

# **Information Technology (IT) Projects – A Psychological Contract Perspective**

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## List of Acronyms

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Definition</b>
EULA	End User License Agreement
EU	End User
IT	Information Technology
SP	Software Publisher
SR	Software Reseller

## Abstract

Incorporating a psychological contract perspective into information technology projects, this study intends to explore the elements of the software publisher-reseller-end user psychological contract in the context of IT projects and contribute to existing literature in the field of IT psychological contracts.

The data for this study was collected via 10 interviews conducted across 5 different cases. Interviewees were asked to describe IT projects they were recently involved in and outline what they perceived to be their obligations towards the other stakeholders and likewise, the obligations of the other stakeholders upon them. Interviews were transcribed and coded in accordance with existing IT project psychological contract elements derived from literature.

The results of this study provided support to all psychological contract elements of the existing model and suggest refinements to better capture the perceived obligations of stakeholders in IT Projects. Furthermore, we observe that while the resellers' and software publishers' psychological contracts with end users conformed to the obligations expected under the model of supplier-customer relationships, the software reseller-software publisher psychological contracts reciprocally contained elements of both supplier and customer obligations. Finally, the findings of this study revealed that critical to the success of IT projects are the elements of transparency, accuracy, dedication, knowledge and responsibility.

## Chapter 1. Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the context, motivation and objectives of this study. The background context and key concepts for this study will be explained, followed by the thesis research problem, and finally the motivation and objectives for the research.

### 1.1 Research Context

The management of software information technology (IT) projects presents an ongoing challenge for information technology professionals. These software IT projects are generally complex, multi-stakeholder exercises involving the management of relationships among multiple parties. Critical to the success of these projects is the management of the various relationships that are party to the project with a key success factor being a mutual understanding between suppliers and their customers (Kern & Willcocks, 2000; Kishore et al., 2003). While the general approach to the management of these relationships is through detailed contractual agreements, contracts are often ineffective approaches to relationship management as the complexity and ambiguity of the interactions between parties cannot be easily defined (Henderson, 1990). Further, obligations can be unclear at the beginning of the relationship and difficult to anticipate in contractual documents (Prifling, Gregory, & Beck, 2009). Given this uncertainty and the importance of mutual understanding between parties on project success, there is a need to clarify the expectations between the various stakeholder relationships in IT projects.

The IT supply chain consists of the software publisher, the reseller and the end user (Fulford & Love, 2004). While the reseller will typically handle day-to-day sales, support and implementation (Fulford & Love, 2004), the software publisher will often be directly involved in the customer's more complex projects. This relationship can be complicated by the fact that generally, no direct contract will exist between the end-user and the software publisher beyond the end user licensing agreement for the software. As an added element to the chain, customers may engage consultants to supplement a lack of resources or technical expertise within their organization (Haines & Goodhue, 2003). Thus, an information system implementation can consist of the multi-party relationship involving: (1) Software Publisher, (2) the End User and (3) the Software Reseller

Despite the importance of relationships in IT projects, there is little research on the ongoing management and understanding of these relationships, with most adopting a customer-supplier (Kern & Willcocks, 2000; Kishore et al., 2003) or customer-consultant perspective (Chornoboy & Wayne, 1990; Dawes et al., 2007; Shah, 1990). This project seeks to study the multi-party relationships of IT projects that exist between software publishers, resellers and customers in an IT project.

Psychological contact theory provides an approach to studying the implicit contractual aspects of the relationships between parties. Psychological contracts, a concept grounded in organizational behavior, are the beliefs and expectations of contractual parties regarding their mutual obligations within contractual relationships (Rousseau, 1989). This project applies psychological contract theory to IT projects by exploring perceived

obligations amongst stakeholders in multi-party IT relationships. In doing so, the project seeks to provide clarity to stakeholder's expectations and allow the parties to develop a better mutual understanding.

Significant study has been conducted in the field of psychological contracts, with Denise Rousseau (1989, 1990, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2001) providing the foundational research for this project. Rousseau's research was drawn upon to develop an understanding of the theories and concepts regarding psychological contracts. Additionally research has been conducted into the application of psychological contracts research in the field of IT systems outsourcing (Herath & Kishore, 2007; Kim et al., 2007; Koh et al., 2004). While, to our knowledge, there are no published studies on the topic of psychological contracts in the context of software IT projects, significant parallels can be drawn between relationships in IT outsourcing and software IT projects.

## 1.2 Concepts

This section provides definitions of the concepts needed to understand the research context. These concepts are referenced throughout this project.

**End User:** The organization that uses the software publisher's product.

**Psychological Contract:** This project applies Rousseau's definition of the psychological contract as the beliefs and expectations of contractual parties regarding their mutual obligations in the contractual relationship, based on perceived promises of a reciprocal exchange (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998).

**Software Publisher:** The developer and provider of commercial off-the-shelf software products. This is in distinction to software integrators, who package different software publisher’s products to offer a solution or to the developers of bespoke software, who custom develop solutions for clients. The various types of software supplier-customer relationships are further detailed in table 1 below.

Table 1 - Software Supplier-Customer Relationships (Brereton, 2004):

Approach	Relationship	Customer	Balance of Power between customer and supplier
<b>Commercial Off-The-Shelf (COTS) products</b>	Software customer has a close relationships with a small number of suppliers	End-User	Toward Supplier
<b>Component-Based Software Engineering (CBSE)</b>	Many suppliers provide parts from which a system is built	Designer	Toward Customer
<b>Software Service Engineering (SSE)</b>	Systems are composed from Web services; customers enter into negotiation with a large number of global suppliers	Designer	No obvious winner

**Software Reseller:** Organizations involved in the sale, support and implementation of a software publisher’s products. They focus on niche marketing and lead generation while the software publisher is responsible for branding and broad marketing (Fulford & Love, 2004). Software resellers are required to have a high level of knowledge of the technology they resell and how to apply it in specific environments (Fulford & Love, 2004). In the software industry, there are typically three types of software resellers:

1. Fulfillment Agencies – operate primarily as order fulfillment under a cost-plus model. High emphasis on volume, low emphasis on knowledge and additional services.
2. Value Added Resellers (VARs) – Market themselves as “solution providers”. They focus on finding and addressing business needs with a greater emphasis on product knowledge and professional services revenues.
3. Systems Integrators – Specialize in large, complex, long-term systems integration projects. These resellers typically have a high degree of product knowledge and derive their main revenue from professional services.

### 1.3 Research Problem

Information Technology (IT) contracts are characterized by three categories of terms: (1) Terms which detail the rights and obligations of the parties (“contract detail”), (2) terms to observe and monitor performance (“monitoring”) and (3) terms which ensure contractual compliance (“penalties”) (Ryall & Samspon, 2009). Common terms found in these contracts include clauses regarding confidentiality, right to terminate, intellectual property rights, limitations of liability, and alternate dispute resolution (Ryall & Samspon, 2009). IT Contracts are most often based on a cost-plus model, in which the customer directs the supplier to perform particular tasks in exchange for time based rates (such as per day or hour) plus expenses (Kalnins & Mayer, 2004). This permits the customer flexibility to change project scope.

The level of detail and customization contained in IT contracts is dependent on the level of familiarity between organizations (Sabberwal, 1999; Poppo & Zenger, 2002; Ryall &

Sampson, 2009). Previous relationships between the parties provide them with a greater breadth of experience to draw from, allowing for more complete and customized contracts. A longstanding relationship history leads to greater levels of contingency planning and is more likely to include monitoring and penalty clauses in contracts (Argyres et al., 2007). Further, the depth of the contract is influenced by the level of trust between organizations, with organizations exhibiting high levels of trust tending to focus less on explicit structured agreements, instead relying on implicit understandings and trust based relationships (Sabberwal, 1999).

Software Publishers license commercial Software under complex contractual agreements known as End User License Agreements (EULAs). These EULAs typically include a number of clauses that fully waive the software publisher of responsibility for the software, ultimately rendering the software sold “as is.” Despite these terms, software publishers employ large teams and engage their supply chain to work with commercial customers and ensure their project success. While this is consistent with the understanding that service-oriented manufacturers, such as software publishers, often provide customers with benefits such as support, repairs and training without a written agreement in place to do so (Rousseau, 1989), the conflicting nature of disclaiming the fitness of a product while working with the customer to ensure the software’s fitness for their purpose suggests that an additional dynamic exists in IT projects beyond the inter-party relationships covered by the explicit contractual relationship.

This study seeks to take a psychological contract perspective to better understand the perceptions regarding the obligations of the parties in software IT projects. The research attempts to answer the question “What are the critical obligations between software publishers, software resellers and end users in an IT project relationship?”

#### **1.4 Motivation**

The central motivation of this study is to help the parties central to an IT project understand the beliefs and expectations of the other parties regarding their obligations in the relationship. As an individual’s behavior may be driven by their perception of these obligations, understanding the formative elements of the psychological contract is critical to managing the relationship. Knowledge of these elements may effect organizational contracting policies and influence best practices for the various parties to the relationship.

Customer-supplier relationships in software fields are characterized by long term partnerships; successful relationships are dependent on mutual respect and willingness to share information (Brereton, 2004). A critical determinant in success and positive perceptions of the supplier is the customer’s perspective of whether a supplier has performed to the expectations of the psychological contract (Blancero & Elram, 1997). Knowledge of what these expectations are can help suppliers establish best practices to better service their customers.

Psychological contracts are supported by notions of trust (Sabberwal, 1999) and have an interactive effect on perceptions of trust and commitment in supplier-customer relationships (Kingshott, 2006). Trust reduces the perceived need to protect against

negative outcomes through formal agreements between parties and instead places greater emphasis on the implicit expectations of the psychological contract (Sabherwal, 1999).

However, the breach of psychological contracts leads to a number of negative consequences including negative emotions, disputes and mistrust (Robinson, 1996; Sabherwal, 1999). Intimate knowledge of the essential elements and characteristics of psychological contracts can help suppliers to manage customer expectations efficiently and to understand the factors they need to consider when building long terms supplier-customer relationships.

## **1.5 Research Objectives**

Existing research has examined psychological contracts in the context of IT systems outsourcing (Herath & Kishore, 2007; Kim et al., 2007; Koh et al., 2004; Prifling et al., 2009). Conducting research exploring psychological contract relationships between the parties in software IT projects contributes to the general field of IT psychological contract knowledge. The findings of this project may lend support to existing research in the context of existing models of IT psychological contracts and discover new elements of psychological contracts in IT.

Once the elements of the software IT value chain's psychological contract are defined, further study can be conducted assessing which of the obligations of the psychological contract are the most important contributors to project success. Further study could be conducted into the relative importance of these elements.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter presents an overview and critical analysis of the relevant literature that informs this project. The following academic fields are of significant importance to the research:

1. Non-contractual relations in business
2. Psychological Contract Theory, focusing heavily on the works of Rousseau to develop an understanding of the underlying theories and concepts regarding psychological contracts.
3. Supplier-Customer Psychological Contracts. A look into the application of psychological contracts in supplier-customer relationships
4. Psychological contracts in the scope of IT Outsourcing. While little work exists regarding psychological contracts with software publishers, significant parallels can be drawn between relationships with IT outsourcers and software publishers.

### 2.1 Non-Contractual Relations in Business

In business, formal contracts specify the obligations of the parties, generally including provisions for the governance and resolution of the relationship (Liu & Yetton, 2008). For business relationships in which both the expected outcomes and the processes for achieving those outcomes can be well defined, formal contracts are sufficient to govern the relationship (Turner & Simister, 2001). In complex supplier-customer relationships, such as those found in technology industries (Argyres et al., 2007), it is difficult to anticipate and

address the full details of the relationship through legal documentation (Hart, 1988; Hill et al., 2009; Rousseau, 1989). In his classic study of Wisconsin manufacturers, Stewart Macaulay (1963) criticized the importance of business contracts in the governance of customer-supplier relationships, finding that despite the existence of a written agreement, parties to complex relationships rarely refer to the contract. Rather, they prefer to negotiate a solution when a problem arises as the involvement of lawyers and disputes over contract terms is perceived to be damaging to the relationship (Macaulay, 1963). In the absence of legal language to govern the exchange, the supplier-customer relationship finds itself more often based on trust than on a formal agreement (Hill et al., 2009).

In their study of the role of market forces in assuring contractual performance, Klein and Leffler (1981) found that it is often market forces (such as the value of ongoing business) rather than the contractual language itself which assures contractual performance.

## **2.2 The Psychological Contract**

### ***2.2.1 History of the Psychological Contract Concept***

The concept of the psychological contract is grounded in organizational behaviour, first being applied by Argyris (1960) who referred to the employer-employee relationship as a “psychological work contract”. Shortly afterwards, Levinson et al. (1962) provided the first definition, referring to the psychological contract as “*the summation of implicit, mutual expectations between organizations and employees*”. Kotter (1973) provided a similar definition, defining the psychological contract as “*an implicit contract between an individual*

*and his organization which specifies what each expect to give and receive from each other in their relationship*". In his paper, Kotter contrasted the psychological contract from the legal contract in that it could contain thousands of items as opposed to the limited number of terms found in explicit agreements.

Until Schein (1980), the psychological contract had been defined strictly in the context of organizational behavior between an employer and an employee. Schien expanded the definition to encompass relations amongst any members of an organization stating, "*Unwritten expectations existing among members in the organization*".

The seminal works of Rousseau (Rousseau, 1989; Rousseau, 1990; Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993; Rousseau, 1995; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998; Rousseau, 2001), heavily referenced in the field of psychological contracts, establish the contemporary view of the psychological contract. The definition provided by Rousseau, and adopted by this project, defines the psychological contract as:

*... [A]n individual's beliefs 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)*

Rousseau (1995) believed that individuals formed psychological contracts as an efficient mental model to organize experiences so that actions could be governed by

automatic processes. Once these mental models were formed, they become relied upon and resistant to change.

### *2.2.2 Elements of the Psychological Contract*

Further, expanding on the research of Rousseau, we characterize the psychological contract as one based on (1) mutual obligations between parties (Rousseau, 1995), (2) comprehensive beyond the legal contract (Rousseau, 1995), (3) an individual level construct (Rousseau, 1995), (4) changeability over time (Smithson & Lewis, 2003), (5) having an impact on organizational behavior (Robinson, 1996) and (6) being influenced by organizational factors (Rousseau, 1995; Kim et al., 2007).

1. Mutuality – While each party may not have a mutual understanding of the terms of the psychological contract, there is at least the perception of agreement and mutuality based on perceived promises (Kim et al., 2007; Koh et al., 2004; Rousseau, 1995).
2. Comprehensive – The psychological contract encompasses both the explicit written terms of the legal agreement as well as the implicit terms derived from the perceptions and beliefs of the parties (Rousseau, 1995).
3. Individual Construct – The psychological contract is unique to each individual's idiosyncratic understanding of the agreement (Rousseau, 1995). Past experiences, beliefs, values, expectations and interpretation of communications influence the individual's understanding of the agreement (Rousseau, 1995; Smithson & Lewis, 2003).

4. Changeability – The psychological contract is dynamic, changing over time due to changing expectations and shifting economic and social contexts (Smithson & Lewis, 2003).
5. Impact on Organizational Behaviour – Changes in the psychological contract influence organizational behavior, such as disappointment and anger caused by the perception that commitments have not been honoured (Robinson, 1996).
6. Influenced by Organizational Factors – Organizations express commitments through various ongoing events which signal future intent (Rousseau, 1995). These expressions of commitment, which influence the formation of the psychological contract, include overt statements, treatment of others perceived to be party to a similar arrangement, expressions of organizational policy and social constructions based on history and reputation (Rousseau, 1995).

While the psychological contract is understood to consist of individual's beliefs regarding mutual obligations (Rousseau, 1989) and can be considered distinct from the legal written agreement (Schein, 1980), in characterizing the elements of the psychological contract, we further understand the psychological contract as a complex concept that encompasses and is influenced by both implicit and explicit factors, including the written agreement.

### ***2.2.3 Psychological Contract Breach***

The perception of psychological contract breach by the individual can result in a perceived breach of commitments and negative outcomes for both the individual and the parties to the psychological contract (Robinson, 1996). Breach of the psychological contract may result in:

1. Negative emotions such as anger, violation and depression (Conway & Briner, 2002)
2. Negative attitude toward the opposing party, including decreased trust (Robinson, 1996; Sabberwal, 1999), reduced commitment and loyalty (Turnley & Feldman, 1999), reduced satisfaction (Conway & Briner, 2002), and cynicism (Johnson & O’Leary-Kelly, 2003).
3. Reduction in performance and perceived obligations towards the opposing party. As individuals seek to achieved equilibrium in exchange relationships, violation may result in feelings of injustice. Individuals thus mentally compensate for the perceived inequality through a decrease in their perceived obligations towards the other party (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994).
4. Negative impact on other relationships as perceptions of breach and negative emotions are transferred to other relationships (Hoobler & Brass, 2006).

### ***2.2.5 Criticisms of the Psychological Contract***

Psychological contract theory is limited by the ambiguity in the field with respect to the notion of implied obligations and the constructs of promises, obligations and expectations (Conway et al., 2009). A criticism of psychological contracts has been that

existing literature is not clear as to the exact definition of a psychological contract (Arnold, 1996; Cullinane & Dundon, 2006; Guest, 1998). Definitions have ranged from “expectations” (Kotter, 1973; Schein, 1978) to “perceptions of obligations” (Herriot and Pemberton, 1995) to “reciprocal promises” and “individual beliefs” (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998).

Guest (1998) points out that the notions of promises, obligations and expectations contemplate varying levels of engagement, failing to meet an expectation being less severe than failing to meet an obligation. Guest (1998) further noted that those definitions of a psychological contract that enforce stronger notions of promises and obligations, such as the definitions of Rousseau (1998), become close to that of conventional contracts. This presents the challenge of distinguishing between promissory and implied contracts (Conway et al., 2009).

Throughout the 50-year history of the psychological contract, researchers have reached reasonable consensus on fundamental elements of the psychological contract; its subjective nature, basis in reciprocal exchanges, reciprocity, mutuality, and its implications for breach (Conway et al., 2009). Despite the conceptual challenges, Guest (1998) outlined the value of psychological contracts for policy and research through focusing on the content of the psychological contract and issues of trust, fairness and exchange. Conway et al. (2009) argued as well that modern research into psychological contracts should focus on their implicitness and how they influence everyday behavior.

### 2.3 Supplier-Customer Psychological Contracts

Expectations and obligations are characteristic of business relationships (Dwyer et al., 1987). Without formal contractual language to govern elements of the relationship, the relationship bases itself on an implied sense of reciprocity and trust (Hill et al., 2009; Rousseau, 1989). This suggests the existence of a psychological contract between the supplier and the customer in that the relationship contains beliefs regarding mutual obligations of both parties (McLean Parks et al. 1998; Rousseau, 1989).

While psychological contract theory was originally conceived for and is generally applied in the context of organizational behavior, Roehling (1997) and Blacero & Ellram (1997) expanded the concept of a psychological contract such that it can now be applied to any relationship, including the customer-supplier relationship. While the psychological contract is formed based on individual's perceptions and beliefs, the sentiments of individuals within an organization generally mirror that of the organization's members as a whole through group interpretation and the development of a common organizational point of view (Hill et al., 2009; Rousseau, 1995).

At its highest level, the supplier-customer psychological contract can be described by the supplier's belief that working towards meeting a customer's service expectations and fulfilling their needs will result in the customer's continued business (Blacero & Ellram, 1997). However, the supplier may maintain a different set of expectations than those understood by the customer, leading to disagreement between the two parties (Hill et al., 2009). Fundamentally, the buyer's perspective of whether a supplier has performed to the

expectations of the psychological contract is a critical determinant in success and positive perceptions of the supplier (Blancero & Ellram, 1997; Koh et al., 2004)

Understanding these expectations is critical to understanding the supplier-customer relationship as each party's behaviour is motivated by their respective perception of elements of the psychological contract. Regardless of the contents of the written agreement, day-to-day interactions between parties are governed by these interpretations (Koh & Ang, 2008).

#### 2.4 Psychological Contracts in IT

Over the last decade, psychological contract theory has begun to be applied to better understand IT supplier-customer relationships, predominantly in the field of IT outsourcing projects (Koh et al., 2004; Koh & Ang, 2008; Agerfalk & Fitzgerald, 2008; Prifling et al., 2009). Koh & Ang (2008) expressed the importance of such research, proposing that IT success requires that relationships be viewed beyond the scope of the legal contract.

Koh et al. (2004) presented the foundational research model for this study, first applying a psychological contract perspective to evaluate success in IT outsourcing projects. Koh et al. (2004) sought to answer the following research questions: *(1) what are the critical customer-supplier obligations in an IT outsourcing relationship?* and *(2) what is the impact of fulfilling those obligations on success?* Koh et al. (2004) analyzed the perceived obligations between customers and supplier by means of the psychological contract between customers and supplier project managers. The concept of psychological contracts was applied to perceived mutual obligations and to how fulfillment of those obligations

could predict project success. The researchers conducted in-depth interviews with project managers on either side of the customer-supplier relationship. Interviewees were asked to describe their obligations in the context of the ongoing and future relationships with the contractual party. The results of the study identified the contents of the outsourcing psychological contract, producing a set of six factors which customers believed were the supplier obligations in an outsourcing project and six factors for the reverse relationship. Further research into IT offshore outsourcing projects (Prifling et al., 2009) and open sourcing projects (Agerfalk & Fitzgerald, 2008) uncovered additional factors and provided support to the psychological contract elements identified by Koh et al. (2004). As Prifling et al. (2009) did not specifically define customer and supplier obligations, the study was interpreted to apply the research's results to the existing model. The importance of these elements was established in a follow-on study conducted by Koh et al. (2004), which found that fulfillment of psychological contract's obligations explained a significant amount of the variance in outsourcing success. In part, this can be attributed to the notion that trust has a strong influence on project success (Pinto et al. 2009) and that fulfillment of the expected obligations under psychological contracts is critical to maintaining trust in an IT project relationship (Sabberwal, 1999).

The psychological contract elements identified in literature are identified in Table 2 - IT Psychological Contract Elements, below. While minimal research has been conducted identifying the elements of psychological contracts in IT (Koh et al., 2004; Agerfalk & Fitzgerald, 2008; Prifling et al., 2009), the cumulative knowledge of these three studies provides a model to direct the research's analysis.

Table 2 - IT Psychological Contract Elements

Obligation	Definition	Presence in literature	
<b>Supplier Obligations</b>			
1	Accurate project scoping	Precisely defining the nature of the work covered in the contract and being flexible in handling change requests	(Koh et al., 2004; Prifling et al., 2009)
2	Clear Authority Structures	Clearly outlining the roles and responsibilities, decision making rights and reporting structures in the project	(Agerfalk & Fitzgerald, 2008; Koh et al., 2004; Prifling et al., 2009)
3	Taking Charge	Completing the work and resolving issues independently	(Koh et al., 2004)
4	Effective Human Capital Management	Ensuring high quality resources are assigned to the project and minimize staff turnover	(Agerfalk & Fitzgerald, 2008; Koh et al., 2004; Prifling et al., 2009)
5	Effective Knowledge Transfer	Transferring the necessary skills, knowledge and expertise associated with the project	(Koh et al., 2004)
6	Building Effective Interorganizational Teams	Fostering a good working relationship among stakeholder staff	(Koh et al., 2004)
7	Responsible and Innovative Attitude	Taking responsibility for commitments, be creative in suggesting direction and helping to achieve a positive impact on the project	(Agerfalk & Fitzgerald, 2008)
8	Knowledge of Client's Language	Understanding the operational language of the customer	(Prifling et al., 2009)
<b>Customer Obligations</b>			
1	Clear Specifications	Clearly articulate the requirements for the project	(Koh et al., 2004; Prifling et al., 2009)
2	Prompt Payment	Pay suppliers on time	(Koh et al., 2004)
3	Close Project Monitoring	Actively oversee the project's progress	(Agerfalk & Fitzgerald, 2008; Koh et al., 2004)
4	Dedicated Project Staffing	Ensure employees with the required skills and knowledge work on the project	(Koh et al., 2004)
5	Knowledge Sharing	Provide supplier with the required information	(Koh et al., 2004; Prifling et al., 2009)
6	Project Ownership	Ensure senior management provides organizational commitment and leadership to the project	(Agerfalk & Fitzgerald, 2008; Koh et al., 2004; Prifling et al., 2009)
7	Do Not Seek To Dominate Process	Not being forceful and dominate in pursuing one's agenda	(Agerfalk & Fitzgerald, 2008)
8	Professional management and business expertise	Providing professional experience to the project	(Agerfalk & Fitzgerald, 2008)
9	Help establish an open and trusted ecosystem	Establishing a responsible working relationship and being transparency in intentions	(Agerfalk & Fitzgerald, 2008)
10	Operational Facilitation	Ensuring the supplier has access to the required materials and resources to perform their work	(Koh et al., 2004; Prifling et al., 2009)

The literature review outlines that current literature applying psychological contract theory to the field of IT has predominantly focused on IT outsourcing projects. The literature has focused on capturing the psychological contract elements of customer-supplier relationships in the field of IT and in determining which elements were critical to project success.

