

# Managing Effective Consultancy Relationships



Chartered Management Institute  
&  
Women In Management

Phoebe Dunn, Director, Square Peg International  
Thursday October 11<sup>th</sup> 2012

*“The consultant relationship is a two-way thing: both the client and the consultant have a responsibility to make it as effective as possible.”*

# Agenda

- 6.00pm Registration, drinks
- 6.30pm Introduction
- 6.35pm **Linky Trott, Partner, Edwin Coe LLP**  
Legal Aspects of Consultancy Relationships
- 6.45pm **Phoebe Dunn, Director, Square Peg**  
Managing Effective Consultancy Relationships
- 7.45pm Networking and meet the team
- 8.30pm Close

# Square Peg International

- A global boutique business consultancy. Since 2003 we have been helping leaders and organisations to manage transitions and deal with events that demand fast, effective change.
- We do that by finding the ‘sweet-spot’ between strategy, leadership, and people practices.
- Our clients include some of the world’s largest brands

*The Coca-Cola Company*

The **Mileage**  
company



 **BARCLAYS**

  
**ZURICH**<sup>®</sup>



  
**BACARDI**  
ESTD 1862  
**MARTINI**

**squarePEG**  
INTERNATIONAL

# Square Peg International

- We try to be ‘not your average consultants’
  - Real world pragmatism
  - Innovation & excellence coming as standard
  - Making things happen
  - A “no-bull” attitude
- 2009: IBC Consultancy of the Year u30 employees. Best International Project
- 2011: IC ‘Consultancy of the Year’
- 2012: Silver Medallists at the global Constantinus ICMCI Awards



**Managing  
Effective  
Consultancy  
Relationships**



# Managing Effective Relationships, What's in it for me?...

## ... the Clients

- Getting the job done
- Trusted pairs of hands
- Technical expertise
- External perspective
- Getting the job done

## ... the Consultants

- Profitable engagements
- Client knowledge
- Hitting the ground running
- Being 'in-play'
- Profitable engagements

# Two perspectives

## The Theory

- *The UK Institute of Consulting code of practice:*

*‘As a consultant and adviser I will put client interests first, doing whatever it takes to serve them to the highest possible standards at all times’*

