Relationship Management: a sales role, or a state of mind?

An investigation of functions and attitudes across a business-to-business sales force

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Abstract

Commentators suggest that the business-to-business sales role is changing and evolving into relationship management. Previous research indicates that a relationship management role is very different from 'traditional' sales, and that it may require a different attitude on the part of the relationship manager. This research explores attitudes towards various aspects of relationship management across an entire international business-to-business sales force in a service industry context. We find that attitudes towards relationship management do not in fact align with job role. A cluster analysis reveals three attitudinal types of sales person: Self-Directed; Team Leaders; and Strategic Sellers. Our findings suggest that some individuals may have attitudes that are inappropriate to their roles, and that attitudes should be taken into account when selecting relationship managers.

Key words: Relationship marketing, sales, sales management, key account management

INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

It is almost 30 years since David Ford suggested that, in managing long-term business-to-business relationships, there is a role for what he called a 'relationship manager' who is the major contact for the client company and who takes responsibility for the successful development of the relationship with the client. He argued that the relationship manager role should be fulfilled by someone of sufficient status to co-ordinate all aspects of the company's relationships with its major clients (Ford 1980).

Recent research has called for a distinction between the activities of selling and ongoing relationship management (e.g. Blythe 2005; McDonald & Woodburn 2007; Ryals & McDonald 2008). This paper explores the role of the relationship manager, and the increasing requirement for sales people to transition to relationship management. Following Weitz & Bradford (1999), we define 'relationship managers' as those individuals responsible, over the long term, for the end-to-end relationship with a business-to-business customer, including communication, sales, and after sales service, and who act as the primary point of contact for a customer. We use the term 'relationship manager' to differentiate our research from the field of customer relationship management (CRM) which is increasingly identified with business-to-consumer markets and technological systems for customer management (e.g. Blattberg & Deighton 1996; Brassington & Pettit 2000; Ahn *et al.* 2003; Ryals & Payne 2001; Ryals *et al.* 2005).

Despite the growing tendency of sales people to become relationship managers (Biong & Selnes 1996; Wotruba 1996; McDonald *et al.* 1997; Piercy *et al.* 1997, 1998; Weitz & Bradford 1999), little research has been carried out on whether sales people have a predisposition to undertake these relational roles. This is an important gap because of the different requirements of these two roles (e.g. Ryals & McDonald 2008). Moreover, previous typologies of sales people based on the type of roles sales people are fulfilling (McMurray 1961; Moncrief 1986; Moncrief *et al.* 2006; Newton 1973) have not yet been extended to the service sector. This study uses an instrument, developed from the literature and tested through intensive pilot interviews, to examine the attitudes of an entire service sector sales force in an effort to address the call of Moncreif *et al.* (2006) for a greater understanding of the sales and relationship manager role in the service sector.

Emergence of the relationship management role

The emergence of relationship marketing in the late 1980s led to a growing interest in getting *and keeping* customers through relationship management (e.g. Christopher *et al.* 1991; Grönroos 1994, 1997; Sheth & Parvatiyar 1995; Aijo 1996; Gummesson 1997). The idea of the relationship manager was extended and developed during the 1980s and 1990s, particularly in business-to-business markets where specialized forms of managing customers have gained increasing importance (Homburg *et al.* 2000). Researchers have suggested that the relationship manager role has different variants for managing different types of customer account: national account managers (Shapiro & Moriarty 1980, 1982, 1984a, 1984b; Stevenson 1980, 1981; Tutton 1987; Wotruba 1996; Weilbacker & Weeks 1997; Dishman & Nitze 1998); major account managers (Barrett 1986; Colletti & Tubridy 1987); and, more recently, to manage the

most strategically important relationships of the business, Key Account Managers (Wilson 1993; Pardo *et al.* 1995; Millman & Wilson 1995, 1996, 1998; Millman 1996; McDonald *et al.* 1997; McDonald & Rogers 1998; Holt 2003) or even global account managers (Yip & Madsen 1996; Millman 1996; Millman & Wilson 1999; Holt 2003).

Traditional sales role

Historically, personal selling has been viewed from a transaction orientation (Jackson *et al.* 1994; Cespedes 1994), a mindset reinforced by reward systems that focus on revenue generation (Wotruba 1996). The traditional role of sales has been defined as "To stimulate, rather than satisfy, demand for products. To persuade customers that they need a supplier's product, sales people in this role focus on achieving short-term results for their companies by using aggressive selling techniques to persuade customers to buy products" (Weitz & Bradford 1999:243) through the use of "aggressive selling techniques" (Weitz & Bradford 1999:243). This role is supported by five basic types of activity carried out by the sales person: contacting customers, selling the product or service, working with wholesalers, servicing the account, and managing information between the seller and buyer (Cespedes 1994). So, traditionally, salespeople have considered their roles fulfilled when the sale is made (Corcoran *et al.* 1995).

However, this tactical view of sales activities is beginning to change, driven by the move from a transactional to a relational focus (Jackson *et al.* 1994; Wotruba 1996; Anderson 1996; Leigh & Marshall 2001). In practice, in business-to-business markets, relationship marketing for the supplier organization is largely carried out through

people in boundary roles, such as salespeople, area managers, account managers and key account managers. These people increasingly play a key role in the formation of long-term buyer-seller relationships (Burger & Cann 1995; Biong & Selnes 1995, 1996; Doney & Cannon 1997; Piercy 2006; Weitz & Bradford 1999).

Impact of relationship marketing on sales

Relationship marketing is bringing a change to the practice of personal selling and sales management as a result of this increased attention on long-term, buyer-seller relationships (Biong & Selnes 1996; Wotruba 1996; McDonald *et al.* 1997; Piercy *et al.* 1997, 1998; Weitz & Bradford 1999). The salesperson's role in long-term relationships is increasingly seen as crucial in creating value for customers as well as for their own organization (Weitz & Bradford 1999).

The transition to relationship management (Marshall & Michaels 2001; Piercy 2006; Rackham & DeVincentis 1999; Storbacka *et al.* 2009; Weitz & Bradford 1999) means that the practice of sales increasingly involves longer-term strategic roles such as customer partner, buyer/seller team coordinator, customer service provider, buyer behavior expert, information gatherer, market analyst, planner, sales forecaster, market cost analyzer and technologist (Anderson 1996; Marshall & Michaels 2001; Piercy 2006; Rackham & DeVincentis 1999; Storbacka *et al.* 2009; Weitz & Bradford 1999; Wilson 1993). Consequently, it has been argued that not only the role but also the necessary attitudes, competences and skills required of modern sales people and relationship managers differ from those needed by traditional salespeople (Shapiro & Moriarty 1984a; McDonald *et al.* 1997; Millman & Wilson 1998; Weitz & Bradford

1999). If so, a re-evaluation of sales typologies that pre-date these developments and were originally developed around more traditional selling is needed.