This research will apply the IT outsourcing psychological contract elements described in the literature to the context of IT software projects and will seek to support the generalizability of the IT psychological contract construct in this context. The concepts presented in the literature are generally heterogeneous. However, a number present similar concepts from the particular viewpoint of the customer or the supplier. For example, knowledge transfer as a supplier obligation and knowledge sharing as a customer obligation both bring forward the principle concept of knowledge exchange. Similarly, effective human capital management and dedicated project staffing both reflect human capital management. The focus of the model on distinct stakeholder perspectives rather than general constructs may presents challenges in the application of the model in multi-stakeholder environments. Thus, the research will further explore if the IT psychological contract elements defined in literature continue to be supported in the context of multi-stakeholder IT projects.

## Chapter 3. Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology used to answer the research question: “what are the critical obligations between software publishers, software resellers and end users in an IT project relationship?” The methodology followed by this research was designed to uncover what the individual stakeholders to IT projects perceived to be their obligations towards the other stakeholders and likewise, the obligations of the other stakeholders upon them. In taking a directed content analysis approach, the research provide a validation and extension of the IT customer-supplier psychological contract (Table 2 - IT Psychological Contract Elements) in the context of software IT projects and to uncover how the IT psychological contract changes in a multi-stakeholder environment.

### 3.1 Conceptual Framework

For this study, psychological contract theory was used to understand the multi-party relationship in software IT implementations. The three parties to this relationship result in the formation of three distinct psychological contracts (identified in Figure 1 - Conceptual Framework) between the software publisher (SP), the software reseller (SR), and the end-user customer (EU). The psychological contracts are as follows:

- **PC1** – formed between the software publisher and software reseller
- **PC2** – formed between the software reseller and the end user
- **PC3** – formed between the software publisher and the end user

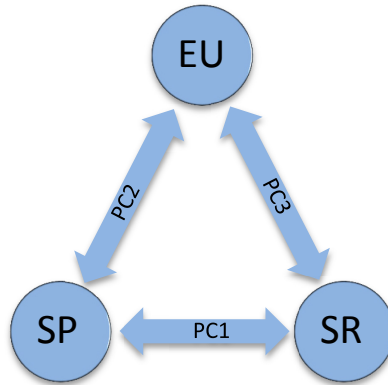


Figure 1 - Conceptual Framework

### 3.2 Multi-Case Study

This research followed a cross sectional, multi-case study approach, analyzing a number of IT software projects. To identify the terms and reciprocal obligations of each of the three psychological contracts in an IT project, a content oriented assessment involving in depth interviews was conducted with parties to the relationship.

Perceived obligations were drawn from one party regarding the others and alternatively, their perceived obligations of the other parties upon them. This methodology was consistent with the approach originally conceptualized by Rousseau (1989), in which he postulated that the reciprocal obligations, promises and expectations of parties can be assessed by interviews and questionnaires. Rousseau and Tijoriwala (1998) further concluded that as psychological contracts represent an individual's beliefs, self-reported measures (such as interviews) are the most direct method to derive information on the nature and content of psychological contracts.

Interviewees were asked to describe their obligations in the context of the ongoing and future relationships with the contractual party. This approach typically measures

respondents' interpretations of parts of the contract including their discrete obligations and perceived promises (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998).

The researcher ensured validity of the study by following a number of measures suggested by Dubé and Paré in their analysis of rigor in information system case research (2003). Primarily, the research followed a multi-case design in order to ensure corroboration and maximize the generalization of the study's results. The study also saturated the data by conducting sufficient interviews such that further study did not reveal new insights.

A clear description of the data sources and the way in which they contribute to the findings was prepared to help the reader understand the limits of the results of the study and address the reliability of the interviewees. Additionally, a clear description of the data analysis process, founded on qualitative research methods, was documented allowing the reader to judge the rigor of the analysis.

Finally, the research was preceded by an extensive literature review of research conducted in the field of information technology psychological contracts in order to ensure the latest models and theories were applied to the research methodology.

Ethical approval for this study in the form of a minimal risk review was obtained from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board.

### 3.3 Study Sample

The population for this study consisted of organizations that had recently been involved in the implementation of a software IT project. For a list of participants, the two largest Canadian IT supplier associations, the Information Technology Association of Canada (ITAC) and the Canadian Information Technology Partners Association (CITPA) were contacted. The membership of these two associations consists of both software publishers and resellers. A request was made to each association to forward a letter (Annex B - Participant Recruitment Letter) to their membership detailing the nature of the study (Annex C – Participant Information Letter) and requesting volunteers for participation. Following initial responses to the call, additional participants were recruited through referral sampling.

This study analyzed 5 IT project case studies, interviewing the project leads from the software publisher, the software reseller and/or the end user of each project. Of the projects selected, 4 were of moderate complexity, having had duration of 90-365 days, involvement of a single software publisher, and involving moderate to significant implementation services being provided by the reseller; the remaining case was of high complexity, having duration of 5 years, involvement of multiple software publishers, and involving extensive implementation services provided by the reseller. The participants all had a minimum of 10 years of experience in selling, implanting, and/or managing software IT implementations. All study participants were from Eastern Canada. Interviews were between July and December of 2012. All interviews were anonymized. Candidates were selected based on their project's complexity (implementation involving more than just the

fulfillment of a purchase order), richness (involvement of software publisher, the software reseller and an end user) and the availability of project's stakeholders to participate in the interview process.

### 3.4 Data Collection

Study participants selected from the above mentioned process were provided with a letter of consent for their signature (Annex D – Participant Consent Form) detailing the nature of the study. Interviewees were requested to consent to digitally recorded interviews to ensure that an accurate record of the session was kept.

The interview followed an interview guide (Annex E – Interview Guide). Interviewees were asked about a software project recently completed or currently underway. Interviewees were asked to describe, in their own words, their obligations to other contractual parties in relation to the implementation. Similar questions were asked concerning the perceived obligations of the other contractual parties.

The critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954) was used as an additional prompt to further draw the interviewees' perceptions. In following the critical incident technique, the interviewees were asked to describe instances in which these obligations were difficult to meet, their perceptions of the incident, the actions taken, and the resulting change in future behaviour. Critical incidents are significant as they generally signal promises (or lack thereof) and set expectations (Rousseau, 1995).

Immediately following each interview, a contact summary sheet (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was prepared to capture the main concepts, themes, issues and impressions

observed during the interview. In total, 50 pages of extended memos expressing thoughts and impressions were collected.

A description of each case was documented and summarized. Case descriptions included a detailed account of the research setting, type of IT project, description of the firms involved, description of the qualifications of the individuals interviewed, and phase of the IT project’s implementation (on-going or *a posteriori*).

### 3.5 Data Analysis

With the aid of the audio recording, all interviews (10) were transcribed for 127 pages of interview data. Following the approach of Miles and Huberman (1994), the transcriptions were reviewed and all references to obligations were coded into major themes representing the parties’ obligations. Following a directed content analysis approach, initial coding was derived from the conceptual framework and literature review, drawing from the 18 supplier and customer obligations identified in the literature (see Table 2 - IT Psychological Contract Elements). Master codes (such as SP→EU for Software Publisher to End User) were established to indicate the contractual relationship and direction of the obligation, followed the obligation. For example, the end user obligation towards the software publisher of knowledge sharing, as identified in Koh et al (2004), was coded as EU→SP – Knowledge Sharing (see Table 3 - Coding Table).

Table 3 - Coding Table

Obligation	Relationship	Interview Transcript
Knowledge Sharing	EU→SP	“quote”

Once data was coded, the coded content was extracted in the form of quotes into tables identifying the construct, the psychological contract which it formed part of, and the relational direction of the obligation (see example Table 4 - Sample IT Psychological Contract Elements Table). Obligations were summarized into short descriptions and grouped based on contractual party, formulating the perceived terms of the three psychological contracts. Each term was summarized with an operational definition (as per Table 2 - IT Psychological Contract Elements) and a quote accompanied the term as an illustration of the contractual element. Quotes are also provided as a means for external observers to independently judge the analysis (Dubé & Paré, 2003). The completed tables for each case may be found in Annex A – IT Psychological Contract Elements Tables

Table 4 - Sample IT Psychological Contract Elements Table

Obligation	Support
<b>Accurate Project Scoping</b>	
PC1	SP→SR <i>we'll review the architecture so we'll ensure that what they're proposing will be effective for the customer – SP1</i>
	SR→SP <i>they do need to let me know well in ahead of time that this is an opportunity that they found and they would like to register with us – SP2-2</i>

Following the coding and capture of interview data and supporting quotations, a within case analysis was conducted for each case. As a validation of the existing model, the analysis indicated if obligations previously identified in literature were found to be present in the study. Each psychological contract element present in the case was detailed and support for each obligation was provided from the research.

A cross case analysis reviewing the presence and relational direction of each psychological contact element identified in the literature was then conducted. The researcher compared the findings between cases, grouping results based on the psychological contract elements. Obligations were reviewed, detailing the obligations that were common within the parties of IT projects and those that were specific to particular relationships. The researcher further identified to what degree the psychological contact elements identified in literature were supported and if any new elements were discovered in the research as an extension of the existing model.

## Chapter 4. Data Analysis and Results

The following chapter consists of a within case analysis for each of the five cases explored in this study. An understanding of the psychological contract elements present in each case was gained through analysis and comparison of the data with the psychological contract elements identified in literature. When appropriate, customer/supplier elements that are homogenous in nature (such as knowledge transfer/knowledge sharing) were analyzed together. Each case includes a diagram detailing which stakeholders to the IT project were interviewed (shaded circles) as well as a summary detailing the type of IT project, a description of the firms involved, a description of the qualifications of the individuals interviewed, and the phase of the IT project's implementation. Results for each case are detailed in Annex A – IT Psychological Contract Elements Tables

This chapter also presents a cross case analysis, reviewing the presence and relational direction of each psychological contact element. The findings from each case are grouped based on the psychological contract elements. The analysis reviews the obligations that were common within the parties of IT projects and those that were specific to particular relationships. The cross case analysis further identifies to what degree the psychological contact elements were supported and new elements that were discovered in the research.

## 4.1 Within Case Analysis – Case 1

### Case 1 - Summary

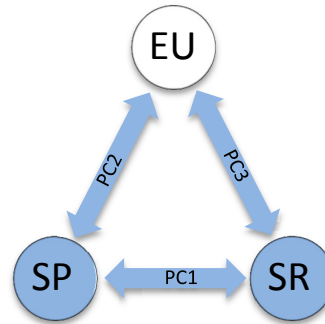


Figure 2 - Case 1 Participant Summary

Case 1 involves a software publisher and a value added software reseller of IT management software (Figure 2 - Case 1 Participant Summary). On the reseller side, the firm's regional sales director (SR1) with 20 years of sales experience was interviewed. The reseller was considered a preferred, premier partner of the software publisher. On the software publisher side, the sales manager (SP1) with 28 years of experience in sales was interviewed. The case examined the relationship between the software publisher and the reseller in the context of their project delivery with a small-medium sized end user of roughly 100 employees in the region of Quebec. The end user had a very small IT organization, of roughly 4-5 people with many of their daily IT activities outsourced to the reseller.

The project consisted of a completed 1 year IT migration under a longer-term 5-year contract between the reseller and the end user for IT management with ongoing sales and technical interaction.

The parties described a relationship with each other that began poorly and nearly non-existent due to substantial turnover. However, the reseller was able to build the relationship back up through a focus on knowledge workers, building a strong workforce focused on demonstrating value to the software publisher and the end user.

### *Case 1 - Analysis*

Case 1 was coded and analyzed in accordance with the psychological contract elements identified in Table 2 - IT Psychological Contract Elements. Results for Case 1 are detailed in Table 6 – Psychological Contract Elements – Case 1, which identifies the relationships, obligations, and provides accompanying quotes. The psychological contract elements identified in the case are discussed below.

#### *Accurate Project Scoping*

The reseller noted that a trust relationship exists on the part of the end user, "*they have entrusted us to be able to tell them if they are going down the wrong path – SR1.*" The end user, being under a long-term contract, entrusts the reseller to lead them in the right direction. To this effect, it was critical to set and manage the client's expectations from both an IT and a business perspective (timelines, budgets, resources...). As a part of this relationship, while the end user does drive demand, the reseller believed that regardless of the client's scoping, they needed and had a responsibility to review the end user's infrastructure to ensure the project is successful. This includes ensuring they understand and scope not only the impact of the project on the end user's technology infrastructure, but also on the end user's business processes, "*where we saw we made mistakes is if we*

*only look at the impact from a technology perspective we did not look at the impact of technology towards the business processes or the business functions – SR1.*” The reseller noted that as IT professionals, they often forget why they exist, which is not just to support technology, but to have technology translate into business outcomes and that they needed to ensure projects are scoped with this in mind.

Similarly, the software publisher noted the responsibility of the reseller to properly scope the project for the end user. However, the software publisher also outlined the requirement that their own system engineers review the project to ensure accuracy, *“they may have done the architecture prior to the implementation but we’ll review the architecture so we’ll ensure that what they’re proposing will be effective for the customer – SP1.”* The reseller concurred, outlining that as they are representing the SP, they expect them to support their efforts, reviewing and approving the work that they do, *“we have to be able to rely on the vendor to support us, to basically rubberstamp what we’re doing because we’re basically representing for the vendor – SR1.”* This highlights an obligation by both supplier parties to ensure the project was accurately scoped for the end user.

The supplier further indicated the importance of the project being clearly scoped and documented as expectations and conflicts arise on the part of the end user (such as for free professional services) when discussions are not captured.

Interestingly, the reseller, being an intermediary between the software publisher and the end user, recognized that they were required to scope the project not only for the end user, but also to the software publisher in the context of reporting sales and business

opportunities, *“So we want to go and get the business and basically go to [software publisher] and say we found this opportunity, we want to work with you on it. All prequalified and architected everything. That's what they're looking for- SR1.”* To the reseller, it was important to not only accurately scope the project, but also their capabilities and competencies, advising the end user of their areas of specialization and the things that they can and cannot do, *“What we're coming to realize and communicate more and more is that we are not everything to everyone and we don't have the pretension to be – SR1.”*

### Clear Authority Structures

At the planning stage of the project, the software publisher worked with the reseller to determine the roles of each organization and the authority structure for the project, *“so at the planning stage that's where we agree if it's a co-engagement or there's a portion of the services that we rendered by us or if there'll be a portion of the services rendered by the partner –SP1.”*

### Taking Charge

The end user, being a smaller organization with minimal IT resources, had essentially handed over their IT management function to the reseller, who recognized their responsibility to act as a trusted advisor and take charge of managing the infrastructure, *“[they] have entrusted us to be able to tell them if the going down the wrong path – SR1.”*

The reseller noted a challenge the end user had outlining the operational importance of their IT project to their financial decision makers. They felt the obligation to take charge and bridge the gap, providing the support in the language skills needed to sell

the project to the business executive, *“we will ask some key questions, ‘do you have funding for your project? Is it considered an operational expense or capital expense project?’ –SR1.”*

The reseller recognized that the IT organization of the end user often lacks these necessary communication skills and that they need to act as an intermediary between IT and business unit in order to intercept this challenge before it results in a negative impact on the project.

Taking charge for the reseller also entailed demonstrating to the software publisher that they are going after more business and going to the market. Reseller noted that the software publisher’s organization is aggressive and therefore they needed to be more aggressive in pursuing that business, *“we need to have more or should I say longer teeth and go and get more projects – SR1.”* Additionally, the reseller highlighted the importance of taking responsibility for their capabilities and demonstrating their initiative to the software publisher. While the software publishers provide training, they believed in the need to also supplement those activities with their own additional training, *“even if we have training from them that is offered, we will also train our people – SR1.”*

### Close Project Monitoring

The reseller indicated that strong project management practices were essential to ensure that the project was delivered on time. They felt that everyone should know, *“what am I doing today – SR1.”* The reseller believed they had the responsibility to ensure they closely monitored and reported on the project’s progress to the end user. This was not only to ensure project success, but to ensure they demonstrated their value to the end user. The

reseller further detailed that project monitoring was critical to their business imperatives. If they fell behind the project schedule, it was at their own expense.

To the reseller, an additional component of their project monitoring obligation was to ensure that the end user was living up to their obligations. They would document if the end user's staff were not showing up to meetings or supplying the right resources in order to ensuring that the end user took ownership of project delays that they caused, *"there is daily reporting to make sure that if the customer doesn't know what we're doing because he doesn't know what he's doing, we still keep track of our time –SR1."*

Surprisingly, the software publisher indicated that they felt little responsibility for project delays and project monitoring given that their main responsibility as the manufacturer in the context of a reseller model is to simply deliver of the software, *"quite frankly our piece is usually the least thing that will cause a delay. Recognizing that it is software, our delivery mechanism is an e-mail with license keys attached. So from a delivery perspective usually what will delay a project is more hardware delivery or the preparation of the rooms or organizational issues within the customer – SP1."*

#### Effective Knowledge Transfer / Knowledge Sharing

The reseller expected the software publisher to educate them in terms of the necessary skills, knowledge, and expertise associated with using and deploying the software publisher's products, *"We expect [the software publisher] to give us the know what – SR1."* The software publisher noted their obligation to ensure that the reseller is knowledgeable of new products by the time they are released, providing them with appropriate training,

certifications and shadowing to ensure they can effectively implement the solution, *“by the time the product is launched we are able to train our partners so they are able to maintain the knowledge and get new certifications. Then, we expect to be shadowing, working with our people so that they can learn on the first few deals and then do it on their own – SP1.”*

The reseller further noted, however, that while the software publisher needed to give them the know-how of the product, they needed to bring forward the knowledge and expertise of managing the end user, *“we are responsible for the part of the knowledge that we can bring onto ourselves – SR1.”* While the Reseller sees one of their biggest values as being their knowledge, they also recognize that they are responsible for appropriately representing and transferring that knowledge to the client in a manner that does not damage or diminish the reputation of the software publisher, *“the most sensitive point for [the software publisher] that we feel is that they're looking for partners in the field that they can trust so that we will not bastardize their name and basically diminish their reputation – SR1.”*

The software publisher outlined their responsibility to ensure that the reseller was trained on new and upcoming software products to ensure they can effectively implement the solutions, *“If we just launched the products by the time the product is launched we are able to train our partners so they are able to maintain the knowledge and get new certifications then we expect to be shadowing, working with our people so that they can learn on the first few deals and it do it on their own – SP1.”* The reseller noted their reliance, as a representative of the software publisher, for the SP to provide accurate information

about new product releases, patches, updates, etc. *“So that when they tell us that this release is coming out or this patch is coming out...that they will live up to their word – SR1.”*

They trust that the information provided is accurate as it is used to advise and support the end user in their service delivery.

The reseller further noted that they need to demonstrate to the software publisher that they are forward thinking by identifying trends in the marketplace and sharing that information with the software publisher, essentially providing market research, desired features back to the SP and challenging them as inventors of the product, *“we have to go to them and say we see this trends in the marketplace how are you, how are the resources at [software publisher] looking at this. So we are able to challenge them even if they are the inventors of their own software – SR1.”*

#### Building Effective Interorganizational Teams

The reseller noted the challenge managing culture differences between their business model and the software publisher’s. The software publishers had a very short term, revenue driven focus while the reseller had a long-term, relationship building focus. As a result, the reseller felt obligated to work with his staff an ensure they understood the software publisher’s forecasting needs, taking responsibility for ensuring that the interorganizational teams worked together are cohesively, *“They have a couple salespeople, spread across the country. Very individualistic culture where there's a manager for example they'll manage four or five rep channel partner manager with everyone in their own little bubble. We don't work as a bubble. So right there is another culture clash where we don't*

*want people in our company to be individualistic. They have to be team oriented so makes it difficult to build a uniform relationship with a bunch of individuals because these doing things their own way so you have to bring people together and work together – SR1.”*

Reseller expressed a challenge with end users sometimes have a feeling of superiority over the reseller making it difficult to create a partnership, *“some of the customers that we deal with see themselves as superior to the vendor and they want to treat us as a supplier, while you're trying to establish your level of partnership which is completely different - SR1.”* Further challenges arise for the reseller in projects where an individual in the end user’s organization feels threatened by the reseller or the project in general (such as a consolidation project where the individual may be made redundant), *“a lot of the times we realize when we’re deploying with the customer that we have sitting in front of us is our biggest critical failure. Because somebody hates what we do or the reason why were there or the person feels threatened - SR1.”*

#### Knowledge of Client’s Language

Given the cultural uniqueness of the area in which the case took place, the psychological contract element of knowledge of client’s language was apparent. As a local French-speaking firm, the reseller had a specialized presence and knowledge not just of the regional language, but also of the unique identity of the Quebec region. The software publisher noted the importance of the reseller having and being that local presence for them.

Interestingly, the importance of a regional partner was not limited to matters of language and culture. The software publisher noted that different regions have different IT environments, where certain technology suppliers may have a stronger presence than others, *“so the skill set the partners bring are typically an understanding of the equipment sold in that region and have integration skills... and this varies region to region – SP1.”* An additional value the reseller brings is the knowledge and understanding of the technology predominant in the region along with the integration skills required to ensure their product works with and is well represented in the regional environment.

### Clear Specifications

The customer obligation to provide clear specifications was not found present in this case.

### Responsible and Innovative Attitude

Reseller lamented that they often take the brunt of end users' challenges, be it things that go wrong or additional scope creep. Because of this, in the interest of customer service, they believed they had an obligation to rise above the end user's challenges and put forward a responsible attitude, helping the end user address those challenges, *“we wind up on the receiving end because were like a huge garbage can where everything comes in and expect us to gobble everything. So we had to do exercise as a company to learn to undo and teach them how to manage these expectations for project management – SR1.”*

## Prompt Payment

Payment was considered a non-issue for the software publisher as they are paid through distribution. The issue of payment was not brought forward by the reseller.

## Dedicated Project Staffing / Effective Human Capital Management

The reseller outlined the challenge in dedicating staff to the project due to the end user's decision making timelines. The reseller had an individual reserved to perform the work, but the end user took so long to make a decision that by the time the decision was made, the reseller's resource had gone on vacation and wasn't available. The reseller expressed frustration that when the end user has not fully committed to the project, these timeline delays not only make it difficult to assign resources, but also results in the resources being inactive and losing out on other business opportunities that the reseller could be billing out the resource on, *"For example, I need to start this project were talking the [software publisher] we have had our person ready for the last few months but it took so long for the decision that person went on holidays ...and then our person is sitting there not on another project and were not billing – SR1."*

A challenge the reseller encountered was with end user resources not showing up at scheduled times and scheduled supplies not being delivered by the client, *"the project manager says, 'hold on here. We are doing our part and on your end this person was not there, did not come in, did not supply this.' - SR1."* When such challenges occur, it became important to ensure the project was well documented in the event that a discussion needed

to be had later on regarding delays in project implementation, *“The recognition that something is wrong is going to have to come from the customer – SR1.”*

Reseller lamented the challenge due to the high turnover and opportunistic nature of the IT professionals in terms of end users retaining knowledgeable workers for business continuity, *“...there is a high turnover in the IT world brought on by the fact there are few jobs so people will be opportunistic and move either up the ladder or the salary range – SR1.”* This was further complicated by technological convergence which resulted in the end user’s staff finding themselves in positions outside their typical domain that they have limited knowledge in (such as telecommunications resources moving over to IT infrastructure), *“So what that means is that you have IT people that have to work in the ...real time of the telecom and the telecom people that have been dwarfed by the IT world – SR1.”* In this particular case, the end user experienced some knowledge gaps that resulted in critical elements of the project architecture being overlooked, *“So when the technologies merge what we see is that we have people that are under skilled to be able to do the first thing which his plan and architect – SR1.”* The individual typically responsible for those elements had left the organization, taking with them knowledge of access codes and documentation of infrastructure, *“Security was never thought about. We come to deploy, ‘What are we doing with security? ...who is the person responsible for this?’ ‘By the way he’s gone now.’ ‘Who’s got all the codes? Who’s got all the manuscripts?’ So it’s a lack of knowledge and it’s a lack of continued continuity of the knowledge – SR1.”*

A further challenge for the reseller was with the end user not having knowledgeable staff dedicated to the project is that it resulted in a misunderstanding of how the technology being implemented would impact their service delivery capability, *“they're not thinking of, ‘how [the technology] is going to impact my service delivery capability?’ – SR1.”* This required that the reseller reset and jumpstart the project, reviewing the project with the end user and resetting the expectations in terms of why they were doing it and what it would do for them, *“We have to go in as the project starts and jumpstart the project over by doing white boarding sessions to allow the person to say let's take a breather look at the whole aspect of this and how is going to impact your customer relationship – SR1.”*

The reseller has dedication commitments to the software publisher as well. The reseller noted that as their salespeople are making commitments to the software publisher, they needed to follow through on deals, *“With the vendor taking commitments from our salespeople and our sales people don't call back the customer or don't follow up on the deal – SR1.”* Reseller noted that as a private company their salespeople do not have the same urgencies as the public software publisher and do not always respect those urgencies.