## The Real-world

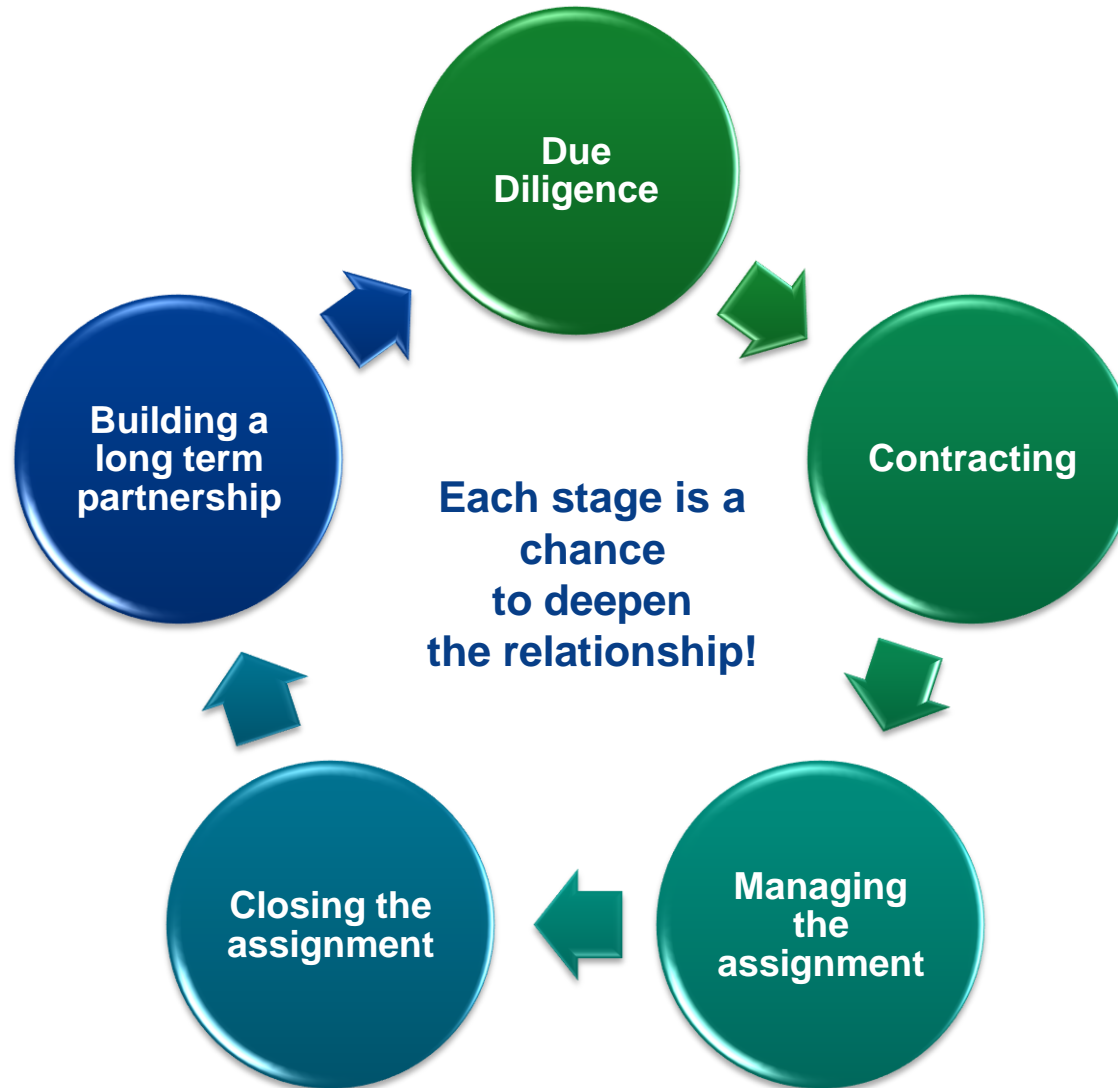
- *‘Bloody clients! Always making ridiculous demands and wanting everything yesterday!’*
- *‘Bloody consultants! Always borrowing your watch to tell you the time!’*

# The traditional/transactional deal



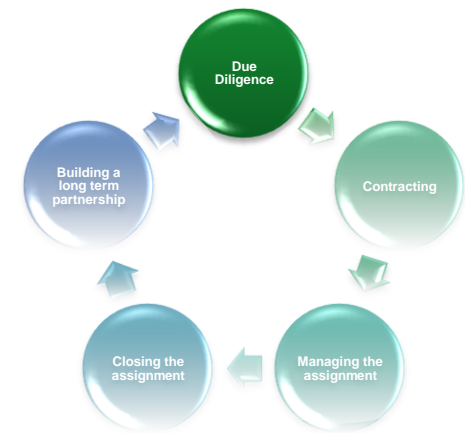


# The Partnership Life-Cycle



# Due Diligence

- The consultant passing the credibility check
  - Forbes March 2012: The ‘Only 3 interview questions’ apply here too :
    - Can you do the job?
    - Will you love the job?
    - And can we tolerate working with you?
  - In the client’s due diligence process the consultant needs to answer all three.
- Your website is a prospective client’s first port of call, but think broader - SEO, Google, published articles, Linked-in etc
  - IC Consultants Register, Preferred supplier lists
- Are you any good?! How can you prove it?
  - Qualifications & memberships
  - Awards
  - Case studies
- **REFERENCES!**



**Question:**  
***Does your web presence strengthen the new relationship by telling an authentic story about your existing client relationships?***

