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Action Plan to Improve Customer Relationship Management

Case: Siemens Healthcare

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<p>This thesis concentrates on improving product recognisability and most critical Customer Relationship Management issues in the case company. The case company seeks to clarify the product recognizability and the customers' knowledge of their product range in its whole diagnostic sector, and wanted to develop an action plan to improve them.</p> <p>To suggest improvements in these areas, this thesis investigates the current state of the product knowledge, and the customers' opinions as for how the company has succeeded in the most important CRM areas. The steps in research also included the inquiry about the customers' agenda, their needs and the way they work in this sector. Based on these findings, the thesis offers a proposal of an action plan how to improve the product recognizability and to address the challenges in the chosen CRM areas. This thesis is done following a case study approach and utilized qualitative research methods.</p> <p>As the data sources for the study, this thesis used, first of all, the findings obtained from the net survey from a selection of customers picked up from the company customer base. Simultaneously, the study searched for the best practises on the identified improvement topics from the research and business literature. Next, the data was collected from the theme interviews with the case company's key employees. These persons were interviewed to clarify the company's current state and to obtain information on how the processes are working in the case company compared to the findings from the best practises.</p> <p>The output of the thesis is the proposal of 14 steps to improve the chosen CRM areas and add products recognizability. The validation of the proposals was made by interviewing the representatives of the case company management. Most of the steps in the proposal were found good and would be taken into practice after further investigation.</p>	
Keywords	CRM, customer relationship management, product recognizability

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1 Introduction

The thesis investigates the knowledge of the case company's products by the customers in the field. It also studies how the case company manages in certain customer relationship areas, and how the customers would like the company to act to better meet their needs.

1.1 Case Company Background

The case company of this study supports healthcare professionals by providing medical technologies in a wide variety of areas, including both hardware and IT. Among them are innovative solutions to customize medicine and enable better differentiated diagnostics and more distinct therapy decisions. The case company is also famous for its advanced imaging, diagnostics, therapy, and healthcare IT solutions.

The case company has over 51,000 employees worldwide, and in the fiscal year 2011 it showed the revenue of 12.5 billion Euros and made profit of around 1.3 billion Euros. Its vision is to ensure the next generation of breakthroughs to become a reality. Beyond delivering the latest diagnostic and treatment technology, the company's commitment to its customers includes a wide support through close collaboration and close partnership. [1] The case company operates in several industry sectors, one of which is healthcare. This study analyses the company's operations in the healthcare sector in Finland.

Finnish public healthcare system makes a unique and comprehensive ecosystem. This system is formed by the primary healthcare and secondary care that includes central and university hospitals, as well as health-care centres. Health care in Finland makes a decentralized, three-level publicly funded health care system and a smaller private health care sector. Although small, the private sector has grown very aggressively over the recent years, and it is taking more significant role in the health care system. Administration wise, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has the highest decision in research areas, while the municipalities are responsible for providing health care to their residents.

For decades, health promotion, including prevention of diseases, has been the main focus of Finnish health care policies. This has resulted in the eradication of certain communicable diseases and overall improvement in the health of the population. The current challenges in the Finnish health care system are long waiting lists in ambulatory care; staff shortages in some municipalities; the increase in health care expenditures due to the aging of the population, and the increasing costs of health care technology. [2] For tackling these problems, the case company of this study serves 20 healthcare districts as its main customers including the central and university hospitals.

1.2 Objective and Outcome of the Study

This study investigates the customer relationship management in the case company's two healthcare business units in Finland. The first one is the laboratory diagnostic, a global leader in vitro diagnostics. It provides hospital, reference, physician office and laboratories settings with the vital information required to accurately diagnose treat and monitor patients. In this business unit, there are about 14,000 people employed globally, with about 30,000 customer sites in 120 countries.

The second unit is working in the imaging and therapy, and it is a market leader in healthcare imaging systems. This business unit covers a broad spectrum of the image-based diagnostics and therapy. Every year the imaging systems from the company are used in about one billion examinations around the world in the interventional imaging field. In this sector, there are over 30,000 employees in worldwide. [1]

These two business units have previously worked separately in the same customer sectors and are to be integrated in Finland. Due to the new market base and constantly increasing markets in Finland, the company seeks to clarify the product awareness in the customers' organisation structures. The need is to know where to put the marketing efforts in certain moments and with certain methods. The company would like to find out the special needs in the different organisation levels in the customers' organisations. For example, to investigate how the customers want to be contacted by the case company, and recognize other similar needs, including different expectations and wishes, depending on the position of the customer inside its organization. There is also a need on the case company's side to clarify certain CRM parts to learn where the company success and where to concentrate.

The objective of the thesis is to make the proposals for improving the case company's customer relationship management. The scope of the thesis is not to propose the changes to a whole customer relationship management strategy but to concentrate on certain topics chosen based on the current state analysis. The interesting issue is to clarify how the customers differ in their needs and opinions depending on their position in different organizational levels. The study focus to recognize how the clients like to be contacted and what are the differences in their values and needs of services that the case company can offer. Finally, the study attempted to stress the customers' awareness of the case company being the only supplier in Finland that can offer a whole pallet of offers in the diagnostic area, the imaging and laboratory, supported with advanced IT applications. This attempt, however, was limited by the fact that the customers, such as healthcare districts organizations, are too split at the moment to benefit from the wide range of possibilities that the case company can offer.

The outcome of the thesis is an action plan to improve the customer relationship management in the case company, in chosen focus areas. All the thesis activities in this thesis were done in the company's and its customers' environments.

This thesis is written in 7 Sections. Section 1 relates some basic information about the company and its business area. It also presents the business problem and objective of the study. Section 2 overviews the research approach, research design and data used in the thesis. Section 3 presents the results of the current state analysis. Section 4 discusses the best practices of customer relationship management. Section 5 describes the proposal building and presents the initial version of the Action Plan. Section 6 relates the results of the proposal validation with the case company management. Finally, Section 7 presents the summary, evaluation and practical implications of the study. It also discusses how reliability and validity issues were tackled in this thesis.

2 Research Approach

This Section describes the research methodology and research process applied in this study. It also discusses the selection of the research approach and presents the data collection and analysis methods.

2.1 Research Process in the Study

The research process started by identifying the business problem and scope of the project, which was done in a meeting with the company's General Manager and the sales and marketing managers. The target for the project was to investigate the current state of the company's customer field, limited to two different sales organisations and a certain product range. The initial input also defined the primary methods for conducting the study, namely the web based interviews to conduct the investigation. It was supposed that the product recognisability by the customers may be at an insufficient level, so that this topic was also added as one of the objectives for the study. Finally, such questions as the customers' future needs in the working environment; the expectancy of the product features; and the preferred marketing channels were added for further clarification. The SWOT analysis of the customer relations strengths and weaknesses was chosen as the method to investigate the current state in the case company, extended with some additional questions to gain a better view to some other areas of customer relationship management. After this clarification, the research problem and target was approved and the investigation started.

Next stage in the research process was data collection for the current state analysis. The data were collected by sending out the web-based interview form to about 700 case company's customers. The questions and the questionnaire technique were agreed with the company's representatives, as well as the interview targets from the customers' side. Based on that, the summary of the interview results was composed for the next steps in the current state analysis.

The full picture of the research process in this study is shown in Figure 1 on next page.