Sales Typologies

Until Moncreif *et al.* (2006) revisited their earlier work (Moncreif 1986), the traditional typologies for sales people (McMurray 1961; Newton 1973) had been developed around the traditional sales role. However, a number of authors have attempted to identify the attitudes, skills and behaviors required by salespeople in relational situations in business-to-business markets as opposed to transactional situations (Lagace *et al.* 1991; Biong & Selnes 1995; Corcoran *et al.* 1995; Boles & Johnston 1999; Wotruba 1996; Leuthesser 1997; Rackham & De Vincentis 1998; Weitz & Bradford 1999) and in services markets (Crosby *et al.* 1990) which Moncreif *et al.* (2006) utilize to provide a contemporary taxonomy of sales roles. Moncreif *et al.* (2006) suggested the typological roles of Consultative Seller (a nurturing role with existing customer providing product support as well as promotional activities making up 34.2% of the work force) and Key Account Seller (a customer partner role involving high levels of support services, contact time, product delivery management, making up 8.3% of the sales force). These types were identified through a cluster analysis of the activities of sales people, which identifies what sales people do but not their attitudes to the relational roles they are increasingly being asked to fulfill.

Attitudes of sales people towards relationship management

Conceptually, the notion that sales people have different attitudinal predispositions forms the basis for sales models such as Blake & Mouton (1964; see also Sternberg & Soriano 1984). In practice, many relationship managers manage more than one

customer (Ryals *et al.* 2005) and the preferred relationship management strategy for each may differ based on the type of customer and the supplier's strategy in relation to that customer (Johnson & Selnes 2004; Gopalan 2007). Therefore, the attitudes of sales people and of relationship managers could be an important issue for organizations wanting to introduce relationship management practices, in order to 'match' them to customers where their particular attitudes and approach chimed with the organization's strategic stance towards that customer. It has even been suggested that sales people who are good at traditional selling may be ill-suited to relationship manager roles (Ryals and McDonald 2008).

Transitioning services sales people into relationship manager roles

Managerially, whether good sales people make good relationship managers is an increasingly important question. As the demand for relationship managers grows (McDonald *et al.* 1997; Piercy 2006), it is the successful sales person who is most likely to be appointed into a relationship manager role managing strategically important customers. However, the requirements of the relationship manager role are very different from those of the traditional sales role (Ryals & McDonald 2008).

Furthermore, Moncreif *et al*. (2006) argue that there is a need to investigate the roles of sales people outside the manufacturing sector (where earlier typologies have mainly been developed) and examine the service sector, which previous research has indicated might have distinct sales and relationship management roles (Crosby *et al.* 1990; George & Kelly 1983).

The research aim is to investigate whether the modern sales force is attitudinally adjusted to relationship selling roles. It extends previous research on sales typologies into the service context, comparing attitudes and job roles across a large international business-to-business sales force in a service organization that had recently committed itself to relationship management.

METHODOLOGY

Research Objective and Approach

The research objective was to investigate the attitudes towards relationship management amongst a group of service sales people in a context where the supplier had a differential relationship management strategy towards its different business-to-business customers.

The case study approach is the most appropriate for looking at a complex phenomenon that is underdeveloped in the literature (Yin 2003, Scholz & Tietje 2002, Strauss & Corbin 1998, Baker 2001) such as the roles and attitudes of sales and relationship managers in service sector organisations. To gain a deep insight into the range of sales and relationship management functions and typologies within an organization we utilised a two-step methodology as suggested by Moncrief *et al.* (2006): firstly a qualitative study to identify the roles of a relationship manager within service sector organisations and secondly a quantitative empirical investigation of the attitudes of sales people from different functional roles across an entire global sales organisation towards relationship management roles, providing attitudinal typologies of sales people within the service sector.

Research instrument development

To explore our research objective we developed an instrument that was capable of exploring the full scope of a service sector sales force across the differing roles of sales and relationship management. We created a structured questionnaire designed to explore attitudes and approaches to sales and relationship management. The instrument was developed using both in-depth practitioner interviews and cross-comparison to the extant literature regarding the roles a service sector relationship manager had to fulfill and how these differed from the traditional sales role.

Four global business-to-business service organisations were selected for the development of the instrument. The selection criteria included having a range of different size customer accounts, with existing relationship management practices which had been in place for between one and five years, having a large sales force, and having a range of distinct sales and relationship management functions. The four companies were: Courier Co. a global logistics and courier business; Computer Co. a networking and software service company; Component Co. a distributer of manufacturing components; and Equipment Co. an office fitter and supplier and distributer of office equipment. Key informants were selected for interview to develop our understanding of the roles fulfilled and the attitudes required by relationship managers.

Following Yin (1994), the sources were organised into four key groups that could provide information on various aspects of relationship management. Data were collected from the relationship managers about their activities and roles. To ensure an exhaustive list of relationship manager activities we also interviewed their customers,

senior or line managers, and colleagues or team members. A full review of the methodology used in this first research stage is available in Holt & McDonald (2000; 2001).

Thirty-eight interviews were carried out across four organisations, with a further 5 relationship manager interviews used for cross-checking purposes, giving 43 interviews in total (Table 1). The results of this first phase of study are summarized in table 2, which was the starting point in developing scales to explore the differences between relationship management and sales roles. The totality of the research uncovered in these interviews is reported elsewhere (Holt 2003; Davies *et al.* 2008).

[Table 1 about here]

To ensure external validity, the results of the qualitative phase were compared and qualified against the extant literature on sales and relationship management. Table 2 cross-validates the constructs developed in the qualitative interviews with the literature and compares the role of a traditional sales person with that of a relationship manager. Those activities with an asterisk identify where the roles of the relationship manager in the service sector match the manufacturing sector components in Moncreif *et al.* (2006). Table 2 formed the basis for the quantitative phase of the study (following Moncrief *et al.* 2006).

[Table 2 about here]

Using qualitative data from four very different industries enhanced external validity and generalizability, enabling the development of a quantitative survey instrument with wide service sector applicability. The survey comprised a series of 42 questions, 23 of which are reported here, answered by means of a 7 point Likert scale (see Appendix 1 for the scales). As with other questionnaire designs, several of the statements were worded negatively and were then reversed during data analysis (Hague 1993, Brace 2004).

Quantitative survey participating company

For the quantitative stage, we sought a service business meeting the same criteria as previously. We focused on a single company to get census-style data from across their sales force, thereby ensuring that we covered all potential groups within the sales force (high internal validity) and could standardize the descriptions of the types of customers they were managing. The company selected is a global airline company and was selected because the company and the industry are 'unremarkable' or typical (Miles & Huberman 1994). Although the industry has experienced recent disintermediation in business-to-consumer markets, the organization is still required to maintain high levels of sales operations in the business-to-business sector which was the focus of this study. The business-to-business sales and customer management teams deal predominantly with freight, tour operators and commercial partners and with bulk seat sales to travel agents (including to major and key accounts). Differentiation in the market is largely based on existing relationships and differential service bundles which the sales force actively create and sell a partially customized manner. At the time of the study, the case company was seeking to redevelop its sales

strategy through relationship management. In particular, it was looking to identify people who might become future key account managers for a number of key accounts.

Data collection

The sample frame at the airline was just over 400 individuals, accounting for all seven of the sales and customer management functions within the organization. Computer terminals were set up at the global sales conference and 30 minutes set aside per delegate in their conference schedule to partake in the research. Two researchers were on hand at all times to provide assistance when required and, although the company language was English, translation support was provided in three other languages. This resulted in a very high response rate of 85% of the global sales force and customer management teams.

[Table 3 about here]

Classification data were collected relating to job title, number of accounts managed, relative value of accounts (generally this is inversely proportional to the degree of relationship management required), and number of years in sales (as an indication of sales experience – Table 3). Gender and nationality data were not collected, at the request of the case organization. Respondents identified themselves by entering their unique employee number. This item was used by senior managers within the company to identify the type of account(s) they worked with, and the sales roles they fulfilled. This reduced the risk of self-reporting bias regarding account importance identified as a problem in pilot studies.

