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# Relationship building: A key driver for securing repeat business



**A study of consulting firm Celerant has found that relationship building is key to bringing in repeat business which accounts for up to 70 per cent of its revenues each year.**

The study of Celerant Consulting, conducted by INSEAD Professor of Organisational Behaviour Tom D'Aunno, also found that 91 per cent of clients surveyed would like to work with Celerant again.

“We see that there is interest in Celerant for repeat engagements, either because they want Celerant to perform their magic, if you will, in other parts of the company, or because they feel that they can still learn from the Celerant techniques.”



D'Aunno says that the major factor for clients deciding to re-hire Celerant is Closework, the 'same side of the desk working' approach on which Celerant prides itself. For the company, that means no barriers between its consultants and its clients.

“To put it simply, it’s about relationship building,” D’Aunno says. “Did Celerant consultants take time to educate people in the client company? Did they try to motivate them to do their best? Did they also try to understand what was motivating individuals in the client company? Did they spend time understanding what it is that these individuals and teams of people were doing within the company? And did they help these individuals reach their full potential?”

It’s both under these conditions, D’Aunno says, and as a result of the strong relationships built, that client companies choose to work with Celerant again.

## Using data to change behaviour

The *Financial Times* recently referred to Celerant as a consultancy that ‘focuses on operational transition, getting down to the nitty-gritty at all levels in a company and straightening out kinks in the linkages between top and bottom.’

D’Aunno notes two particular ways in which Celerant achieves this: “One of the things that Celerant is good at is helping to build teamwork within the client company which otherwise might be absent or at a low level.” Another is its ability to get managers in client companies to “use data to make decisions about how to improve their behaviour.”



High-profile Celerant clients include the Honda Formula 1 Racing Team, where consultants worked on changing its culture and processes to optimise Honda's investment in a 50 million dollar wind tunnel running 24 hours a day, seven days a week; and InBev, the world's leading global brewer by volume, where consultants worked with the client to optimise performance, reduce costs, share best practices and realise economies of scale across the 30 countries in which the brewer operates.

D'Aunno found that clients identified several key factors contributing to the success of projects on which Celerant worked:

1. The appropriate skill-sets of Celerant consultants
2. The ability of Celerant consultants to mobilise key individuals within the client company to support the change
3. Celerant's ability to respect the client's skills and involve the client as a partner in solving the problems identified
4. Flexibility on Celerant's part and the ability to make adjustments to its intervention, and ways of working with a client over the course of the project
5. Celerant's long-term planning for the client company to sustain results over time

D'Aunno says that not only does Celerant believe in the importance of focusing on organizational change, but also that "it's to Celerant's credit, that they deliver on these things, that they put these into practice and that the majority of clients are satisfied with the results that they deliver."

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Consulting and Coaching for Change

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