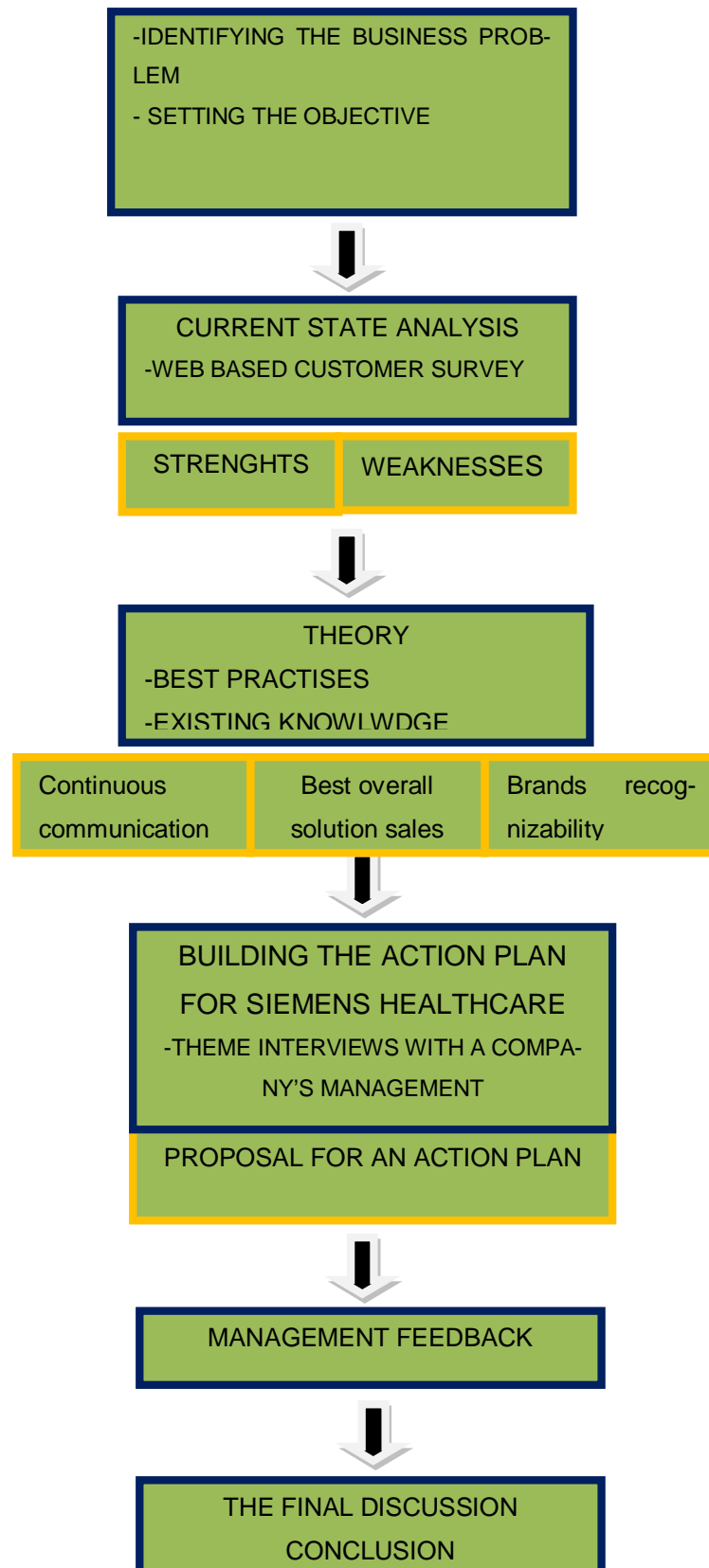


Figure 1. Research process in this study.

As seen from Figure 1, the problem identification and the current state analysis made the first stages in the research process. Then the data was analysed and the findings were identified, from the point of view of the strengths and weaknesses in the company's the current customer relationship management practices. Some weakest and most crucial customer relationship management elements were analysed separately, and the theory how to increase product recognisability was researched. After that the best practices in the targets area were discussed in the company theme interviews with the company's management and sales. Finally, the data obtained from the current state analysis, the literature and the company interview findings were merged to build an action plan with proposals for improvements.

At the final stage, the findings and the proposal were presented to the management of the company for validation. The target was to correct and develop fully or partly agreed proposals for the case company to be taken into practice.

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis Methods

The data for this study came from three main sources. The first one was the current state analysis and the second was data collected from literature and third one was the theme interviews.

The data of the study was collected from a wide range of *web-interviews* using a net tool to clarify the current state. The web-interviews included the questionnaire for a big number of the customers' representatives. The interview mails were sent out to hundreds of persons and the target was to have about 50 responses. The questionnaire included the e-letter with the introduction where the researcher introduced the purpose of the interview. The idea was to get the customers interested to answer the survey. The questionnaire included multiple choice questions. The goal of this questionnaire was to have the view of the company's product recognisability by the customers and get some idea of how the clients value the company as a business partner. The questionnaire did not include any open questions. The findings from the interviews were presented in words, following the qualitative analysis of the results.

The group of information ants was chosen based on the industry sector and the status of the person in the organisation. The target was to send out interview requests for the specialists such as radiologists, clinicians, laboratory specialists and the people who are working on the administrative level. The email addresses were collected from the company's records and the internet. Some of the target people were working in many places at the same time, so the data had to be clarified before sending the form out. Next the data from chosen improvement areas was researched from the literature.

To have practise data from company, theme interviews were conducted with some company representatives in marketing related working positions. The aim was to have some data how the clients and company are working on chosen improvement areas. The theme interview method offers more space for the interviewer and the interviewee to have more open discussion on the topic. The interviews were done in the Finnish language because all the interviewees were Finns. The records were then translated, and those can be found in the appendices.

After the improvement proposals were ready, the company representatives were validated in short interviews with the management on the sales and marketing organizations. The validation interviews started with a short description of the thesis, then the proposals were presented and the three target areas were discussed with the interviewees. Since sales and the marketing organisations are quite small, all sales and marketing managers and also some sales people were chosen for interviews. The interviewees shared the views on how they see the organisation is working and what are the targets and focuses. The sales account managers also discussed the views on how the improvement proposals could work in the real life in the customer field. The interviews gave ideas how to improve the working methods. The questions were sent to the interviewees beforehand to explain shortly what the findings were in the thesis and the improvement proposals for three targets.

3 Current State Analysis

This section presents the results of the current state analysis of how the case company manages in different sectors of customer relationship management, and shows the results of the customers' product recognisability. The results are described mostly in qualitative terms, without going deeply into statistics.

3.1 Web-based Interview

The goal of the web-based interviews was to have an overview of the customer field and to point out to the weaknesses in the selected areas of the case company's customer relationship management process. The first idea was to ask only the knowledge of products, but quite soon the goal became more accurate and some other questions were added to get the best outcome.

The first point was to clarify the respondents' position in the organisation. It was also needed to know if the respondent is working in the laboratory, radiology, researcher, or other department to have valid responses. Next was to clarify the title, in case the respondent is working in the administration. It was needed to know if the respondent is working in a private sector, healthcare district, university hospital, central hospital or another place. This information was added to separate the responses using tabulation in the Excel and also have a possibility to filter the responses in the web solution. The responses were separated and compared inside the same groups.

The first aim was to research the differences between the laboratory sector and the imaging sector customers. Next was to find out how the responses differ between administrator level and specialist level, with specialists such as clinician doctors and chemists.

The analysis started with the question how the respondents identify the company as a deliverer of products in different sectors such as imaging product, the laboratory product and healthcare IT product sectors. There was also question to clarify that the company is the only deliverer in Finland which provides all diagnostics fields' products and services for the whole healthcare sector.

Next the respondents were asked the knowledge of some brand names of the laboratory and imaging sector products. It was expected to see more detailed knowledge on the specialist group than administration respondents, but the idea was to clarify the knowledge about the products across the different sectors.

Then the respondents were asked questions about customer relationships. There were asked about the customer relationship in general, though there were many aspects that would be nice to know and be useful when doing the marketing plan proposal for the company. There were used in all the questions the evaluation scope from 4 to 10 (following the logic of the grade scale in Finnish primary school: 10-9 is excellent, 8 good, 7 satisfying, 6 fair, 5 passable, 4 fail).

Next the respondents were asked how the company behaves as a business associate and how the case company communicate in the marketing and customer care situations. The respondents were asked how easy is to do business and how accessible is the case company. The respondents were also asked how professionally the account managers act and how the case company manage in the sales period. The respondents were also asked how the customer feels that the company value them. It was also important to know how the company takes care of the customer's needs and how well it finds the best solutions for the customers' needs. At last, there were asked if the clients find the relationship reliable or not.

Next questions were how the case company success in different customer relationship's periods. The respondents were asked how they like the relationship when there are no purchases in the process. The respondents were also asked how well the case company manage in tender phases, and how the company behaves when succeed in tender phase and switches to the contract negotiation.

It was also of interest to ask how well the company manage is perceived by the customers in the delivery phase including room planning to turn over to the customer. It was also of interest to clarify how the company succeeds in after sales. Some application trainings are planned normally to have soon after the turn-over to the customer. As well as what is the best service for the customer in this phase and after-warranty time period.

The customers were also asked about the company's values. Conducting the operation in the ecological way plays a big role in the companies, especially when it is possible to make savings and benefits and supports economic growth. The case company, for example, has designed program Green+ Hospitals concept. It has addressed three success factors; ecological requirements, efficiency and quality. The first question related to this area was about the work environment and ecological values. The respondents were asked how they rate it on the scale 4-10. Next was asked how important is to find new improvements for patient care and technical improvements for technical efficiency and quality.

Next was asked about the value of the best technical solution for advanced healthcare such as the best assortment for imaging technology, laboratory technology, healthcare IT solutions, and integrate those. Then was asked how important it is for them to get tools for optimising workflow to make it easier to work and improve efficiency with technical solutions to get the most benefit of personnel, material and time. Was also decided to ask need to improve work processes and tools to become more economically effective. Then respondents were asked how they value the better energy saving of diagnostics equipment and reduced the wastes.

Usually customers like to know the future costs of the purchase. Therefore it was asked what would be the most valuable time period for them to be able to count that at the purchase time. It was also asked how far the clients would like to count the operating costs. Another interesting question was how important is the purchase price versus the estimated life cycle costs.

Customers' opinion was asked about certain delivered services of their point of view on the scale 4-10 and how company succeed with those. There was also asked how they value life cycle cost levelling solutions to fund purchases such as leasing, funding services, rent services and the usage compensation. Then was asked clients' opinion of the equipment and application training assortment such as on-line training, training in the hospital and training repertory in the company's training centre. The respondents were also asked the need for the accessory assortment from third party deliverers via the company. Then were asked how they grade of the project management role in the

delivery phase. It was also decided to ask clients opinion about technical services repertory and evaluate how the case company succeed in that important customer service sector. The respondents were also asked how important it is for them to be able to upgrade purchased unit.

Next the respondents were asked some questions about the marketing channels on the scale 4-10. The clients were asked the most preferred way to be contacted; if they prefer personal visits, phone contacts, e-mails, or they prefer to seek the information from the internet, social media; or to have information by letters or in the seminars and training events. In these questions the most interesting point was how the customers value the social media as marketing channel, such as Facebook and Twitter. This information is needed to plan the use of the correct channels for marketing. Then the respondents were asked questions about the theme days of the equipment supplier, and how important it is to have theme days and seminars about Computed Tomography, MR imaging and laboratory sector lecturers, product instructions and seminars.