#### Do Not Seek to Dominate Process

The reseller is responsible for maintaining the long-term relationship with the client and, as a private company with no shareholder pressure, prefers to receive the order from the customer when the customer is ready, *“We get the purchase order from the customer when they are ready because we have a long-term relationship – SR1.”* However, the reseller noted that the software publisher seeks to dominate the sales process due to the

publicly traded nature of their business and the revenue pressures that brings, *“With the vendors the week end is the month end, the month is end of quarter end, end of quarter is end of year and end of year is the end of the world. So it's two very different ways of working together – SR1.”* This had resulted in conflict between the organizations as the software publisher’s sales force pressured and sought to interfere with the sales strategy of the reseller. The reseller has needed to take the time to explain to their sales team the company culture of the software publisher and likewise, explain to the software publisher their company’s culture, *“So what we have found is that we have taken a lot of time to explain to [the software publisher] what our company culture is all about – SR1.”*

The Software Publisher noted that they make available tools and resources (such as prepared statements of work) to the reseller and expects the reseller to make use of them. However, the resellers outlined that they bring experience and their own intellectual property to the table and want the software publisher to trust their knowledge and tools, *“we expect that they will be able to trust the intellectual property that we bring to bear – SR1.”* While the tools were appreciated, insistence on their use by the software publisher was perceived as being dominating over the reseller’s business processes.

The reseller noted importance for the software publisher to recognize that as integrators, the reseller is responsible for managing the end user’s corporate infrastructure in its entirety, an infrastructure that includes the software publisher’s products, but also the products of many other vendors. Sales decisions are therefore made in this greater context and not isolated to just the software publisher’s products, *“they may not be aware that we*

*are working on a corporate infrastructure where we can have basically a server migration at the same time a storage migration of the same time and be designing a backup infrastructure at the same time. The [software publisher's technology] is a part of this but we are integrating and are responsible for integrating everything that will touch this – SR1."*

Further, the reseller's focus was to ensure the solutions put forward best fit the end user's business requirements, which may not be the software publisher's solution. This may result in disappointment by the software publisher, but the reseller believed the software publisher must understand that the end user's business come first and foremost.

#### Professional Management and Business Expertise

Reseller emphasized that the biggest value they bring to the client is being knowledgeable, demonstrating to the client they can be there when called upon for expertise whether it be technology specific, or in licensing, delivery, architecting, updating or patching, *"the biggest value the customer sees is can I talk to someone who is knowledgeable – SR1."* Ultimately the end user brings in the reseller for their skill sets, to supplements resources that they do not have.

Software Publisher expects the reseller to be able to install products that have been on the market for several years. This expectation diminishes the more recently the product has been released, *"We expect them to be able to install the products that are of it that have been available for a few years. Where the expectation is less if we had just launched a new product in the past year or so – SP1."*

## Help establish an open and trusted ecosystem

While the software publisher understood that the reseller may propose their competitors' products to the end user, the software publisher expected, at a minimum, that the reseller be honest of their intent to position a competing product, *"our expectation is that the partner lets us know if they're positioning our solution or a competitor's solution – SP1."* Likewise, the software publisher will be honest if they intend to work with another partner and compete with the reseller. This being said, if the software publisher believed that they are in a position of competition more than cooperation, they were less likely to work with the reseller.

As the reseller acts as a representative of the software publisher, the reseller believed that the software publisher had an obligation to be open, honest and truthful with them, *"So that when they tell us that this release is coming out or this patch is coming out or that this person will be at that meeting that they will live up to their word – SR1."* Similarly, the reseller believed in having the same obligation for honesty and openness towards their customer. They believed in an obligation to present themselves honestly and truthfully regarding their capabilities, *"You have to be able to look at yourself in the mirror and say what am I my able to do, what am I not able to do, and do I have the fortitude to be forthright about this – SR1."*

## Operational Facilitation

Software publisher provides a "solution enablement toolkit" to the reseller that includes best practices, tools, and information on their products and services, *"we provide a*

*solution enablement toolkit. So we will provide, for different toolsets, our best practices, our professional services, our IP wrapped into tools – SP1.”* In providing this toolkit, the software publisher expects that the reseller will, at a minimum include the elements of the toolkit in the statement of work with the client.

## 4.2 Within Case Analysis - Case 2

### Case 2 - Summary

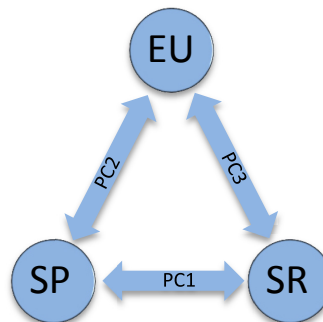


Figure 3 - Case 2 Participant Summary

Case 2 is the most robust case, involving an IT management software publisher, a local IT reseller and an end user operating in the field of IT (Figure 3 - Case 2 Participant Summary). Both the IT director (EU2) with 20 years of experience and the manager of IT (EU2-2) with 18 years of experience from the end user's organization were interviewed. The reseller's account executive (SR2) had been in sales and account management for 13 years and had been with the reseller's organization for seven months. On the software publisher side, the sales manager (SP2) had been with the company for seven years, but had been involved in selling the product for 14 years. Also interviewed was a sales manager with 25 years of experience from a second software publisher (SP2-2) that had worked with the reseller and the end user in related implementations to those discussed in this case.

The case followed the end user's relationship with the reseller as well as their specific implementation of the software publisher's products that had completed in the last year. Initially, the end user purchased the software publisher's products through a different

reseller. However, the individual interviewed in this case left that organization and, along with some technical resources, joined the subject reseller's organization. As this individual and the technical resources had intimate knowledge of the end user's infrastructure and were perceived as being some of the most skilled in the industry, the end user changed resellers, following their preferred individuals.

In one particular critical incident brought forward in this case, following an infrastructure upgrade, one of the software licenses installed had been left off the quote by the reseller and a temporary license installed instead by mistake. One year after the installation, the license expired and the system ground to a halt. The reseller and the software publisher needed to work together and develop a solution with the end user to allow them to move forward.

Of particular interest in this case is the sentiment of the parties involved. The reseller outlined very little support or interaction with the software publisher in the implementation. Similarly, while the end user described strong relationships with the software publisher and reseller in the case, they in general, believed they had little obligation towards their suppliers beyond their contractual obligations.

### *Case 2 - Analysis*

Case 2 was coded and analyzed in accordance with the psychological contract elements identified in Table 2 - IT Psychological Contract Elements. Results for Case 2 are detailed in Table 7 - Psychological Contract Elements - Case 2, which identifies the

relationships, obligations, and provides accompanying quotes. The psychological contract elements identified in the case are discussed below.

#### Accurate project scoping / Clear Specifications

When a reseller understands the end user's infrastructure, they are able to provide greater insights, guidance and value to the end user. The Customer noted that they appreciated when the reseller made the effort to ensure the products that they were requesting worked in their infrastructure, *"When we asked [the reseller] for quote for something, the guys in the back look at it and say, 'no no, they're not asking for the right thing,' and then we work in getting the right thing – EU2."* The end user saw no value in a reseller that just gave them what they asked, *"The other vendors are to give us exactly what we wanted. No questions asked. So where's the value? The value here is that I asked for A and they gave me B, but really I wanted to ask for B. But I didn't know – EU2."* The reseller in the case noted the same, feeling their responsibility to assist the end user in translating business needs into technical requirements, *"our goal here was to show them that look, 'you guys aren't sure about what you're doing. You have a plan. You know you want the end result to be, but you're not really sure how to get there and you want the best plan of attack' – SR2."* To the software publisher, accurate project scoping entailed honesty in regards to their capabilities, outlining that they will walk away from a deal if they don't believe it will result in a positive outcome for the client, *"if I don't think it's our niche or I don't think we're really good at it. I walk away from it – SP2."*

The reseller placed a great deal of importance on ensuring projects were accurately scoped for the end user. They had put processes in place to ensure quotes were vetted by an appropriate technical resource before being provided to the end user, *"I'm not allowed to put a quote in front of my clients without it being vetted by my systems engineer – SR2."* They further acknowledged the need to recognize end users operate under budgetary restrictions that must be respected, *"we have to understand that they have their budgets that they have to stay within – SR2."* The software publisher placed similar importance on making the right recommendations for the end user's infrastructure, *"making recommendations that will address where they want to go and we're not implementing something knowing that they are going here and having to pull it all apart and rework it – SP2."* They did, however, acknowledge that marketers may get ahead of themselves and the product put forward may not meet the end user's needs, *"sometimes through no fault of their own the way they position the technology isn't what the customer was actually trying to do –SP2."* Similarly, the software publisher noted that they expected the reseller to be honestly marketing themselves to end users and to ensure they have the capacity to support the knowledge claims they make, *"I am expecting in that case where the reseller has marketed themselves as being knowledgeable in many technologies; [Software Publisher] and [Software Publisher] and [Software Publisher]...if they are going to do that than they should be able to support those technologies that they're marketing - SP2-2."*

The software publisher viewed their role as a demand generator, while the reseller as being responsible for coordinating the sale, *"I, as a manufacturer, have a role to go into customers, create excitement, create interest and then [the reseller] would put it together*

*top to bottom – SP2.” They recognized that their technology is often only one part of the solution and the reseller is the one putting everything together for the end user, “I sell one piece of that stack...they’re kind of the glue that puts the server the network and the storage altogether – SP2.” The software publisher did expect, however, that if the reseller was working on a deal with a customer, that they would identify that deal to them, “they do need to let me know well in ahead of time that this is an opportunity that they found and they would like to register with us – SP2-2.”*

### Clear Authority Structures

Authority structures for IT projects can vary depending on whether it’s the software publisher or the reseller leading the implementation, *“the implementation all depends on whether we do it at [software publisher] or if [the reseller] does it – SP2.”* In this case, the software publisher preferred an authority model where the reseller leads the overall project and they are responsible for ensuring their product is installed correctly, *“What works very well is when our resellers or our partners managed the project from a server, network, storage side, and then have us do some of the heavy lifting like us putting it in... according to best practices, getting it on, getting it available for them to do their integration into the business and that works quite well – SP2.”* However, the software publisher noted that the reseller will sometimes ask them to take the lead on a project if they are unwilling to take on the risk associated with the work, *“What sometimes happens is [the reseller] or another reseller will say, ‘we want you to do it and we want you to take a liability and the risk’ – SP2.”*

The software publisher outlined the challenge of determining who the decision makers are within the end user's organization, *"You try to understand or try to find out or understand who are the technical decision-makers, the business decision makers, the financial decision-makers – SP2-2."* Often the software publisher's interactions are with the end user's technical resources, who may be very interested in the software publisher's product, *"the technical folk love your widget, your tool, whatever it is you got that's good, but more and more it is the business that is deciding what IT should be doing – SP2-2."* However, the software publisher recognized that they may run into roadblocks if they only speak with the IT department. It was important to continually validate the project with all decision makers and ensure that all necessary approvals were obtained, *"If we continue to try and talk just to IT, we may hit a brick wall when the business says, 'well that isn't what I asked for.' So you continue to try and validate that with business and then you go back to the financial side and say, 'if IT says this is good and the business agrees, then is there money available to spend?' – SP2-2."*

### Taking Charge

The end user expressed frustration that when things went wrong with their installation and when they called all the software publishers involved, the software publishers blamed each other instead of taking charge and working to resolve the problem, *"So we called [Software Publisher], we call [Software Publisher], we call [Software Publisher]. We called all the vendors and they said it's not our problem. It's the other vendors. So we couldn't get it fixed – EU2."* The end user noted that in such cases, the software publishers will claim to support only specific specifications and implementations of

their product, *“They the software vendor support their environment with specific specifications. So if you have this piece of hardware in this piece of software our stuff is going to work if you move a little bit you're out of our configuration and we don't support you – EU2.”* Despite this, the end user believed the software publishers had an obligation to support and given the importance of their infrastructure, the software publishers’ finger pointing was considered unacceptable. It was left for the end user to take charge, bring the software publishers into a room, and ensure they worked together to resolve the problem, *“So we told the vendors that were not going to pay you anymore until the three of you get in a room is fixed that problem – EU2.”* In addition, the end user demanded the reseller involved mediate and resolve the issue with the software publishers, *“so that's where I get the service provider involved, ‘You guys come in here, you guys negotiate. I bought the equipment through you guys from these vendors’ – EU 2-2.”*

When the end user’s infrastructure went down a year after the implementation due to a temporary license being mistakenly installed and not quoted, the reseller recognized the need to take ownership, take charge and find a solution for the client, *“I say, I'll take care of it – SR2.”* Replacing the misquoted license came at a considerable expense, so in order to remedy the situation, the reseller identified that the end user needed some additional product elsewhere and used the profit to offset the mistake, *“They needed some [product]. So what I did was take all the profit from that and threw it against the cost of the license – SR2.”* In taking the extra effort to ensure the problem was resolved for the end user, the reseller made sure that the end user was aware of the loss they had incurred and expected that the end user rewarded them with future business, *“I made no money off the*

*deal. I made sure they understood that...I came good for it, even though it cost me money. But, just so that you know guys, I took care of you and please remember that next time you have an order – SR2.”* When discussing the same event, the software publisher noted the need to review the incident and determine the best path forward, *“We do a lot of transactions and it’s very hard to always get them right. I can say both sides, we sit down, we talk about it, we find out where it went wrong. Gather the facts and then make a decision on how to move forward – SP2.”*

Even if the end user made a mistake, the software publisher did not expect them to necessarily take charge, rather the software publisher believed that it was their responsibility to ensure the end user was satisfied even if they were at fault, *“if it was the customer that forgot to tell us a piece of information and it didn't work, then you would sit with the customer and ask them how do you want to move forward and what is it going take to make things right again. My reputation and ability for them to recommend us going forward is more important than the mistake – SP2.”* This was important to the end user, who believed it was important for the software publisher to ensure issues were rectified, regardless of who was at fault or what the contract specified. The end user believed that regardless of the written agreement, a trust based business relationship governed their interactions and to return to the written agreement was a major breach of that trust, *“If ever a vendor goes in and goes bullets by bullet to review a contract, I might just pay them because I don't have the time to deal with that. But I'll be sure never to do business with them again – EU2.”*

The end user favoured resellers that take off some of their work load, that call and provide reports, outline what renewals are upcoming, *“I pick the one that basically calls me minimum once a month and provides me with a report and says, here's where we are here's the ones that are due and here's what's next – EU2-2,”* and ultimately help them manage their software, *“what type of quality of service can the reseller provide? How can they help me justify and basically take off some of my work? – EU2-2.”* This was the most desirable feature in a reseller next to providing good pricing, *“If you're able to do this so I don't have to manage all this, so I don't have to call you, that's quality of service and that's what I'm looking for other than pricing – EU2-2.”*

#### Effective Human Capital Management

The reseller recognize the importance of ensuring that they have the best technical resources available to assist the end user, *“I make sure I've got the best technical guys to help them out with anything and that's what wins them over – SR2.”* The software publisher placed the same importance on themselves, as well as acknowledging the reseller's strength in attracting technical resources, *“We do a very good job at hiring strong technical people and that's the reseller's strength and our strength is our technical people it's not our salespeople – SP2.”*

To the end user, it was the knowledgeable resources that were important, *“I would say that they're probably part of the top three, top five [software publisher] subject matter experts in Canada. And if I want support, that's what I'm looking for – EU2-2.”* The end user further outlined the importance of resellers maintaining these knowledgeable resources.

When key technical resources left the previous reseller's organization, it dramatically change the dynamic and ability for that reseller to provide the services the end user was looking for, *"if a resource on their side leaves the organization. It has a massive impact on their ability to provide the support, which is what happened here – EU2-2."*

The end user noted that they were willing to change resellers to follow the skilled resources in order to ensure they continued to receive the best support *"So that relation could change anytime. It's totally dependent on how the vendors managing their staff - EU2-2."* They admitted to having very little loyalty to the reseller's organization, recognizing that the relationship was mainly built with the individuals in that organization, *"They're just moving around so my relationship moves around as well because there's only a small piece of the relationship that's built with the business. It's built with the service matter expert – EU2-2."*

In the case of small resellers, the end user highlighted that the loss of a key resources in the reseller's organization resulted in a loss of trust for their ability to support them in the long term. Even if they replaced the resources that left, the end user would no longer have the confidence in that reseller, *"If you find those other resources then I'm going to question your ability, based on the size the organization, to continue the relationship. Because those smaller organizations, although they're local, they're very resource dependent – EU2-2."*

Interestingly, the sales representative from the reseller noted that they were not knowledgeable in IT, but believed their role was to coordinate and manage the company's

resources and ensure the right individuals were brought forward to address the end user's needs, *"I freely admit to them I know virtually nothing about IT. My job is to ensure that...when you've got a problem, I'll put the people in front of you that will have the solution for you. And to make sure you always get the best resources – SR2."*

### Close Project Monitoring

The software publisher emphasized the importance of project management from all parties, *"project management all the way through from both sides is essential – SP2."* on the end user side, the software publisher believed they were responsible for ensuring the right decision makers were available, managing disruptions to the business and coordinating with the project owners, *"from the customer's perspective, the right people at the right table at the right time. They handle all the downtime, discussions with the business or the person making that decision – SP2."* Whereas the software publisher viewed their roll and the roll of their reseller as ensuring the right technical resources were available at the right time, *"I say our side, as partner and manufacture, that person's responsible for... [finding] the key resource, bring that resource in at the proper time – SP2."*

The building of the project plan appeared to be a collaborative effort between the end user, the reseller and the software publisher, *"They typically build a project plan with us – EU2."* For the reseller, as the lead on the project, the project planning consisted of the entire project schedule, *"We put together a statement of work as to what we would do with the project, 'You're going to receive a gear at this time. The rack and stack involved with it comes through [software publisher]...Your [product] will come in and the [systems engineer]*

*will come in over the period of 7 to 10 days to help configure the [software publisher's product]' – SR2.*” The software publisher, on the other hand, was focused on ensuring that the project plan appropriately accounts for the installation of their product and ensuring that the end user is aware of expected downtime and can accommodate this necessity for the installation, *“So if there is a downtime that has to happen then we have to schedule it, allow the business to give us that opportunity to put new gear in etc – SP2.”*

Typically, for smaller projects such as those described in this case, the end user will rely on the reseller for project management of the implementation. However, they will take on a greater role in project management if the project is of larger scale or greater importance to their organization, *“We might supply our own project manager if it's too big. In this case, they did the whole project management on their own – EU2.”* The software publisher noted that even in instances when the end user prefers to manage the project on their own, they will monitor the projects to ensure they are going well and if additional assistance is required, *“there are regular meetings where we try and understand the projects and if they're doing it themselves that the projects are on track are successful – SP2-2.”*

#### Effective Knowledge Transfer / Knowledge Sharing

It was important to the end user that the reseller transferred the product and configuration knowledge during the implementation of the solution. The end user ensured their staff worked side-by-side with the reseller's staff so that the knowledge regarding the implementation was shared, *“Everything they do is sit in the chair side-by-side. This is how*

*you set up the volume; this is how you do this... all the virtualization. It's knowledge transfer – EU2.”* The reseller described a similar approach, in which rather than performing the installation work themselves, they stand beside the end user and guide them through the process. While some end users respond unsatisfied, believing the reseller should be doing the work, the reseller believed it was better to help the end user understand how the solution works, *“do you want to pay for us to come in again in another month or two when you have an issue or do you want us to show you how this whole thing works and runs – SR2.”*

Interestingly, the end user recognized that they provide the vendors with knowledge opportunities by allowing them to work on implementing new technologies (play in their sandbox), *“I don't know how too many others are doing 10 gig virtualize network supersonic, the techies want to go and play with it – EU2.”* The end user noted that they do not have a problem with their project being the first time the reseller implemented the solution. They recognized that their infrastructure was leading edge and could not expect that the reseller had a strong knowledge in the solution. What they did expect, however, was that the reseller had the general expertise to work through the implementation, *“we know the stuff are playing with is leading edge. So not everyone knows how to make it work at that point, but we know they're smart – EU2.”*

The reseller outlined the obligation to ensure the software publisher was informed of their sales efforts, *“keep them in the loop as far as closing time is concerned – RS2.”* This involved reporting meetings, progress of sales and status of implementations. Interestingly,

the reseller believed reporting back to the software publisher was important in order to protect themselves and demonstrate their value to the software publisher, *“That's just more for my sake so that they see that we've got the effort and if they ever come back and try to say, 'someone else said that they were in there working,' I now have an e-mail trail saying, 'look I told you guys that we were doing this stuff.' So it covers your ass and at the same time they've got something to tell their management – RS2.”*

In some instances, if the reseller was not familiar with the product being implemented, they would engage the software publisher to do the installation. In such cases, the reseller expected the software publisher to perform the knowledge transfer to the end user, *“we might not have an SE that knows the product in which case we have to hire the software company to come in and do the installation. So they're expected to do full knowledge transfer during that time – SR2.”* This occurred in particular with newer technologies. In addition, the reseller expected to be able to shadow the software publisher during the implementation so that their resources gained the knowledge necessary to do the work on their own in the future, *“until the guy has worked with the manufacturer on at least two or three implementations he can't do one on his own – SR2.”*

The software publisher described a variety of resources that they provide to the reseller and expected that they use in support of their sales activity - *“All of our partners have access to all of our training at no charge. So they can send somebody to attend a training class at no charge because we want them to have that skill set. We do give them a number of white papers, documentation, sample statements of work. We give them all*

*those most templates so that they can see the typical steps are tasks that are involved so they don't have to reinvent the wheel on the project – SP2-2.”*

The software publisher identified the need to ensure resellers are adequately trained to implement their technologies, *“we train our partners to quote and architect correctly – SP2.”* Additionally, the software publisher believed in conveying similar information to their end users regarding their products and forthcoming technologies, *“We also do probably quarterly updates with the customer where we basically talked about our technology new model numbers new software coming out new enhancements etc. and that is probably the most important thing to the customer, having key and concise [software publisher] updates – SP2.”*

#### Building Effective Interorganizational Teams

The end user believed that all resellers essentially provide the same value proposition. One of the main differentiators however, was the people; how easy was it to work with and manage the relationship with the reseller, *“They all do the same thing. They all resell software, hardware; they all have pretty much the same volume discount. It’s all about our relationship with the person. How easy it is to work. - EU2.”* The end user further noted that ultimately, any reseller doing work in their organization needed to be able to work with their staff in the completion of the project, *“They have to work with our team and that's the number one thing – EU2.”*

It was important to the end user that the reseller they worked with had a good relationship with the software publisher, *“For me as a customer, it's very important to know*

*that the reseller and the publisher have a good relationship because I'm not going to do business with the reseller if he's not trusted – EU2,” “They're the one that at the end of the day, they're going to build the relationship with the vendor - EU2-2.”* Ensuring a good working relationship existed between the reseller and the software publisher provided the end user with the comfort that issues could be resolved smoothly by the reseller, *“That's why we work with that guy because he can work with the software vendors in the back and tell them you know this is a good customer. Don't screw around with them – EU2.”* The software publisher recognized the importance of their relationship with the reseller as the reseller being their representative as a subset to a bigger solution, *“usually there is a tie between the manufacturer and the partner and the partner usually does the whole stack – SP2.”* Further, the software publisher noted that they preferred to work with resellers that work with them and involve them throughout the process, *“A value added reseller is something that takes the solution and involves us every step of the way those are the partners that I would like to work with – SP2.”*

The software publishers detailed the need to work together with other vendors in the industry to insure that their products worked together, *“we get together as manufacturers. We'll all get together and we'll all talk to them about how it's a common message and how we're working together on the backend with research and development and engineering all working to make sure that all the parts work together – SP2,” “we may compete with [software publisher] and [software publisher] and [software publisher] and others, but we also support one another - SP2-2.”* This obligation existed not only in the general industry, but also on projects where multiple software publishers' technologies

were being integrated as part of a solution, *“Rarely is it just [us] on a customer site...so we do have to interact with other software publishers other hardware manufacturers to ensure the project is successful - SP2-2.”*

#### Responsible and Innovative Attitude

Reseller noted that they work to ensure the relationship with the end user is in the end user’s best interest. For example, the reseller highlighted that on occasion they will make deals for the end user where they do not receive any profit. This was in the interest of helping them move their IT projects along but with the expectation that the end user would recognize the good gesture and return it with future business, *“I told him out right. Look I'm not going to make any money on this deal but you guys need some help in this and I know that if I treat your right you guys will keep doing business with me and it'll come around – SR2.”*

The end user believed that sometimes a vendor being on site performing knowledge transfer was also an opportunity for them to gain insight into their infrastructure that could be leveraged for marketing purposes, *“Sometimes the vendors come on-site and they sit down and they see. They want to understand what we’re doing with their software. They want to know and then they want to sell us on new features, upgrades – EU2.”* The reseller described the scenario somewhat differently, outlining that understanding the end user’s environment was in the interest of putting forward the best solutions, *“We want to learn about the environment, learn what the pain points are and then figure out what the best solution is for the current environment and what the plans are going forward – SR2.”* The

software publisher, similar to the reseller, believed that understanding the end user's business allowed them to ensure their products met their needs, *"My involvement with the customer is understanding their business as far as it comes to IT to ensure that we are keeping up with their IT challenges and their concerns of where they want to go – SP2."*

Ultimately, the software publisher recognized that software is inherently prone to malfunction and errors and as such, they needed to ensure they had the appropriate support mechanisms in place to address end user's challenges as they arise, *"We can't guarantee that's not going to break but we put in place the best practices to make sure that it gets replaced – SP2."*

#### Knowledge of Client's Language

The end user outlined the importance of reseller's understanding their business, indicating that they were willing to change resellers due to the sales representative's knowledge of their business, *"that guy knew what I was looking for that he knew how I operated my business so I think he's made a difference – EU2-2."* Similarly, the software publisher believed it was their responsibility to understand the end user's needs and priorities, *"it's our job to be in front of those clients making sure that we understand what the projects are that are at the top of their priority list – SP2-2."*

