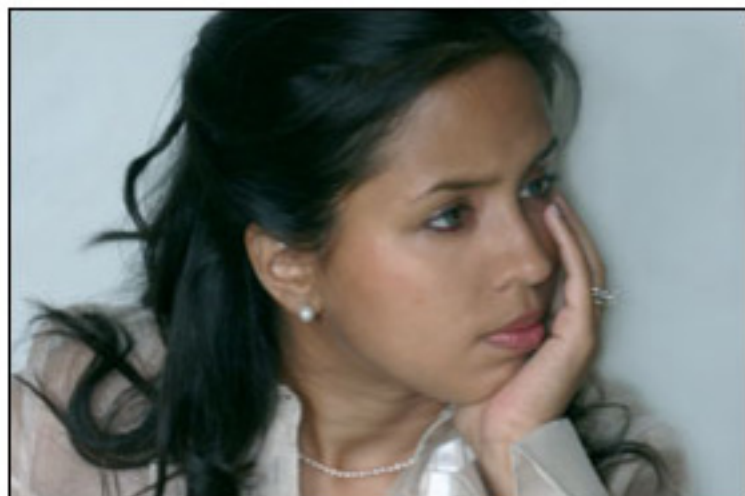


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Building a client base with the three Ts - tenacity, truth and trust

Rhea Duttgupta was on the road to becoming a partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers when she had one of those "now or never" moments - and decided to form Corporate DNA Consulting, a business that works with senior managers and directors to implement culture change and team-building within organisations.

In less than two years she has taken her London-based business from nothing to a £1.3m turnover boasting an array of blue-chip clients such as Unilever, EdF Energy, BP and Dubai Holding.

"Since starting my own business I have never had to make a sales presentation. My work comes mainly from word of mouth and recommendations," she says.

Her success, she says, is down to tenacity, truth and trust. "Some of my

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business relationships go back years, to before I joined PWC," says Duttagupta, 34. "It's important to build relationships, make connections and nurture them. That is key to success. Clients remember and value the smallest of gestures and favours."

Duttagupta was born in London but brought up in India before returning to the UK 10 years ago. "There were three people who have inspired me - my grandfather, mother and a former client. My grandfather told me to have a dream and follow your own path. Do something different but do it well."

"My mother told me just to do my best. Even now when I go into a boardroom I never think I must win the contract, I just think I want the client to feel he's had the best meeting of the day. It's such a simple principle but it never fails."

But the driving force that made the young, newly qualified MBA determined to cut it in a corporate boardroom was a put-down from an ex-client. "It was seven years ago. I walked into a boardroom, and this guy looks at me and says: 'What is a young thing like you doing in a boardroom?' I died. I was so hurt and crushed. But it made me want to become a really top notch boardroom consultant. That remark gave me the edge to prove myself."

To be successful, she says, you have to believe in yourself. "Don't wait for someone else to tell you that you are great at what you do. It's important not to crave external validation. Inner strength is important. If you have that conviction, and you are modest and kind, you will succeed. Be bold, take risks, do something different and stand out. But be yourself."

By Philip Smith

Rhea Duttagupta has just been nominated for the Women of the Future Awards – those who are tipped for the top. To hear more of her secrets of success, come to the Business Club half-day seminar on [Surviving the Recession in London](#) next Tuesday or [Manchester](#) on Thursday October 9.