The sales organization has account managers supported by product specialists and reporting to customer and marketing management, and above is the general manager. In the survey the clients were asked what would be the most valuable contact person from the customers' side and how often they like to be contacted.

In Appendix 1, some sections of the questionnaire are presented (in Finnish). The full forms are available when asked from the researcher.

3.2 Results of the Web-based Interviews

Totally about 500 e-mails were sent out to the customers with the covering letter. There came about 80 out-of-office and not-able-to-deliver messages. Out of 500 web-interviews sent to the customers, 132 persons responded to the questionnaire. Thus, the response ratio amounted to 26%. The structure of the responses is presented in Figure 2.

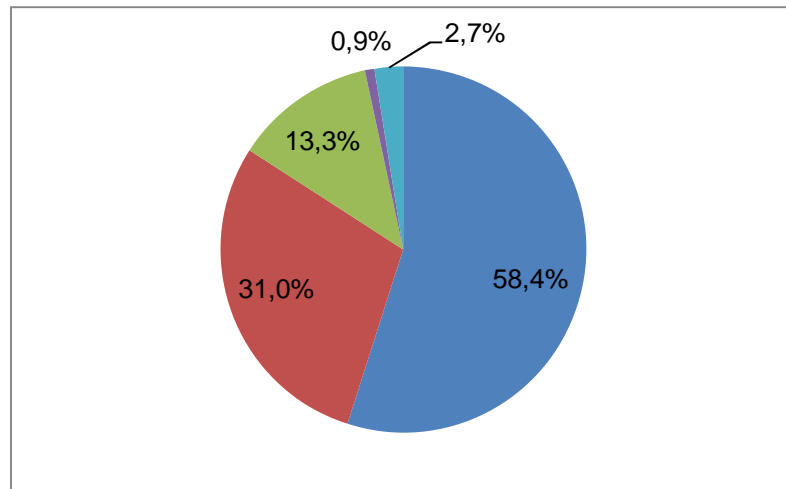


Figure 2. The response structure of web-interviews.

Figure 2 show of which 50,8% came from laboratory and 26,8% from imaging customers. The administrators sent 11,5% and procurement 11,5% of total responses the administrators amounted to 13,3% and procurement to 0,9% of total responses. 2,7% were from customers in other departments.

Figure 3 below show the distribution of responses according to the working unit or the working area of the respondents.

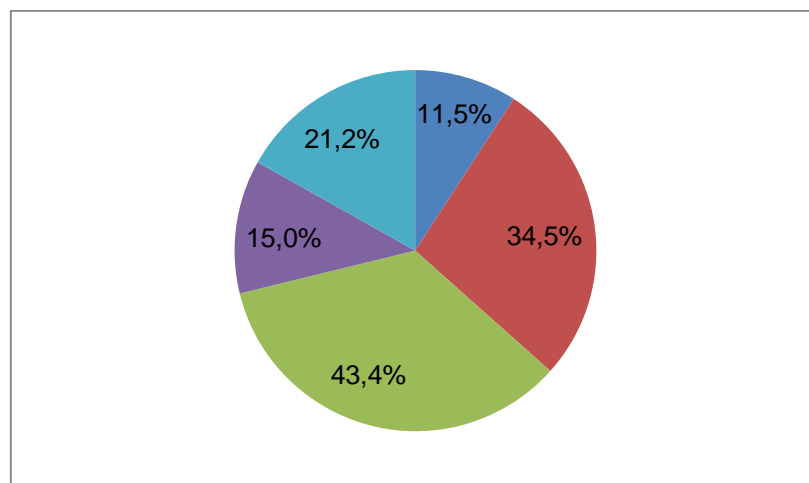


Figure 3. Respondents' working areas in web-interviews.

Figure 3 shows 43,4% of responses came from University hospitals, 34,5% from healthcare districts, 15% from central hospitals and 11,5% from private clinics. The responses were sorted out into three sectors: imaging, laboratory and management. The Survey Monkey program was used for the analysis of the questionnaire.

The aim of the customer survey was to have data for the current state analysis. The aim was also to find things where the company succeeds, but especially the customer relationship management parts were concentrated on to find the improvement areas. All questions were evaluated on the scale from 4 to 10, and the target was to find the responses with the lowest grades 4 to 6, and compare them to the high-end grades like 9 or 10. The major part of the answer grades were in 7 or 8. The need was to find the calculation method to separate the responses with the lowest scores from the other responses, and it was decided to use the Net Promoter Score. The idea came from the case company's representative. The company has found the NPS useful in their own customer surveys. The idea was not to compare the thesis results to the company's the previous surveys results, but to calculate them separately. The explanation of the method and the practical examples are shown in the section below.

3.2.1 NPS (Net Promoter Score)

Fred Reichheld introduced NPS in 2003 NPS as a customer loyalty metric [3, p.1]. Net Promoter score measures the loyalty that exists between providers and consumers. NPS is based on the idea that customers are segmented into three groups. Promoters are the fans of the services and products and giving the grades of 9 and 10. The second group is passives that have bought products but might obtain the same product from competitors next time. They are giving the grades of 7 and 8. Detractors are the customers who are unhappy for services and products for some reason.

To count NPS, the total number of detractors is deducted from the number of promoters. For example, if there are 100 total responses and the result shows that 65 customers are happy with some service and they gave grades as 9 and 10, they are promoters. Then of the 100 customers, 17 are giving the grades 7 and 8 and are not part of the equation. The remaining 18 customers are detractors. That group has bought the company's product but may nevertheless buy again and do not recommend product for

no-one. In the example, the total number of 100 makes the example more clearly in the percentage. The idea is then count promoters minus detractors and the result is the Net Promoter Score. $65 - 18 = 47\%$. NPS can be as low as -100 when everybody is a detractor or as high as $+100$ if everybody is a promoter. That kind of result is not unlikely. If you got positive NPS, it is felt to be good and an NPS of $+50$ is excellent.

In this study, NPS was used for the questions where the customers were asked about their opinions of the company's services and success in customer relationship areas. It was a tool for find the well-done and unsatisfactory areas out of all the responses that were in certain number on the scale from 4 to 10. Table 1 below shows the example how the NPS was analyzed in this study.

Table1. *Example of the NPS calculation.*

	LAB	IMAGING	ADMIN	TOTAL	ANSW	%	% OF GROUP	lab	img	admin
Customer Relationship in generally										
10	3	1	0		4	4,347826		29,41176	32,25806	25
9	14	10	3		27	29,34783	33,69565217			
8	26	16	6		48	52,17391				
7	6	3	3		12	13,04348				
6	0	0	0		0	0				
5	2	1	0		3	3,26087				
4	0	0	0		0	0	3,260869565			
	51	31	12	92						

Table 1 shows the responses to the question regarding customer relationship in general. It shows that most of the responses are in numbers 8, 9 or 10. The promoters responded 9 or 10, and made 33,7% of the total number of responses. Only 3,2% of the total responses were numbers 4, 5 or 6. Those were counted as detractors. The NPS for laboratory clients was 29,4%; for the imaging sector clients 32,3%, and for the administrator clients the NPS was 25%. Table 2 shows a second example where the respondents were asked how the case company can find the best overall solutions for the clients.

Table 2. *Second example of the NPS calculation.*

	LAB	IMAGING	ADMIN	TOTAL	ANSW	%	% OF GROUP	lab	img	admin
How well the company finds the best overall solutions for you?										
10	4	1	0		5	5,617978		16,32653	32,25806	9,090909
9	10	11	2		23	25,8427	31,46067416			
8	21	11	4		36	40,44944				
7	8	6	4		18	20,22472				
6	4	1	1		6	6,741573				
5	1	1	0		2	2,247191				
4	1	0	0		1	1,123596	10,11235955			
	49	31	11	89						

As seen from Table 2, the responses were somewhat down in their evaluations comparing to the previous example. 10,1% of the total responses were detractors which scored 4, 5 or 6. In Table 2, NPS numbers are shown on the right side. The responses differed so that the laboratory clients' NPS scored 16,3%; the imaging clients' NPS scored 32,3%, and the administrator clients' NPS showed 9,1%. The second area would need more focus and efforts to be improved comparing to the first one because the NPS numbers were less there. The net promoter score was counted in the same way for each question and for each answer group; and the improvement areas were chosen based on these results.

3.2.2 Analysis of the Results

One of the aims was to find out differences between the response groups. When analysing the whole group regarding the question about the recognition of the case company as a healthcare imaging system supplier, the responses show twofold results. 26% of the responses showed that the company is not known as an image system supplier and 19% indicated that they knew that very well. In the Administrator's group, the average response was 7 indicating that the imaging sector is rather known. In the laboratory sector, the average was 4 indicating that the imaging sector is unknown for them. In the major group of respondents belonging to the imaging sector, the respondents know the company's products well. Such responses were expected as this group works closely with many imaging products that the company delivers. The average response indicated, however, that the company's IT products are rather known. 24 % of the total respondents answered that the company's IT products are unknown to them. The imaging departments' clients knew them better than other respondents. That was expected as the group is using the company's IT applications in their everyday work.