#### Prompt Payment

Customer acknowledged the need to pay on time and to ensure they were up to date on their support, *"It's good practice to pay them on time; to pay the support – EU2."*

## Dedicated Project Staffing

Customer recognize obligation to effectively manage its resources during an implementation. The end user outlined that it was unrealistic to bring a vendor on site on a continuous basis if they did not have the ability to have their own resources dedicated on the same schedule, *“It's easy to say, ‘I want you on-site for five days for three weeks to get this done’. But if on our side we need to have the same resources dedicated to work with them hand in hand, it's unrealistic – EU2.”* As the end user’s staff had their own regular tasks to perform, in order to better manage the implementation, the end user scheduled the supplier’s resources based on the capacity and availability of their staff, *“So typically when we do one of those types of contracts, we don't have the consultant coming in five days a week. It's one or two a week and for a longer period of time because we know our resource can't handle it, there's no way – EU2.”* The software publisher did note however, that in order for a project to be successful, they will need access to the end user’s required resources within a reasonable amount of time, *“we will need those people to be engaged within a reasonable amount of time – SP2-2.”*

Reseller expected the end user to effectively manage their resources and not reschedule tasks on short notice. If the end user does not have a resource available for a scheduled event, then the reseller cannot bill for the resource that had been reserved and loses out on that opportunity, *“So if we tell them that we need 5 to 6 days for something and they say okay come in on this day, don't change it a couple days before because we set aside the resources for that – RS2.”*

The end user made sure that they had, on staff, some level of in-house knowledge regarding the technologies they have implemented *“Every technology we have over here I've made sure that I have two resources that are basically trained and qualified to support the technology – EU2-2.”* This was to ensure they could perform initial incident triage and isolation prior to calling the software publisher for support. The software publisher concurred, outlining that they expected the client to have a basic understanding of their products, *“...the technical team understands the functionality that we can provide – SP2-2.”*

### Project Ownership

The reseller noted that they preferred not to work with end users that did not have a clear mandate. They believed such end users just shopped around and wasted time, *“They don't know what they're doing moving forward in which case if you can't tell me what your plan is for the next 8 to 12 months or what's happening in your environment, why do I want to bother talking to you – SR2.”* Further, the reseller believed it was necessary to ensure the end user had the appropriate organizational commitment to the project, *“you have to ask out right when you'd be purchasing it what is going to make the project go ahead and what is going to stop it? Is this just something that you're dreaming but you have no money? – SR2.”* Similarly, the software publisher noted the challenge when end user projects are re-prioritized, causing delays in implementation, *“they may have other priorities that bubble up and senior management says no put that aside and work on this one – SP2-2.”* Ultimately, the software publisher recognized the need to validate their work with the project owners to ensure things were going smoothly, *“We know who those people are and we continue to*

*revalidate during the project with those people that we're on track, that it is what the business is looking for, that the funding continues to remain available - SP2-2."*

#### Do No Seek To Dominate Process

The end user did not appreciate being dictated terms or processes by their suppliers, *"If they try to dominate us in any way, we terminate. I can't stand that – EU2."* They believed in their own processes and expected the suppliers to work within those processes, *"We have our processes change configuration management. They have to work with us to follow the process that we have – EU2."*

Likewise, the reseller noted that one software publisher involved with in the implementation interfered with their sales effort even when asked not to. The reseller had advised that it was not a good time to contact the end user, but the software publisher called anyway, *"they called up the customer after I asked him specifically not to. Said it's really busy not a good time to reach out to them. They're not implementing this for at least 6 to 9 months. Don't worry about it. They still called three or four times going over everything – RS2."* Conversely, the reseller noted that the software publisher discussed in this case does not try to dictate terms to the reseller, *"[Software Publisher] is the complete opposite, they're fantastic to work with – RS2."* The software publisher detailed their transparent approach to ensuring the reseller was not dominated in the sales process, *"So that's another thing that I do that I think the channel partners enjoy. That I tell them when I'm going in and tell them why I'm going in with without them – SP2."* The software publisher did note that resellers do need to understand that the reason why they the

software publisher is interacting with the end user is not to interfere with the sale, but because the end user is their end user as well, *“I couldn't understand why the manufacture was going in to see the customer, but it's his customer too right? – SP2.”*

#### Professional management and business expertise

For the end user, the reseller must have knowledgeable resources that are qualified to work on their systems. *“Typically the reseller we work with must have qualified engineering support. So we deal with [reseller] because they have the best [software publisher] guy on staff – EU2.”* Interestingly, to the end user, those knowledgeable resources were the individuals at the reseller, not the reseller themselves. As a result, the end user was inclined to change resellers if the knowledgeable resources moved to another organization, *“We used to deal with [another reseller] because they had a good technical support guy and then the guy and the sales rep moved to [reseller] and now we're dealing with [reseller], because of those guys. Technical support defines which reseller we use – EU2.”*

The end user noted that they make use of resellers to supplement their technology resources as their organization was limited in size and could not hire experts in every field, *“you don't have subject matter experts in every technology that's deployed. I would have to hire 50 resources...that's why I rely on those service providers – EU2-2.”* While the end user's organization employs skilled resources, if those resources were not available (working on other projects) or not knowledgeable in the technology (particularly in the case of new technologies), they relied on the reseller to fill those gaps, *“if my resources are not available*

*I have to rely on my service provider to support me – EU2-2.” To the end user, support capability was a critical criterion in the contractor selection process. It was essential to ensure that the reseller implementing the solution had the capability to provide follow-on support, “I want to make sure that I pick the right reseller that has the technical ability to support me afterwards – EU2-2.”*

The reseller remarked that the relationship with the end user was poor when he first received the account. However, the reseller was able to turn the relationship around by demonstrating their professional expertise and knowledge capability, *“We...had as a lunch and learn where they brought in all the network guys and the technical guys and they sat down with the SE and asked him, basically spending an hour and a half trying to stump him and that's when we won their respect. They said, ‘okay you guys really know what you're talking about’ - SR2.”*

The software publisher recognized that in order to stay competitive, they had to continually deliver value to end users, *“I have to do my job continually deliver customer satisfaction, deliver good technology – SP2.”* They further recognized that the consequence of such action was their end users moving to another vendor’s technology. Interestingly, the software publisher remarked that this obligation was towards not only the end user, but also the reseller. They noted that they believed the reseller was also a customer that they had to demonstrate value to, else they bring in a competitor *“So if I'm not viewed as best-of-breed, whether that's technology wise or the way I work with partners, then they'll*

*probably bring in something else. So that's my job. 50% of the time, sell the customer. 50% of the time, sell the reseller – SP2.”*

The software publisher valued the management and technical expertise the reseller brought forward to support the end user. They valued the reseller for their dedication to managing the relationship with the end user, *“There’s a business side which is very dedicated to the customer follow-up, get back to them fast, etc. – SP2,”* the technical expertise they provide, *“the second side has their technical folks; the people that do the implementations, the people that do professional services, the people that do the break fix, the people that do architecture. They have one of the best teams I've seen in the country and that's why I really enjoy working with them – SP,”* and their dedication to becoming knowledgeable about the products, *“there are expectations that the salespeople, the partner salespeople, have attended at least some basic sales and product training so that they know how to represent that vendor – SP2-2.”* The technical expertise was of particular importance to the software publisher, who viewed strong technical resources as being capable of ensuring the product works for the end user, thus protecting their reputation, *“my reputation is so important to me and I know those technical people protect that reputation – SP2.”*

#### Help establish an open and trusted ecosystem

The reseller noted that end users should be completely honest and open about what they want, *“I'm expecting that there'll be completely honest and open about what they need – SR2,”* and further honest regarding which other vendors and competitors the end user is

working with, *“I’ll ask them out right who else they’re dealing with and really appreciate when they tell me – SR2.”* The reseller experienced a positive relationship with the end user involved in this case, which the reseller attributed in part to the end user’s openness, *“This customer was good for not hiding the information – SR2.”* The software publisher similarly appreciated when end users were open regarding their needs and allowed them the opportunity to propose their products, *“So what I’m expecting from the customer is saying, ‘hey, here’s where we’re going, how do you align with where we’re going?’ and give us a shot at it - SP2.”* Ultimately, the software publisher viewed the full transparency among all parties as being in the best interest of the end user, *“if I’ve got all the information from the partner and all the information from the customer and I give all the information as a manufacture we have a very happy customer – SP2.”*

Conversely, the software publisher viewed guarded end users, those that do not reveal information regarding their goals, as being of increased risk. For such end users it became necessary to ensure everything was well documented and that all assumptions were detailed, *“If that person is very guarded... we just got to be bulletproof on a proposal – SP2.”*

It was frustrating to the reseller when an end user did not trust them and tested them using trust exercises that took up large amounts of time, *“Some clients will change configures over and over and over again just to see if you’re being honest on pricing and then come back to the original and just buy the original and they burned through a ton of cycles – SR2.”* They did, however, note that they take a fair pricing approach and that the

end user in this case appreciated their honesty, *“they said they like dealing with us because we only have to provide one quote with our pricing which is usually the most fair where other companies, they will provide a quote that’s high and then say oh I can do better and sharpen a pencil and then lower it lower and lower it – SR2.”*

The reseller placed a significant amount of trust in the end user in their presales activities. They trusted that their sales efforts and expertise put forward working with the end user at no cost to develop a solution will result in a purchase and feel betrayed if it does not, *“We’re not charging them to come in and put in a solution, but we damn well expect them to buy from us when it's done. If you do not buy it, that's one thing. But, if you buy from somebody else, it's kind of kicking you in the face – SR2.”* Similarly, the software publisher placed the same level of trust with the reseller. That if they support and invest in a reseller, that that reseller will not work to replace their technology with that of a competitors, *“I'm expecting from them that if I support them hundred percent then they support me 100%... If I create that trusted relationship with them. I expect them not to bring in another manufacture – SP2.”* Further, the software publisher expected that if the end user asked the reseller about switching to a competing technology, that the reseller would defend their product and provide them with an opportunity to change the end user’s mind, *“I would hope that they would first ask why and engage us and bring us in and talk about the circumstances as to why they don’t want [the software publisher] versus saying yeah we can sell that – SP2.”*

## Operational Facilitation

The reseller noted they received very little assistance from the software publisher other than typical help desk support, *“Systems engineers might call help desk about a question because of something not working the way this it should, but in two and a half years, I don't think I've ever involved the manufacture – SR2.”* The software publisher presented a disputing opinion, stating they support the reseller in several aspects of the sale including technology support, providing product roadmaps and participating in presentations, *“So technology support, roadmap discussions, anything that's coming up in the future that they need to be aware of. As far as technology, leadership, etc. We're involved in presentations, we're involved in pricing, we're involved in you name it and we're involved in it – SP2.”* This view was also shared by the other software publisher in the case, *“So we do support them. We'll assist in initial presentation and demonstration piece. I do have technical resources who will help out with the demonstration, proof of concept – SP2-2.”* The software publisher further noted that for large transactions, they will review the reseller's quote and architecture to ensure accuracy, *“We also look at all the architectures and all of their quotes and all of their configurations – SP2.”*

The software publisher's support for their resellers was not limited to knowledge and resources, but also to putting in place a business environment that protects the reseller's sales efforts. This was described as a deal registration in which a reseller can identify a business opportunity they are working on and be protected from the sale being taken by a competitor, *“at the backend what every software publisher will we do to protect the partner is give them what's called the deal registration and that really is to incent a*

*partner to become an extension of our sales force. So they're there to work with our clients and build up to for us and then we agree ahead of time that we'll protect them - SP2-2*

While the reseller recognized that are instances where the end user had not ensured that all required resources and material are there when they arrive to perform an installation, *"there are situations where we get on site and the client needs to get another process or another server – SR2,"* they commented that such instances are minimal as they strive to mitigate such an occurrence, *"...but it's very minor because we've taken the steps leading up to that so that we don't get on-site and there's a complete screw-up –SR2."* Further, if such an event occurs, the reseller's resources will mitigate the loss time by performing other work while the missing equipment is obtained, *"there's all this other work they can do up until that time – SR2."*

Customer noted need to provide adequate lead time to their suppliers *"of course I have to provide enough lead time for them to provide a quotation, stuff like that – EU2-2."* Similarly, the software publisher outlined the need for the end user to provide access to their facilities and resources during the implementation, *"The statement of work will always have those assumptions and they are that we will have access to facilities to your resources SP2-2."* Consequently, the software publisher noted that while the end user's decision making process is slow, once the decision is made they expect the project to be rushed quickly, *"Everything is slow until they buy. But when they buy everything has to go fast – SP2."* This requires that the software publisher have the resources on hand for when the client wishes to implement.

The software publisher brought forward an intimate knowledge and expertise of the products they manufacturer and believed that resellers should make use of the focused product knowledge, *“I have to know it inside and out and the channel partners need to leverage that and say hey this guy knows everything about this particular product let’s get as much information as he possibly can – SP2.”*

### 4.3 Within Case Analysis - Case 3

#### Case 3 - Summary

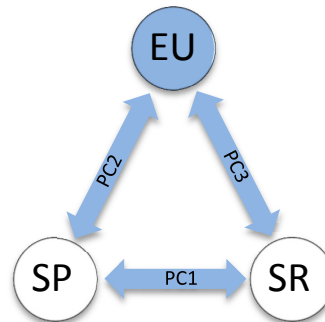


Figure 4- Case 3 Participant Summary

Case 3 involves a project manager involved in a large, multimillion dollar public sector IT project (Figure 4- Case 3 Participant Summary). The project had been ongoing for 5 years and was in the final phases of the implementation. The reseller was a large organization acting as an integrator of three software publisher's technologies. Two of the software publishers were large firms and the third was a small niche technology firm. The interviewee (EU3) had 10 years of experience as a project executive.

Some challenges which arose were associated with the project being at the end of a five year implementation, in which many realities have changed and unforeseen circumstances have occurred, but there is an agreement in place that the reseller is obliged to follow through on. In the case, discussions with the reseller regarding how to move the project forward typically resulted in the end user sacrificing functionality so that the project's timeline could be met.

### Case 3 - Analysis

Case 3 was coded and analyzed in accordance with the psychological contract elements identified in Table 2 - IT Psychological Contract Elements. Results for Case 1 are detailed in Table 8 - Psychological Contract Elements - Case 3, which identifies the relationships, obligations, and provides accompanying quotes. The psychological contract elements identified in the case are discussed below.

#### Accurate project scoping / Clear Specifications

The end user noted that one of the software publishers involved in the project was a smaller organization and it became apparent throughout the implementation that they had not scoped the project accurately in accordance with their available skillset and resources. They were subsequently challenged in supporting an implementation of their product of such a large scope, *"[The software publisher] is a small-company and to undertake a product of this magnitude I think was beyond their initial capacity – EU3."*

To the end user, accurate project scoping and developing an open and trusted ecosystem went hand in hand. Accurate project scoping wasn't just about being technologically competent, it was also about honesty on the part of the reseller concerning the architecture, ensuring elements and potential challenges were not hidden, *"I would expect [that they]...will be forthright and honest about the architecture of their solution so that we don't find some funny things downstream that were papered over – EU3."*

The end user highlighted the propensity of the reseller to argue that key elements of the solution were not outlined in the initial agreement and required change request. While

the end user acknowledged that in large projects, change requests are a manner used by resellers to earn additional revenue, the occurrence of this practice lead to conflict. In the case, the reseller attempted to charge the end user for features that should have been part of the base product. *"I said no it's not acceptable to charge any costs related to [the functionality] end of discussion. That is part of your base product – EU3."* While the reseller reneged on their position and proceeded with implementing the solution as designed, the end user was unhappy as the debate resulted in an unnecessary loss of time and effort for the project *"we have to put the paperwork for change requests to do one of these. So we tie up all kinds of people for absolutely nothing – EU3."*

The end user recognized that due to the length of the project, they needed to be flexible with regards to holding the reseller to the project scope. They needed to be understanding that requirements drafted in the past may differ from the solution ultimately delivered due to technology changes, environment changes, etc. *"I think one has to understand that when the requirements are done two or three years earlier, by the time you do a high level fit gap, by the time you get into the implemented solution. They're worlds apart – EU3."*

### Close Project Monitoring

Due to the scale of the project, close project monitoring on the part of the reseller was highly expected by the end user, *"our expectation that they're going to live within the budget that that they've been assigned and deliver within the timelines that we've agreed in order to execute the project – EU3."* The large budgets and timelines associated with the

project necessitated that the resellers effectively manage the implementation in order to ensure success. Close project monitoring also entailed understanding the business requirements and transformation needs such that the reseller had *“...to have an understanding of the impact this is going to have on their project in terms of managing the project. So that’s corporate planning, scheduling and execution of the various phases – EU3.”*

The end user recognized that while it is important to hold the reseller to account in terms of schedule and project management, *“they really kept their feet to the fire – EU3,”* that there was an inherent degree of reasonableness on the part of the end user in terms of delays and forcing the project plan, *“Now things happen and one has to be reasonable about the whole thing because there are a lot of unforeseen events that happened – EU3.”*

The end user expressed challenges with the reseller in terms of not fulfilling their expectations regarding project monitoring and documentation, highlighting that the end user and reseller were not in sync with regards to the perception of their close project monitoring obligation, *“and this is where he gets a little bit infuriating because things are not documented correctly and you keep telling them that that’s not documented correctly and they keep arguing, ‘yes, yes this is what was said’ – EU3.”*

### Building Effective Interorganizational Teams

Building effective interorganizational teams was considered by the end user to be a factor for both the end user and the reseller. On the end user’s part, ensuring that they bring together all the disparate stakeholders and consultants into a cohesive project team

*“So all of that is resources and consulting companies coming in from all over and sometimes you never met these people, but you have to form a team – EU3.”* For the reseller’s part, it’s important for the end user that the reseller ensures a cohesive working environment among themselves and the software publishers. The end user recognized this can be difficult, *“bringing these other players as major subs into a cohesive unit can be a challenge – EU3,”* but was ultimately satisfied with the reseller’s management of the software publishers, *“I have to admit that [the reseller] had a good handle on the suppliers – EU3.”*

#### Knowledge of Client’s Language, Culture and regional environment

In the case, the end user noted that a greater understanding between the end user and the reseller developed over the life of the project, *“it’s nice because if you been around the company for some time and everybody talks the same lingo – EU3.”* This highlights the notion that broader relationships and understanding are developed over time.

#### Do No Seek To Dominate Process

The end user expressed challenges with the one of large software publishers involved in the case abusing their position of power in terms of pricing, licensing, and direction of the project. At the end of 5-year contract term, the software publisher significantly increased the maintenance price of the software being provided as part of the project. The software publisher essentially held the end user, not being in position to switch software technologies, hostage, *“I would say organizations like [software publisher] are very, very large and sometimes they have you in a corner where the users of their solutions are stuck in the native price changes – EU3.”*

As the large multi-year project was prone to challenges with evolving requirements over the term of the project, the end user found that the software publisher would attempt to influence the outcome of requirement discussions in their favour, *“Now they're in the invaluable position of trying to deliver a solution against requirements. So have they tried to impose themselves impose a direction? Yes – EU3.”*

#### Professional management and business expertise

In the project outlined in this case, the end user expected that the reseller brought forward significant professional expertise to manage the project, *“number one they need to provide the necessary skill set so that they can effectively communicate support to the project if not the client – EU3.”* With the reseller acting as an integrator, this included the management skills to integrate the various pieces of the solution, *“making sure that all the pieces fit together and meet the requirements – EU3,”* as well as bringing forward an understanding of the niche solution being implemented, *“from a knowledge perspective because [the technology] is a fairly focused marketplace and you need that [technology] expertise to be able to be effective – EU3.”* Ultimately the end user expected the reseller to bring forward the experiences, best practice and best technology suitable to fulfilling the requirement, *“they will table best practices they will table the best available technology...also bring to the table a way of doing things, a methodology, a process approach that they can demonstrate that it is a workable – EU3.”*

Help establish an open and trusted ecosystem

The case highlighted the notion of trust and good faith as an issue that arose on many occasions throughout the project's implementation. The end user expected that interactions with the reseller be in *"good faith and respect and expected to be in good faith"* but noted that *"sometimes things are not always done in an honest fashion – EU3."*

The end user indicated that they had a perception that the reseller was masking the shortcomings of the software publishers' ability to deliver on the solution, *"It was also evident to us from an account side that there are weaknesses where they were trying to minimize them or paper over them – EU3."* As a result, certain elements of the project were not being completed as scheduled and required that the end user to take steps to mitigation delays and minimize the impact on timelines.

In another instance, the end user had made a change to the scope of the project regarding the interface between systems, which was communicated to the reseller by the end user's senior management. Moving forward however, the end user outlined that the reseller pretended to not to be aware of the system changes and argued that the integration work could not be done, *"here's an instance where I found that [the reseller] was less than honest. they knew about it early on, but pretended that they didn't – EU3."* Ultimately the debate with the reseller resulted in the end user giving up on the functionality and being significantly dissatisfied with the reseller's actions.

#### 4.4 Within Case Analysis - Case 4

##### Case 4 - Summary

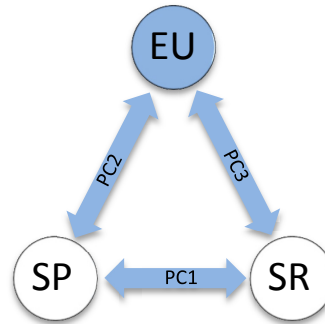


Figure 5 - Case 4 Participant Summary

Case 4 involves an end user's IT manager (EU4) with 10 years of experience working in enterprise software (Figure 5 - Case 4 Participant Summary). The end user had hired two resellers for a security upgrade as opposed to hiring a single reseller for the entire project. Each reseller was specialized with a particular software publisher's product. In this case, the end user relied heavily on resellers and had little involvement with software publishers, analogizing the relationship as *"I've got more involvement and concerned with the contractor who's helping me fix my kitchen then I do with Home Depot – EU4."*

##### Case 4 - Analysis

Case 4 was coded and analyzed in accordance with the psychological contract elements identified in Table 2 - IT Psychological Contract Elements. Results for Case 4 are detailed in Table 9 - Psychological Contract Elements - Case 4, which identifies the relationships, obligations, and provides accompanying quotes. The psychological contract elements identified in the case are discussed below.

## Clear Authority Structures

Customer outlined that while he found there were clear authority structures with hardware vendors, *“I had escalation paths. I knew who I had to go to”*, this was not the case on with the software publishers, *“...On the software side, not so much – EU4.”* The frequent acquisitions which occur in the software industry and poor management of the acquisition process led to confusion and frustration for the end user regarding who to contact, *“You call in for support and they would say, ‘no that’s not our thing’ ‘but the guy that I used to speak to says I have to talk to you because you bought them last week’ – EU4.”*

## Taking Charge

Regardless of the issue or who was at fault, if things went wrong with software or its implementation the end user expected the reseller to take charge and assist in resolving the issue, *“It’s not enough to just say you’re sorry... Help me solve it – EU4.”* It was unacceptable to leave the end user with an unresolved issue. Likewise, the same expectation existed with the software publisher. The end user expected the software publisher to own up and support their products, even if the quality of the relationship was poor (for example, due to not renewing maintenance on time), *“I do have an expectation that they’re going to standby the product regardless of how bad a customer I am – EU4.”*

The end user also noted that, while they recognized it as a sales activity, they appreciated it when the reseller took charge regarding potential improvements to their infrastructure as it demonstrates an interest in helping them achieve their goals, *“If they*

*know that there is something that they can do that's going to make my life easier somehow, I appreciate it when they took the time to communicate that – EU4.”*

### Close Project Monitoring

To the end user, project monitoring must be a two way street between themselves and the reseller, with the end user managing from an account perspective and reseller monitoring from a technical perspective, *“I should be providing them with ongoing status updates and they should be providing them to me for a technical perspective and I should be providing them to them from an account management perspective – EU4.”*

The end user does, however, grow concerned when updates have not been provided regularly by the reseller, *“not hearing back from them regularly or as often as I expected – EU4.”* The end user was further irritated when the reseller did not appear to give project monitoring the level of attention or seriousness that was expected, *“Where I feel that kind of fell short was that I had an expectation and you didn't meet it. I brought it to your attention and your project manager didn't notice it and I had to bring it up – EU4.”*

### Clear Specifications

Customer noted that being clear in expectations entails not only being clear regarding what is expected, but also what the desired result is, *“I need to make very clear what my expectations are not just expectations of them but expectations of the outcome – EU4.”* The end user believed that when his goals were shared, it allowed the reseller to bring forward the right resources to help achieve those goals.