Data analysis

Attitudinal data do not necessarily follow the conventions of normality as assumed in many analysis techniques (e.g. ANOVA and Structural Equation Modelling). Under Kolmogorow-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality tests all 23 measures were significant at the <0.05 level indicating high incidents of non-normality. Although transformation of the non-normal data is a viable option, it would violate the purpose of the study. Thus, we primarily employ non-parametric tests in reporting our results.

Similarly, Levene tests in all but nine of the dimensions give significant results indicating that equality of variance is not present. With this in mind we have used the Kruskal-Wallis test to look for differences between roles/account types (two-tailed test), we have also used Games-Howell post hoc ANOVAs to confirm the findings of this test.

We have used a cluster analysis to explore the distribution of relationship management attitudes across the workforce, conducted according to the K-Means method using Euclidean distance (MacQueen 1967). K-means is the most popular method of clustering in marketing and is especially useful when dealing with large data sets (Dillon 1994; Wendel & Kamakura 2000).

In contrast to hierarchical cluster analysis, K-means requires predetermination of the number of clusters. However, the number and characteristics of the groups were not known prior to the analysis. In tests of thirty methods for identifying the number of clusters in a population, Milligan & Cooper (1985) identified three methods that proved significantly more robust than the others, especially when used in

combination: Pseudo f, Pseudo t and the Cubic Clustering Criterion (CCC). As Pseudo t calculations cannot be calculated with K-Means clustering, we ran simulations from K-Means clusters between two and 20, calculating both Pseudo f and CCC (using SAS). CCC can be used for basic hypothesis testing and estimating the number of population clusters; it has also proved very effective in large samples (Sarle 1983). Although the Pseudo f for our data set does not demonstrate a single clear 'local peak' relative to the cluster numbers either side, a large increase in the CCC at the three cluster level, combined with one of the local peaks in the Pseudo-f at this same point, suggests the suitability of a three cluster solution. This solution also meets a secondary criterion that there are sufficient numbers of cases in each cluster to allow statistical analysis (Cluster 1 = 73 people, Cluster 2 = 87 people, Cluster 3 = 140 people).

RESULTS

Attitudes towards Relationship Management

Looking at the organization as a whole, we find a great divergence in the level to which individuals rate their approaches as related to relationship management. Figure 1 provides a 95% confidence interval of the probable population mean of attitudes across the organization. High numbers imply a tendency towards Relationship Management and low numbers indicate a tendency towards a 'traditional' non-relational sales perspective.

[Insert Figure 1 Here]

The results indicate the extent to which the airline's sales people had relationship management attitudes towards their roles, focusing on researching and understanding customers and their problems, and interacting regularly with them. We see a strong tendency to prefer deep data collection, expanding contacts within customer from single point of contact to multiple points of contact, being adaptable to match customer cultural norms, and a greater propensity to delegate and work in teams. However, Figure 1 also shows that the move towards relationship management is not universal across all role attributes. The respondents' predisposition to take decisions without involving others, take risks when uncertain, prefer customers who are predominantly interested in price, and laxity in implementing plans, are somewhat at odds with the notion of relationship management and, in fact, more reminiscent of traditional sales people.

Although these findings are suggestive of some relational selling attributes (e.g. planning, data collection and analysis), they are also indicative of more traditional attitudes (using intuition, ignoring implementation plans, bidding for all business regardless of capability to supply or profitability). This could be problematic for the company if expensive strategic activity, such as time spent on data collection, planning and building networks, is ineffectively used by their sales force when it comes to prioritization of activities, customer demands and opportunities during the customer interaction.

Homogeneity of attitude across sales roles

Of great interest to the case company was the extent to which individual's attitudes mapped to the increasing requirements for relationship management in their existing

roles. Discussions with the senior managers revealed that accounts were aligned with different groups within the sales force based on the extent to which certain customer groups required customized, or higher service levels. In other words, the company gave its commodity accounts to Call Centers and Sales and Senior Sales Executives, accounts requiring small amounts of customization and relationship management to Sales and Senior Sales Executives and Area/Regional Managers, medium to high priority relationship management accounts to Sales Managers, and large, highly customized accounts to Key Account Managers.

This process of account allocation should mean that Sales Managers and Key Account Managers are more attuned to relationship management than the rest of the sales force. Certainly, they actively manage fewer accounts than their compatriots (Table 3) but, when it comes to their attitude towards relationship management, we find no difference between any of the five job roles using the Kruskal-Wallis test (because of the small sample sizes in Communications Executives, Call Centre Managers and Sales Support, these responses were condensed into one group designated 'Other'). The only exception to this, and an extremely surprising one, is that the company's Key Account Managers have a lower strategic orientation and a stronger preference for seeking revenue over a strategic relationship than any other group. Although care must be taken when interpreting results from such a small group (seven individuals), this finding is suggestive of a problem in the selection of key account managers. Anecdotal evidence suggested that the company tended to promote its top-performing sales people into key account manager roles, and that these individuals were more motivated by revenue-seeking than by relationship-building.

To confirm that the lack of differentiation between the groups was not due to the lower level of accuracy of non-parametric test we conducted a Games-Howell post hoc ANOVA. Although there are 230 possible points of variance between the five groups over the 23 measures, only 12 points of difference are significant between the groups (selected results are reported in Table 4), four of which relate to the Key Account Managers' lack of strategic orientation discussed above.

[Table 4 about here]

The other points of difference are the reluctance of the Sales and Senior Sales Executives to delegate to team members; lack of influence over technical or operational departments; and preference for working alone as opposed to managing other people. These contrast with the results for the Sales Managers and Area Managers. This result is as expected: Sales and Area Managers would be expected to show a greater orientation towards delegating and influencing and managing others.

The sample sizes for both Key Account Managers and the Other group (which includes Call Centre Managers) are small, which would lead to lower significance. However, a visual inspection of the results using a radar diagram (Figure 2) suggests that the five groups mirrored each other closely in terms of their attitude to relationship management. In fact, a visual inspection suggests that, if anything, the Key Account Managers score lower in terms of relationship management because of a lack of organization and formalized working, as well as having a lower propensity to extend their depth of contact within a customer, relying on their principal contact more than the other groups.

[Figure 2 near here]

In summary, the Sales Managers and Key Account Managers in the case company do not differ from the rest of the sales force in terms of their attitude to relationship management. If further research confirmed this finding in other organizations, it might explain Wilson's (1993) contention that relationship management has often led to lower profit margins as companies adopt the processes (planning and analysis etc.) of relationship management, but not the attitudes and understanding of how this changes the role of the salesperson.

Three Attitudinal Clusters

So far, our analysis has failed to find a link between the job role and the attitude towards relationship management. This raises a real question as to whether the attitudes within the different sales roles are divergent. To answer this question we conducted an exploratory cluster analysis which revealed three clusters of differential attitudes to relationship management which we characterize as Self-directed, Team Leader and Strategic Sales (Figure 3).

[Insert Figure 3 Here]

Using Games-Howell post hoc ANOVAs we found that these three groups diverge significantly on a number of attitudinal measures. Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted first to check for consistency but provide a lower level of clarity so, to demonstrate the differences between groups, Games-Howell are reported (Table 5).