When asked whether the company is known as a laboratory equipment supplier, the respondents had more middling responses. The major part of the respondents knew the laboratory products rather well. Almost 16 % answered that they knew those equipments well. Only 12,7% of respondents indicated they rather know these products. Most of the respondents come from the laboratory sector, which explains for the result. However, 17,5% of the clients indicated that the company's lab products are unknown to them. The knowledge in the administrator group was also twofold. Most of

the group has responded number 4 as unknown but still almost the same number knows products well. The laboratory products were almost unknown in the imaging clients' group. That was expected since they are working in totally different sectors and not using these products.

When asked, if people know that the company is the only supplier that delivers the whole healthcare sector diagnostics services in Finnish markets, the most have responded as "fair" or 6. In the laboratory, the responses of imaging and administrator groups were number 4, which correspond to unknown.

3.2.3 Recognition of Brands

The responses were predictable when asked the recognisability of product names. The laboratory specialists knew the company's laboratory brands, and the radiology department clients knew the imaging brand. In the administrators' group there were some brands that were better known than the others. For example, the most sold brands were as well the most familiar to the respondents. The best known products in the imaging product group were MRI scanners, CT scanners and ultrasound scanners. In the laboratory products, the most recognisable were the ADVIA analyser, Immulite, CLINITEC and RapidLab/RapidPoint.

3.2.4 Success in Customer Management Segments

The average response value was "good" for the customer relationship questions. 33,6% of the total ratings were "excellent". The result was better from the laboratory and imaging specialist clients, than from the administrator clients. The promoters were 29% from the laboratory, 32% from imaging and 25% from the administrator clients. For the question about the company's behaviour as a business associate, the result was quite similar to the previous question. 30% of the total results were located between 9 and 10. When calculating Net Promoter Scores, the results would mean the value of 24 from the laboratory clients, 33 from the imaging clients and 25 from administrator clients.

The communication in the marketing and customer care clients gave somewhat higher grades. The mean result was 9 in the laboratory and administrator sectors and 8 in the imaging sector. 45% of the respondents answered as “known” and “well known”. The NPS were 52 from the laboratory customers, 22 from the imaging customers and 36 from the administrators’ side. The results indicated that the imaging sector has more to improve when comparing with the other two groups.

The responses to the question about the easiness to do business with the company, and how the clients feel its accessibility, the average score was 8. The laboratory clients gave the average score of 9. Totally 43,8 % gave the high grades. The net promoter scores were 46 from the laboratory clients, 25 from the imaging clients, and 27 from the administrator clients. The responses to how the case company manage in the sales phase and how professionals the account managers are on the mode was again 8 in total. The laboratory and imaging customers gave the score of 8 but the administrator clients mean result was 7. 37,9% grades were either “very good” or “excellent”. Net promoter scores were 31 from the laboratory clients, 39 from the imaging clients and 27 from the administrator clients.

The question of how do the customers think that the company values them gave more interesting results, because the response rate differed between the administration and the specialists groups. In the imaging and laboratory fields, the result was 9, but in the administrator group the score was 7. Still in the administrator group all the responses were between 7 and 9. Totally 48% of the respondents gave the high grades. Net promoter scores were 47 from the laboratory specialists, 45 from the imaging specialists and 36 from the administrators. The mean result was 8, and 35,2% gave the grade “excellent” to the question how the company takes care of the customers’ needs. The NPS were 33 from the laboratory clients, 26 from the imaging clients and 18 from the administrator clients. To the question how well the company manages find the best solutions for the customer’s needs the mean result was 8, and the imaging sector clients were the most satisfied. The total 31% of the respondents gave the grade “excellent”. The mean result was “good” to the question on relationship reliability. 46,7% gave the grade “excellent”. NPS’s were 38 from the laboratory clients, 45 from the imaging clients and 55 from the administrator clients.

3.2.5 Success in Relationship in Certain Periods

The average score was 8 to the question how the company succeeded in the customer relationship when there is not a current purchase procedure with the customer. 30% of the whole group answered “excellent”. The NPS were 24 from the laboratory clients, 19 from the imaging clients and 18 from the administrator clients. The imaging sector clients also valued the company’s success in the tender phase as “excellent”.

The laboratory clients responded with the mean result of “well”. Totally 46,4% gave the grade “excellent”. The results show that in this part the case company is doing well. The net promoter scores were 38 from the laboratory clients, 51 from the imaging clients and 27 from the administrator clients.

In contract negotiations, the case company managed also well. 40,9% gave the excellent grades and the mean result was 8 in every sector. NPS was 37 from the target company laboratory clients, 42 from the target company imaging clients and 18 from the target company administrator clients. The company also scored well in the product delivery projects. The mean result was “excellent”. The mean result was 9 and totally 51,2% rated the company as “excellent”. The best mean rate came from the imaging sector clients. The NPS was 40 from the laboratory clients, 64 from the imaging clients and 27 from the administrator clients. The after-sales and customer care operations got the average mode as “good”. It is worth to mention that 41,3% of the total answer value the company as “excellent” in this field. The net promoter scores were 37 from the laboratory clients, 45 from the imaging clients and 36 from the administrator clients.

3.2.6 Customer Values

The mean results was 8 to the question of how the customers value the ecological working environment. It was interesting that there were a few respondents who used the scores below 7 rating the questions as not that prominent. The results are shown in Figure 4 on next page.

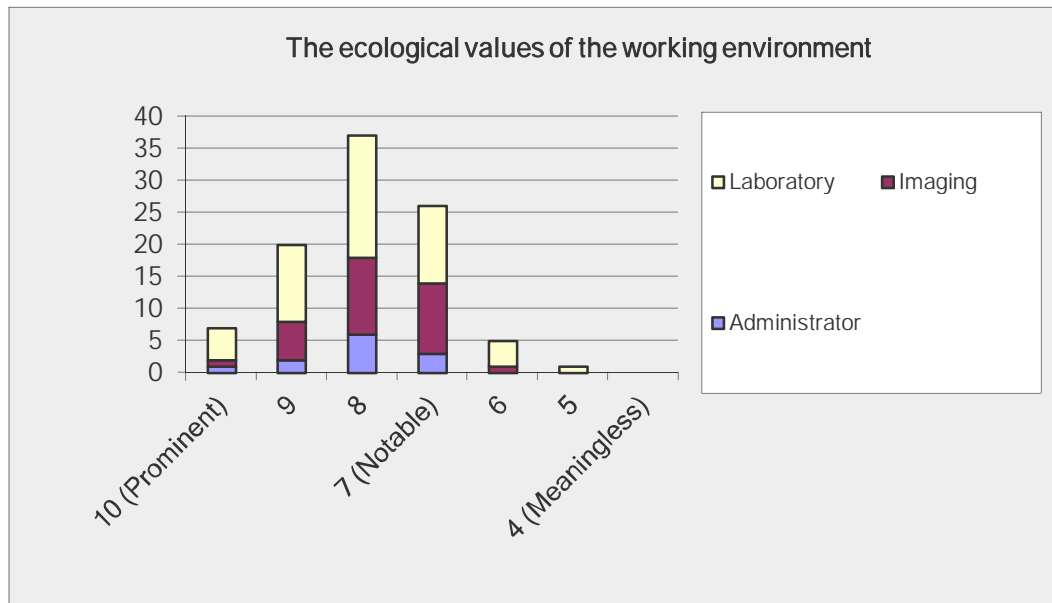


Figure 4. The ecological values of the working environment.

Figure 4 shows that in all respondent groups 8 was the most frequent answer. The laboratory sector found this question more important than the imaging and administrator clients. It can be explained by the fact that the laboratory clients use a lot of disposable articles. Figure 5 shows the responses to the question of how important it is to find out new solutions in patient care and new solutions to improve technical efficiency and quality.

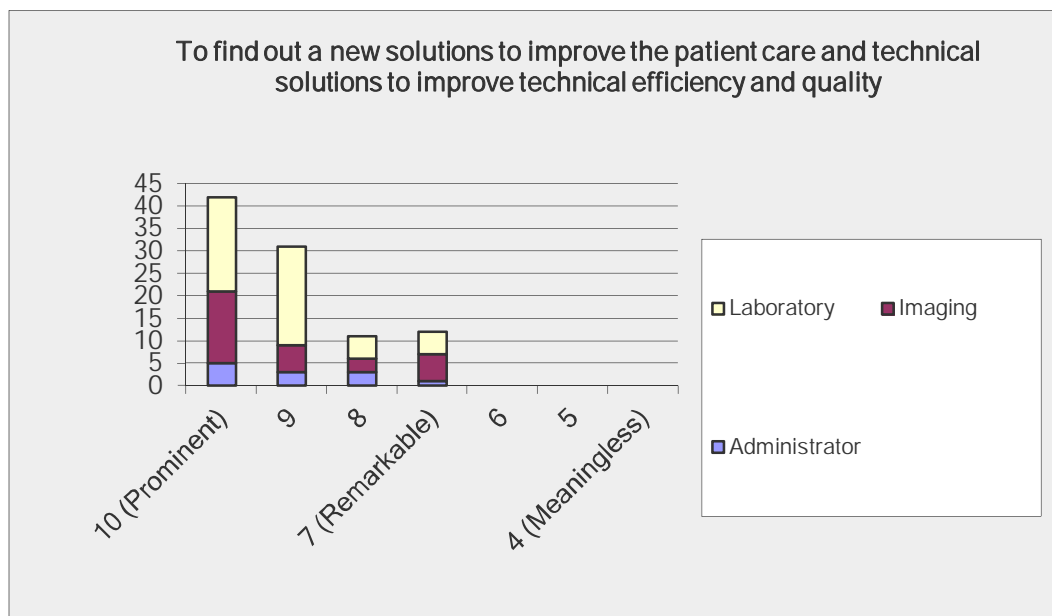


Figure 5. The need for new solutions.