# Contracting

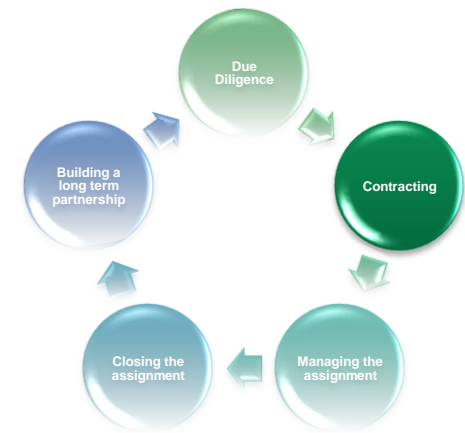
*'A good contract should not be under-estimated. It doesn't have to be complex, but the Schedule of work must be detailed so that there is a clear understanding on both sides of what's to be delivered.'*

*'It's worth taking extra time building the contract, because in the course of discussing the Schedule you'll learn a lot about your contractor and yourself, particularly in terms of managing expectations.'*

*'Make sure you have the right to ask for individual consultants to be replaced (or indeed retained). It's not unheard of for a consultancy to put in the A team to win the business and substitute with the B team for delivery.'*

*'Insist that the individual consultants are incentivised to deliver your required outcomes (not to generate more revenue from the engagement. (It's exceedingly tiresome and counter-productive to work with a consultancy team which is constantly trying to 'up-sell' you.'*

*'A good contract helps you retain a good contractor and depersonalises any problems that arise.'*



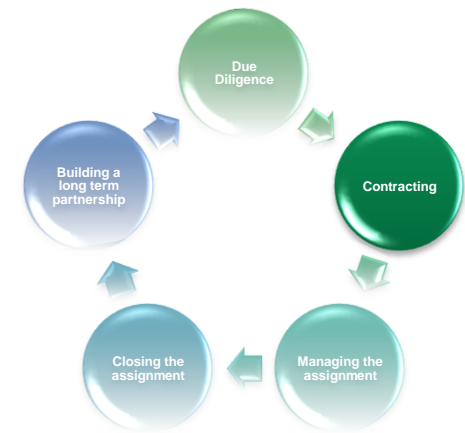
*'Ensure the contract clearly shows the outcomes you want.'*

*'If you want knowledge transfer, make sure it's written into the contract at the start - it can become a very expensive after thought.'*

*'Agree how the rates will be determined for extra work.'*

# Contracting

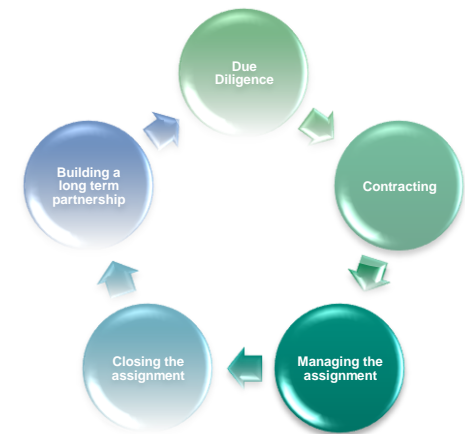
- Each new contract is yours to lose
- Spend the time to get a very clear understanding of what the client wants/needs – challenge is the heart of partnership
- Be clear:
  - Who will deliver
  - What they will deliver
  - When they will deliver it
  - How they will deliver it
- Spend the time to cover legal responsibilities:
  - Confidentiality and data protection
  - Intellectual property
  - Staff retention
  - Conflict of interest