[Table 5 about here]

Self-Directed – Self-directed individuals have preferences that are suggestive of quite a strong traditional sales slant. They prefer lower levels of contact with customers than other clusters and are less inclined to collect customer information. They are the least likely to plan, develop shared strategy or implement strategies. They are defined as self-directed because of their lack of interest in working with or delegating to an account team, organising others, formalising systems (such as lines of communication), and because they have the least amount of contact or influence over the people delivering the promises the sales person makes. They prefer informal communication channels, flexibility in their role, and have a dislike of spending time colleting reams of customer information and planning their accounts. In essence, they prefer to be left to their own devices and avoid structured work patterns and responsibility. The profile suggests that self-directed individuals would be unsuited to a high-level relationship management role but might be the best group for dealing with the more transactional and price-orientated customers. Sales and Senior Sales Executives account for most of the self-directed cluster in the case company (Figure 4); probably, these are the people most likely to prefer to work alone.

Team Leaders – The use of the term Team Leader does not infer seniority but, rather, a preference for taking on responsibility as part of a team. Team leaders are more responsive to making the strategic decisions than the self directed group. They enjoy team work, are well-connected within their own delivery organisation and take responsibility for the whole sales process both before and after the point of sale. They are also interested in the analysis, planning and execution of strategies. They are, however, the worst-connected group; they tend to be reliant on fewer individuals

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within the customer for their knowledge of the customer's culture or strategy. They are also the most likely group to be influenced by revenue rather than by the strategic value of customers. So, although generally more inclined to relationship management, they seem to lack some of the core attitudes that might drive them to create long-term customer partnerships. These individuals feel at their best when there is a structure in place to drive their work. They enjoy gaining an understanding of the customer and using this information to plan out the customer strategy. They understand the need to align other areas of the business behind what they do and prefer formalized methods of interacting and placing demands on others. Team Leaders might suit major account management roles (rather than key account manager roles), working with profitable but non-strategic customers and chasing one-off pieces of work. Although no single job role within the organization dominated this group we find a higher proportion of communications executives and area managers here, which may fit with some of the sales support roles in which these individuals are involved.

Strategic Sales – Strategic Sales people are in some ways similar to Team Leaders but are markedly more motivated on four strategic aspects. The first and second of these are their depth of contact and depth of knowledge within their customers; they build much deeper networks and prefer to rely on multiple points of reference for their decision making, providing a more powerful data source for making plans. The third and fourth areas are related to the longer time horizons they prefer to work to and the extent to which they search for strategic value in customers (as opposed to revenue). These four areas are likely to make them more adept at taking relationships to a more strategic level. It is interesting to note that this group is the largest within the sample, indicating that the majority of the sales force is at least moderately attitudinally

adjusted to the relationship management role. We do find, however, that membership of this group is fairly evenly spread across existing roles. Rather surprisingly, there is no particular tendency for people with relationship management preferences to be found in relationship manager roles. Sales Managers and Key Account Managers are no more attitudinally aligned to relationship manager roles than their Sales Executive colleagues.

[Insert Figure 4 Here]

Figure 4 illustrates the intriguing finding that the more relationship-oriented individuals were not found exclusively or even predominantly within the account manager roles. Instead, they were distributed across the entire sample. For example, even though many of the Sales and Senior Sales Executives are self-directed types, others seemed to have attitudes better-suited to a relationship management role. Figure 4 suggests that the company has a number of potential relationship managers but not necessarily in relationship manager job roles.

DISCUSSION

Our results indicate that there are indeed different attitudes to relationship management, but that these different attitudes do not necessarily map to job roles. We find three distinct groupings of attitudes, differentiated by their attitudes towards team working, market sensitivity, planning, and strategic orientation. These findings are important for both theory and practice.

Implications for Theory

The research contributes to theory as it offers a way to test the contention made by previous researchers of the development of sales as a strategic activity, focusing on relationship management and having longer time horizons (Leigh & Marshall 2001; Piercy 2006). Our research uncovers 23 attitudes and approaches which show a stronger tendency towards relationship management than sales (Table 2 and Figure 1). In particular, we found approaches to understanding the customer's culture, market environment (collecting information) and commercial outlook driving formalized strategic development, account planning and selection of priority accounts. These findings support the growing literature on the changing role of sales (Biong & Selnes 1996; Wotruba 1996; McDonald *et al.* 1997; Piercy *et al,* 1997, 1998; Weitz & Bradford 1999). We also find that attitudes related to forging relationships with operations and viewing their role as coordinating others into cohesive teams are strong within our sample. These attitudes are indicative of a shift towards relationship management and provide a needed empirical contribution in this area (McDonald e*t al.* 1997; Piercy 2006). However our study failed to suggest that this move was universal across all relationship management attitudes, with a number of the implementation of sales strategy attitudes (selective bidding, managing risk and implementing plans) lacking within the sales force, suggesting that much of the formalized parts of relationship management are being enacted, but the impact of this on how the customer in actively managed may be limited.

Our second theoretical contribution comes through our proposal of a three-cluster typology based on attitudes towards relationship management in service sector organizations, addressing a recent call to consider sales typologies in the service context (Moncrief *et al.* 2006). We labeled these 'Self-Directed, Team Leader, and

Strategic Sales'. Self-directed people have a propensity to view themselves and their role from an individualist perspective. They are unlikely to have an interest in managing others or taking on responsibility, although they see the need for having to get others to do a certain amount of work for them. Team Leaders are differentiated from Self-directed people based on their information management and management of others, as they are more likely to prefer working in a team, building a greater understanding of the client and using this to plan out customer bids. However they are distinguished from Strategic Salespeople by their predisposition towards short-termism, not seeking out cultural knowledge of the customer perspectives and staying clear of long term joint strategic planning. Strategic Salespeople are most clearly differentiated based on their long-term outlook and predilection for complex pieces of work needing volumes of data, especially cultural and organizational dynamic data from within the customer.

In principle, the cluster analysis might help to indicate which people have a relationship management perspective, regardless of current job role. As the foregoing discussion indicates, Strategic Salespeople are the closest fit to the requirements of a relationship management role as set out in the literature (e.g. McDonald & Rogers 1998; Ryals & McDonald 2008). We note, though, that they do not score highly on all the dimensions and their propensity for risk taking might need monitoring in some strategic relationship situations.

Implications for Practice

Our research also has implications for practitioners, since we find that the participant's attitudes are sometimes at odds with relationship management. The

extended role of the relationship manager identified in the literature, and listed in Table 2, does provide a means of identifying relationship management attitudes in sales. As an empirical contribution we find that many of these attitudes are highly prevalent across the sales force, supporting previous research that has argued that sales is shifting towards relationship management (e.g. Jackson *et al.* 1994; Wotruba 1996; Anderson 1996; Leigh & Marshall 2001).

However, we also find that, even in an organization with a declared commitment to relationship management, some of the attitudes of the sales people are perhaps closer to those we would expect to see in traditional transactional selling. Thus, for example, despite taking time to build understanding of the client and to plan, they give a low priority to analyzing their data to get the most out of it. Beyond this, they often prefer customers who have price as their principle rationale for decision-making, and they tend to avoid prescriptive implementation plans for customer strategy.