Figure 5 shows that all clients evaluate new technical solutions as remarkable. 76,6% rate them from 9 or 10. The laboratory sector rates are somewhat lower, but still the mean result was 9. These improvement areas were closer to the imaging sector, but for both the laboratory and the imaging clients, the technical solutions are important for helping with the workflow.

Figure 6 shows how the clients evaluated the importance for the case company “to find out the best technical solution for advanced healthcare” such as the best assortment for the imaging technology, laboratory, technology, and healthcare IT solutions and integrate them.

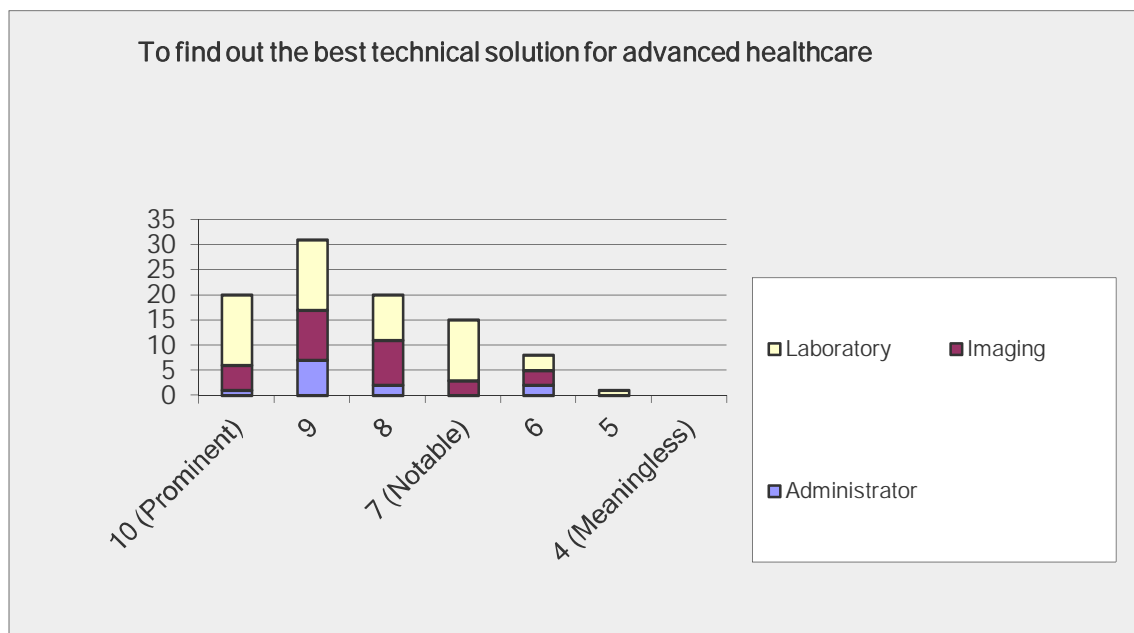


Figure 6. *The need to find the best technical solution.*

Figure 6 shows that the mode was 9 and the highest rate came from the laboratory people. 53,7% of the respondents valued it as “prominent”. Figure 7 shows how important is to get tools for optimising workflow, as well as to make it easier to work by improving efficiency of technical solutions, and getting the best benefit from the personnel, material and time.

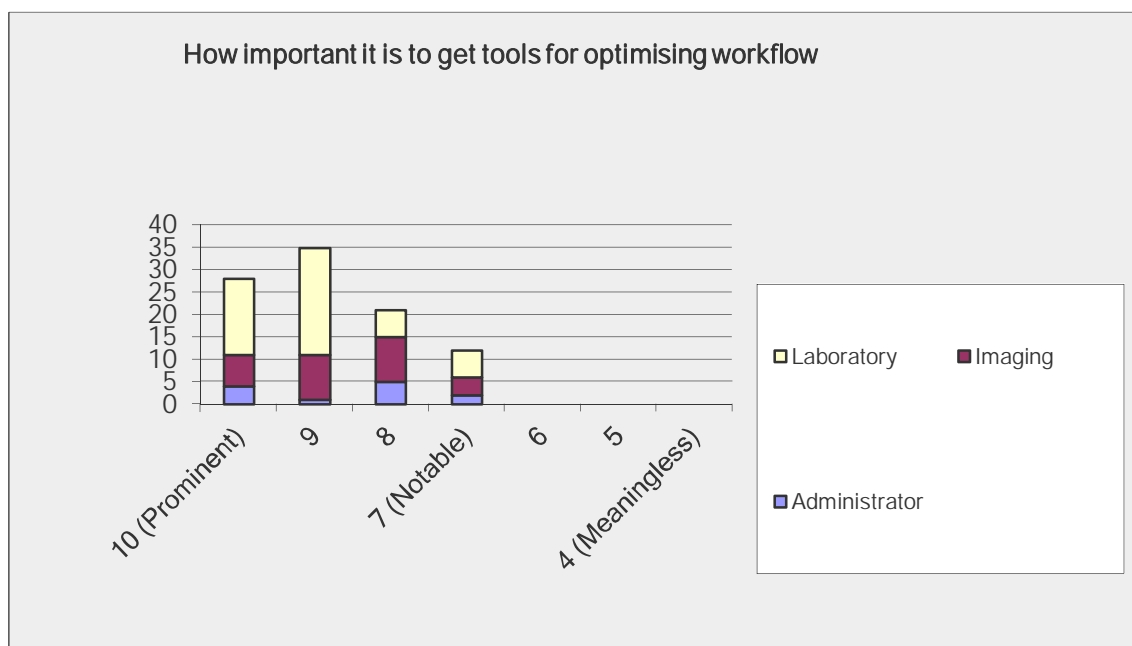


Figure 7. The need to have tools for optimising workflow.

Figure 7. shows that the mean result was 9. In the laboratory clients, the imaging clients and the administrator clients value that as “very prominent”. The workflow improvements seemed to be important to all.

Figure 8 shows the responses for the question how the clients evaluated the improved working processes and tools and to have changed those into more economically effective.

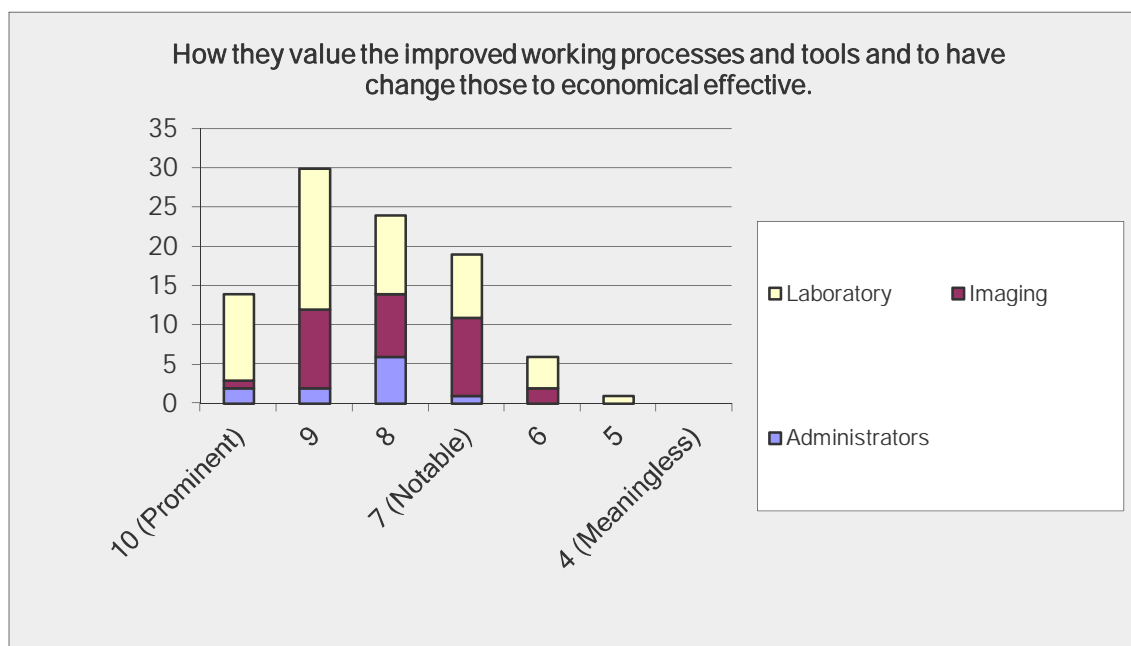


Figure 8. The need for improved working processes.

Figure 8 shows that the overall result was 9 which corresponds “to have working processes improved”. 46,7% of all clients valued it as “very important” or “very prominent”. The economic aspects were rated high as expected.

