transactional contracting results in the employer explicitly and implicitly promising to provide specific, monetary remuneration for certain services performed by the employee or contingent worker. This results in a short contract-like agreement between the two parties (Strong, 2003). In this case often brokered by a third party, hence the triangular relationship. The relational contracting by contrast emphasises a socio-emotive interaction between the employee and employer (Strong, 2003). This is more likely to develop between the employing organisation and the contingent worker as defined in this study due to the typically longer time period of the relationship.

1.11. Time Frame

Here two subcomponents are defined, namely Duration and Precision. Duration of the time frame is the extent to which the employee perceives the relationship to be short- or long-term. Precision of the time frame is the extent to which the employee perceives the duration of the relationship to be finite (defined) or indefinite (undefined) (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998). In general it is thought that contingent workers are likely to have short time frames with finite terms when it

comes to their relationship with their client organisations as apposed to the longer term undefined relationship with their employing organisation. The moderating factor here is that it is thought that the longer term relationships on both subcomponents increase employee commitment and extra role behaviour.

1.12. Particularism

Particularism is the degree to which the employee perceives the resources exchanged within the contract as unique and non-substitutable (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998). For example, a psychological contract high on particularism may be where an employee has a unique set of skills, knowledge and abilities that the organisation could not find elsewhere (Conway and Briner, 2005). Lee and Faller (2005) maintain that particularism increases the likelihood of future interaction among the contracting parties and therefore the relational nature of the contract because specificity leads to a lack of substitutability of the resource (the worker in this case), and also necessitates increased communication. This causes a problem for the employing organisation in the triangular relationship.

1.13. Multi-Agency

A multiple agency relationship exists when an act by an employee simultaneously fulfils obligations to two or more entities, with full knowledge and sanction from both (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998). This definition excludes employees who simply hold two jobs that are mutually exclusive such as employees who hold two part-time jobs. McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher (1998) suggest that all else equal, multiple agency relationships will increase commitment by diffusing an

imbalance in one relationship. This may however highlight or cause a perception of imbalances in the relative terms of the psychological contract between the employee and the client and employer organisation. There are also other downsides such as having more than one 'boss', conflicting demands and overload. This is very relevant given the nature of the contingent employee relationship in the triangular relationship if the success of the psychological contract with their employer is perceived to be conditional on the success of the psychological contract with the client.

1.14. Volition

Volition is the degree to which employees believe they had choice in the selection of the nature of the employment relationship, including, but not limited to, the degree to which they had input or control into the terms of the contract or formulation of the 'deal' (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998). Contingent workers may not typically have high levels of volition due to the fact that many of the work assignments are agreed to by the client and employing organisations and not the employees themselves (this is not always the case though for say independent consultants).

1.15. The importance and Relevance of the Research

According to the ITWeb/CareerWeb 2007 IT Salary Survey, "A severe shortage in experienced IT skills fuels job-hopping, with over 50% of respondents having looked for a new job in SA, and about 5% ready to take up an overseas offer" and "Overall salaries are up by 25% on last year's sample", which might suggest that there are market forces driving turnover but this is at odds with the reported findings that "the top three areas of dissatisfaction within current employment environments were company culture, career, and boss, with 48%, 35% and 27% of the vote

respectively”. This would suggest that there are many other reasons employees chose to leave a company which is born out by their comment that “although remuneration is still a concern for employees, these results point to far softer issues, which companies could work on as part of their retention strategies”. It is for these reasons that a better understanding of the employee-employer relationship in this industry is so important to organisations.

Currently there is a perception that staff turnover in the IT services industry (specifically in SA) is high by other industry standards and there are several theories as to why this is. The impact of this is thought to be an even greater threat to small and medium sized IT services business as it threatens their very existence. According to the Labour Market Review (2005, p 30) “The most prominent areas of perceived concern were a lack of 'IT professional skills' followed by a lack of 'general IT user skills'. This suggests that specific/technical and general IT skills are thought to be underdeveloped within the professional occupations, and general IT skills are viewed as lacking across occupational categories.” It is this ‘lack’ of skills that highlights the importance of trying to come to a better understanding of employee-employer relations in the IT industry with in South Africa to try and assist in improving relations to the benefit of all concerned.

These trends coupled with the acknowledged changes in the employee contract (e.g. Roehling, Cavanaugh, Moynihan and Boswell, 2000) from the ‘old’ to the ‘new’ have created a great need for a better understanding of the relational dynamics that exist, especially in the triangular relationship that exists between the employee and their respective employing and client organisation.

This study endeavours to shed some light on the triangular relations that are so typical of the increasingly 'out sourced' (e.g. Coyle-Shapiro, Morrow, Kessler, 2006) work environment in which we find ourselves and in so doing contribute to the knowledge base in the area of psychological contract 'dimensions' (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998; Sels, Jannssens and Van Den Brande, 2004).

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Appendix A: Questionnaire



Questionnaire for research report: The company-client relationship and the retention of staff in the IT consulting industry.

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire. Bellow are three sections which should take 10 to 20 minutes to complete. Please complete all three sections before submitting your results by emailing your response to the address at the bottom of the page. Neither you nor your organisation will be identified in the questionnaire.

For the purposes of the research, we seek to capture the responses of IT workers who are permanent employees, engaged in client facing roles and could be defined as an employee with specialised knowledge and who could be classified under one of the following criteria:

- Leased workers - Employee's who are effectively 'leased out' as part of an entire workforce to a client organisation.
- Consultants - Employee's who are engaged by clients on a contracts basis for the completion of a project.
- Subcontracted workers - Employee's who perform work that is transferred from the client organisation and performs tasks on or off the premises of the client company.

SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF RESPONDENT

The following information will be used to make group comparisons only and your questionnaire will not be analysed on an individual basis. The organisation is only used to be able to monitor company response rates.

Gender:	<input type="text"/>	
Period of service with current employer:	Months <input type="text"/>	Years <input type="text"/>
Average length of client engagements:	Months <input type="text"/>	Years <input type="text"/>
Average number of clients served at any one time:	<input type="text"/>	
Highest level of education:	<input type="text"/>	
Race:	<input type="text"/>	
Age:	<input type="text"/>	
Organisation:	<input type="text"/>	

SECTION 2: EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP WITH EMPLOYING ORGANISATION

Please answer the following questions as they relate to your understanding of the relationship you have between yourself and your current employer. Please use the scale as indicated. Indicate your answers by placing an 'x' in the appropriate box.

- My employer is open and upfront with me
- I believe my employer has high integrity
- In general, I believe my employer's motivations and intentions are good
- I can expect my employer to treat me in a consistent and predictable fashion
- My employer sticks to agreements despite changing circumstances
- My employer is flexible in applying agreements
- My employer considers made agreements
- I adjust easily to changes in my employer's work situation
- I tolerate change when introduced in my employer's firm
- I am able to deal with unpredictable events in my work situation with my employer
- I adopt a flexible attitude with my employer
- I accept if agreements are being revised with my employer
- My employer personally supports me in difficult periods
- My employer appreciates me for what I do and for who I am
- My employer considers not only the end result but also my personal effort
- My employer treats me as a person, not as a number
- My employer allows me to be myself within their firm
- I am concerned about my employer's firm even outside working hours
- I work extra hours when necessary
- I bring own ideas and creativity into my employer's firm
- I want to develop myself in my employer's firm
- I invest time and energy in my employer's firm
- My employer sets agreements regarding my work down in writing
- My employer makes specific agreements regarding my work
- My employer is very clear about opportunities for advancement in this firm
- My employer specifically describes the performance appraisal criteria used in this firm
- My employer unambiguously describes my rights within this firm
- I clearly state what is important to me in my job with my employer
- I explicitly indicate my career wishes and plans to my employer
- I clearly indicate if problems arise to my employer
- I make explicit agreements with my boss at my employer about work
- I work only the hours set out in my contract with my employer and no more
- My commitment to my employer is defined by my contract
- My loyalty to my employer is contract specific
- I prefer to work a strictly defined set of working hours for my employer
- I only carry out what is necessary to get the job done for my employer
- I do not identify with my employer's goals
- I work to achieve the purely short-term goals of my job for my employer
- I expect to grow in my employer's organisation
- I feel part of a team in my employer's organisation
- I have a reasonable chance of promotion if I work hard for my employer
- To me working for my employer is like being a member of a family
- My employer develops/rewards employees who work hard and exert themselves
- I feel my employer reciprocates the effort put in by me
- I am motivated to contribute 100 per cent to my employer in return for future benefits

All of these questions were answered on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly agree and 5 = Strongly disagree)

SECTION 3: EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP WITH CLIENT ORGANISATION

Please answer the following questions as they relate to your understanding of the relationship you have between yourself and your current client or clients. Please use the scale as indicated. Indicate your answers by placing an 'x' in the appropriate box.

- My client is open and upfront with me
- I believe my client has high integrity
- In general, I believe my client's motivations and intentions are good
- I can expect my client to treat me in a consistent and predictable fashion
- My client sticks to agreements despite changing circumstances
- My client is flexible in applying agreements
- My client considers made agreements
- I adjust easily to changes in my client's work situation
- I tolerate change when introduce in my client's firm
- I am able to deal with unpredictable events in my work situation with my client
- I adopt a flexible attitude with my client
- I accept if agreements are being revised with my client
- My client personally supports me in difficult periods
- My client appreciates me for what I do and for who I am
- My client considers not only the end result but also my personal effort
- My client treats me as a person, not as a number
- My client allows me to be myself within their firm
- I am concerned about my client's firm even outside working hours
- I Work extra hours when necessary
- I Bring own ideas and creativity into my client's firm
- I want to develop myself in my client's firm
- I invest time and energy in my client's firm
- My client sets agreements regarding my work down in writing
- My client makes specific agreements regarding my work
- My client is very clear about opportunities for advancement in this firm
- My client specifically describes the performance appraisal criteria used in this firm
- My client unambiguously describes my rights within this firm
- I Clearly state what is important to me in my job with my client
- I explicitly indicate my career wishes and plans to my client
- I clearly indicate if problems arise to my client
- I make explicit agreements with my boss at my client about work
- I work only the hours set out in my contract with my client and no more
- My commitment to my client is defined by my contract
- My loyalty to my client is contract specific
- I prefer to work a strictly defined set of working hours for my client
- I only carry out what is necessary to get the job done for my client
- I do not identify with my client's goals
- I work to achieve the purely short-term goals of my job for my client
- I expect to grow in my clients organisation
- I feel part of a team in my client's organisation
- I have a reasonable chance of promotion if I work hard for my client
- To me working for my client is like being a member of a family
- My client develops/rewards employees who work hard and exert themselves
- I feel my client reciprocates the effort put in by me
- I am motivated to contribute 100 per cent to my client in return for future benefits

All of these questions were answered on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly agree and 5 = Strongly disagree)