**Question:**  
***Does your contracting strengthen the relationship by clearly reflecting and setting expectations?***

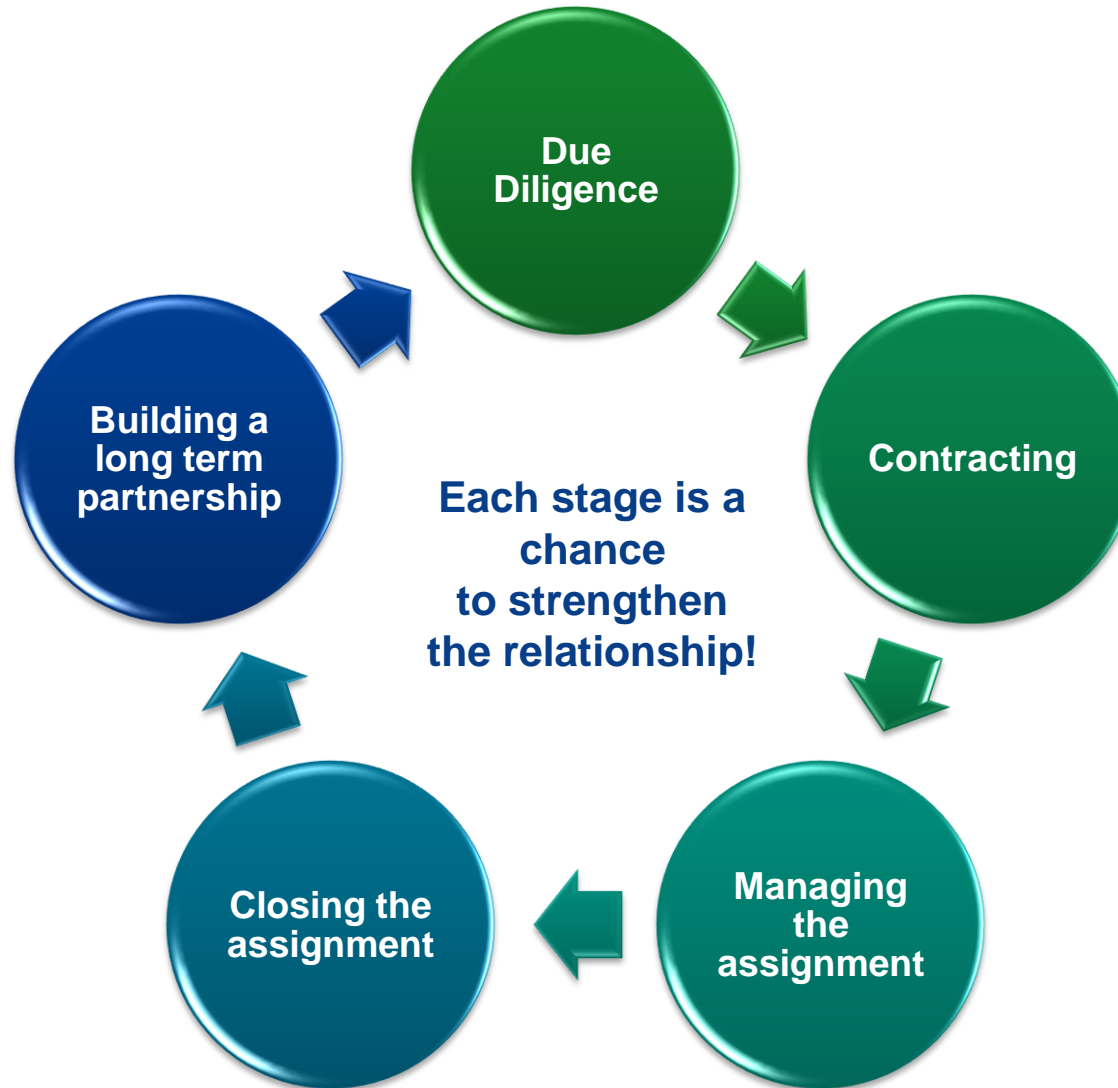
# Managing the assignment

- Whatever it takes – always deliver.
- Make the client look good - demonstrate *value* for money
- Plan the work and work the plan – milestones & deliverables
- Regular progress checks – *what* and *how*
- Be part of the solution
- Build trust with individuals – individuals hire consultants
  - Network – learn the business, join the dots
  - Socialise – keep it friendly but not familiar.  
The client does not want your tales of woe
  - NEVER bitch!
- No surprises



**Question:**  
***Does the way you manage your assignment strengthen the relationship by consistently reconfirming the purchase decision?***