This finding raises questions about the training these sales people had been given and also about the organizational performance measurement and reward systems. It could be that the sales people we surveyed were being asked to undertake strategic roles in the organization for internal selling but were measured by and rewarded for chasing non-strategic clients (although all sales people were compensated through fixed salary rather than commission-based rewards).

A second contribution of our work that is important for sales directors is that we find little differentiation based on attitude towards relationship management in the more senior sales people tasked with these roles. This could have a substantial bearing on

how we think about relationship management. If in fact a different set of skills is required, which both the literature and the qualitative study suggested, then we have to ask whether the best sales people are the most appropriate people for these positions? In other words, when companies appoint people into relationship management roles, it might be advisable for them to consider applicants from a wider range of backgrounds and, perhaps, to focus on their attitudes to relationship management rather than on their selling capabilities.

Overall, we find no correlation between the job role (and its degree of expected relationship management) and attitudes towards relationship management. This indicates that people in the higher-order relationship management roles in this organization did not get there owing to their higher propensity to work in a relationship management style, which could have a significant bearing on the likelihood of success for themselves and for their business. The implication for practitioners is that sales managers should pay more attention to attitudes before appointing sales people to relationship management positions to avoid misallocation of resources. It may even suggest that sales people are, in many respects, inappropriate for relationship management roles. Overall, our study demonstrates that people *called* relationship managers don't necessarily profile like relationship managers, which certainly indicates that there is some issue with the recruitment, training, or reward of these people.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The purpose of the study is to examine the attitudes of a sales force towards relationship management and to see whether these attitudes match their job roles. The

results of the study provide some interesting observations that may guide future research and also influence the practice of sales.

The research has contributed a new theoretical notion, which is that there may be three types of sales person based on their attitudes towards relationship management: Self-Directed; Team Leader; and Strategic Sales. More research would be needed to confirm these profiles. The single-company setting means that we are limited in the extent to which we can generalize the findings beyond the scope of study, although the survey instrument used was developed from a number of cross-industry interviews (Table 1). Applying the tool to a single company did enable us to control for a number of extraneous variables such as consistency of role description, reward structures and of customers served, and reduced the impact of industry differences, making the single-company test a justifiable sacrifice. Using a single company also enabled a very high response rate (85% coverage), producing an unusual data set comprising a cross-section of an entire sales force. Wider testing in different contexts, perhaps including customer perspectives, would be needed to establish whether the three clusters provide a definitive description of attitudes. Given that even the Strategic Sales people did not fully match the theoretical description of a relationship manager, future research could explore whether there are other groupings that our research did not reveal, or whether in fact the theoretical description of the perfect relationship manager is unattainable in practice. Further research and testing of the instrument would be needed to confirm whether it can help organizations to identify potential account managers and key account managers.

In addition to the limitation of the single-company context, there may have been some social desirability bias influencing the respondents' answers. Given that the airline's culture was noticeably oriented towards customers and relationships, perceived pressure to conform to this norm might have influenced the results. However, the anonymity of the data-gathering process would help to reduce the social desirability bias.

From a practical perspective, the airline used the data to inform the reshaping of its sales team and, in particular, to help them identify the long-term strategic thinkers who could manage their key accounts. This process has enabled the airline to streamline the sales force around a tiered customer management approach. The finding that their Key Account Managers did not profile as expected has initiated substantial re-orientation training. The degree to which top-performing sales people successfully transition into relationship management roles would be an interesting topic for future study.

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Appendix 1: Survey items and response format

1.   In the questions below, place a cross (X) in the spaces on the scale to represent your work style in relation to the statement of account management style:

a)   When collecting commercial information on clients, who do you go to for the information?

Principle client contact only | | | | | | | *Multiple points of contact inside and outside the client firm*

b)   Targets and goals are important in gauging performance; to what extent are you governed by short-term financial goals in relation to long-term financial goals

Short-term financial goals | | | | | | | *Long-term financial goals*

c)   I consider a short-term financial goal to related to the period between …... months and ……months

d)   I consider a long-term financial goal to related to the period between ……months and ……months

e)   When making an assessment of your customers organisational culture you form judgements based on -

Intuition and principle client contact | | | | | | | *Analysis and multiple-level contacts*

f)   How do you work, in a flexible or highly organised manner?

Highly organised | | | | | | | *Highly flexible*

g)   When forming proposals for clients do you focus on demonstrating a revenue case or commercial objectives?

Revenue case | | | | | | | *Commercial objectives*

2.   Sales people have different working styles with their customers. Please identify in the questions below the extent to which you agree with the statements made. There is no right or wrong answer. *(One answer per line only)*

	To no Extent					To a great extent	
To what extent do you make decisions based on intuition as opposed to detailed research in relation to the client?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what extent do you collect all available client data when making decisions?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what extent do you respond to current customer behaviour as opposed to shaping a long-term shared vision with the customer?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what extent do you take risks in complex or uncertain situations with clients?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what extent is your role to develop a shared strategy with the client?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In planning, to what extent is deep analysis and understanding more important to you than objectives and actions?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

To what extent are you able to follow strict implementation plans without having to change them to meet new circumstances?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what extent are you good at organising those around you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what extent is your preference for winning new business as opposed to seeing through existing projects?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what extent do you use a structured and defined process to identify key customers?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what extent do you bid for all profitable business within designated customers, as opposed to only strategically aligned business?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what extent do you work closely with operations?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what extent can you influence operations to get things done?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what extent do you build and utilise a trusted small group of personal relationships (as opposed to a very large group) when formulating ideas, research and decisions?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what extent are you comfortable with your other colleagues dealing directly with your client?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what extent do you have a formalised method for communicating decisions and ideas?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what extent do you adapt your work style and communications to match national cultural differences?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what extent are you more comfortable managing customers who are mainly interested in price than in a long term relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of survey instrument development

	Courier Co.	Computer Co.	Components Co.	Equipment Co.	Other Companies	
Relationship Manager	2	3	3	1	5	**14**
Line Manager	1	1	1	1	-	**4**
Customer	4	3	3	2	-	**12**
Internal	4	4	4	1	-	**13**
TOTAL	**11**	**11**	**11**	**5**	**5**	**43**

Table 2: The extended role of the Relationship Manager

Role	Expectations of a Traditional Sales Person	Expectations of a Relationship Manager	Literature Sources
*Managing information**	Quickly cut it down to the essentials needed to achieve the sale	Manage information and co-ordinating information inside their firm and between them and the customer	Brady (2004); Millman (1999a, 1999b); Millman & Wilson (1995); Shi et al. (2005); Wotruba & Castleberry. (1993)
Undertaking strategic marketing	What is important is to identify the customer's objectives and then formulate an attractive financial proposition, make the business case for why customers should purchase.	Understand the customer's strategy and match it with the suppliers. Attempt to understand the customer better than they understand themselves.	Brady (2004); Harvey *et al.* (2002); Millman & Wilson (1999)
*Knowledge of the customer**	Monitor the customer's behaviours and actual purchasing carefully and respond to that.	Dealing with the future of both businesses and developing a shared vision. This means understanding the customer's core competencies and how the suppliers can match the customers.	Boles & Johnston (1999); Brady (2004); McDonald *et al.* (1997); Millman & Wilson (1999); Shi *et al.* (2005); Weitz & Bradford (1999); Wotruba & Castleberry (1993)
*Managing organisation and culture**	Have an intuitive feel for the customer's organisation and culture based on the information and attitudes of the main contact.	Understand the customer's corporate culture and how they do business, and can speak to that when presenting to them. It is important to have connections at all levels of the organisation and be comfortable with that.	Homberg *et al.* (2002); Millman (1999); Millman & Wilson (1999); Wilson & Millman (2003)
Managing complexity, risk and uncertainty	Boil down complexity and seeing issues clearly in black and white. Thriving on the risk but doing little to manage it	understanding change and unpredictability are all part of the relationship. Attempt to analyse risk and uncertainty and take action about it.	Homberg *et al.* (2000); Wilson & Millman (2003)
Strategy development	Action orientated strategy.	Have a broad vision about how the relationship between the two organisations is to develop and actively guide both parties in this direction.	Brady (2004); Harvey *et al.* (2002); Homberg *et al.* (2000); Weitz & Bradford (1999)
*Planning**	Little in any formal customer planning, very action orientated	Have good strategic planning skills and make medium to long term plans often jointly with the customer.	Andrews & Smith (1996); Brady (2004); McDonald *et al.* (1997); Millman (1996); Ryals & Rogers (2007); Weitz & Bradford (1999); Wotruba & Castleberry. (1993)