## Building Effective Interorganizational Teams

For the end user, ensuring members from both sides of the implementation were brought together was key to a successful project, *“I always pushed for a kickoff meeting where are laying out timelines so that's not just me and the reseller but it's my team at the table and their team at the table. Again, very transparent – EU4.”* The end user noted that communication was essential to maintaining the relationship and noted further that communication needed to be bi-directional. Not just expecting the reseller to provide updates, but also providing their feedback back to the reseller, *“Communication is key and again it's bidirectional. If I'm not providing them with feedback, even if there's nothing to report on because everyone was happy. They showed up on time. They do their work every day... that regular touch point needs to happen – EU4.”*

## Responsible and Innovative Attitude

To the end user, it was important that the reseller was working towards achieving a positive impact on the project, *“it goes back again to share my goals. I expected that they're sharing and participating in helping me to achieve those – EU4 .”* If the reseller was not doing so, failure to meet the expectation resulted in a loss of confidence in their ability to manage the implementation, *“you didn't do very much to make me feel like I should be confident that you're running my project – EU4.”*

The end user recognized that they needed to own up to the things they do wrong, or for things that are their fault. Likewise, the end user expected the reseller to share responsibility if it was a joint error, *“There are situations where it's completely our fault, and*

*we admitted it was our fault and then the onus is on us. But if it was a two way thing, then I expect that we'll share the pain of fixing it – EU4.”*

Ultimately, the end user described their best relationships with resellers as those where issues and challenges could be easily resolved, *“The best relationships that I have with resellers are the ones that I kept going back to because it’s easiest to work through any issues and contractual problems and whatever else – EU4.”* The end user outlined that they focus their repeat business with those resellers that he felt contributed and worked towards the success of his business.

#### Dedicated Project Staffing

Customer noted his responsibility to keep staff dedicated and engaged in the project. Central to this was ensuring communication with staff and including them as part of the planning process, *“it hasn’t been an issue as its well communicated with the staff, they’ve been part of the planning process – EU4.”*

#### Effective Human Capital Management

The main value the end user derived from the resellers involved in the case was their expertise and specialization in the particular technologies being implemented. Being a smaller organization, the end user preferred to maintain a staff of technology professionals with general IT knowledge that could be supplemented by the reseller’s subject matter experts, *“I preferred to manage with a team of highly capable generalist and then bring in specialists and dropping them in as needed – EU4 ,”* supplementing his staff with the expert resources of the reseller. In relying on resellers, the end user expected that they would be

providing the expert resources needed to ensure the project was successful, *“I'm expecting that they're bringing their experience and specialization to the table and hopefully steering me in the right direction – EU4.”*

### Project Ownership

The end user recognized that it was important to the project to demonstrate his interest and support to his staff by occasionally attending meetings, *“I didn't attend all the meetings they were having but I went every once in a while to make sure that I was in the loop as to show my interest and support – EU4.”*

Conversely to the end user obligation to ensure proper project ownership, the end user identified the importance of product ownership on the part of the software publisher, outlining that they should take pride and strive for excellence in their products, *“they should be striving to be the best at whatever it is that they're doing and I want to see a degree of passion in what they're doing when I talk to them – EU4.”* That pride and product ownership was not present with one of the software publishers involved in the case, causing the end user to remark that they were starting to look into alternative technologies, *“I'm talking to them and they're saying that oh our product kinda sucks and it's going to suck for a while but what are you going to do you're stuck with it. That's not a very good relationship and I'm immediately starting to find other products to replace it – EU4.”*

Help establish an open and trusted ecosystem

To the end user, project success required continual open communication throughout the lifecycle of the project, *“It [communication] has to be both ways and continual throughout the lifecycle of the project – EU4.”*

Further to this, the end user emphasized the importance of an open and trust-based relationship with the reseller. While the end user may have an idea on how to approach a business problem, they are relying on the expertise of the reseller to ensure the best solution. They recognized that the ability of the reseller to accurately scope and assist them was based on them being open and transparent about their goals, *“In order for that to happen they have to have my end goals. I can't just give them this piece. There has to be a degree of trust and openness and transparency – EU4.”*

## 4.5 Within Case Analysis - Case 5

### Case 5 - Summary

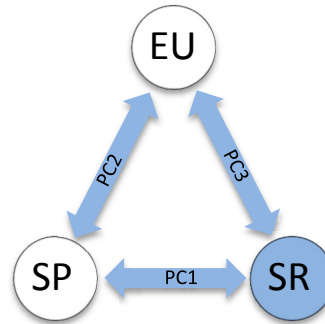


Figure 6 - Case 5 Participant Summary

Case 5 involves the senior sales executive of a public sector reseller focusing on IT management software (Figure 6 - Case 5 Participant Summary). The interviewee (SR5) has 10 years of experience in IT architecture and 15 years of IT Sales. The case discusses the reseller's implementation of software for a data migration for a large public sector client. Originally expected to require 3-4 months to implement, the project ultimately required 14 months to complete. In the case, a conflict occurred due a misunderstanding by senior management of the product's functionality. Following a sales presentation made by the software publisher to a senior executive of the end user, the senior executive instructed his staff to acquire the product and implement the solution without conveying his expectations or understanding.

Of note in this case was the reseller's perception that both the software publisher and the end user were their customers. The end user was a customer in the traditional sense. But, the software publisher was a customer from the perspective that their confidence in the reseller dictated how much future business was referred to the reseller

and, ultimately, whether or not the reseller could continue to operate as the software publisher's channel partner. To this effect, the reseller described their need to sell themselves to both the end user and the software publisher.

### *Case 5 - Observations*

Case 5 was coded and analyzed in accordance with the psychological contract elements identified in Table 2 - IT Psychological Contract Elements. Results for Case 5 are detailed in Table 10 - Psychological Contract Elements - Case 5, which identifies the relationships, obligations, and provides accompanying quotes. The psychological contract elements identified in the case are discussed below.

#### Accurate project scoping

The reseller believed that poor scoping of projects occurred in the areas of *"timelines for delivery, capability of the technology, [and] suitability of the technology - SR5."* In the case, the reseller commented that there was a misunderstanding on the part of the client in terms of the capability of the software in the implementation. The reseller described the responsibility for the misunderstanding as mutual, in part due to miscommunication on desired outcomes within the end user's organization and in part due to the reseller making assumptions regarding the end user's understanding of the product and concerning the end user's desired outcomes, *"We live and breathe this technology every day and sometimes you make an assumption on clients understanding and it's dangerous. ...where we got off track is, often with our customers, we define the scope of*

*work without knowing all of the things that they want, without knowing what they want in the infrastructure - SR5.”*

In some cases, the capability of the technology may have been overstated by the software publisher’s product announcement, requiring the reseller to outline the product’s limitations to the client *“We do a lot of taking the shine off the announcement - SR5.”* The reseller expressed the software publisher’s tendency to overstate the functionality of their product at conferences, resulting in their need to decipher the marketing messaging conveyed at product announcements and ensures an accurate understanding of the product on the part of the client *“It’s kind of what was really released at [the software publisher’s conference]. We have a couple of senior architects that are very effective at doing this without disrespecting [the software publisher]...saying ‘this is what was said but this is what it really does - SR5.”*

In other cases, the source of the poor scoping may have come from poor representations by a salesperson or by product marketing material, *“I lived through lots of days where I’m trying to make something exist that doesn’t exist because the salesperson told them, read about it in a brochure, or promised them it was going happen - SR5.”* To the reseller, it was ultimately their responsibility to be honest and forthright with end users on capability of technology, identifying to the client the limitations of the product and scoping the project to the specific realities of the client, advising them, *“if you have this already is not going to work. Unless you’re at this level are ready, It’s not going to work - SR5.”*

## Clear Specifications

As detailed above, in the case the reseller experienced challenges concerning the specifications and requirements of the end user. The project was initiated following a sales presentation made by the software publisher to a senior executive of the end user, in which the executives understanding and expectations were not communicated to staff or the reseller. *“Some of the contentions were a misunderstanding of the terminology. Someone at the higher level within the client went to a presentation about the automated disaster recovery functionality of [the product] and that senior executive went back and said to the people, ‘This is what I want. buy [the product]’ without really communicating their understanding of automated - SR5.”* The reseller was further challenged by the poor specifications due to the end user’s *“lack of understanding ...of what their infrastructure really was - SR5,”* placing the reseller in a position of needing to make assumptions with respect to their project proposal and plan. The end user not understanding the technology, what it did and not clearly outlining what they wanted ultimately resulted in a conflict when the plan could not be met.

## Taking Charge

The reseller detailed the need, when things go wrong, to take charge and begin working through the problem on behalf of the end user, *“...and then you start the process of opening tickets, troubleshooting with that manufacturer, troubleshooting with [the software publisher] –SR5.”* In some instances, if the problem was a result of their own fault, the reseller admitted the need to own up to the mistake with the manufacturer and seek a

remedy, *“Periodically there's some begging that occurs between the reseller and the manufacture when it's our own fault –SR5.”*

### Clear Authority Structures

The lack of clear authority structures was highlighted as a challenge in this case. The reseller found that while the senior executives had some misunderstandings concerning the project, the people the reseller was dealing with directly with for the implementation had a better understanding of the project's realities, *“There's also a lack of clarity between the visionary who wanted this in place and their operational team or the transformation team that is going to make it happen - SR5.”*

To further complicate the project, the reseller lamented the tendency of technical resources from both end user and reseller organizations to disregard project authority structures and project plans in favor of independent decision making at the technical level, *“they just think ‘we'll work it out between us’ and then they go down that path together and then change the time where they show up and change what they're going to do and change the scope of work amongst themselves and our guy isn't reporting up on our side and their guy isn't reporting up on their side... - SR5.”* The reseller recognized that it was necessary to ensure that the technical resources from both organizations understood the authority structure of the project.

The reporting structure of the project was identified as a further challenge by the reseller. The reseller noted that when working with other stakeholders, it did not follow that communicating to an individual in the organization implied communicating to the

organization itself. Proper communication structures needed to be followed to ensure the appropriate individuals were informed. This was the case with both the reseller communicating to the software publisher, *“Communicating to someone at [the software publisher] isn't necessarily communicating to [the software publisher] - SR5,”* as well as communicating to the client, *“Sometimes we get this perception that if I tell someone in government. I've told the whole government - SR5.”*

#### Effective Human Capital Management / Dedicated Project Staffing

The reseller outlined challenges with the implementation regarding the end user's resources being dedicated to the project, *“It was difficult to get all the stakeholders from storage and networking and servers and software and applications to the table at the same time - SR5.”* While the reseller saw one of their advantages as being flexible, they noted that when the end user does not have dedicated staff working towards the project, when the end users resources aren't available or do not show up to scheduled meetings, it results in lost opportunity cost as their resources can't then move on to other billable work, *“there's a point where when you've shown up three or four times on a billable day when you didn't take other contracts and you're only there for 7 min because you realize that after the meeting started that only 3/5 people are there. It becomes contentious because then you have to sit down and say I need to bill for this day and we're chewing into time to get this completed - SR5.”*

Effective human capital management thus is important for reseller not just for customer success, but to also ensure that they do not lose money from wasted resources.

The Reseller's resources were planned and scheduled in advance as much as possible in order to effectively manage their human capital and minimize lost opportunity *"So we're on the contract where it's billable time and we try to maximize the resources. We try to keep them busy 70% of the time. I know already where most of our guys are going to be next Wednesday. Next Thursday - SR5."* Consequently, the reseller expected reciprocal dedication from the end user regarding their own resources.

### Close Project Monitoring

The reseller discussed that their obligations to the software publisher vary depending on the visibility of the project. Due to the high visibility of this case with the senior executives of the end user's organization, the software publisher took a particular interest in the success of the implementation. Because of this, the reseller closely monitored the project not just for the end user, but also for the software publisher to give them the assurances that the project was going well. *"So for this particular project because it has such a high level of visibility and scrutiny, we would communicate back to them every couple days. We set milestone meetings that they were openly invited to - SR5."*

In describing the importance of the project, the reseller alluded to a greater emphasis on ensuring the software publisher was satisfied with the implementation more so than the end user. The reseller perceived this high profile project as an opportunity to earn a more favourable reputation with the software publisher and potentially earn more referral business, *"every implementation is an opportunity for us to market ourselves to them ...we try to stay top of mind with them - SR5."* To this effect, while the reseller described the

importance of closely monitoring the project, *“on a project of 200 working days for 4 or 5 resources you need the absolute tyrannical draconian oversight of a project manager who is relentless in their taskmaster verification role - SR5,”* they further described the importance of monitoring the project even if it was solely for the benefit of the software publisher, *“it’s important for us to have milestone meetings where, even if it’s not with the customer, that our sales team communicates to me and I communicate to their [the software publisher’s] local lead - SR5.”*

For the reseller, in addition to closely monitoring the end user’s individual projects, they also ensured the long term customer needs were monitored, such as the end user’s software assets and asset reporting, *“we do have a good tracking system where we bring in all the serial numbers of the licenses that we sell we map them to purchase orders - SR5.”* This allowed the reseller to provide greater value added monitoring, advising them of software maintenance renewals and assisting in ensuring the end user’s overall software assets were managed, *“rather than 90 days before the renewal, what we do is pull them six months before the renewal is due and start pinging them on, ‘here’s your renewal quote. This is what you have to do to prepare your paperwork. Here’s visibility of your assets.’ It really is a lifecycle asset management kind of service that we do - SR5.”*

#### Responsible and Innovative Attitude

In the case, the project arrived at a situation whereas the implementation had expended the available days of work under the contract, but had not reached the completion of the project. In order to ensure the success of the project and the satisfaction

of the end user, the reseller assessed the reasons for the delays and put forward additional resources at no cost to the end user to compensate for where they may have been at fault, *“we had to sit down and say what's reasonable for us to offer as extra time. Let's identify what the delays were. Are we reasonably responsible for some of them? sure. So if we need 20 more days we'll take seven days off and will provide that out of our budget - SR5.”*

#### Professional management and business expertise

As the reseller was a smaller organization, they did not feel like they held much influence with the senior executives of the end user's organization. In this case, the reseller relied on the software publisher's business expertise and brand image to validate their work, advocate for their technology, and play a political role with senior management, *“[the software publisher's] role was politically to communicate up that yes the technology works. Yes it works as stated - SR5.”* This assistance was particularly important for the reseller due to the pressure from senior executives resulting from the delays in the project.

Again, due to the smaller size of the reseller's organization, they had only experienced a limited number of implementations. Due to this, the reseller expressed the importance of being able to leverage the software publisher's business expertise and experience with the software. When a challenge arose that the reseller could not resolve, they would work through the software publisher's breadth of experience in order to find a solution *“as a small-company we have a reasonable but limited amount of experiences with the different types of infrastructure. when we hit a roadblock or a glitch, then we reach into our contacts...and they mine their database of similar scenarios to try and find a fix - SR5.”*

## Operational Facilitation

The reseller relied on the software publisher to support and enable the work they do with end users, providing them with the support when issues arise, *“periodically we make mistakes and they are pretty supportive - SR5,”* and the tools and assistance needed to successfully operate in the marketplace, *“where I’ll give [the software publisher] kudos is that they seem to work hard to put programs in place that allow a channel to find a place to define a value and to earn a reasonable return - SR5.”*

#### 4.6 Cross Case Analysis

The cross case analysis reviews the presence and relational direction of each psychological contact element identified in the literature against the data observed in the research.

The analysis compares the findings between cases, grouping results based on the psychological contract elements and capturing the presence of each element observed in the cases in Table 5 - Presence of Psychological Contact Element in Cases. For each element, the table displays the psychological contract's relational direction (for example, SP→EU for a perceived obligation of the Software Publisher towards the End User) and details in which case(s) the element was found to be present (for example, the presence of the element in Case 1 is identified as "1").

Each of the psychological contract elements observed in literature is then reviewed, detailing the obligations that were common within the parties to IT projects and those that were specific to particular relationships. The analysis further identifies to what degree the psychological contact elements were supported and if any new elements were discovered in the research. In general, an element is considered supported if it experiences presence in at least two cases (characterized as supported) for the given directional relationship (supplier or customer). The analysis characterizes an element as strongly supported if the element is found present in three or more cases, was mentioned frequently in conversation and was expressed with strong emotion or importance by the interviewees. An element with presence in only one case, mentioned infrequently and expressed with little emotion or

importance by the interviewee was characterized as having weak support. It should be noted that the lack of support for a psychological contract element in a given case does not necessarily diminish the significance of the element. Rather, it may be attributed to the limited perspectives present in a case (only one stakeholder may have been interviewed) or the particular experiences of the individuals interviewed.

Table 5 - Presence of Psychological Contact Element in Cases

		SP→SR	SR→SP	EU→SP	SP→EU	EU→SR	SR→EU
<b>Supplier Obligations</b>							
1	Accurate project scoping	1,2	1,2,3		2,4,5		1,2,3,5
2	Clear Authority Structures	1,2,5	2	2	2,4	5	3,5
3	Taking Charge	2	2,5	2	2,4		1,2,4,5
4	Effective Human Capital Management		1		2,3	1,2,5	1,2,3,4,5
5	Effective Knowledge Transfer	1,2,5	1		2,4		2,3
6	Building Effective Interorganizational Teams	2	1,2,5		2	3,4	1,2,3,4,5
7	Responsible and Innovative Attitude	5	1		2,4,5	1,3,4	2,3,4,5
8	Knowledge of Client's Language		1		2		2,3
<b>Customer Obligations</b>							
1	Clear Specifications			2		1,2,3,4,5	
2	Prompt Payment			2		2	
3	Close Project Monitoring	2	5	2	2	1,3,4	1,2,3,4,5
4	Dedicated Project Staffing		1	2		1,2,4,5	3
5	Knowledge Sharing	1	1,2			1,2	1
6	Project Ownership			2	4	1,2,3,4,5	
7	Do Not Seek To Dominate Process	1,2,5			2,3,4		1,2
8	Professional management and business expertise	1	1,2		2,4		1,2,3,4
9	Help establish an open and trusted ecosystem	1	1,2,3	2		1,2,3,4	1,3,4
10	Operational Facilitation	1,2,5		2,4		2	

#### 4.6.1 Accurate project scoping

The obligation of accurate project scoping was found present in all cases and is strongly supported as a supplier obligation. This was typically associated with the software publisher and/or the software reseller ensuring that the project and solutions appropriately

addressed the end user's needs. Critical to the fulfillment of this obligation are the notions of transparency and accuracy. In accurately scoping projects, suppliers must be honest and forthright in terms of both the capabilities of their products and their technical resources' knowledge and capacity to deliver on the project. It must also be noted that end users play an important role in facilitating the scoping of projects by ensuring suppliers are provided with sufficient information to understand the end user's needs with minimal assumptions. With complete information from the end user and a transparent and accurate approach, software publishers and software resellers should not be challenged in meeting this element of the psychological contract.

The obligation was also present between the software publisher and the software reseller. The software publishers expected the software resellers to accurately scope and report business opportunities while the software resellers often looked upon the software publishers to validate the work they were doing for the end users. As publicly traded companies, software publishers rely on the accurate scoping and reporting of opportunities to accurately forecast revenue. Consequently, resellers rely on the information provided to them by software publishers, directly through consultation and validation but also through the marketing and support literature they are provided, to accurately scope to the end users. A failure on the part of software publishers to provide such information accurately can result in resellers, relaying inaccurate project information to end users, placing them in breach of their psychological contract with their customer.

#### **4.6.2 Clear Authority Structures**

The perceived obligation of the supplier to clearly outline roles and responsibilities was strongly supported for both software publisher and software reseller with presence in all cases. For the software reseller-software publisher relationship, this obligation focused on determining who would be responsible and what level of engagement each party would take on for the project for the project. Discussing and establishing the working relationship and engagement plan prior to entering into the project is a critical set in clearly establishing authority structures for a project. Further, end users may benefit from seeking clarification on the software publisher-software reseller relationship in advance. For end users, this obligation focused on understanding what escalation paths were available (who do they contact) if they needed support. Clearly outlining escalation paths in project material can help address this obligation.

#### **4.6.3 Taking Charge**

It was heavily perceived by end users that their suppliers (primarily the software resellers) had an obligation to take charge and resolve issues with the project, providing strong support for this psychological contract element with several references in nearly all cases. The obligation was so strongly perceived that end users in multiple cases expected their suppliers to take charge even when they were at fault for the issue. Resellers further expected the software publisher to work with them and assist in resolving project issues. In recognizing the strong expectation of end users that their suppliers be responsible and take charge for issues that arise, both software publishers and resellers must enter into projects

with a strong attitude of commitment and be prepared to take the steps necessary to realizing the end user's goals and ensure their satisfaction.

#### ***4.6.4 Effective Human Capital Management***

Effective human capital management was supported as a software publisher obligation and strongly supported as a software reseller obligation towards end users with presence in all cases. While end users perceived this obligation as controlling staff turnover, they placed greater emphasis on the expectation that the suppliers maintained the skilled resources necessary to effectively implement and support the IT project. In the IT industry, however, turnover is not a problem restricted to the supplier side. Supplier side concerns on the part of software resellers regarding staff turnover and a perceived obligation for effective human capital management on the customer side was also present and strongly supported as an end user customer obligation towards software resellers. This obligation highlights the importance of ensuring organizations have effective recruitment and retention programs. Ensuring the dedication and retention of staff being critical to end users' timely completion of projects and knowledge retention while being critical to the success of their business and their ongoing operations for software resellers given the loss of business associated with the loss of a sales representative.

#### ***4.6.5 Effective Knowledge Transfer***

Effective knowledge transfer is strongly supported as a supplier to customer obligation. Software publishers were expected to transfer product knowledge (such as information regarding release dates) to software resellers while both software publishers

and software resellers were expected to transfer product and project knowledge to the end user. Effective knowledge transfer may be facilitated through both formal and informal means and fostered with a spirit of openness and willingness to share information. Formal means can include effective use of communication tools such as websites, conferences, literature to disseminate information and can often align with marketing efforts. They can further include more direct methods associated with projects such as training and project documentation. Informal means can include sales and project meetings, technical walkthroughs, working side-by-side with the end user, and other unstructured discussions throughout the project.

#### **4.6.6 *Building Effective Interorganizational Teams***

The expectation that software resellers work towards fostering good working relationships with stakeholders was strongly supported with presence in all cases and is fitting given their role as a solution provider, in which they work with publishers to bring solutions to end users. End users expected software resellers to have strong working relationships with software publishers in order to have the confidence that the software reseller will have the appropriate support from the manufacturer when needed. These strong working relationships can be evidenced through participation in software publishers' various partner and reseller programs (such as achieving "gold" or "premium" partner status). These programs further demonstrates a dedication towards the product as they typically require stringent knowledge and resource commitments on the part of the reseller. End users can also perform due diligence regarding the reseller's relationships before a project begins by soliciting the software publisher's thoughts and opinions of the reseller.

#### ***4.6.7 Responsible and Innovative Attitude***

Taking responsibility for commitments and helping to achieve a positive impact on the project was strongly supported as a supplier obligation in nearly all cases and found present with strong support as an obligation for end user customers as well. Ultimately, stakeholders commonly perceived the best relationships as those where the other parties were easy to work with, especially when challenges arose in the project. To help foster responsible and innovative attitudes, end users should be understanding when things go wrong during project implementation and recognize responsibility for incidents where they are at fault.

#### ***4.6.8 Knowledge of Client's Language***

The psychological contract element of Knowledge of Clients Language experienced minimal presence in the cases, but was supported as a supplier obligation. We observed that simply understanding the client's operational language was insufficient to appropriately characterize the obligation originally described by Koh et al (2004). In addition to knowledge of the customer's lexicon, we observed an obligation for the supplier to understand the culture (both organizational and regional) of the customer, the customer's regional environment (what suppliers, partners are strong in the region), and the customer's business needs (what are their operational imperatives, how they operate their business). We therefore observe that redefining this construct to "Knowledge of Client's Business and Operating Environment" may enhance the existing model.

#### **4.6.9 Clear Specifications**

The end user's obligation to provide clear specifications received strong support with presence in all cases. This psychological contract element appeared present predominantly as an end user obligation towards the software reseller. This is likely due to the notion that software resellers act as intermediary solution providers, gathering end user requirements to develop a solution that meets the end user's needs. Software publishers appeared to have little involvement in the requirement gathering stage of the IT project.

Similar to accurate project scoping, providing clear specifications is dependent on transparency and accuracy on the part of the end user. To ensure project success, end users must ensure suppliers have the necessary information and detail to sufficiently understand the projects requirements. The greater the number of assumptions a supplier must make regarding end user's objectives and technical and operating environment, the less likely the supplier will be in delivering an operational solution. End users must further ensure their specifications are defined accurately and correctly in order to ensure suppliers do not architect the wrong solution.

#### **4.6.10 Prompt Payment**

Prompt payment was not heavily acknowledged in the cases, showing only weak support when prompted. This may be attributed to the matter of payment being a non-issue for those interviewed. Having rarely encountered issues regarding payment, perceptions regarding this obligation may not have been considered worth mentioning.

We observed that perceived obligations regarding finances and payment were more heavily weighted towards project ownership, ensuring that the funds were available and that the financial decision makers had approved the project, rather than the obligation to be paid promptly.

#### *4.6.11 Close Project Monitoring*

While considered a customer obligation in literature, the cases revealed that end users expect and perceive a heavy obligation on the part of the software reseller (as a supplier) to closely monitor the project. Often end users, admittedly, did not have project management capabilities and employed resellers, in part, to perform this function. The presence of this obligation is strongly supported with presence in all cases. However, consideration should be given to the aspect of project monitoring being a mutual customer-supplier obligation. Effective monitoring of a project benefits from a project plan established as a collaborative effort between the end user, the reseller and the software publisher. As a matter of project monitoring, end users should strive to ensure the correct decision makers were available, manage disruptions to the business and coordinate with the project owners when required. Software publishers and resellers, bringing forward the technical expertise, should ensure project monitoring includes monitoring from a technical perspective, ensuring timelines appropriately accommodate delays, challenges, and capabilities based on lessons learned in past projects.