# The Partnership Life-Cycle



# TABLE EXERCISE I

# Table Exercise (10 mins)

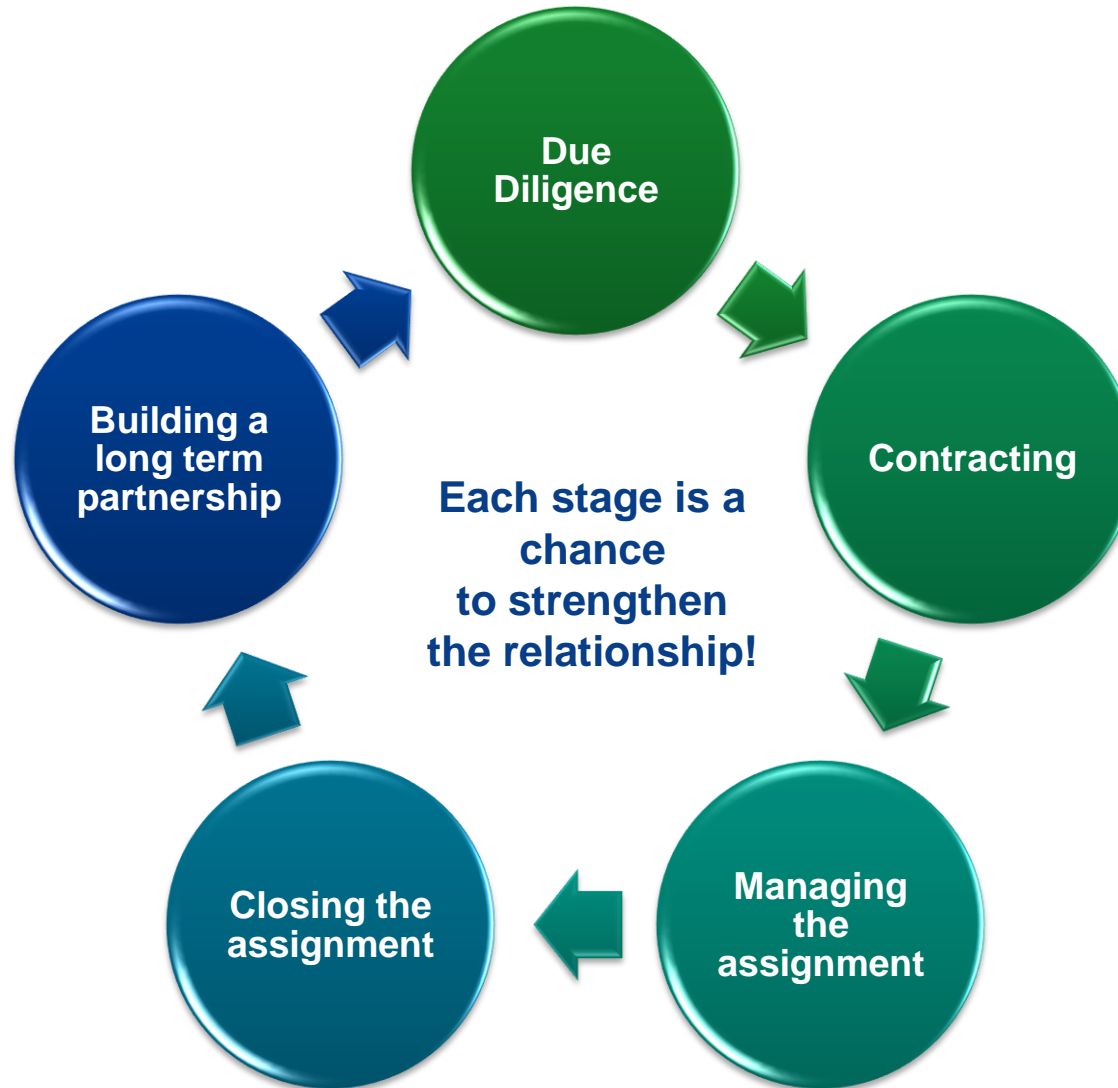
- Divide into groups with a mix of clients and consultants
- Spend 10 minutes talking through the first three stages of the partnership cycle. For each stage identify your top 3 dislikes.
  - Due diligence
  - Contracting
  - Managing the assignment
- What can we as clients and consultants do about them?
- Report back