Strategy implementation	Making things happen and keeping to the action plan.	long term implementation planning but recognising when the plan is no longer relevant and making alternative plans if need be.	Harvey *et al.* (2002); Shi *et al*. (2005); Wotruba & Castleberry (1993)
Taking responsibility*	Responsible for the sale and prehaps delivery of services, but little more.	Understand the political issues. Consult and communicate but, at the end of the day, the responsibility for the entire customer lifespan in theirs.	Boles & Johnston (1999); Homberg *et al.* (2000)
Prioritising	Accept the given customer focus and bid for all business within designated customers.	Use a customer-validated criteria-based process for identifying key customers, and desirable bits of business within them.	Homberg *et al.* (2000)
Selling and negotiating externally*	Strong at negotiating and selling effectively with the customer without preperation to achieve highest volume and highest price.	Strong at understanding the customer in depth, generating compelling value propositions, and negotiating value-based premiums.	Brady (2004); Colletti & Tubridy (1987); McDonald *et al.* (1997); Millman & Wilson (1995; 1999)
Selling and negotiating internally*	To barter and bargain to get things done.	The internal selling role is a major part of there function. Maybe 60-80% of there time is spent trying to secure delivery of the promise to the customer.	Brady (2004); Millman & Wilson (1999); Workman et al. (2003)
Operational delivery and supply chain management	Little close day-to-day relationship with Operations but react fast if customer complaints arise.	Work closely with operations, especially on customisations. Recognise potential issues and address them pro-actively. Identify supply chain/project opportunities and contribute to task forces.	Harvey *et al*. (2002); Homberg *et al*. (2000; 2002)
Managing external relationships*	Focus on a few pivotal people in the relationship and develop good personal relationships with them to minimise costs.	Build relationships that will ensure a good relationship between the two companies at many levels in the organisations, that can function without the relationship manager present.	Colletti & Tubridy (1987); Guenzi *et al.* (2007) ; Harvey *et al*. (2002) ; Menon *et al*. (1997); Shi *et al.* (2005) ; Weitz & Bradford (1999)
Managing internal relationships*	Focus on a few key people inside their company and develop good personal relationships with them.	Have close, shared relationships with people inside the entire company at a wide range of functions and levels, who understand the relationship aims, buy into them, support and pro-actively offer relevant new ideas.	Guenzi *et al.* (2007) ; Harvey *et al.* (2002) ; Millman & Wilson (1995); Shi *et al.* (2005) ; Weitz & Bradford (1999)

*Managing the account team**	Handle the relationship alone whenever possible.	Build a trusted team to interact directly with customer. The team are empowered to act, but understand when the relationship manager should be involved.	Homberg *et al.* (2000; 2002) ; Jones *et al.* (2005); McDonald *et al.* (1997); Millman (1996); Shi *et al.* (2005); Weitz & Bradford (1999); Workman *et al.* (2003)
*Understanding personal style**	A personal style is best described as: Savvy, Streetfighting, Aggressive when necessary, Competitive	A personal style is best described as: Change agent. Working for the company more than for themselves. Command respect at all levels. Act like a business manager.	McDonald & Woodburn (2007); Wotruba & Castleberry (1993)
Ability to work with different types of accounts	Most comfortable managing customers who don't want a strategic relationship, where the focus is mainly on price and transactions and the relationship is mainly with procurement.	Most comfortable working with customers who are interested in a strategic relationship, where they have good access to various levels of the company, and where the customer is interested in joint innovation or other breakthrough projects.	Harvey *et al.* (2002); McDonald & Woodburn (2007)

* = Also map to Moncreif *et al.* (2006) Relationship Selling components

Table 3: Sample statistics

Job title	Role	Sample size	Number of accounts for which revenue-responsible	Average years in sales	Average value of Customers
Sales / Senior Sales Exec	Deal with moderately customized bulk and freight customers through prospecting, and long term customer engagement	179	145	7.9	Medium
Sales Manager	Manage Sales execs but also have some high value accounts	73	769*	14.0	Medium-High
Communications Executive	Manage marketing communications but have some prospecting and sales roles	9	7	7.8	N/A
Sales Support	Have some prospecting and sales roles with low value accounts but mostly provide internal support	12	32	6.5	Low
Area Manager	Manage regional areas of independent smaller accounts	57	449*	12.0	Low-Medium
Call Centre Manager	Manage call centre staff who deal with low value customers and cold calling	5	46	12.4	Low
Key Account Manager	Deal with highest value corporate customers	7	80	11.7	Very high
TOTAL		**342**	**4,656**		

* This number reported appears high because the sales managers and area managers are revenue-responsible for their entire team of sales and senior sales executives. The accounts they are actively managing range between 40 and 120 according to subsequent validation with senior managers.

Table 4: Selected results of Games-Howell Post-Hoc ANOVAs

Dependent Variable	(I) Role	(J) Role	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Strategic Orientation	KAM	S. Mgr	-1.831(*)	.546	.046	-3.63	-.03
		S/SSExec	-1.801(*)	.503	.048	-3.59	-.01
		A Mgr	-1.982(*)	.553	.030	-3.79	-.18
		Other	-2.037(*)	.587	.029	-3.90	-.18
Planning (Shared Strategy)	Other	KAM	-1.743(*)	.519	.021	-3.28	-.21
		S. Mgr	-1.258(*)	.411	.035	-2.45	-.06
		S/SSExec	-.823	.404	.276	-2.00	.36
		A Mgr	-1.056	.423	.117	-2.28	.17
Organising Others	S/SSExec	KAM	-.306	.297	.833	-1.37	.76
		S. Mgr	-.467(*)	.133	.005	-.83	-.10
		A Mgr	-.434	.179	.117	-.93	.06
		Other	-.169	.256	.963	-.91	.57
Working With Operations	S/SSExec	KAM	.399	.486	.916	-1.37	2.16
		S. Mgr	-.345	.192	.381	-.88	.19
		A Mgr	-.554(*)	.195	.043	-1.10	-.01
		Other	-.127	.320	.994	-1.06	.80
Influencing Operation	S/SSExec	KAM	-.140	.396	.996	-1.54	1.26
		S. Mgr	-.538(*)	.194	.048	-1.07	.00
		A Mgr	-1.035(*)	.199	.000	-1.59	-.48
		Other	.220	.351	.970	-.80	1.24
Account Teams	S/SSExec	KAM	-.800	.420	.394	-2.30	.70
		S. Mgr	-.696(*)	.169	.001	-1.16	-.23
		A Mgr	-.680(*)	.199	.008	-1.23	-.13
		Other	.015	.395	1.000	-1.14	1.17