Figure 9 shows how the customers evaluated “to do better in the energy saving of the diagnostics equipment” and “to reduce the waste”. The laboratory clients value it the highest as expected. In their business, the waste is remarkable because of dispensable test equipment such as test tubes. In the imaging sector, the clients’ responses were mostly in 8 and in the administrator group the responses were around 7 as “notable”. 47,9% rated the waste economic solutions very important.

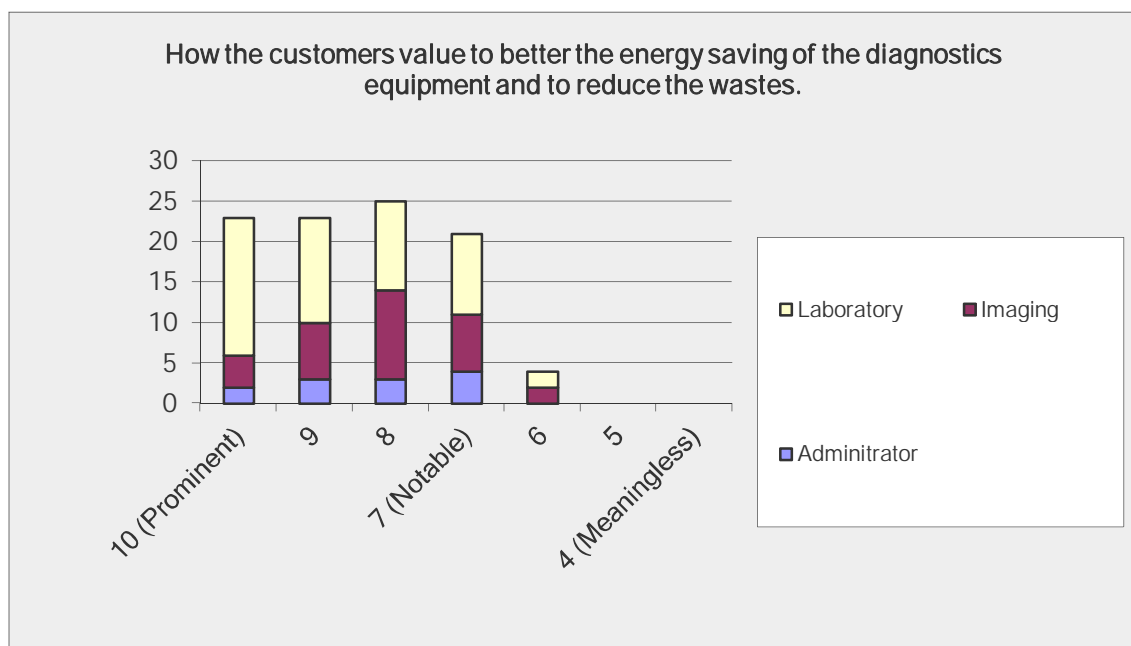


Figure 9. The rates for better the energy saving.

Figure 9 shows how the clients valued the energy saving and reducing the waste. The laboratory clients valued it most but it was important to all customer sectors. This is quite obvious, as the energy costs money.

These were the questions about the customers' values. Similarities are clearly visible between the customers' groups. The responses made very important areas to improve and are the case company's targets for improvements.

3.2.7 Tender Phase and Long Time Expenses

All customers were interested to do the long term cost planning. The major group of the clients was counting the total expenses for the next 5 - 7 years. In the laboratory sector, emphasis was somewhat less than in the imaging sector. But when counting operating costs, the result was quite similar. That has also been noticed in many tender requests from the imaging sector customers. When asked how important the purchase price is for them against the estimated life cycle costs, the responses were again quite similar in their responses. The imaging sector clients like to count all costs further into the future than the other clients.

3.2.8 Success in Services Provided by the Case Company

In this question, the respondents were asked about the value of life cycle, cost levelling solutions to fund their purchases such as leasing, funding services, renting services, and usage compensation. The laboratory sector uses the usage compensation in all fields. To the question about the clients' value of the equipment and application training assortment, such as on-line training, training in the hospital, training repertory in the company's training centre - the net promoter scores were 36 for the laboratory clients, 26 for the imaging clients and 38 for the administrator clients. When asked how they need the accessory assortment from the third party deliverers, net promoter scores were 18 from the laboratory clients, 3 from the imaging clients and 11 from the administrator clients. The clients evaluated the project management role in the equipment delivery process as "very good", with the net promoter scores being 32 from the laboratory clients, 58 from the imaging clients and 38 from the administrator clients.

It was important to know how the clients rate the repertory of the technical services and how the case company succeeds in that important customer service sector. It was evaluated high, and the company succeeded well in that service sector. Also the opportunity for the products to be updated was rated as high. The counted net promoter scores were 52 from the laboratory clients, 51 from the imaging clients and 50 from the administrator clients.

3.2.9 Marketing Channels

A personal visit was evaluated as the most important way to communicate. Next in order the training events were rated, such as lectures and sessions, then customer seminars, then e-mail, then phone contacts, then internet, then letters, and last the marketing via social media. The results also show that modality specific theme days and seminars are found important for the customers. Product instructions and trainings were also evaluated as important.

3.3 Summary of Results

The case company is managing well in all sectors and parts of the customer relationship. It is known that the company is the market leader measured by many indicators. Next the strengths and the weaknesses are collected based on the previous notes. Net promoter scores and mean values were calculated, and there were some areas found evaluated as very positive but some also in a negative way.

3.3.1 Strengths

The company succeed in all customer relationship management levels and the clients valued the company as “satisfactory” or “good”, but not as “excellent”. The company was found very reliable according to the responses. Customers thought that the company values them, communication is partly good, and they felt that the company representatives are easy to do business with. The customers valued the company’s accessibility as “satisfactory”.

The best scores came from the sales process questions especially from the tender phase and delivery project phase which were valued as “very good”. The application training and training with multiple choices were also valued as “good”. The responses showed that the company succeeds well in the customer care sector, including service and maintenance. The possibility to update the systems was indicated as the company’s strong area.

3.3.2 Weaknesses

The customer relationship in general received the mean result of “good” from all client sectors, but there is room for some improvements. One area where to improve is how the customer thoughts the company behaves as a business associate. The company would need to notice the customers’ needs better and be able to find overall solutions for them. It would be important to increase the expertise of product knowledge and the customer working field knowledge. Basically the need would be to know the customers better, what the customers do, and recognize their needs better. The weakest part in the customer relationship was customer communication when there were no upcoming or ongoing purchases.

It is typical as there are limited resources, but still not advisable when customers feel that way. Next was the business and contract negotiation where there is also something to improve. There came up supposedly the expertise. The results showed that the tender itself is often well done, but after a successful tender, the quality comes somewhat down in contract negotiation. In the warranty periods and after-sales, the company has succeeded well, but there were also some need for improvements. In the imaging sector, the experts did not rate the leasing, funding services, rent services and the usage compensation so highly important, but the administrator group valued them very high. To address this challenge, there could be a marketing area to improve; and the imaging sector customers' knowledge of these services would be profitable to strengthen.

The application and equipment trainings were the things to plan better, and would be important to increase the number of those. The assortment of accessories from third party deliverers via the company has found lousy. The recognisability of products and services were quite as expected, and all clients did not know that the company delivers imaging equipment and laboratory products. The laboratory and imaging sector customers did not know either that the case company delivers IT products. The imaging sector products were the most familiar for the administrator customers. Next familiar for the administrator customers was the laboratory sector products and last the healthcare IT products.

3.3.3 Conclusions from the Results

When planning this survey, it was hoped to get responses which would clearly show the needs in certain improvement areas. As mentioned and expected the most frequent responses were 7 or 8. Topics with the lowest scores were specially targeted in the research findings with an aim to concentrate on the improvements that can be made in these areas. To set limits on this thesis, the researcher did not go deeper into the mathematical statistics of the survey responses, leaving other findings for other researchers to investigate. The chosen areas were very basic areas in customer relationship management but also the most crucial ones.

Table 3 below presents the main areas and the findings for improvement.

Table 3. *Main areas and the findings for improvements.*

Focus area	Steps for improvements in
1. Customer communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - customer communication when are not ongoing or coming acquisitions - overall communication
2. Find overall solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increase the expertise - know the customers and their needs better - add third party equipment to choose and also offer it - influence on the tender quality
3. To add recognisability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is almost unknown that the company can deliver all diagnostics products to the hospital. Also that it is the only company in Finland that manufactures all this equipment pieces and provides services for them - the imaging sector is the best known part of the company. The administrators do not know that the company provides health-care IT solutions. Thus, product recognisability is not sufficient in the whole customer sector

Table 3 presents the main areas for improvement, but other important marketing topics identified in the current state analysis were either not completely bypassed in the analysis and best practices discussed below.

The next step is to find a solution to improve the customer relationship management and identify the best practises from research and business literature. Merged with the

existing knowledge from the management side, these findings are making a basis for improvement proposals in Section 5.5.

