

OHPs	Points
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are client relationship skills and why are they increasing important for consulting actuaries?</li> <li>Here is a view from another context , search and selection, but the key aspects are transferable into any service consulting environment</li> <li>What is this client saying about their preferred client relationship</li> <li>The key aspects: small number of suppliers: relationship that goes beyond transactions: understanding who they are and how they like to do things: time</li> <li>In essence, a different type of relationship than purely the provision of technical advice</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>So what are client relationship skills</li> <li>At base level, technical expertise. Without that we will not get in the game. However, this is no longer sufficient for successful client relationships (if every it was!)</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What else do we need?</li> <li>Business skills: what do I mean by that?</li> <li>Whole range including formal communication skills (presentation, meetings, writing): Management (project, team, time): and Commercial (how businesses operate)</li> <li>Important but still not enough to really differentiate us as excellent client relationship consultants</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other element is personal. What I mean by that are things like: personal interaction skills (examples are high level of listening skills, empathy, and leadership). I will come back to these later, but no doubt all of you are aware that this is an aspect of actuarial consulting that is alluded to in the Morris Review</li> <li>Why are they so important?</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These are some of the reasons</li> <li>Some of the statistics in Morris Review underline these issues e.g. top 750 pensions schemes are advised by 25 firms, and top 100 schemes by 11 firms but biggest 4 firms have 74% of the market</li> <li>What differentiates firms? I would suggest not technical expertise since as I mentioned these are the price of entry to the game but real differentiator is the quality of consultants in terms of business management and personal skills and abilities</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This OHP summarises it succinctly</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does a firm develop these?</li> <li>I'd like to say it was rocket science but it isn't. Rather good , thoughtful attention to some of the most basic people management activities and systems</li> <li>To achieve the quality of client relationship consultants firms will increasingly need, the skills and qualities required should be the real building blocks of these activities</li> <li>The activities should sing from the same hymn sheet and be mutually reinforcing and consistent</li> <li>However, this is not always done or done as well as it could be</li> </ul>

9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In recruitment, look for broader client relationship related strengths in potential recruits, rather than a narrowish template of what a good technical person would be. In my experience, too much emphasis is given to the technical numerical, mathematical ability at the expense of some of the other qualities. Numerical ability is essential, of course, but technical expertise is not going to be enough and will just continue the issues identified by Morris</li> <li>• It might also be the case that to find these skills and qualities, your recruitment processes begin to look at sources beyond the traditional universities and courses?</li> </ul>
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What might these broad strengths be? Here are various examples</li> <li>• How many of your firms look for some or all of these in your graduate or later recruitment? Look seriously or see them as 'nice to have'?</li> <li>• Interestingly, the items marked with an asterisk are those that McKinsey's focus on in their graduate recruitment i.e. leadership, people interaction, group problem-solving and personal impact. I recognise that McKinsey have a different consulting focus to actuaries, but I think it is interesting that they do not major on technical ability. Rather their philosophy seems to be that their training and development of very high quality graduates will provide the technical expertise.</li> </ul>
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Morris Review mentioned on a number of occasions how essential communication skills were to successful consulting actuaries and also that it was an area where it perceived they could have been done better.</li> <li>• In response, many firms said that they recognised this as a source of competitive advantage</li> <li>• That sounds positive and that they are taking the recruitment and development of these skills seriously. I have a question for you on that?</li> </ul>
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much time does your firm invest in developing these communication skills compared to technical training?</li> <li>• Another question; how much of any training which is provided is focussed on the formal aspects of communication skills i.e. presentation, writing, chairing meetings? And how much is focused on the real relationship skills of interacting with clients and advanced personal skills. Back to our HR manager at the beginning who want consultants to understand him, his requirements and how he likes to do things</li> <li>• How can the training your firms achieve that?</li> </ul>
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By recognising two levels of communication skills</li> <li>• At the lower, communication skills level and at the higher, 'self-awareness' (for want of a better word) level</li> <li>• Understanding both your own personal interacting styles but also the range of styles other use.</li> <li>• Also understanding your own personal strengths and motivations and how these can differ from others. As part of that, understanding</li> </ul>

	<p>how to identify and clarify others' motivations through, for example interviewing and questioning techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finally, to understand the range of consulting tools and approaches available to you as client relationship, not simply technical consultants and how to use them in a client situation</li> </ul>
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Institute recognises this need to some extent in that it has introduced a business awareness module, but that can only go so far. The responsibility for developing client skills lies with individual firms not least from the angle of their own competitive advantage</li> <li>The ways to achieve this is by both structured learning through managed experience and feedback. By seriously building development of these high level client and communication skills into your training processes alongside training in technical expertise and professional qualifications. They should be an integral part at both pre- and post-qualification level.</li> </ul>
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples of what could be included are highlighted on this OHP</li> <li>One valuable side-benefit of this would be in the motivation of individuals to the firm. If they saw that you were taking their broader career development seriously rather than simply development of technical expertise then their commitment to the firm is likely to be higher</li> </ul>
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This leads me to the final part of the jigsaw for firms: retention</li> <li>Having gone to the trouble to recruit and train these client relationship skills, you need to make sure they stay and that you obtain the competitive benefit from them</li> <li>How do you do that?</li> <li>The keys to this are these three: by enabling them to obtain real experience in using the skills in client situations, even if there is a bit of a risk at times; by providing real client responsibility at early stages in their career and, linked to the first key, look for, create or encourage them to find opportunities for further development of these skills</li> </ul>
17, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finally, what about us as individuals. So far we have talked about firms' responsibility in building client relationship skills. But what about our responsibilities as individuals. How do we become great client relationship managers (with all that means for success in our careers)</li> <li>All the things mentioned in relation to training above. But in addition, we need to see our own careers as our 'property' and responsibility. Development of your client relationship skills and identifying our career path is down to you, taking full advantage of the training provided by your firm</li> </ul>
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How – by investing in yourself so that you can look the bank manager squarely in the eye and know that he would not be disappointed in your ability.</li> </ul>