# Table Exercise

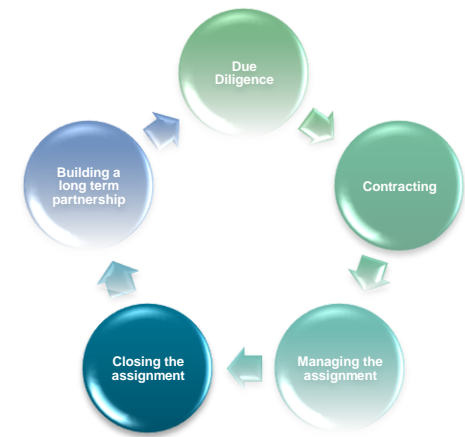
- Due diligence
- Contracting
- Managing the assignment

# The Partnership Life-Cycle



# Closing the assignment

- Wrap it up with a bow - provide a formal review meeting & report
- Be honest about what went well and 'less well'
- Tick off the deliverables
- Be explicit about the added value
- Invoicing
  - Bill transparently
  - Follow up personally
- Write up a case-study
- Request – and get – client references while your wonderful work is still fresh
- Ask for introductions
- Agree how you will stay in touch



# Closing the assignment

- Wrap it up with a bow - provide a formal review meeting & report, documentation etc
- Be honest about what went well and 'less well'
- Tick off the deliverables
- Be explicit about the added value
- Invoicing
  - Bill transparently
  - Follow up personally
- Write up a case-study
- Request – and get – client references while your wonderful work is still fresh
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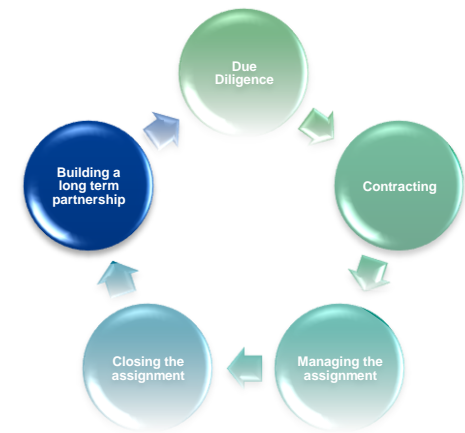


## **Question:**

***Does the way you wrap up your assignment strengthen the relationship by consistently reconfirming the purchase decision?***