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 5: Divergence between heterogeneous grouping using Games-Howell Post Hoc ANOVAs

Dependent Variable	(I) Cluster	(J) Cluster	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Depth of contact	Self-directed	Team Leader	1.121(*)	.292	.001
		Strategic Sales	-1.656(*)	.203	.000
	Team Leader	Self-directed	-1.121(*)	.292	.001
		Strategic Sales	-2.777(*)	.234	.000
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	1.656(*)	.203	.000
		Team Leader	2.777(*)	.234	.000
Financial Time Horizon	Self-directed	Team Leader	-.134	.269	.872
		Strategic Sales	-1.035(*)	.210	.000
	Team Leader	Self-directed	.134	.269	.872
		Strategic Sales	-.901(*)	.238	.001
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	1.035(*)	.210	.000
		Team Leader	.901(*)	.238	.001
Depth of knowledge	Self-directed	Team Leader	.814(*)	.277	.011
		Strategic Sales	-1.796(*)	.170	.000
	Team Leader	Self-directed	-.814(*)	.277	.011
		Strategic Sales	-2.609(*)	.247	.000
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	1.796(*)	.170	.000
		Team Leader	2.609(*)	.247	.000
Organisation	Self-directed	Team Leader	-.489	.268	.164
		Strategic Sales	-.051	.226	.972
	Team Leader	Self-directed	.489	.268	.164
		Strategic Sales	.438	.254	.198
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	.051	.226	.972
		Team Leader	-.438	.254	.198
Strategic Orientation	Self-directed	Team Leader	.851(*)	.273	.006
		Strategic Sales	-.497	.234	.088
	Team Leader	Self-directed	-.851(*)	.273	.006
		Strategic Sales	-1.347(*)	.270	.000
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	.497	.234	.088
		Team Leader	1.347(*)	.270	.000
Analytics vs. intuition	Self-directed	Team Leader	-.090	.233	.922
		Strategic Sales	-.302	.179	.213
	Team Leader	Self-directed	.090	.233	.922
		Strategic Sales	-.213	.224	.610
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	.302	.179	.213
		Team Leader	.213	.224	.610
Information Collection	Self-directed	Team Leader	-.898(*)	.190	.000
		Strategic Sales	-1.086(*)	.144	.000
	Team Leader	Self-directed	.898(*)	.190	.000
		Strategic Sales	-.188	.150	.423
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	1.086(*)	.144	.000
		Team Leader	.188	.150	.423
Creating Vision	Self-directed	Team Leader	.471	.209	.066
		Strategic Sales	.541(*)	.174	.006
	Team Leader	Self-directed	-.471	.209	.066
		Strategic Sales	.070	.200	.934
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	-.541(*)	.174	.006
		Team Leader	-.070	.200	.934
Risky Clients	Self-directed	Team Leader	.310	.247	.423
		Strategic Sales	.496(*)	.187	.024

			Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
	Team Leader	Self-directed	-.310	.247	.423
		Strategic Sales	.187	.229	.693
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	-.496(*)	.187	.024
		Team Leader	-.187	.229	.693
Planning (Shared Strategy)	Self-directed	Team Leader	-1.199(*)	.203	.000
		Strategic Sales	-1.429(*)	.169	.000
	Team Leader	Self-directed	1.199(*)	.203	.000
		Strategic Sales	-.230	.161	.329
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	1.429(*)	.169	.000
		Team Leader	.230	.161	.329
Planning (Analysis)	Self-directed	Team Leader	-1.127(*)	.212	.000
		Strategic Sales	-.913(*)	.163	.000
	Team Leader	Self-directed	1.127(*)	.212	.000
		Strategic Sales	.214	.192	.507
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	.913(*)	.163	.000
		Team Leader	-.214	.192	.507
Implements Strategy	Self-directed	Team Leader	-.716(*)	.225	.005
		Strategic Sales	-.269	.173	.267
	Team Leader	Self-directed	.716(*)	.225	.005
		Strategic Sales	.447	.204	.078
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	.269	.173	.267
		Team Leader	-.447	.204	.078
Organising Others	Self-directed	Team Leader	-1.264(*)	.158	.000
		Strategic Sales	-1.100(*)	.138	.000
	Team Leader	Self-directed	1.264(*)	.158	.000
		Strategic Sales	.164	.120	.359
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	1.100(*)	.138	.000
		Team Leader	-.164	.120	.359
Responsibility	Self-directed	Team Leader	-1.300(*)	.193	.000
		Strategic Sales	-1.257(*)	.153	.000
	Team Leader	Self-directed	1.300(*)	.193	.000
		Strategic Sales	.043	.173	.967
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	1.257(*)	.153	.000
		Team Leader	-.043	.173	.967
Priorities (Identifying Key Customers)	Self-directed	Team Leader	-1.413(*)	.180	.000
		Strategic Sales	-1.103(*)	.160	.000
	Team Leader	Self-directed	1.413(*)	.180	.000
		Strategic Sales	.310	.140	.072
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	1.103(*)	.160	.000
		Team Leader	-.310	.140	.072
Priorities (Bidding for new business)	Self-directed	Team Leader	1.054(*)	.210	.000
		Strategic Sales	1.141(*)	.165	.000
	Team Leader	Self-directed	-1.054(*)	.210	.000
		Strategic Sales	.087	.179	.877
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	-1.141(*)	.165	.000
		Team Leader	-.087	.179	.877
Working With Operations	Self-directed	Team Leader	-1.329(*)	.216	.000
		Strategic Sales	-1.536(*)	.170	.000
	Team Leader	Self-directed	1.329(*)	.216	.000
		Strategic Sales	-.208	.176	.469
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	1.536(*)	.170	.000
		Team Leader	.208	.176	.469
Influencing Operation	Self-directed	Team Leader	-1.557(*)	.220	.000
		Strategic Sales	-1.730(*)	.183	.000

			Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
	Team Leader	Self-directed	1.557(*)	.220	.000
		Strategic Sales	-.173	.176	.590
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	1.730(*)	.183	.000
		Team Leader	.173	.176	.590
External relations	Self-directed	Team Leader	1.147(*)	.184	.000
		Strategic Sales	.838(*)	.163	.000
	Team Leader	Self-directed	-1.147(*)	.184	.000
		Strategic Sales	-.308	.159	.132
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	-.838(*)	.163	.000
		Team Leader	.308	.159	.132
Account Teams	Self-directed	Team Leader	-1.510(*)	.208	.000
		Strategic Sales	-1.123(*)	.192	.000
	Team Leader	Self-directed	1.510(*)	.208	.000
		Strategic Sales	.388(*)	.155	.036
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	1.123(*)	.192	.000
		Team Leader	-.388(*)	.155	.036
Communication	Self-directed	Team Leader	-1.661(*)	.174	.000
		Strategic Sales	-1.419(*)	.154	.000
	Team Leader	Self-directed	1.661(*)	.174	.000
		Strategic Sales	.242	.139	.193
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	1.419(*)	.154	.000
		Team Leader	-.242	.139	.193
Culture	Self-directed	Team Leader	-1.143(*)	.211	.000
		Strategic Sales	-1.064(*)	.184	.000
	Team Leader	Self-directed	1.143(*)	.211	.000
		Strategic Sales	.079	.147	.853
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	1.064(*)	.184	.000
		Team Leader	-.079	.147	.853
Customer preference	Self-directed	Team Leader	.885(*)	.260	.003
		Strategic Sales	.303	.198	.278
	Team Leader	Self-directed	-.885(*)	.260	.003
		Strategic Sales	-.582(*)	.239	.043
	Strategic Sales	Self-directed	-.303	.198	.278
		Team Leader	.582(*)	.239	.043