#### *4.6.12 Dedicated Project Staffing*

Dedicated project staffing was strongly supported as a customer obligation with presence in all but one case, primarily as an obligation towards the software reseller as opposed to the software publisher (whose personnel were generally not directly involved in the implementation in the cases studied). End users can help ensure the fulfillment of this obligation by providing staff with the support and organizational commitment required to ensure staff are both motivated and capable of being dedicated to the project. This includes ensuring resources have capacity and availability to attend meetings and complete project tasks and ensuring senior management demonstrates a leadership role and is supportive of staff obligations to the implementation. Ultimately, as a good customer, end users should ensure the dedication and commitment of their staff to the project in recognition that lost time associated with undedicated project members may result in lost billable hours and lost revenue for suppliers.

#### *4.6.13 Knowledge Sharing*

The obligation of knowledge sharing was supported as a customer obligation from the perspective of the end user sharing knowledge with the reseller, but also from the software reseller sharing market knowledge with the software publisher. From the end user perspective, knowledge sharing is closely tied with the success factors described in clear specifications, in that end users should strive to share pertinent information with suppliers in an open and transparent fashion in order to facilitate project scoping and project delivery. This entails not only the transparent of sharing information at the scoping stage, but also throughout the project delivery. While end users may express an unwillingness to

share information due to a general distrust for suppliers, they should further recognize the importance of a trust based relationship to project success, balancing such concerns against the threats to project delivery that arise from a supplier operating under incomplete information.

#### *4.6.14 Project Ownership*

Project ownership received strong support with presence in all cases as an end user obligation towards the software reseller. Project ownership is important to suppliers as it demonstrates organizational dedication and commitment to the project and provides suppliers a level of certainty that the project (and thus the business) will move forward. End users can demonstrate project ownership by having a clear organizational vision provided by senior management, by the attendance of senior management at important meeting with vendors, and by minimizing the re-prioritization of projects.

We further observed that expanding the definition of project ownership to include having a clear mandate could further provide clarity to this obligation. While ensuring the project had senior management support was observed as an obligation on the part of the customer, the customer having a clear direction and authority from senior management to address a particular business imperative could form a more appropriate view of the obligation.

Interestingly, one case raised the supplier equivalent of this obligation in the form of “product ownership”. The end user believed suppliers had an obligation to be committed to the product being implemented, ensuring they believed in its functionality and would

continue to support and advance the product in the future (for example, not selling outdated, unsupported technology).

#### *4.6.15 Do Not Seek To Dominate Process*

While the literature described “do not seek to dominate process” as a customer obligation, it was observed in all instances that process domination appeared to have occurred from the supplier side with customer stakeholders perceiving this as an obligation towards them. It is therefore observed that that the obligation to not dominate the process is not supported as a customer obligation, but rather strongly supported a supplier obligation.

For resellers, process domination on the part of the software publisher resulted from interference with the reseller’s sales efforts (for example, by contacting the end user directly regarding a potential project). A level of trust is required on the part of software publishers that their resellers are appropriately managing the business relationship with the end user and should avoid interfering in this regard. While software publishers might feel such interference is necessary in order to ensure sales efforts, this can have unintended consequences for the sale such as creating a sense of vendor harassment by the end user or by unintentionally providing conflicting information than what the reseller had intended. However, resellers should also recognize that their customer is also the software publisher’s customer and they have their own obligations regarding relationship management to fulfill.

For end users, process domination occurred when resellers and manufacturers leveraged their market position to abuse, manipulate, or influence the business outcome in

their favour. Suppliers should exercise caution taking such an approach as while there may be significant gain (both short and long term), these actions are perceived very negatively by end users and may result in a loss of the customer in the long term.

#### ***4.6.16 Professional management and business expertise***

In the IT projects reviewed in this study, end users employed software resellers in order to supplement the gaps in their organization with skilled professional resources from the software reseller. Software publishers, as well, expected such professional management and business expertise from the software reseller when acting as a supplier of their products. This obligation was therefore not supported as a customer obligation (as identified in literature), but was strongly supported as a supplier obligation with presence in nearly all cases. As a significant loss of trust can occur from a supplier misrepresenting or not having sufficient capability to perform the work that the customer engaged them to do, it is critical that suppliers ensure they maintain the knowledge and skills necessary to complete the work and present these capabilities honestly and accurately.

#### ***4.6.17 Help establish an open and trusted ecosystem***

Establishing a responsible working relationship and ensuring transparency in intentions was expected from both customer and supplier stakeholders and presented strong support as both a customer and supplier obligation in the context of the software reseller-end user relationship. In particular, software resellers expected customers to be honest and open in regards to their purchasing intentions and needs while reciprocally believing the need to be honest with their customers, developing a trusted relationship. As

discussed throughout this cross-case analysis, notions of transparency and openness are critical to successful fulfillment of the IT psychological contract, in particular in the accurate scoping of requirements and addressing of business needs. It is further important to recognize that openness follows from trust and that if a trusted relationship does not exist between the parties, it is unlikely that an effective, transparent flow of information will exist. This outlines the importance of suppliers ensuring that they fulfill their obligations under the psychological contract to ensure a trust based relationship is fostered.

This obligation also presented strong support as a reseller obligation towards the software publisher, who expected software resellers to be open regarding which products (theirs or their competitors) they are positioning with an end user. In the scoping and reporting of business opportunities, resellers must be honest and transparent regarding the products they are positioning to the end user and be forthright when they intend on positioning a competitor's product. While positioning a competing product may be perceived negatively by the software publisher, honesty in this regard allows the software publisher to manage their business appropriately, whereas discovering the circumstance after the fact is perceived much more negatively, potentially perceived as a betrayal and may result in a reconsideration of the relationship by the software publisher.

#### ***4.6.18 Operational Facilitation***

Defined in literature as a customer obligation to ensure suppliers have access to required materials, operational facilitation presented support as a customer obligation for both end users and software publishers. While software publishers and software resellers

expected to have the appropriate access and necessary materials available from the end user (such as system access, system architecture and technical documentation), software resellers also expected software publishers had the resources in place (such as training and sample statements of work) to support them in their project delivery. It is therefore suggested that this obligation be redefined to remove “supplier” from the definition. A more suitable definition to encompass the multi-stakeholder aspect of this obligation would be “ensuring access to the required materials and resources to perform the work.”

## Chapter 5. Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter discusses the results of the data and analysis presented in the previous chapter and presents the conclusions for the research. Also discussed in this chapter are the implications of the findings, research limitations, recommendations for future research and contributions to existing knowledge.

### 5.1 Observations

#### Support of Existing Model

The findings observed support for all psychological contract elements identified under the existing model of the IT customer-supplier psychological contract, as described in Table 2 - IT Psychological Contract Elements of the literature review.

For supplier obligations, strong support was found for the IT psychological contract elements of Accurate Project Scoping, Clear Authority Structures, Taking Charge, Effective Human Capital Management, Effective Knowledge Transfer, Building Effective Interorganizational Teams and Responsible and Innovative Attitude. Only weak support was observed for the supplier obligation of Knowledge of Client's Language. It was further observed that the supplier obligation of Responsible and Innovative Attitude also strongly identified as a customer obligation.

For customer obligations, strong support was found for the IT psychological contract elements of Clear Specifications, Close Project Monitoring, Dedicated Project Staffing,

Project Ownership, and Help Establish an Open and Trusted Ecosystem. The elements of Do Not Seek to Dominate Process and Professional Management and Business Expertise were not supported as customer obligations. However, they were strongly identified as supplier obligations. Only weak support was observed for the customer obligations of Prompt Payment and Knowledge Sharing. It was further observed that the customer obligation of Close Project Monitoring also strongly identified as a supplier obligation.

### The Supplier as Customer

We observe that the introduction of resellers, as intermediaries between the software publishers and the end users, to the theoretical framework revealed a unique psychological dynamic between the reseller and the software publisher. While the resellers' and software publishers' psychological contracts with the end users conformed to the obligations expected under the theoretical framework of supplier to customer, the software reseller- software publisher psychological contracts reciprocally contained elements of both supplier and customer obligations.

As resellers make decisions as to which products they will support and market, they are, in effect, a customer to the software publisher, who must ensure that their products (both their software and themselves as an organization) are desirable to the reseller and included in their portfolio. Consequently, the software publisher also makes decisions as to which resellers it wishes to do business with and enlists or refers resellers to sell their products. The reseller thus, must demonstrate their value to the software publisher in order to ensure they continue to receive business for those products. In such a scenario, the

reseller can effectively be described as a supplier (of their reseller services) and the software publisher as a customer. We therefore observe that the software publisher-reseller psychological contract contains elements expected in both supplier to customer and customer to supplier psychological contracts.

While further research is required, we observe that the degree to which the parties had obligations characteristic of the elements of psychological contracts that are common to customers versus those common to suppliers may be influenced by the bargaining position of the software publisher. In a software market in which there are few competitors, the software publisher likely has greater discretion as to which resellers it wishes to work with (software publisher as customer). Whereas in a software market where there is significant competition, the software publisher is likely competing to ensure the resellers are positioning their products (software publisher as supplier).

#### Depth of Involvement

The customer-supplier dynamic of the elements of the software publisher-reseller's psychological contract may further vary depending on the roles undertaken by the software publisher and the software reseller in the IT project. In some instances, the software publisher may lead the IT project, with supplemental work from reseller. In such a case, the software reseller's psychological contract would likely contain a greater emphasis of supplier obligations towards the software publisher. In other instances, the reseller may lead the IT project with the software publisher taking on a backend support role and thus a greater element of supplier obligations.

## Individual vs. Organizational Commitment

We observed that the size of the reseller's organization impacted the end user's loyalty and commitment towards that organization. When the reseller was small with limited technical resources, the customer was more likely to develop a direct psychological contract with the individual within that organization. This presented a reinforcement of the psychological contract as an individual level construct. Thus, only a small portion of the business was built with the reseller and the client's relationship largely existed with the sales or technical expert. As a result, loyalty towards the supplier was weak and the customer was willing to change vendors if their contact moves. Whereas the end user that focused on leveraging multiple resellers with specialized knowledge rather than a single reseller, focused more on the organization due to their pool of resources rather than specific resources.

## 5.2 Research Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides insights for both academic research and practitioners, there are limitations. While the researcher intended to explore cases in which all parties to the project were available to be interviewed; only one such case materialized. The study thus explored a variety of cases in which all, two or only one of the parties were interviewed. While the variability between cases thus may not be sufficient to support saturation, the results were consistent across cases. Further research should build on the results and observations of this thesis to explore their validation in other types of software implementation relationships and to further expand upon them.

In particular, the limitations of the study relate to the sample population. First, the study focused on value added resellers as opposed to resellers performing full integration or simple fulfillment roles. Thus, we cannot conclude that the obligations and relationship dynamics observed for value added resellers would follow on lower complexity fulfillment relationships or would sufficiently represent the psychological contract for integrators involved in higher complexity projects. Further research could be conducted to explore the psychological contract elements of IT projects involving resellers as fulfillment agents or as integrators and further validate the generalizability of the existing model.

Second, the end user customers sampled in this thesis consisted of public sector and smaller commercial organizations. The study did not examine the IT psychological contracts of implementations in large commercial organizations. As such organizations would likely maintain larger bargaining power over suppliers, this would be an interesting area for future research to compare findings and explore the influence of power dynamics on the psychological contract.

Finally, there is a possibility for regional bias. The region in which the study was conducted is largely influenced by the public sector as the major regional customer. Such a heavy regional focus on a particular type of customer may influence norms and culture of individuals operating in the marketplace, even when working with private sector organizations. Thus, the researcher would encourage a replication of the study in a commercial focused region to verify generalizability of the study.

As an additional area for future research, the study uncovered an interesting dynamic of the “supplier as customer” in the Software Publisher-Reseller relationship. Additional research on this dynamic is suggested. Possible research topics include observing how this psychological contract dynamic is influenced by the bargaining position of the software publisher or how the dynamic changes based on the roles of the parties in the implantation (which party is taking the lead).

### 5.3 Conclusion

Research in the application of the psychological contract concept to IT projects has demonstrated the importance of psychological contract fulfillment to the success of these projects. It is therefore critical that the parties involved in an IT project are aware of their obligations as perceived by the other parties to the project. In so doing, they may better understand, respect, and manage the behaviors driven by the perception of these obligations and avoid the perception of psychological contract breach.

Through analysis of the data uncovered in the five cases studied in this research, we observed a focus by the participants of this study on the elements of transparency, accuracy, dedication, knowledge, and responsibility. We therefore conclude that the critical obligations between software publishers, software resellers and end users in an IT project relationship are the following:

- 1 **Transparency** and openness between all parties allows for clear planning, scoping of requirements, addressing of business needs and business forecasting;

- 2 **Accuracy** in scoping of the requirement, the capability of the product, and the ability of the organization to deliver the solution;
- 3 **Dedication** and commitment of resources from all sides, ensuring the resources required are available and tasks are completed as scheduled;
- 4 **Knowledge** and skill necessary to complete the work; and
- 5 **Responsibility** to take charge, address issues as they arise, and bring the right people together to complete the project.

In working towards fulfilling these critical obligations, stakeholders to IT projects may better fulfill the perceived expectations of the other parties. In doing so, they may better fulfill their obligations under the psychological contract and increase the likelihood of project success.

### *5.3.1 Implications of Findings*

#### Implications for Software Publishers

A heavy reliance by software publishers on the reseller channel produced a weak perception of psychological contract obligations of the end user towards software publishers. We observed that most obligations addressed by end users were directed towards resellers, with very little perception of obligation towards software publishers. While software publishers may employ resellers as sales intermediaries in order to focus on to focus on their core non-sales activities, the relationship distance this creates runs the risk of reducing end user commitment and loyalty.

As software technology becomes increasingly commoditized, software publishers will need to strengthen their relationships with the end users through a better demonstration of commitment to their perceived obligations as a supplier. All end users interviewed in the cases presented a relatively negative view of software publishers, lamenting the poor support they provide and the general lack of commitment to the relationship with the customer, indicating poor fulfillment of the psychological contract on the part of software publishers. We observed that as a result, end users trust and loyalty towards software publishers was low with end users expressing a high willingness (and sometimes desire) to switch to a competitor's product. Software publishers could address these poor perceptions by greater efforts to demonstrate their commitment by, for example, taking charge when problems occur with their software, not deflecting blame, but rather working with the customer to resolve the issue.

### Implications for Resellers

We observed that end users established significantly stronger psychological contracts with resellers than with software publishers. In general, the end users studied in the cases expressed a reliance on resellers to supplement their organization's knowledge, expertise, and professional practices in the implementation of IT projects.

The strong expectations of end users also create a greater risk of perceived breach of obligations on the part of the reseller if they are not attentive to the relationship. Such perceived lack of fulfillment can result in loss of trust and change in loyalty on the part of the end user. However, we observe that resellers can recover a relationship with a

demonstration of strong knowledge, taking charge and following through on commitments. For example, demonstrating to the end user that they have a unique understanding of their needs, infrastructure and future vision, coordinating with software publishers and being innovative to resolve issues as they arise, and dealing with an upset customer without delay.

Software publishers expected a high degree of openness on the part of resellers concerning their ongoing efforts with customers. Ultimately, the reseller's psychological contract with the software publisher was highly reliant on the reseller demonstrating their value to the software publisher. This included demonstrating that they were effectively seeking out new business, complying with sales and lead forecasting requirements, and being open and honest regarding the products they are positioning to an end user.

#### Implications for End Users

Software resellers and software publishers outlined that the largest obligation end users had was to be open and transparent in terms of their business needs and operational plans. Suppliers perceived a lack of openness on the part of a guarded customer as an increased risk. Without complete information, suppliers were required to perform their work by making assumptions and, as a result, were more reserved in presenting and architecting solutions. Ultimately, the more assumptions made by suppliers, the less likely the end users were to get the solution they desired. Greater efforts for transparency on the part of customers may allow suppliers to develop better IT solutions and deliver greater satisfaction. This includes disclosing relevant details regarding system infrastructure and

design, desired outcomes, scope and project requirements. Ultimately, providing sufficient information to the reseller or software publisher such that they do not need to make unnecessary assumptions regarding the end user's needs.

It is important for end users to recognize that poor commitment on their part is not only an action representative of a poor customer, but also results in financial consequences for suppliers. Project delays and resources not being available are not just an inconvenience for suppliers, but result in lost profit as the supplier's staff are not billing and could be on other projects. In order to ensure a collaborative atmosphere based on mutual trust is maintained, end user's should take necessary steps to ensure organizational commitment to the project. This includes ensuring resources have the time and motivation to complete project tasks and ensuring senior management is supportive of staff obligations to the implementation.

### ***5.3.2 Contributions to Knowledge***

Prior research has focused on IT psychological contracts in the context of IT outsourcing and offshoring projects. In contrast, this thesis focused on IT software project psychological contracts, providing a new theoretical lens to research in IT psychological contracts and a new theoretical perspective to IT software projects.

This thesis contributes to achieving a greater understanding of the IT project psychological contract by, as suggested by Koh & Ang (2004), expanding existing models beyond the limit of two stakeholders (customer and supplier) through analysis of multiple stakeholders involved in IT projects. In analyzing the psychological contract representing the

software publisher, software reseller and end user's beliefs and expectations regarding their mutual obligations in IT projects, we reveal that while the IT project psychological contract elements contained in literature are supported, the existing supplier-customer models may be insufficient to appropriately describe the multi-stakeholder relational dynamics involved during an IT implementation. We further suggest refinements to the existing model, such as to the definition of operational facilitation and knowledge of client's language, to improve upon prior research in the contents of the IT psychological contract.

In introducing a multi-stakeholder analysis of IT projects, this research contributes to knowledge by analyzing the relatively unexplored IT psychological contracts in the IT supply chain that exist between the software publisher and the software reseller. We observed that this psychological contract cannot be effectively characterized by the typical supply chain definition of supplier-customer whereas both parties, in effect, act as a supplier and a customer. This dynamic being potentially influenced by factors such as bargaining power and project involvement.

We further contribute the effect of supply chain distance on IT psychological contracts by analyzing software publisher-end user psychological contract in the context of intermediary (software reseller) driven implementations. We observed that greater involvement between the software reseller and the end user resulted in a lowered perception of obligation on the part of the end user towards the software publisher.

As a contribution to the practice of implementing IT projects, this thesis identifies specific areas that stakeholders involved in IT projects should consider as best practices.

Through the qualitative analysis of five case studies, we identify the critical obligations between software publishers, software resellers and end users in an IT project relationship.

## Annex A – IT Psychological Contract Elements Tables

### Case 1

Table 6 – Psychological Contract Elements – Case 1

Obligation	Support
<b>Accurate Project Scoping</b>	
PC1	<p>SP→SR</p> <p>we have to be able to rely on the vendor to support us to basically rubberstamp what we're doing because we're basically representing for the vendor – SR1</p> <p>they may have done the architecture prior to the implementation but we'll review the architecture so we'll ensure that what they're proposing will be effective for the customer – SP1</p> <p>we'll review the architecture so we'll ensure that what they're proposing will be effective for the customer – SP1</p> <p>typically our system engineers will review the scope of work – SP1</p>
	<p>SR→SP</p> <p>So we want to go and get the business and basically go to [software publisher] and say we found this opportunity, we want to work with you on it. All prequalified and architected everything. That's what they're looking for – SR1</p>
PC3	<p>EU→SR</p>
	<p>SR→EU</p> <p>they have entrusted us to be able to tell them if they are going down the wrong path – SR1</p> <p>where we saw we made mistakes is if we only look at the impact from a technology perspective we did not look at the impact of technology towards the business processes or the business functions – SR1</p> <p>What we're coming to realize and communicate more and more is that we are not everything to everyone and we don't have the pretension to be. Because it's not about desperation, It's about... I can do this well this I don't, but I can understand even if I don't do this the impact that it has on everything else that were doing together –SR1</p>
<b>Clear Authority Structures</b>	
PC1	<p>SP→SR</p> <p>so at the planning stage that's where we agree if it's a co-engagement or there's a portion of the services that we rendered by us or if there'll be a portion of the services rendered by the partner –SP1</p>
	<p>SR→SP</p>
<b>Taking Charge</b>	
PC1	<p>SP→SR</p>

	SR→SP	<p>“I have to take ownership and then for example I will call the sales manager... I’ll call them and say it’s not going to work with the two reps. We got to find a way to make this work” – SR1</p> <p>we need to have more or should I say longer teeth and go and get more projects – SR1</p> <p>we have to be more aggressive – SR1</p> <p>even if we have training from them that is offered, we will also train our people – SR1</p>
PC3	EU→SR	
	SR→EU	<p>an organization where decisions can be taken very quickly or can be taken in a very long span of time but once it’s taken expect everything to be done right away because they’re behind the eight ball and we have to make them realize that even if you were so behind the eight ball we have to manage expectations – SR1</p> <p>We want to be able to say the customer. We are accountable as integrators from A-Z whatever happens here – SR1</p> <p>“[they] have entrusted us to be able to tell them if the going down the wrong path – SR1</p>
<b>Effective Human Capital Management</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	
	SR→SP	<p>so we are responsible for part of the knowledge that we can bring onto ourselves. The know how to be</p>
PC3	EU→SR	<p>“it’s a lack of knowledge and it’s a lack of continued continuity of the knowledge because there is a high turnover in the IT world brought on by the fact there are few jobs so people will be opportunistic and move either up the ladder of the salary range” – SR1</p>
	SR→EU	<p>Or we don’t have enough expertise for what you’re try to do but we can help you find someone who will do it. So we will go and find the right party to be able to do this for the partner</p>
<b>Effective Knowledge Transfer</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	<p>We expect (the software publisher) to give us the know what – SR1</p> <p>by the time the product is launched we are able to train our partners so they are able to maintain the knowledge and get new certifications. Then, we expect to be shadowing, working with our people so that they can learn on the first few deals and then do it on their own – SP1</p>
	SR→SP	<p>we are responsible for the part of the knowledge that we can bring onto ourselves – SR1.</p>
<b>Building Effective Interorganizational Teams</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	

	SR→SP	<p>the reason behind that is that the way this vendor set up and we see this with other vendors. They have a couple salespeople, spread across the country. Very individualistic culture where there's a manager for example they'll manage four or five rep channel partner manager with everyone in their own little bubble. We don't work as a bubble. So right there is another culture clash where we don't want people in our company to be individualistic. they have to be team oriented so makes it difficult to build a uniform relationship with a bunch of individuals because these doing things their own way so you have to bring people together and work together. – SR1</p> <p>So we're not asking our people to change and we're not asking them to change. We're asking people to understand and the minute that they can understand the differences in culture, they will automatically adjust and say okay I know what they need – SR1</p>
PC3	SR→EU	<p>"some of the customers that we deal with see themselves as superior to the vendor and they want to treat us as a supplier. While you're trying to establish your level of partnership which is completely different -SR1."</p> <p>a lot of the times we realize when we're deploying with the customer that we have sitting in front of us is our biggest critical failure. Because somebody hates what we do or the reason why were there or the person feels threatened -SR1</p>
<b>Responsible and Innovative Attitude</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	<p>what we realize is that the customer in IT doesn't really manage expectations well with his customer which is the business units who drive the people who drive the people that drive business imperatives and when they don't manage their expectations while we wind up on the receiving end because were like a huge garbage can where everything comes in and expect us to gobble everything. So we had to do exercise as a company to learn to undo and teach them how to manage these expectations for project management – SR1</p>
	SR→EU	
<b>Knowledge of Client's Language</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	
	SR→SP	<p>so the skill set the partners bring are typically an understanding of the equipment sold in that region and have integration skills... and this varies region to region. – SP1</p>
<b>Clear Specifications</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	<p>Detail for example, the scope of the number servers. What is the impact if were trying to do deployment and one of the applications will be down for a day or for five hours. – SR1</p> <p>A lot of times you'll hear it's not what I said or you don't understand what it wanted to do or accomplish. – SR1</p>
	SR→EU	
<b>Prompt Payment</b>		
<b>Close Project Monitoring</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	<p>the project manager says hold on here. we are doing our part and on your end this person was not there, did not come in, did not supply this... - SR1</p>
	SR→EU	<p>there is daily reporting to make sure that if the customer doesn't know what we're doing because he doesn't know what he's doing, we still keep track of our time</p>
<b>Dedicated Project Staffing</b>		