# Building the long term partnership

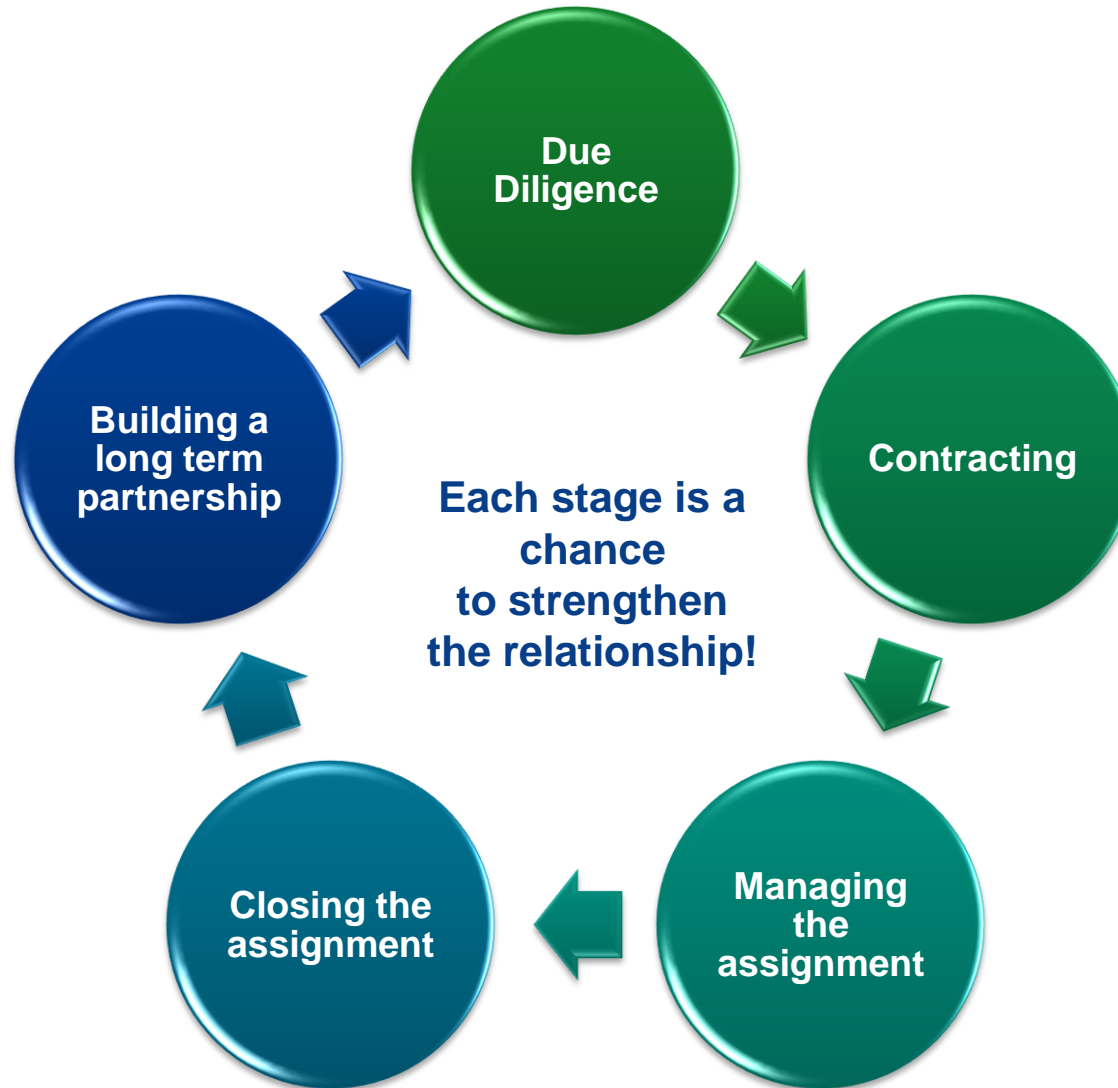
- True partnership – in it together even when apart
- Stay connected on terms that add value for both parties
- Be useful – something for nothing
  - Provide insights, articles, links etc that the client may not see
  - Demonstrate that you are staying close to their business
  - Make introductions – if you really believe they'll benefit your client
  - Prioritise requests for help – clients children
- Share your successes
- Reach out to offer support – sparingly. They should know where you are!



## Question:

***Does the way you build the long term relationship strengthen the partnership by giving the client something of value whilst keeping you in play?***

