



## Project Divorces Having Trouble With Your Partner?

“Signed, sealed, delivered – I’m yours” sang Stevie Wonder and that suggests the beginning of a beautiful relationship.

If only that were true for customer and supplier relationships, whether in projects or longer term contractual connections. The “signed and sealed” seem relatively straightforward and mostly the contract sorts those things out. “Delivered” starts to show the cracks and “I’m yours” is probably the heart of the issue.

Of course a supplier who is, quite simply, not keeping to the conditions agreed in the contract deserves to lose the customer sooner or later – particularly if there is any hint that the promises made were only to get the signature. The gradual decay of care, attention and over the period of the relationship is more insidious and can lead to shock and surprise when the customer walks.



Elizabeth Taylor said “When the marriage is on the rocks the rocks are in the bed” – now without taking the analogy too far it’s about intimacy and the parallel is it’s often the most difficult thing to talk about – and paradoxically the least talked about issues tend to be the ones causing the biggest relationship problems. They’re both the symptom and cause of the breakdown.

The issue, then, is not so much what’s in the fine print of the contract but what the expectations or implied promises are ... and sometimes these are not those things which can be explained rationally, logically and in contract terms. The growing sense that a supplier isn’t that bothered about the business is not expressed in service delivery percentages but in how hard it becomes to do business with the suppliers’ staff, how sales staff only seem to call when their figures need a boost and the impression that you’re an inconvenience not a treasure. The final insult is the impersonal customer service survey which arrives in the email – conducted by a market research company. “Hello darling – I notice we haven’t been getting on too well recently so I’ve asked a relationship counsellor to send you a satisfaction survey...”

But how do you find out what’s really gnawing away at the customer’s sense of worth, value and importance before it’s too late? How do customers themselves surface and prioritise the core concerns? How do you work out what is important and urgent to fix if the relationship is to prosper and flourish?

A recent addition to the market place could help you do just that. PROMIS® (PROject Measurement and Improvement Service) is simple yet profound in its effect.

The service helps you hold meaningful conversations with your customer by finding out what’s really going on for them. To quote co-founder, Bill Fonvielle, “We bring the provider team together with the customer team (face to face!) in facilitated sessions to make the customer’s expectations of the working relationship explicit.”

Scary stuff? Not as scary as telling your boss the contract just disappeared and you don’t know why.

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE [www.PromisingOutcomes.com](http://www.PromisingOutcomes.com) FOR MORE INFORMATION**