PC1	SP→SR	
	SR→SP	With the vendor taking commitments from our salespeople and our sales people don't call back the customer or don't follow up on the deal – SR1
PC3	EU→SR	<p>“...and then our person is sitting there not on another project and we're not billing. So we have a negative impact on our bottom line. So it's basically a dance in which you have to make sure the partner is on the floor at the same time as you are and you're looking each other in the eye and saying we're doing this together, but then you look around and you can't find a partner” – SR1</p> <p>For example, I need to start this project were talking the [software publisher] we have had our person ready for the last few months but it took so long for the decision that person went on holidays ...and then our person is sitting there not on another project and were not billing</p> <p>Not showing up is one very good example – SR1</p> <p>the project manager says hold on here. we are doing our part and on your end this person was not there, did not come in, did not supply this... - SR1</p>
	SR→EU	
	<b>Knowledge Sharing</b>	
PC1	SP→SR	<p>If we just launched the products by the time the product is launched we are able to train our partners so they are able to maintain the knowledge and get new certifications then we expect to be shadowing (working with our people so that they can learn on the first few deals and it do it on their own – SP1</p> <p>So that when they tell us that this release is coming out or this patch is coming out...that they will live up to their word –SR</p>
	SR→SP	we have to go to them and say we see this trends in the marketplace how are you, how are the resources at [software publisher] looking at this. So we are able to challenge them even if they are the inventors of their own software – SR1
<b>Project Ownership</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	So you go see for example the CFO for funding and we find that they lack the language skills to sell the project to the business unit to the decision-maker. So we have to bridge that gap - SR1
	SR→EU	
<b>Do No Seek To Dominate Process</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	<p>“we expect that they will be able to trust the intellectual property that we bring to bear” – SR1</p> <p>they may not be aware that we are working on a corporate infrastructure where we can have basically a server migration at the same time a storage migration of the same time and be designing a backup infrastructure at the same time. The (software publisher's technology) is a part of this but we are integrating and are responsible for integrating everything that will touch this. –SR1</p> <p>With the vendors the weekend is the month end, the month is end of quarter end, end of quarter is end of year and end of year is the end of the world. So it's two very different ways of working together – SR1.</p>
	SR→SP	
PC3	SR→EU	We get the purchase order from the customer when they are ready because we have a long-term relationship

Professional Management and Business Expertise		
PC1	SP→SR	
	SR→SP	We expect them to be able to install the products that are of it that have been available for a few years. Where the expectation is less if we had just launched a new product in the past year or so
PC3	EU→SR	
	SR→EU	the biggest value the customer sees is can I talk to someone who is knowledgeable – SR1
Help Establish an Open and Trusted Ecosystem		
PC1	SP→SR	So that when they tell us that this release is coming out or this patch is coming out or that this person will be at that meeting that they will live up to their word – SR1
	SR→SP	our expectation is that the partner lets us know if they're positioning our solution or a competitors solution –SP1
PC3	EU→SR	“Some people have a very flexible trust some people don't have any flexible trust some of the customers that we deal with see themselves as superior to the vendor and they want to treat us as a supplier. While you're trying to establish your level of partnership which is completely different. This is where it's very difficult, and it's never the same with each customer.” – SR1
	SR→EU	You have to be able to look at yourself in the mirror and say what am I my able to do, what am I not able to do, and do I have the fortitude to be forthright about this. – SR1
Operational Facilitation		
PC1	SP→SR	If they're uncomfortable whether it's because new technology, timing, their resources are booked, etc. then we can complement with our own professional services – SP1
		we provide a solution enablement toolkit. So we will provide, for different toolsets, our best practices, our professional services, our IP wrapped into tools – SP1
	SR→SP	

## Case 2

Table 7 - Psychological Contract Elements - Case 2

Obligation	Support
<b>Accurate Project Scoping</b>	
PC1	SP→SR
	SR→SP <p>I as a manufacturer have a role to go into customers create excitement create interest and then [the reseller] would put it together top to bottom – SP2</p> <p>they do need to let me know well in ahead of time that this is an opportunity that they found and they would like to register with us – SP2-2</p>
PC2	EU→SP
	SP→EU <p>So making recommendations that will address where they want to go and that we're not implementing something knowing that the going here and having to pull it all apart and rework it – SP2</p> <p>sometimes through no fault of their own the way they position the technology isn't what the customer was actually trying to do –SP2</p> <p>During the acquisition process we will work with the client to build out build of and will work with other parties in the project build out a build of materials, hardware, software professional services - SP2-2</p> <p>if I don't think it's our niche or I don't think were really good at it. I walk away from it – SP2</p>
PC3	EU→SR

	<p>SR→EU</p> <p>So say we call all the vendors. I want a [software publisher] storage 10 gig to go in there and we want these things. They're going to look at it and say well you know what you forgot this you want this this and this because of the environment. And that's the good quote. And I would change this for that. Because it's more suited. The other vendors are to give us exactly what we wanted. No questions asked. So where's the value? The value here is that I asked for A and they gave me B, but really I wanted to ask for b. But I didn't know – EU2</p> <p>When we asked [reseller] for quote for something the guys in the back look at it and say no no there not asking for the right thing. And then we work in getting the right thing – EU2</p> <p>our goal here was to show them that look, 'you guys aren't sure about what you're doing. You have a plan. You know you want the end result to be, but you're not really sure how to get there and you want the best plan of attack – SR2</p> <p>we have to understand that they have their budgets that they have to stay within – SR2</p> <p>I'm not allowed to put a quote in front of my clients without it being vetted by my SE – SR2</p> <p>I sell one piece of that stack...they're kind of the glue that puts the server the network and the storage altogether – SP2</p> <p>"I am expecting in that case where the reseller has marketed themselves as being knowledgeable in many technologies; [Software Publisher] and [Software Publisher] and [Software Publisher]...if they are going to do that than they should be able to support those technologies that they're marketing - SP2-2."</p>
<b>Clear Authority Structures</b>	
<b>PC1</b>	<p>SP→SR</p> <p>"What sometimes happens is [the reseller] or another reseller will say, 'we want you to do it and we want you to take a liability and the risk' – SP2 "</p> <p>what works very well is when our resellers or our partners managed the project from a server network storage side, and then have us do some of the heavy lifting like us putting it in ... according to best practices, getting it on, getting it available for them to do their integration into the business and that works quite well – SP2</p> <p>"Implementation all depends on whether we do it at [software publisher] or if [the reseller] does it – SP2."</p> <hr/> <p>SR→SP</p> <p>"What sometimes happens is [the reseller] or another reseller will say, 'we want you to do it and we want you to take a liability and the risk' – SP2 "</p> <p>what works very well is when our resellers or our partners managed the project from a server network storage side, and then have us do some of the heavy lifting like us putting it in the rack cabling according to best practices, getting it on, getting it available for them to do their integration into the business and that works quite well – SP2</p>

PC2	EU→SP	<p>You try to understand or try to find out or understand who are the technical decision-makers, The business decision makers, the financial decision-makers – SP2-2</p> <p>the technical folk love your widget, your tool, whatever it is you got that's good, but more and more it is the business that is deciding what IT should be doing – SP2-2</p> <p>if we continue to try and talk just to IT, we may hit a brick wall when the business says well that isn't what I asked for. so you continue to try and validate that with business and then you go back to the financial side and said if IT says this is good and the business agrees then is there money available to spend SP2-2</p>
	SP→EU	In the project plan everybody's given tasks and the timeline to achieve this task - SP2-2
<b>Taking Charge</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	"We do a lot of transactions and it's very hard to always get them right. I can say both sides, we sit down, we talk about it, we find out where it went wrong. Gather the facts and then make a decision on how to move forward – SP2."
	SR→SP	"so that's where I get the service provider involved, 'You guys come in here, you guys negotiate. I bought the equipment through you guys from these vendors' – EU 2-2."
PC2	EU→SP	if it was the customer that forgot to tell us a piece of information and it didn't work, then you would sit with the customer and ask them how do you want to move forward and what is it going take to make things right again. My reputation and ability for them to recommend us going forward is more important than the mistake – SP2
	SP→EU	<p>So we called Cisco we call IBM we call now we called all the vendors and they said it's not our problem. It's the other vendors. So we couldn't get it fixed – EU2</p> <p>They the software vendor support their environment with specific specifications. So if you have this piece of hardware in this piece of software our stuff is going to work if you move a little bit you're out of our configuration and we don't support you – EU2</p>
PC3	EU→SR	

	<p>SR→EU “They needed some [product]. So what I did was take all the profit from that and threw it against the cost of the license – SR2</p> <p>I made no money off the deal. I made sure they understood that...I came good for it, even though it cost me money. But, just so that you know guys, I took care of you and please remember that next time you have an order – SR2</p> <p>there's all this other work they can do up until that time – SR2</p> <p>what type of quality of service can the reseller provide? How can they help me justify and basically take off some of my work? – EU2-2.”</p> <p>I pick the one that basically calls me minimum once a month and provides me with a report and says, here's where we are here's the ones that are due and here's what's next – EU2-2</p> <p>“If you're able to do this so I don't have to manage all this, so I don't have to call you, that's quality of service and that's what I'm looking for other than pricing – EU2-2.”</p>
<b>Effective Human Capital Management</b>	
PC2	<p>EU→SP</p> <p>SP→EU “We do a very good job at hiring strong technical people and that's the reseller's strength and our strength is our technical people it's not our salespeople – SP2.”</p>
PC3	<p>EU→SR</p> <p>SR→EU I freely admit to them I know virtually nothing about IT. My job is to ensure that...when you've got a problem, I'll put the people in front of you that will have the solution for you. And to make sure you always get the best resources – SR2.</p> <p>but I make sure I've got the best technical guys to help them out with anything and that's what wins them over - SR2</p> <p>“We do a very good job at hiring strong technical people and that's the reseller's strength and our strength is our technical people it's not our salespeople – SP2.”</p> <p>so that relation could change anytime it's totally dependent on how the vendors managing their staff EU2-2</p> <p>“I would say that they're probably part of the top three, top five [software publisher] subject matter experts in Canada. And if I want support, that's what I'm looking for – EU2-2.”</p> <p>“If you find those other resources then I'm going to question your ability, based on the size the organization, to continue the relationship. Because those smaller organizations, although they're local, they're very resource dependent – EU2-2.”</p> <p>So they're purely dependent on their ability to attract those technical subject matter experts and retain them – EU2-2</p>
<b>Effective Knowledge Transfer</b>	

PC1	SP→SR	<p>until the guy has worked with the manufacturer on at least two or three implementations he can't do one on his own – SR2</p> <p>we train our partners to quote and architect correctly – SP2</p> <p>All of our partners have access to all of our training at no charge. So they can send somebody to attend a training class at no charge because we want them to have that skill set. We do give them a number of white papers, documentation, sample statements of work. We give them all those most templates so that they can see the typical steps are tasks that are involved so they don't have to reinvent the wheel on the project – SP2-2</p> <p>our professional services team makes sure that they share all the documentation and make sure that documentation shared internally but also shared with our partners who do implementations for us - SP2-2</p>
	SR→SP	
PC2	EU→SP	
	SP→EU	<p>we might not have an SE that knows the product in which case we have to hire the software company to come in and do the installation. So they're expected to do full knowledge transfer during that time – SR2</p> <p>Sometimes the vendors come on-site and they sit down and they see. They want to understand what we're doing with their software. They want to know and then they want to sell us on new features, upgrades – EU2</p> <p>We also do probably quarterly updates with the customer where we basically talked about our technology you model numbers new software coming out new enhancements etc. and that is probably the most important thing to the customer – SP2</p>
PC3	EU→SR	
	SR→EU	<p>Everything they do is sit in the chair side-by-side. This is how you set up the volume, this is how do this, all the virtualization. It's knowledge transfer</p> <p>Knowledge sharing is important. That's why we have the relationship with the tech lead to consulting with us – EU2</p> <p>do you want to pay for us to come in again in another month or two when you have an issue or do you want us to show you how this whole thing works and runs – SR2</p>
<b>Building Effective Interorganizational Teams</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	usually there is a tie between the manufacturer and the partner and the partner usually does the whole stack
	SR→SP	<p>usually there is a tie between the manufacturer and the partner and the partner usually does the whole stack</p> <p>A value added reseller is something that takes the solution and involves us every step of the way those are the partners that I would like to work with – SP2</p> <p>the whole stack. That's where they really provide value to us – SP2</p>
PC2	EU→SP	

	SP→EU	<p>Also in our interaction with different key players in the industry as far as where they're going forward – SP2</p> <p>we get together as manufacturers. We'll all get together and we'll all talk to them about how it's a common message and how we're working together on the backend with research and development and engineering all working to make sure that all the parts work together – SP2</p> <p>Rarely is it just [us] on a customer site...so we do have to interact with other software publishers other hardware manufacturers to ensure the project is successful SP2-2</p> <p>we may compete with [software publisher] and [software publisher]and [software publisher]and others, but we also support one another SP2-2</p>
PC3	EU→SR	
	SR→EU	<p>They have to work with our team and that's the number one thing – EU2</p> <p>They all do the same thing. They all resell software, hardware, they all have pretty much the same volume discount. it's all about our relationship with the person how easy it is to work. - EU2</p> <p>That's why we work with that guy because he can work with the software vendors in the back and tell them you know this is a good customer. Don't screw around with them – EU2</p> <p>"They're the one that at the end of the day, they're going to build the relationship with the vendor - EU2-2."</p> <p>For me as a customer, it's very important to know that the reseller and the publisher have a good relationship because I'm not going to do business with the reseller if he's not trusted – EU2</p>
<b>Responsible and Innovative Attitude</b>		
PC2	EU→SP	
	SP→EU	<p>My involvement with the customer is understanding their business as far as it comes to IT to ensure that we are keeping up with their IT challenges and their concerns or where they want to go – SP2</p> <p>We can't guarantee that it's not going to break but we put in place the best practices to make sure that it gets replaced</p>
PC3	EU→SR	
	SR→EU	<p>I told him out right. Look I'm not going to make any money on this deal but you guys need some help in this and I know that if I treat you right you guys will keep doing business with me and it'll come around – SR2</p>
<b>Knowledge of Client's Language</b>		
PC2	EU→SP	
	SP→EU	<p>"it's our job to be in front of those clients making sure that we understand what the projects are that are at the top of their priority list – SP2-2."</p>
PC3	EU→SR	
	SR→EU	<p>that guy knew what I was looking for that he knew how I operated my business so I think he's made a difference – EU2-2</p>
<b>Clear Specifications</b>		

PC2	EU→SP	So we're making sure all the time that we're meeting the technology requirements and the business requirements and those translate into statements of work for an implementation SP2-2
	SP→EU	
PC3	EU→SR	We're not good with accurate project scoping we usually do one-page statement work you come in five days 10 days get the thing to work. It's very simple two three bullets – EU2
	SR→EU	
<b>Close Project Monitoring</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	project management all the way through from both sides is essential – SP2
	SR→SP	
PC2	EU→SP	from the customer's perspective, they right people at the right table at the right time. They handle all the downtime, discussions with the business or the person making that decision – SP2
	SP→EU	<p>"Everything is documented because downtime is something that can't happen – SP2."</p> <p>"So if there is a downtime that has to happen then we have to schedule it, allow the business to give us that opportunity to put new gear in etc – SP2."</p> <p>I say our side, as partner and manufacture, that person's responsible for... [finding] the key resource, bring that resource in at the proper time – SP2.</p> <p>there are regular meetings where we try and understand the projects and if they're doing it themselves that the projects are on track are successful – SP2-2</p> <p>a typical project where there's a product and the services there would be a project manager assigned - SP2-2</p>
PC3	EU→SR	
	SR→EU	<p>and then at one point we switched our project manager we hired our own to take control of the project – EU2</p> <p>We put together a statement of work as to what we would do with the project, 'You're going to receive a gear at this time the. rack and stack involved with it comes through [software publisher]], their services. Your [product] will come in and the [systems engineer] will come in over the period of 7 to 10 days to help configure the [software publisher's product]' – SR2</p>
<b>Dedicated Project Staffing</b>		

PC2	EU→SP	<p>It's easy to say. I want to on-site for five days for three weeks to get this done. But if on our side we need to have the same resources dedicated to work with them hand in hand. It's unrealistic – EU2</p> <p>They want someone on-site five days a week to do something specific and at the end of the work the project didn't get done and it's late and that's because the customer not the vendor. So you have to scope that properly – EU2</p> <p>So if we tell them that we need 5 to 6 days for something and they say okay come in on this day, don't change it a couple days before because we set aside the resources for that – SR2</p> <p>Every technology we have over here I've made sure that I have two resources that are basically trained and qualified to support the technology – EU2-2.</p> <p>“...the technical team understands the functionality that we can provide – SP2-2.”</p>
	SP→EU	
PC3	EU→SR	<p>It's easy to say. I want to on-site for five days for three weeks to get this done. But if on our side we need to have the same resources dedicated to work with them hand in hand. It's unrealistic – EU2</p> <p>They want someone on-site five days a week to do something specific and at the end of the work the project didn't get done and it's late and that's because the customer not the vendor. So you have to scope that properly – EU2</p> <p>So typically when we do one of those types of contracts, we don't have the consultant coming in five days a week. It's one or two a week and for a longer period of time because we know our resource can't handle it, there's no way – EU2</p>
	SR→EU	
<b>Knowledge Sharing</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	
	SR→SP	<p>That's just more for my sake so that they see that we've got the effort and if they ever come back and try to say, 'someone else said that they were in there working,' I now have an e-mail trail saying, 'look I told you guys that we were doing this stuff.' So it covers your ass and at the same time they've got something to tell their management – RS2</p> <p>keep them in the loop as far as closing time is concerned – RS2</p>
PC3	EU→SR	But they've got reason to, I don't know how to many others are doing 10 gig virtualize network supersonic, the techies want to go and play with it – EU2
	SR→EU	Knowledge sharing is important. That's why we have the relationship with the tech lead to consulting with us – EU2
<b>Project Ownership</b>		
PC2	EU→SP	We know who those people are and we continue to revalidate during the project with those people that we're on track, that it is what the business looking for, that the funding continues to remain available – SP2-2
	SP→EU	

PC3	EU→SR	They don't know what they're doing moving forward in which case if you can't tell me what your plan is for the next 8 to 12 months or what's happening in your environment, Why do I want to bother talking to you? – SR2
		you have to ask out right when you'd be purchasing it what is going to make the project go ahead and what is going to stop it? Is this just something that you're dreaming but you have no money? – SR2
	SR→EU	
<b>Do No Seek To Dominate Process</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	So that's another thing that I do that I think the channel partners enjoy. That I tell them when I'm going in and tell them why I'm going in with without them – SP2.
		I couldn't understand why the manufacture was going in to see the customer, but it's his customer too right? – SP2"
	SR→SP	
PC2	EU→SP	
	SP→EU	If they try to dominate us in any way we terminate I can't stand that – EU2
PC3	EU→SR	
	SR→EU	If they try to dominate us in any way we terminate I can't stand that – EU2
		We have our processes change configuration management. They have to work with us to follow the process that we have – EU2
<b>Professional Management and Business Expertise</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	So if I'm not viewed as best-of-breed, whether that's technology wise or the way I work with partners, then they'll probably bring in something else. So that's my job. 50% of the time, sell the customer. 50% of the time, sell the reseller – SP2."
	SR→SP	my reputation is so important to me and I know those technical people protect that reputation – SP2
PC2	EU→SP	
	SP→EU	So if I'm not viewed as best-of-breed, whether that's technology wise or the way I work with partners, then they'll probably bring in something else. So that's my job. 50% of the time, sell the customer. 50% of the time, sell the reseller – SP2."
PC3	EU→SR	

	<p>SR→EU</p> <p>Typically, the reseller we work with must have qualified engineering support so we deal with [reseller] because they have the best [software publisher] guy on staff. We used to deal with [reseller] because they had a good technical support guy and in the guy sales rep moved to [reseller] and I were dealing with [reseller], because those guys. So technical support defines which reseller we use – EU2</p> <p>they'll have their own sales and ideally technical resources who will help build the proof of concepts and go through the pilot and work with the client for a proof of performance – SP2-2</p> <p>We...had as a lunch and learn where they brought in all the network guys and the technical guys and they sat down with the SE and asked him, basically spending an hour and a half trying to stump him and that's when we won their respect. They said, 'okay you guys really know what you're talking about' - RS2</p> <p>There's a business side which is very dedicated to the customer follow-up, get back to them fast, etc. – SP2,"</p> <p>the second side has their technical folks; the people that do the implementations, the people that do professional services, the people that do the break fix, the people that do architecture. They have one of the best teams I've seen in the country and that's why I really enjoy working with them – SP2</p> <p>if my resources are not available I have to rely on my service provider to support me – EU2-2</p> <p>they'll have their own sales and ideally technical resources who will help build the proof of concepts and go through the pilot and work with the client for a proof of performance – SP2-2</p> <p>you don't have subject matter experts in every technology that's deployed. I would have to hire 50 resources...that's why I rely on those service providers – EU2-2</p>
<p><b>Help Establish an Open and Trusted Ecosystem</b></p>	
<p>PC1</p>	<p>SP→SR</p> <p>SR→SP</p> <p>"I'm expecting from them that if I support them hundred percent then they support me 100%... If I create that trusted relationship with them. I expect them not to bring in another manufacture – SP2"</p>
<p>PC2</p>	<p>EU→SP</p> <p>So what I'm expecting from the customer is saying, 'hey, here's where we're going, how do you align with where we're going?' and give us a shot at it - SP2</p> <p>I want them to be able to pick up this phone and for them to be able to pick up the phone and say hey let's move forward here's what we're thinking and what are your ideas –SP2</p> <p>I've had forums that I really enjoy where the customer will invite me in and say here's what we're trying to do his overthinking give us some feedback. Where you think we're wrong and let's have an open forum where everyone is allowed in and I like those because then we go and put together a solution – SP2</p> <p>If that person is very guarded... we just got to be bulletproof on a proposal – SP2</p> <p>SP→EU</p>

PC3	EU→SR	<p>I'm expecting that there'll be completely honest and open about what they need – SR2</p> <p>I'll ask them out right who else they're dealing with and really appreciate when they tell me – SR2</p> <p>This customer was good for not hiding the information – SR2</p> <p>Some clients will change configures over and over and over again just to see if you're being honest on pricing and then come back to the original and just buy the original and they burned through a ton of cycles – SR2</p> <p>they said they like dealing with us because we only have to provide one quote with our pricing which is usually the most fair where other companies, they will provide a quote that's high and then say oh I can do better and sharpen a pencil and then lower it lower and lower it – SR2</p> <p>We're not charging them to come in and put in a solution, but we damn well expect them to buy from us when it's done. If you do not buy it, that's one thing. But, if you buy from somebody else, it's kind of kicking you in the face – SR2</p>
	SR→EU	
Operational Facilitation		

PC1	SP→SR	<p>Systems engineers might call help desk about a question because of something not working the way this it should, but in two and a half years, I don't think I've ever involved the manufacture - SR2</p> <p>So technology support, roadmap discussions, anything that's coming up in the future that they need to be aware of. As far as technology, leadership, etc. We're involved in presentations, we're involved in pricing, we're involved in you name it and we're involved in it – SP2</p> <p>We also look at all the architectures and all of their quotes and all of their configurations – SP2</p> <p>So the architects would validate even prior to the purchaser or to the purchase of any software on the customer side – SP2-2</p> <p>we do everything we possibly can to ensure that the bill the materials and the configuration is correct, both from [reseller]'s perspective and from our perspective before it gets ordered because is difficult to make changes after the fact. So we measure three times and cut once – SP2</p> <p>at the backend what every software publisher will we do to protect the partner is give them what's called the deal registration and that really is to incent a partner to become an extension of our sales force. So they're there to work with our clients and build up to for us and then we agree ahead of time that we'll protect them - SP2-2</p> <p>So we do support them. We'll assist in initial presentation and demonstration piece. I do have technical resources who will help out with the demonstration, proof of concept – SP2-2</p> <p>And if they do build something into project plan. Here's some sample statements of work here's a sample configure guidelines. – SP2-2</p>	
	SR→SP		
	PC2	EU→SP	The statement of work will always have those assumptions and they are that we will have access to facilities to your resources SP2-2
		SP→EU	
	PC3	EU→SR	<p>there are situations where we get on site and the client needs to get another process or another server – SR2</p> <p>of course I have to provide enough lead time for them to provide a quotation, stuff like that – EU2-2</p>
		SR→EU	
<b>Prompt Payment</b>			
PC2	EU→SP	It's good practice to pay them on time to pay the support – EU2	
	SP→EU		
PC3	EU→SR	It's good practice to pay them on time to pay the support – EU2	
	SR→EU		

### Case 3

Table 8 - Psychological Contract Elements - Case 3

Obligation	Support
<b>Accurate Project Scoping</b>	
PC2	EU→SP
	SP→EU [The software publisher] is a small-company and to undertake a product of this magnitude I think was beyond their initial capacity – EU3
PC3	EU→SR
	SR→EU they are the architect of the solution so they are responsible for the overall design of the product of the solution – EU3  will be forthright and honest about the architecture of their solution so that we don't find some funny things downstream that were papered over – EU3  I told him I said no it's not acceptable to charge any costs related to [the functionality] slip end of discussion. That is part of your base product – EU3  . Now it's not that it was going to be a significant problem, but these cost a little bit of money and it causes delays because we have to put the paperwork for change requests to do one of these. So we tie up all kinds of people for absolutely nothing – EU3
<b>Taking Charge</b>	
<b>Clear Authority Structures</b>	
PC1	SP→SR
	SR→SP I have to admit that [Software Reseller] had a good handle on the suppliers in terms of protocol of communication – EU3
<b>Effective Human Capital Management</b>	
PC2	EU→SP
	SP→EU that's right, resource turnover – EU3
PC3	EU→SR
	SR→EU Now I have to say that [Software Reseller] has a good team good technical competent team, which is supported by the supplier of the solution – EU3  that's right, resource turnover – EU3  If something is not being done because they don't have people to do it... simple as that and so when you're stuck – EU3  that they will bring to the table appropriate skill sets – EU3
<b>Effective Knowledge Transfer</b>	
PC3	EU→SR
	SR→EU developing the training the training material, train the trainer that kind of stuff – EU3
<b>Building Effective Interorganizational Teams</b>	