# The Partnership Life-Cycle



# TABLE EXERCISE II

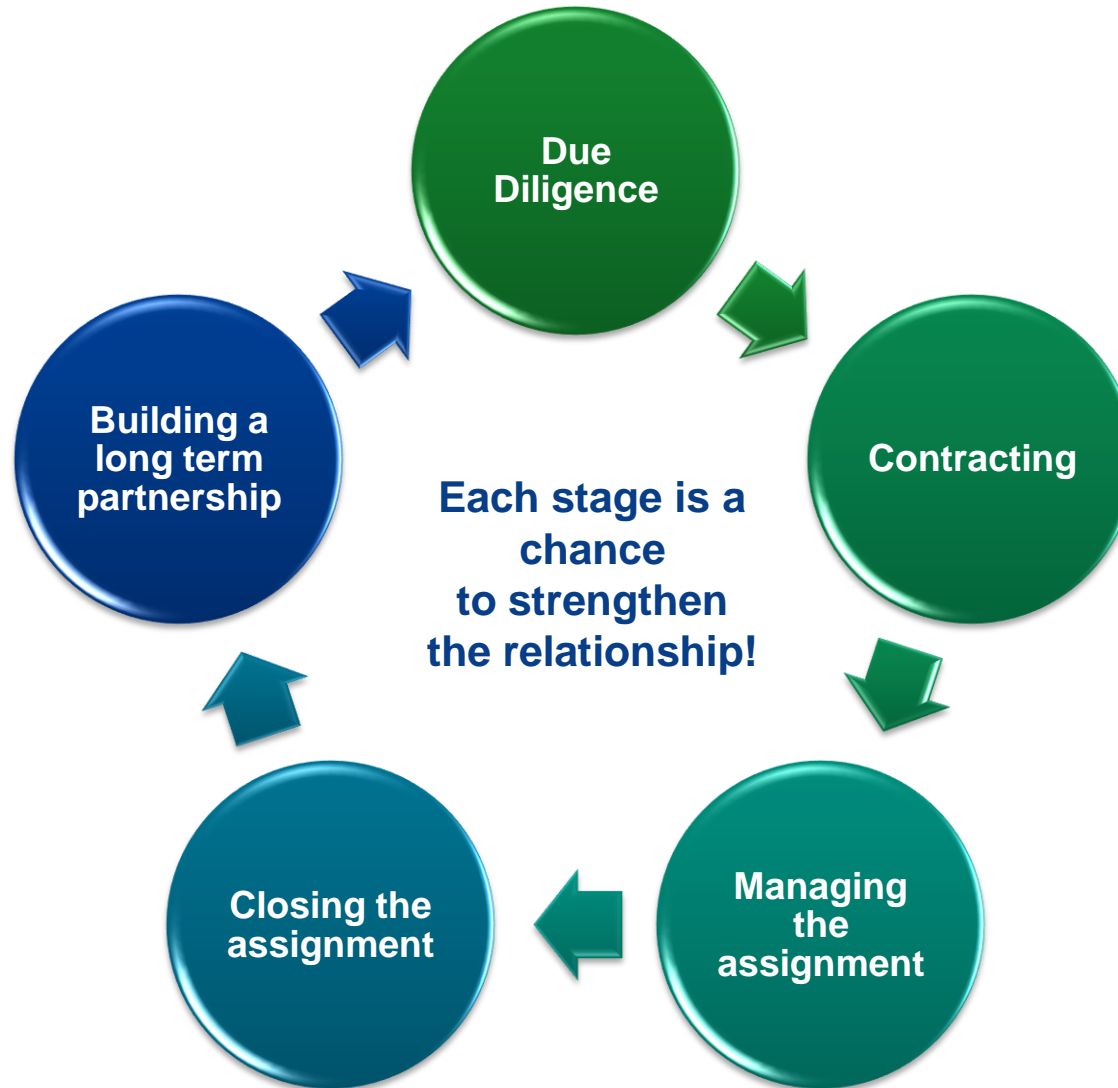
# Table Exercise

- Divide into groups with a mix of clients and consultants
- Spend 10 minutes talking through the final 2 stages of the partnership cycle. For each stage identify your top 3 dislikes:
  - Closing the assignment
  - Building a long term partnership
- What can we as clients and consultants do about them?
- Report back



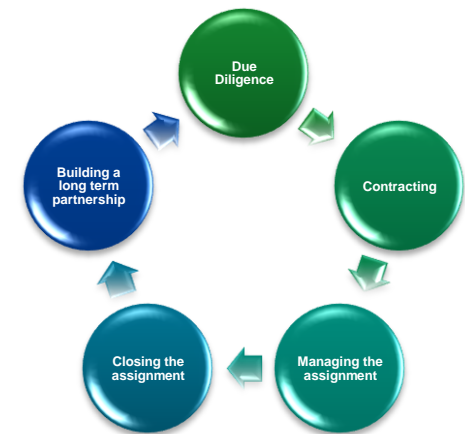
**SO WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?**

# The Partnership Life-Cycle



# Questions to ponder

- *Does your web presence strengthen the new relationship by telling an authentic story about your existing client relationships?*
- *Does your contracting strengthen the relationship by clearly reflecting and setting expectations?*
- *Does the way you manage your assignment strengthen the relationship by consistently reconfirming the purchase decision?*
- *Does the way wrap up your assignment strengthen the relationship by consistently reconfirming the purchase decision?*
- *Does the way you build the long term relationship strengthen the partnership by giving the client something of value whilst keeping you in play?*



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