3.3.4 Customer's Opinion as a Point of the Comparison

As an additional point of evaluation, this study uses a single customer evaluation to extend its analysis. One company's important customer shared his view on the current state of the customer relationship with the case company. This customer gave a presentation in Stockholm (6 November 2013) and reported on some customer relationship areas where the case company has succeed and those where the company has to improve on. The headings of his slides were telling why to choose this company. The strengths identifies as important are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. *Strengths in the case company Customer Relationship Management form one customer perspective.*

Strengths
- strong brand name +++++
- modalities +++++
- outspoken R&D focus and innovative products +++++
- service +++
- marketing ++
- IT +

Table 4 shows that the brand is really strong from his point of view. The modalities and products are very strong areas too. In addition to the points, listed in Table 3, this customer also mentioned as positive points that the company systems are stable, delivery is consistent and on time. He also offered his views on the areas critically important to him as a customer. These areas are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. *Critical Areas in the case company Customer Relationship Management from one customer perspective.*

Areas critical for customers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowing customers agenda is essential and solely establishing a relation with decision maker is not enough - Knowing customers agenda is key to success because customers profile is changing - Experts' (say radiologists') influence in the decision-making process is becoming diluted by CIO and investment committees - Consistent delivery of required technology is important to stay on the customers' preferred vendors list - Value!

Table 5 shows that there is an obvious similarity between this customer's opinions and the findings from the current state analysis in Finland. This fact has strengthened the confidence that the three targets identified in the current state analysis are the right areas for the case company to focus on.

4 The Best Practices of The Customer Relationship Management

This section discusses the best practices in customer relationship management. Since the fields of customer communication and product recognisability were identified as the company priorities from the very beginning, this section focuses especially on the areas of communication, the best overall sales and product awareness.

4.1 Overview of Customer Relationship Management

To start to improve customer relationship management is a long process and it is advisable to start with the topics which provide most value in a short term. In this case it is communication, the best overall sales and product awareness where to put the efforts. As a conclusion of the survey the customers especially value the expertise provided by the case company, as people are one of the company's main assets as well as the area for improvement. The sales process includes many things that would be valuable to be noticed when planning the marketing. The workable sales process is vital for people in large organizations, and the people coming in contact with customers need to be well trained in the processes and technology in use. That results in finding the best solutions for the customers and increasing sales. [4, p. 14-15]

Leading customer relationship management requires a big picture approach. It is also needed to focus on the strategy of healthcare organizations to implement good tactic conclusions for customer relationship management. [20, p. 56] Basically it is a way to work for managing a company's interaction with the existing and new coming customers. It is normal in big organisations to have certain tools and technology to hold all necessary customer information such as marketing, customer service and support, appointments, small business and social media. There are many CRM (Customer Relationship Management) application systems to manage the customer information and most of those are made by big operators.

Customer relationship management (CRM) is a model for doing business and a set of operating practices to maximize profitable revenue from customers. What would be advisable to happen is the integration of processes and technology through points that have any impact on a particular customer transaction. CRM includes also a manage-

ment strategy that enables an organisation to become customer-focused and develop stronger relationships with its clients. It helps bring together information about customers, sales marketing effectiveness, and responsiveness and market trends. [4, p. 7] Well done and implemented relationship program strengthens customers' loyalty, otherwise there may happen the customers' lack of trust to the company. [4, p. 17]

If the company has a customer relationship management strategy in place, the next need is to improve and continuously adapt that strategy in the changing markets. Renart and Gabre [4] suggest that it would be advisable for a company to implement continuous improvement process at least four different and complementary levels. The company also needs to review and reinforce the company's mission and values; reconsider and redesign the strategy if needed; manage the relationship improving activities more effectively; improve the quality of material, human resources, program execution, and the governance of the processes [4, p. 5-6]. A systematic review of these parts of improvement helps generate high quality relationship over the time.

To build the customer relationship is a time consuming, long period process. The relations between the customer and the company change over the years and the benefits of customer relationship management shrink as the relationship gets older. It is seen that commitment and trust wane. The customers do not know what the company has done for them lately and it impacts to the attitude. It is possible that the customer think that the company has taken advantage of them because customers become more and more sensitive and start to feel that their trust in the company is lost. [4, p. 9]

According to Henning-Thuray and Klee [15], the most common is a three dimensional variable of the customer relationship quality, meaning the customer's service quality or product quality related opinion, and the customers trust in the company's ability to achieve excellence in execution. A third thing is the customer's relationship commitment. The determinant of the customer's retention is a good quality of the relationship. [15, p. 743] The customer relationship is based on commitment and trust. The relationship is then more fruitful and customers are more open if the company's communications, requests, proactive and more cooperate. To influence customers' perceptions of the company's integrity the review of its missions, culture and values is crucial. The goal is that the customers would see the company as a partner whom to trust and rely

to add their value. Relationship planning and its strategy planning would be good always tend in the same direction with all individual activities. [4, p. 16-17]

4.2 Continuous Customer Communication

The purpose of customer communication is to increase the value of a product or service to the customers. It is a critical business function in any service business [6, p. 121-122] In big companies, there is typically dividable management for the customer service, customer care center, sales including customer account managers, product specialists and application specialists. But the communication strategy becomes more important and more difficult to lead when having multiple customer touch points. [4, p. 15]

To have effective communication with multiple channels for the customers, management strives to involve integrating and coordinating strategies and the activities on all channels to ensure consistent service quality. Best practices in this respect stress establishing a single customer relationship marketing strategy for all channels. The company would be advisable to be consistent in communications and promotions in all channels. The most important is to have well trained employees with knowledge of all channels and communicating strategy. Well done channel integration in communication directly influences purchase decisions in the future and it improves customer loyalty and retention. It is empirically demonstrated that especially with customers who have been for some reason disappointed by one contact, but who want to establish a second contact with the company through another contact channel. [4, p. 14-15]

Multichannel relational communication means a personalized communication with customers via various channels as part of a broader relationship marketing strategy. It is common that companies use special level customer data to personalize this communication to retain the existing customers. This kind of communication can announce the new products and reference sites. This kind of communication increase the customers' knowledge of broaden market share and new products. It can remind them also of the services and can be used to convey targeted offers. [10, p. 94]

Theory such as reciprocal action entails that when increasing relational communication it has a positive effect on repurchase. It is because customers perceive greater relationship investment by the firm. This principle suggests that using preferred channels it enhances customers' motivation to reciprocate because clients appreciate personalization efforts. Other theory called reactance is telling that when increasing that relational communication it has negative influence on repurchase because the customers felt it obtrusive. The customers respond more positively for higher communication volumes when their most preferred channels are used. The perspective of reciprocity has found positive association between repurchase behaviour and relational communication volume. The direct communication targeted for the customer needs to increase perceived relationship investment and follow to reciprocity. [10, p. 94-95]

4.2.1 Ideal Point of Communication

When thinking about the amount of communication, there is some ideal point when the repurchase is at the highest activity level with respect to the efforts used [10, 11]. The customers repurchase is increasing as communication volume increases from low to medium level, but it is decreasing when communication increases from medium to the high level. The perfect level of attribute is reached at an intermediate level to get out the best response. At first when the attribute is getting higher to the ideal point it increases the utility and the customer response becomes more approving. When the ideal point is further acquired, increasing in the attribute is causing negative utility and less favourable response. [10, p. 94-96] [11, p. 12-13]

Opposing factors may set customers against the repeated advertising stimulation. The first initial exposures produce better positive response when considering reducing uncertainly stimulus. Higher levels of exposure produce a negative effect because of the boredom reaction. The effect of these opposing factors may be diminishing the relationship between the provider and the customer if gone beyond a certain threshold and advertising. In the point when the response is ideal, it describe customer's response to the customer relational communication for any communication channel that the company uses. [10, p. 96] [11, p. 12-13]

4.2.2 Channels for Communication in Combination

When using multiple channels in combination, it can cause independent effects, additive effects or even multiplicative interaction effects. It is usual that the company sends e-mail adverts and the sales use a telephone to contact customers and do advertising. Sales may send the paper mails such as the brochures for customers and invite the customers to the seminars and fairs as advertising reasons. [10, p. 3]

The companies have to lead all channels. Because of the interaction of the multiple channels it is more difficult to find the ideal point. The ideal point in one channel is also dependent of the volume in other channels. When stress is placed on one channel, the ideal point for volume in the other channels may decrease or increase. These interactions are logical, but still the exact effect is not known. The customer may respond positively when using a combination of channels rather than a single channel. It shows that a company use greater resource investment for communication. Sometimes the customer can attribute the intensified utility to firm actions and the company does not get value for increased spending. The integrated marketing communication central dogma is that the effect of using multiple channels is more than the sum of the individual effects of the used channels. It is because all different channels provide individual advantages in the communicating information for customers. Contacting via multiple channels allows companies to offer complementary benefits for the customers who optimize the overall utility of the communication meaning greater resource investment. With the individual customers, it is more distinct to get the better communication result using direct channels to get to them more value with customized content. [10, p. 96-98]

In theory [10, 11], the communication via multiple channels leads to increased repurchases because it shifts the ideal point so that customers present reciprocity up to an increased volume on one or many channels. When the relational communication volume on one channel enhances when communication volume on the other channel rises and that shows a positive interaction between any two channels that are in use in combination and customers repurchase response come better. Again when increasing the telephone contacts the ideal number of e-mails decrease. Together with those is possible to get quite fast reactance rate. The fastest reactance would be possible to have by telephone, lower with e-mails and slowest with a mail channel. The reactance occurs more fast when the customers receive communication through multiple channels and

occur more slowly when receiving communication via channels they prefer. [10, p. 98]
[11, p. 12-13]