PC3	EU→SR	So all of that is resources and consulting companies coming in from all over and sometimes you never met these people, but you have to form a team – EU3
	SR→EU	bringing these other players as major subs into a cohesive unit can be a challenge – EU3  I have to admit that [Software Reseller] had a good handle on the suppliers in terms of protocol of communication, but you know you can sense tension – EU3
<b>Responsible and Innovative Attitude</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	I think the client understands that the world has changed since they cut this deal – EU3
	SR→EU	The client is expecting that the vendor will put his best foot forward in a sincere way – EU3
<b>Knowledge of Client's Language</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	
	SR→EU	it's nice because if you been around the company for some time and everybody talks the same lingo – EU3
<b>Clear Specifications</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	there is a design phase that they have to go through – EU3  So in terms of delivering a solution. They have to have an understanding of the requirements – EU3  I think some the obligations we have are to make it clear to the vendor our expectations – EU3  I think one has to understand that when the requirements are done two or three years earlier, by the time you do a high level fit gap, by the time you get into the implemented solution. They're worlds apart – EU3
	SR→EU	
<b>Close Project Monitoring</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	Now things happen and one has to be reasonable about the whole thing because there are a lot of unforeseen events that happened – EU3
	SR→EU	...to have an understanding of the impact this is going to have on their project in terms of managing the project. So that's corporate planning, scheduling and execution of the various phases – EU3  our expectation that they're going to live within the budget that that they've been assigned and deliver within the timelines that we've agreed in order to execute the project – EU3  remember an instance where.... and this is where he gets a little bit infuriating because things are not documented correctly and you keep telling them that that's not documented correctly and they keep arguing yes yes this is what was said – EU3
<b>Dedicated Project Staffing</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	

	SR→EU	not all of the suppliers had the wherewithal and the horsepower to sustain the pressures of the project that would manifest themselves during a long-term project like this. This is not a five-month endeavor. There are hundreds of millions of dollars involved – EU3
<b>Knowledge Sharing</b>		
<b>Project Ownership</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	So you're the constant mode of re-conciliation negotiation of getting middle-management their senior management on side – EU3
	SR→EU	
<b>Do No Seek To Dominate Process</b>		
	EU→SP	
PC2	SP→EU	Now they're in the invaluable position of trying to deliver a solution against requirements. So have they tried to impose themselves impose a direction? Yes – EU3
		I would say organizations like Oracle are very, very large and sometimes they have you in a corner where the user of their solutions are stuck in the native price changes. The changes to the licenses – EU3
<b>Professional Management and Business Expertise</b>		
	EU→SR	
PC3	SR→EU	<p>number one they need to provide the necessary skill set so that they can effectively communicate support to the project if not the client – EU3</p> <p>the expertise of being an integrator to making sure that all the pieces fit together and meet the requirements – EU3</p> <p>from a knowledge perspective because [the technology] is a fairly focused marketplace and you need that [technology] expertise to be able to be effective. So, even at the programming level with the programmer. one has to understand these notions of [the technology] to be effective – EU3</p> <p>From a social perspective is that they will table best practices they will table the best available technology – EU3</p> <p>They also bring to the table a way of doing things a methodology a process approach that they can demonstrate that it is a workable – EU3</p>
<b>Operational Facilitation</b>		
<b>Prompt Payment</b>		
<b>Help establish an open and trusted ecosystem</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	So you have to put some reality into your discussion with the vendor so have to be at a frank and open discussion – EU3

SR→EU

It was also evident to us from an account side that there are weaknesses where they were trying to minimize them or paper over them – EU3

I think they were trying to minimize them to the extent they could but at some point you can hide everything – EU3

will be forthright and honest about the architecture of their solution so that we don't find some funny things downstream that were papered over – EU3

that they be done in a respectful and mutual manner even though everybody get stressed out. Everybody keeps their cool – EU3

they are doing it in good faith and respect and expected to be in good faith, but sometimes things are not always done in an honest fashion – EU3

Here's an instance where I found that [the reseller] was less than honest. they knew about it early on, but pretended that they didn't – EU3

## Case 4

Table 9 - Psychological Contract Elements - Case 4

Obligation		Support
<b>Accurate Project Scoping</b>		
PC2	EU→SP	
	SP→EU	they have an obligation to make sure that what they're providing does what it says it does and make sure that it does that very well – EU4
<b>Clear Authority Structures</b>		
PC2	EU→SP	
	SP→EU	You call in for support and they would say no that's not our thing. but the guy that I used to speak to says I have to talk to you because you bought them last week – EU4
<b>Clear Specifications</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	I need to make very clear what my expectations are not just expectations of them but expectations of the outcome – EU4
	SR→EU	
<b>Taking Charge</b>		
PC2	EU→SP	
	SP→EU	So I do have an expectation that they're going to standby the product Regardless of how bad a customer I am – EU4
PC3	EU→SR	
	SR→EU	It's not enough to just say you're sorry and that kind of sucks. Help me solve it – EU4  if they know that there is something that they can do that's going to make my life easier, somehow, I appreciate it when they took the time to communicate that – EU4
<b>Effective Human Capital Management</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	
	SR→EU	I preferred to manage with a team of highly capable generalist and then bring in specialists and dropping them in as needed – EU4  if they know what my goals are that I'm trying to reach, if I'm presenting them with that information ,I'm expecting that they're bringing their experience and specialization to the table and hopefully steering me in the right direction – EU4
<b>Effective Knowledge Transfer</b>		
PC2	EU→SP	
	SP→EU	the vendor can be a lot more strategic and say this is what we're working on now we just made improvements to this which I know you're looking at but had problems with – EU4
<b>Building Effective Interorganizational Teams</b>		

PC3	EU→SR	I always pushed for a kickoff meeting where are laying out timelines so that's not just me and the reseller but it's my team at the table and their team at the table. again very transparent – EU4
	SR→EU	Communication is key and again it's bidirectional – EU4
<b>Responsible and Innovative Attitude</b>		
PC2	EU→SP	
	SP→EU	it goes back again to share my goals. I expected that they're sharing and participating in helping me to achieve those – EU4
PC3	EU→SR	The best relationships that I have with resellers are the ones that I kept going back to because it is easiest to work through any issues during the contractual issues and everything else – EU4  There are situations where it's completely our fault, and we admitted it was our fault and then the onus is on us. But if it was a two way thing, then I expect that we'll share the pain of fixing it – EU4
	SR→EU	You didn't meet an expectation and then you didn't do very much to make me feel like I should be confident that you're running my project – EU4  it goes back again to share my goals. I expected that they're sharing and participating in helping me to achieve those – EU4
<b>Knowledge of Client's Language</b>		
<b>Clear Specifications</b>		
<b>Close Project Monitoring</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	I should be providing them with ongoing status updates and they should be providing them to me for a technical perspective and I should be providing them to them from an account management perspective – EU4
	SR→EU	I should be providing them with ongoing status updates and they should be providing them to me for a technical perspective and I should be providing them to them from an account management perspective – EU4  not hearing back from them regularly or as often as I expected – EU4  . I had called to their attention and when I did call to the attention they said we're sorry and here's this week's update and where I feel that kind of fell short was that I had an expectation and you didn't meet it and I brought it to your attention and your project manager didn't notice it and I had to bring it up, and I don't feel like they gave it enough attention they just didn't give it the importance it deserves – EU4
<b>Dedicated Project Staffing</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	So typically in the latter part of my career it hasn't been an issue as its well communicated with the staff, they've been part of the planning process – EU4
	SR→EU	
<b>Knowledge Sharing</b>		
<b>Project Ownership</b>		
PC2	EU→SP	

	SP→EU	they should be striving to be the best at whatever it is that they're doing and I want to see a degree of passion in what they're doing when I talk to them – EU4  they have an obligation to be passionate about what they're doing and specializing in it – EU4
PC3	EU→SR	I didn't attend all the meetings they were having but I went every once in a while to make sure that I was in the loop as to show my interest and support – EU4
	SR→EU	
<b>Do No Seek To Dominate Process</b>		
PC2	SP→EU	The vendor is always trying to go deeper and that always trying to help the reseller go deeper the trying to get a firmer foothold – EU4
<b>Professional Management and Business Expertise</b>		
PC2	EU→SP	
	SP→EU	the same sort of specialization that we are looking for from the reseller. I would expect from the publisher – EU4
PC3	EU→SR	
	SR→EU	I may have an idea in my head that's workable but not the best. they should be able to present that and say if you're trying to reach X you can get there by Y. But if we do Z that will go better – EU4  the value add that I expect from the specialization that I'm paying for, I'm coming to you because you can offer this experience that I don't have – EU4
<b>Help Establish an Open and Trusted Ecosystem</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	In order for that to happen they have to have my end goals. I can't just give them this piece. There has to be a degree of trust and openness and transparency – EU4  I prefer to have them go a little deeper and understand what my goals are, what I'm trying to achieve and foster those relationships and those relationships are hard to change – EU4
	SR→EU	It has to be both ways and continual throughout the lifecycle of the project, communication – EU4  so transparencies, communication, they have to have the knowledge and display a shared interest in reaching those goals together – EU4
<b>Operational Facilitation</b>		
PC2	EU→SP	Yes I suppose I have an obligation to be a good customer – EU4  a good consumer should do what they can to try and improve the product. It's to your own benefit – EU4
	SP→EU	
<b>Prompt Payment</b>		

## Case 5

Table 10 - Psychological Contract Elements - Case 5

Obligation	Support
<b>Accurate Project Scoping</b>	
PC1	SP→SR It's kind of what was really released at [the software publisher's conference]. We have a couple of senior architects that are very effective at doing this without disrespecting [the software publisher]...saying this is what was said but this is what it really does – SR5
	SR→SP
PC2	EU→SP
	SP→EU We do a lot of taking the shine off the announcement – SR5
PC3	EU→SR
	SR→EU We live and breathe this technology every day and sometimes you make an assumption on clients understanding and it's dangerous – SR5  not adequate communication at the end the day. Not adequately defining the expectations. There are probably a lot of catchphrases for it. Overselling – SR5  We do a lot of taking the shine off the announcement but still articulating the new value proposition. But the new value proposition within certain parameters, like it's not everything to everybody. if you have this already is not going to work. unless you're at this level are ready, It's not going to work – SR5  I lived through lots of days where I'm trying to make something exist that doesn't exist because the salesperson told them, read about it in a brochure, or promised them it was going happen – SR5  timelines for delivery capability of the technology suitability of the technology. Those are probably the biggest ones – SR5  So where we got off track is, often with our customers, We define the scope of work without knowing all of the things that they want – SR5
<b>Clear Authority Structures</b>	
PC1	SP→SR communicating to someone at [software publisher] isn't necessarily communicating to [software publisher]. – SR5
	SR→SP

PC3	EU→SR	<p>The people that we were talking to weren't the people that had the misunderstanding. So there's also a lack of clarity between the visionary who wanted this in place and their operational team or the transformation team that is going to make it happen – SR5</p> <p>The other place where goes off the rails little bit and I was a technical guy is when you get technical people together they tend to have... its more than a disregard for contracting. They just think we'll work it out between us and then they go down that path together and then change the time where they show up and change what they're going to do and change the scope of work amongst themselves and our guy isn't reporting up on our side and their guy isn't reporting up on their side. – SR5</p> <p>Sometimes we get this perception that if I tell someone in government. I've told the whole government – SR5</p>
	SR→EU	<p>the other place where goes off the rails little bit and I was a technical guy is when you get technical people together they tend to have... its more than a disregard for contracting.. they just think we'll work it out between us and then they go down that path together and then change the time where they show up and change what they're going to do and change the scope of work amongst themselves and our guy isn't reporting up on our side – SR5</p>
<b>Taking Charge</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	
	SR→SP	<p>The onus is more on us and allows us to represent ourselves as a more value partner so it's really when we communicate with the manufacturer in harder software in this case [software publisher] every implementation is an opportunity for us to market ourselves to them – SR5</p>
PC3	EU→SR	
	SR→EU	<p>and then you start the process of opening tickets troubleshooting with that manufacturer, troubleshooting with [the software publisher] – SR5</p> <p>Periodically there's some begging that occurs between the reseller and the manufacture when it's our own fault – SR5</p> <p>rather than 90 days before the renewal what we do is pull them six months before the renewal is due and start pinging them on, here's your renewal quote this is what you have to do to prepare your paperwork here's visibility of your assets. It really is a lifecycle asset management kind of service that we do – SR5</p>
<b>Effective Human Capital Management</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	<p>However when someone comes in to the project part way through, a new manager, A new overseer or project manager, that's more difficult to go back and justify the timelines the tasks where are you in the project – SR5</p>
	SR→EU	<p>So were on the contract where it's billable time and we try to maximize the resources. we try to keep them busy 70% of the time so I know already where most of our guys are going to be next Wednesday. Next Thursday – SR5</p>
<b>Effective Knowledge Transfer</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	<p>so they were actually a presenter of the original automated technology presentation – SR5</p>
	SR→SP	
<b>Building Effective Interorganizational Teams</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	

	SR→SP	as a small-company we have a reasonable but limited amount of experiences with the different types of infrastructure. when we hit a roadblock or a glitch, then we reach into our contacts...and they mine their database of similar scenarios to try and find a fix – SR5
PC3	EU→SR	
	SR→EU	and then you start the process of opening tickets troubleshooting with that manufacturer, troubleshooting with [the software publisher] – SR5  as a small-company we have a reasonable but limited amount of experiences with the different types of infrastructure. when we hit a roadblock or a glitch, then we reach into our contacts...and they mine their database of similar scenarios to try and find a fix – SR5
<b>Responsible and Innovative Attitude</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	there is, especially with software, a lot of flexibility in licensing when necessary to move the project forward. So what we found with [software publisher] and what was used to find with Microsoft is that if there was a misunderstanding of the feature or if that feature exists but that feature exists only at this level of licensing and that that wasn't communicated the software companies have more flexibility in terms of correcting misunderstandings from a licensing – SR5
	SR→SP	
PC2	EU→SP	
	SP→EU	there is, especially with software, a lot of flexibility in licensing when necessary to move the project forward. So what we found with [software publisher] and what was used to find with Microsoft is that if there was a misunderstanding of the feature or if that feature exists but that feature exists only at this level of licensing and that that wasn't communicated the software companies have more flexibility in terms of correcting misunderstandings from a licensing – SR5
PC3	EU→SR	
	SR→EU	in this case there was a sequence of ones where we got ourselves to the end of the contract, but not the end of the project and then we had to sit down and say what's reasonable for us to offer as extra time. lets identify what the delays were our we reasonably responsible for some of them, sure. So if we need 20 more days we'll take seven days off and will provide that out of our budget – SR5
<b>Knowledge of Client's Language</b>		
<b>Clear Specifications</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	It was a lack of understanding from some of the silos ...of what their infrastructure really was – SR5  So some of the contentions were misunderstanding of the terminology. Someone at the higher level within the client went to a presentation about the automated disaster recovery functionality of [the product] and that senior executive went back and said to the people, "This is what I want. buy [the product]" without really communicating their understanding of automated – SR5
	SR→EU	
<b>Close Project Monitoring</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	

	SR→SP	<p>So for this particular project because it has such a high level of visibility and scrutiny, we would communicate back to them every couple days. we set milestone meetings that they were openly invited to – SR5</p> <p>it's important for us to have milestone meetings where, even if it's not with the customer, that our sales team communicates to me and I communicate to their [the software publisher's] local lead – SR5</p>
PC3	EU→SR	
	SR→EU	<p>on a project of 200 working days for 4 or 5 resources you need the absolute tyrannical draconian oversight of a project manager who is relentless in their taskmaster verification role – SR5</p> <p>ITEX we do have a good tracking system where we bring in all the serial numbers of the licenses that we sell we map them to purchase orders – SR5</p> <p>rather than 90 days before the renewal, what we do is pull them six months before the renewal is due and start pinging them on, 'here's your renewal quote. this is what you have to do to prepare your paperwork. here's visibility of your assets.' It really is a lifecycle asset management kind of service that we do – SR5</p>
<b>Dedicated Project Staffing</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	<p>It was difficult to get all the stakeholders from storage and networking and servers and software and applications to the table at the same time – SR5</p> <p>So there are a number of times where we had meetings that were to review the connecting pieces of the architecture and only 3/5 of the groups that show up – SR5</p> <p>there's a point where when you've shown up three or four times on a billable day when you didn't take other contracts and you're only there for 7 min because you realize that after the meeting started that only 3/5 people are there. It becomes contentious because then you have to sit down and say I need to bill for this day and we're chewing into time to get this completed – SR5</p>
	SR→EU	
<b>Knowledge Sharing Project Ownership</b>		
PC3	EU→SR	This small project for the size of the project had a radically unrealistic visibility in the highest levels of the organization – SR5
	SR→EU	
<b>Do No Seek To Dominate Process</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	Manufacturers It's been a pretty constant battle to keep them out of taking opportunities direct – SR5
	SR→SP	
<b>Professional Management and Business Expertise</b>		

PC1	SP→SR	so [software publisher]'s role was politically to communicate up that yes the technology works. yes it works as stated. there's a misunderstanding of the statement and we'll continue to move along – SR5
		as a small-company we have a reasonable but limited amount of experiences with the different types of infrastructure. when we hit a roadblock or a glitch, then we reach into our contacts...and they mine their database of similar scenarios to try and find a fix – SR5
	SR→SP	
<b>Help Establish an Open and Trusted Ecosystem</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	
	SR→SP	Our communication with suppliers is constant – SR5
<b>Operational Facilitation</b>		
PC1	SP→SR	Inevitably, periodically we make mistakes and they are pretty supportive – SR5
		where I'll give [the software publisher] kudos is that they seem to work hard to put programs in place that allow a channel to find a place to define a value and to earn a reasonable return – SR5
		So their role is to put the notion of that brand forth with the most senior executives – SR5
	SR→SP	
<b>Prompt Payment</b>		

## Annex B – Participant Recruitment Letter (email)

Dear (ITAC)( CITPA),

I am an MSc candidate in Electronic Business Technologies, an interdisciplinary study in collaboration with the Telfer School of Management, the School of Information Technology and Engineering (SITE) and the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa, conducting a study entitled *Information Technology (IT) Projects – A Psychological Contract Perspective* under the supervision of Dr. Mignerat, Assistant Professor, Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa.

The purpose of this study is to uncover the perceived obligations which exist between software publishers, resellers and their customers in an IT project.

As a leading IT association in Canada, I would like to invite your members to participate in this study, the benefits of which will lend new insights into success factors for software IT projects. I've attached a letter of information (attachment) which provides potential candidates with the details of the study, as well as information on potential risks, expected benefits and confidentiality.

Interested candidates will be requested to propose a recent private sector IT project implemented by their organization. The project must be of moderate complexity, having had duration of 30-90 days. The project must have had direct involvement by the software publisher, the software publisher's reseller and the customer. The availability of the project lead from the software publisher, the reseller and the customer for a short interview

(approximately one hour) is a requirement for selection. Three such projects will be selected for the study.

Should a proposed project be selected for the study, the project lead from the software publisher, the reseller and the customer will be invited for a short interview (approximately one hour) to discuss the project and their expectations towards the other parties involved in the project. The meeting will be held at a time and place convenient for the participant between (date) and (date).

Candidates are requested to provide notice of their intent to participate and submit their cases to me no later than (Insert Date Here) by email.

Should potential candidates wish to inquire about the nature of the study or their participation, they may contact me at my coordinates below or may contact the Thesis Supervisor, Dr.Mignerat, Assistant Professor.

I look forward to working with your members to take a close look at perceived obligations between the parties of an IT project.

Regards,

Emilio Franco

Graduate Student

Telfer School of Management

## Annex C – Participant Information Letter

### IT Projects – A Psychological Contract Perspective

Emilio Franco  
Graduate Student  
Telfer School of Management

Muriel Mignerat  
Assistant Professor  
Telfer School of Management

**Invitation to Participate:** I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Emilio Franco.

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of the study is to uncover the perceived obligations which exist between software publishers, resellers and their customers in an IT project.

**Participation:** Your participation will consist of attending a single one hour interview session, during which you will be asked to describe your obligations towards the stakeholders in a software IT project. The interview will be tape-recorded.

**Risks:** There is no harm associated with participating in the non-participant field observation. It is your right to stop the non-participant field observation at any time. During the course of the interview you will be asked to talk about your experiences in a recent IT project. The interview process can sometimes be difficult but, as the researcher, I am assuring you that every effort will be made to make this a pleasurable experience as possible. If at any point during the interview you wish to take a break, you are free to do so. You may also stop participating in the interview at any time.

**Benefits:** You will receive no immediate benefits, but there is the potential for long term benefits since the study will help understand perceived obligations of IT project stakeholders towards each other. The research will help develop theory regarding this subject and provide new insights into success factors for software IT

**Confidentiality:** The information that you will share will remain strictly confidential. No information that can link you to this study will be retained.

**Anonymity:** Steps to protect your anonymity and confidentiality of your data will include the use of pseudonyms and leaving out any information that might directly identify you. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the data. Your identity or affiliation will not be revealed in the publication.

**Voluntary Participation:** You are under no obligation to participate and if you choose to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed.

**Your decision to participate or not will be kept confidential.**

**How does consent work for a study like this?**

Prior to the commencement of the interview, you will be requested to complete and sign the attached consent form.

**Questions:**

Emilio Franco

Graduate Student

Telfer School of Management

## Annex D – Participant Consent Form

### Consent Form

*(on University of Ottawa letterhead.)*

#### IT Projects– A Psychological Contract Perspective

Emilio Franco  
Graduate Student

**Telfer School of Management**

Muriel Mignerat  
Assistant Professor

**Telfer School of Management**

**Invitation to Participate:** You are invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Emilio Franco.

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of the study is to uncover the perceived obligations which exist between software publishers, resellers and their customers in an IT project.

**Participation:** My participation will consist of attending a single one hour interview session during which I will be asked to describe my obligations towards the stakeholders in an IT project. The session has been scheduled for *(place, date and time of session)*.

**Risks:** There are no risks associated with the study.

**Benefits:** My participation in this study will provide new insights into success factors for software IT projects and influence both supplier and customer best practices.

**Confidentiality and anonymity:** I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for purposes of this study and that my confidentiality will be protected.

**Anonymity** will be protected in the following manner. No personal identifying information will be recorded. All participants will be coded. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to data. The identity of the participants or their affiliation will not be revealed in the publication

**Conservation of data:** The interview transcripts and recordings will be kept in a secure manner. All physical copies of records will be stored in a locked office. All digital information (including audio recordings) will use encryption to safeguard the information.

**Voluntary Participation:** I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any

questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed.

**Acceptance:** I, (*Name of participant*), agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Emilio Franco of the faculty of graduate studies, which research is under the supervision of Professor Muriel Mignerat.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or his supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa.

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Annex E – Interview Guide

### Presentation of the Research

- Introduction of interviewer
- Explain the nature and goal of the research
- Assurance of anonymity of the interviewee

### Socio Demographic Questions

This socio demographic information is being collected solely for the purpose of data analysis in the context of this study. This data will be kept anonymous and strictly confidential.

Unless you explicitly allow us to do so, there will be no way to identify respondents.

1. Professional Background? Since? \_\_\_\_\_ (xxxx)
2. Place of employment? Since? \_\_\_\_\_ (xxxx)
3. Position(s) occupied? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Type of software implemented? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Duration of implementation? \_\_\_\_\_ (days)

### Initial Open-ended Questions

1. To begin with, could you describe software information system implementation?
2. Can you describe the different parties (organizations) involved in the implementation?
3. From your perspective, what are your obligations to party  $X_n$ ?
4. Similarly, what do you perceive to be the obligations of party  $X_n$  towards you?

**Prompts (used as needed to elicit additional insights)**

- Could you describe a critical incident in which you found it difficult to meet your obligations?
- Has the implementation been experienced similarly by the different stakeholder groups?
- Has your perception of the relationships in the implementation changed over time? In what way?
- Has the implementation impacted the way in which you will perceive future relationships with similar parties?
- How did the fulfilment of your perceived obligations affect the relationship?
- How did the non-fulfillment of your perceived obligations affect the relationship?

**Specific Prompts (used if interviewee has difficulty determining perceived obligations)**

- Do you believe the following are your obligations to the other parties?
  1. Clear Specifications
  2. Prompt Payment
  3. Close Project Monitoring
  4. Dedicated Project Staffing
  5. Knowledge Sharing

6. Project Ownership
  7. Do No Seek To Dominate Process
  8. Professional management and business expertise
  9. Help establish an open and trusted ecosystem
  10. Operational Facilitation
- Do you believe the following are obligations towards you by the other parties?
    1. Accurate project scoping
    2. Clear Authority Structures
    3. Taking Charge
    4. Effective Human Capital Management
    5. Effective Knowledge Transfer
    6. Building Effective Interorganizational Teams
    7. Responsible and Innovative Attitude
    8. Knowledge of Client's Language

### **Conclusion**

This concludes the questions that we have planned to ask you today. Before we finish,

1. Is there anything else that you feel is important to mention relative to the software implementation?
2. Is there anything else we did not raise that you think is relevant to mention in the context of this study?
3. Would you like to see the dissertation once it is finalized?
4. Do you know of someone who may be interested in participating in this study?

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