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Figure 1: 95% confidence interval for attitudes to relationship management
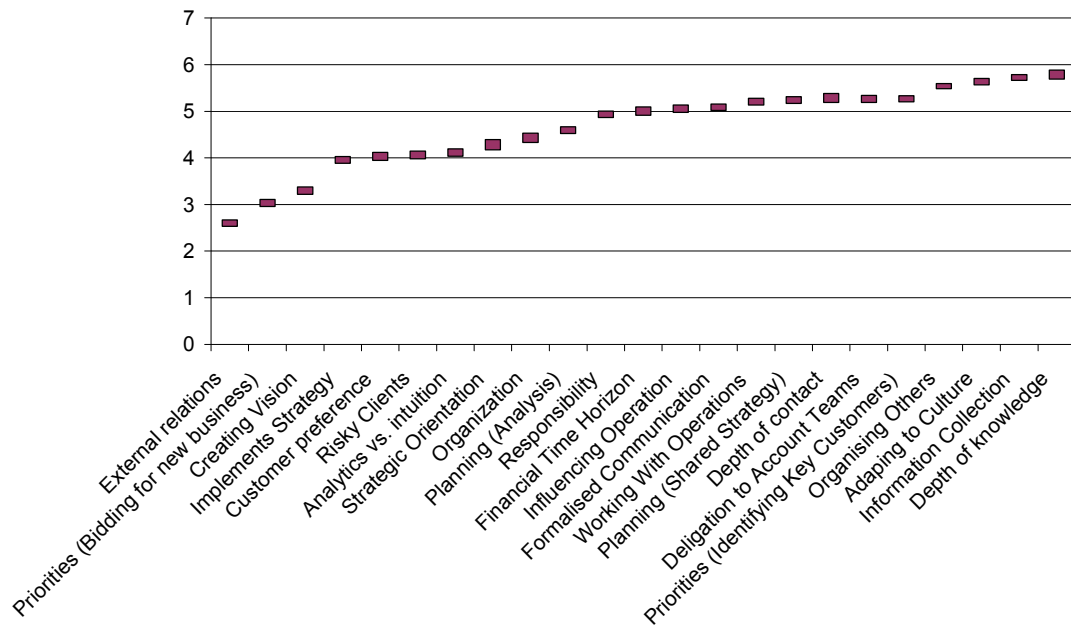
Figure 2: Role-based attitudes to relationship management are surprisingly homogeneous
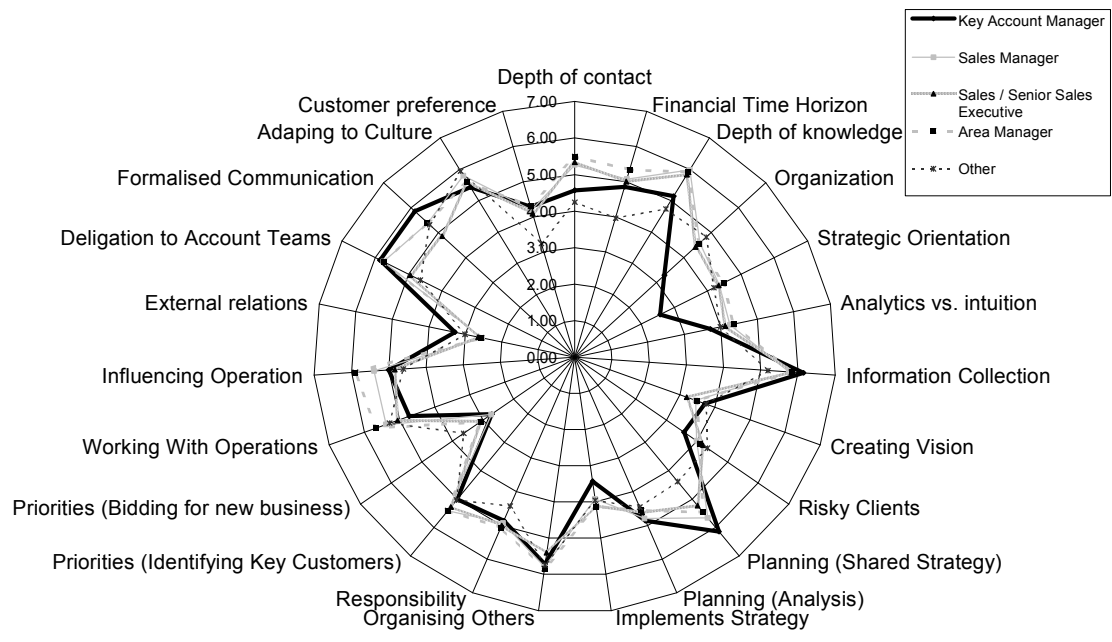
Figure 3: Cluster-based attitudes to Relationship Management reveal heterogeneous attitudes
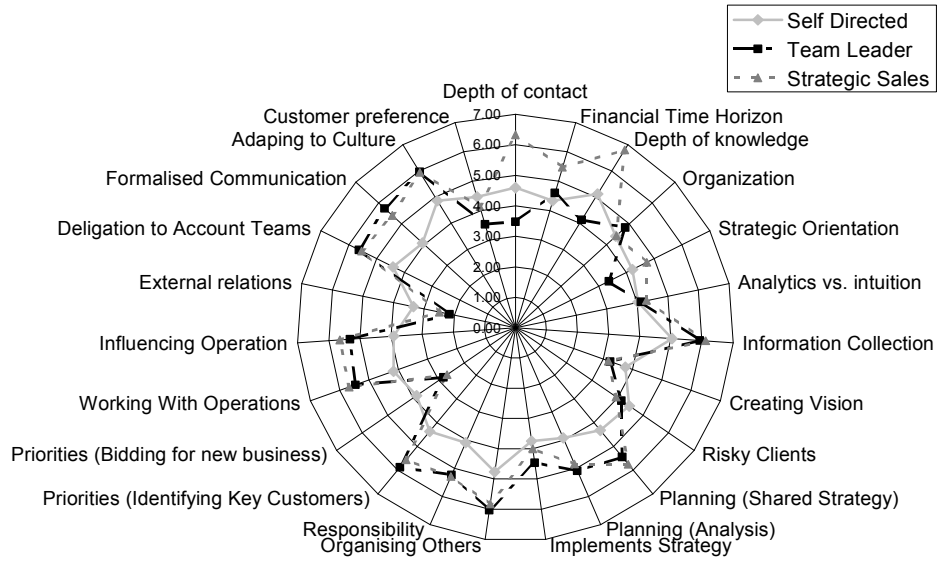
Figure 4: Distribution of Attitudinal Groups across the Sample