It is possible to cross as a relational factor the loyalty of the industrial customers with the customer relationship marketing of compact policies up to the very powerful customer relationship management (CRM) applications. That kind observation is more important foremost for small to medium size companies because those need to do marketing with a lower cost than big companies. That is a reasonable goal for the big companies too to have these benefits with a smaller budget. It would be possible to inlay relation management structures in the quality plan of the management organisation. As solution, it would be explicit represent a natural destination which is most probably to implement but definitely achievable and not just futuristic. [6, p. 120]

Customer relation management is an innovative marketing direction and a profile of overall management. It is included and essential in the normal enterprise commercial process. Because of the complex business to business markets, the frequent company commercial process realises that it is increasingly necessary to move the approach of a vision to commercial negotiation from a very deep technical perspective. [6, p. 122] That equals the cultural change from a technical seller to a global sales consultant such as key account managers. The professional background of the product specialist is often used in sales processes needs to change up to a more commercial consultant role. The product specialist knows and is aware of the value of small pieces of information found in the commercial negotiation phase together with sales. There is then necessity to enter the enterprise network critical resources together with right approach to improve overall of entire sales quality. That definitely needs to activate both internal and external communicational processes. [6, p. 122]

4.2.3 Communication Traditions

The marketing traditions often rely on existing socioeconomic theories to have implications that are normative for channel management. It aims to explain the structures of management, and the behaviour in the marketing channel context [7, p. 39] The marketing focus is then placed on customer relationships and on the efficiency of economic exchange. Customer relationships are viewed as strongly mutual and interdependent.

There are some streams of research that within the tradition emphasize the economic aspects of channel relationships, and others the social and governmental aspects. The major issues have been the definition of efficient forms of management for different channel relationships and the modelling of their socio economic nature. [7, p. 39]

In the market tradition, there are three interrelated sets of goals. The first tradition strives to explain and understand the exchange behaviour between customer relationship development and the organisations in the marketing network context. The next aims to understand how the relationship network between all actors evolves and how markets evolve and function from the network point of view. [7, p. 39]

There are various views on relationships. The view includes relations between individual customers, companies, and many different organisations such as districts and governmental agencies. When the resources in the market are heterogeneous, the sides of the market relationship are supposedly active and the interdependence between those is quite strong. [7, p. 39-40] It has a strong managerial stress aiming to improve the effectiveness of marketing activities, especially communication and its channels and messages. The customer relationship perspective of the organisation is often fairly restricted or restrained and showing an image of a loose and far connection. The managerial target is to create interactive communication to the customer relationship. There the company's sales would be an active partner who makes the offers and communication based on the customer's status and feedback. All operations are targeted to keep the customers well profitable and loyal on a permanent way. [7, p. 38]

There are also other implications that would be advisable to be noted in marketing communication. All communication would be reasonable to evaluate as their ability to create the wanted effect of communication. Different options have different strengths and would be better to mastered to accomplish different objectives. There is a mix of different communication channels and optimal communication depends on the particular objectives that are involved. Each channel plays a specific role when creating wanted communication effects. When using a huge number of different combinations of communication options, those can create nearly similar effects. The best combination may not be possible to find especially in light of the phrase "whole is greater than the sum of the parts." Though it would be good to reach it when mixing the channels in communication management. [8, p. 840-842]

4.3 Best Overall Solution Sales

Business-to-business sales (B2B) can be a selling procedure by the company selling components to another. Business-to-business sales include in a big industrial company case more. It is about consulting and sharing knowledge of technical details and the latest innovations. It is planning the best solution for the customer's needs to help them in every day working. There is also a remarkable group of people, the clients that are be observed. [7, p.45-48]

A salesman in business to business marketing area has always been considered in all related technical expertise things and terms comparing the relationship related appearance with objection related appearance in marketing. It is usual that the salesman is an engineer, chemist, technician, physicist or other with the technical background. The conscientious technical operational knowledge of the entrepreneurial offer in nowadays is vital because of the technically improving purchase sector and the growing number of international competitors and their aggressive behaviour. [6, p. 123]

Nowadays it would be a value to handle the whole knowledge of marketing correctly and sales including technical things mentioned, but also social and psychological elements. For management, it is vital to recruit and select the professionals who are experts in all those mentioned sectors. With only technical skills it is not possible to sell but maybe work as a technical specialist to support sales with deeper technical questions. [6, p. 123]

The salesperson's goal is to develop a sales activity and not a pure consultancy as now more and more occurs. On the other hand, it is undoubted that industrial goods increase their own utility in different ways. Depending on the industrial contexts of the purchasing company it may be essential to effort deep and customised information on behalf of the delivery company. It is more comfortable to go to the sale process basics, which have never to be crude but always sharp and precise with an extra value to let business operator apply with higher effectiveness. [6, p. 123-124]

Some research has found that the solution selling is not the thing anymore. The product and combination of applications and features are still the targets to sell, but nowadays the customers are able to solve the problems themselves. In the past, the most knowledge was in sales reps that were discovering the customers' needs and offered the solution that the companies were able to provide. Nowadays many customers are using more sophisticated procurement groups and sometimes purchasing consultants with a huge load of data and are able to define solutions by own. That implemented as very specific tenders that clients provide. [13, p. 63]

Based on the researcher's experience from operating with the private sector customers, the marketing may take some features from business to consumer. Then it is possible for clients to buy products directly from the deliverer without a tender process. The sales people have a possibility to influence directly the final user's purchase decision. It is totally different situation comparing with healthcare districts official tenders where the acquisition decision is made by prize and a technical based evaluation matrix. Customer relationship management applications and systems help people move the purchase decision generator from commodity to experience in business to business markets. The absence of the business process's customer relationship management philosophy can move the customers' relationship focus based on their own experience of the past purchase in the consumer market. The move is a fundamentally functional type, very limited and depend the relational and emotional involvement of them. When having a strong customer relationship management impact on the sales operations, the consumers or customers focus their attention on emotional and experience values. Those are reachable in purchase processes. [6, p. 123,128]

In the Nordic countries, the markets are included in the market oriented framework and it is the promise concept. The sales give almost every time a set of promises when establishing customer relations. Those are connected with services, goods or systems of services, financial solutions, and social contacts, information transferring and future commitments. At the same time, the buyer gives quite similar set of the promises about their commitments in this relation. Those promises are crucial to be kept to have the relation maintained and commercialised in the future to have reciprocal benefits to both sides. Marketing is to develop, establish and commercialise customer relations to met organisational and individual objectives. [5, p. 54]

4.3.1 Collaboration Sales and Marketing

There are a few types of factors influencing cooperation between sales and marketing. Those are at least integrators, facilitators and management attitudes towards coordination. The exploring case studies establish that senior management plays a key role when creating and improving collaboration between marketing and sales. There is a positive connection between collaboration sales and marketing, and improved business performance. [9, p. 943] The collaboration between sales and marketing indicates that it is elements of integration such as collective goals; mutual understanding, informational activities, resource sharing and team spirit have better impact on performance than the interaction component of integration. [9, p. 941-943]

As the word “integration” tells there is a real need to create a process and put all parts into a one. To combining marketing and sales parts may together be not that hard as the sales and marketing has necessarily different activities produced by different people who are suitable for each function. The collaboration is essentially working together and shows the need to create the connections between two different sectors which are entities and culturally different. The aim is to create learning opportunities and improve functionality to gain business performance. Sales and marketing nowadays more often need to collaborate but not to integrate. [9, p. 941-944]

It is seen that remarkable efforts have been found considering collaboration and cooperation between departments in organisation based on the assumption that interdepartmental collaboration is joined to improvement of the business. It is clear that every firm has to improve the relationship between marketing and sales. There is something that still displays the most disputed relationships within many organisations and is something that has increasing attention from academics and practitioners. The organisation easily looks that marketing and sales are a single function from the customer point of view. Customers do not differentiate those departments and consider them to perform a single meaning. If the basic role of sales is more to stimulate than satisfy products demand, marketing is something that is structured around customers and markets, and is integrating sales, distribution, product strategy, communication activities and competencies. [9, p. 951]

Marketing varies a lot by organisations. It is industry dependant. The cross functional relationship between marketing and sales may cause many negative characteristics because there can be bad coordination between those especially in planning and goal setting. The reason is that there are often tensions between those because of philosophical and physical separation and bad communication. Sales are more intuitive and it is obvious that those functions are culturally differentiated. That is the reason to be ensured that those departments are able to collaborate. In the marketing department, people may be more creative than in the sales department. In the worst case, the organisations are blaming each other for sales failure. In some case it can be beneficial if conflict is associated with improved performance. Collaboration improvements, communication quality and interdepartmental relations improve the formulation of strategy as well as reduce conflicts. There is some view or evidence that a strong relationship between collaboration of functional areas makes greater customer satisfaction and improved performance in business. To collaborate the people, base is to know others' role, role ambiguity, have better communication, not blame each other and align the better the goals and activities. [9, p. 940-941]

4.4 Increasing Product Recognizability

To add product recognisability and the customers' awareness of its product range is a part of selling and marketing process. Currently, the branding and selling are turning in some business areas to more intuitive from the sales view. The case company's customers are highly educated academics, and like to have contacts via traditional ways and have specialists' services for overall solutions, the best for their needs. The product range and its combinations are vitals be well known by marketers and sales and their work is to find and transfer the need and fact to customers' awareness. [13, p. 63]

To add a single product's recognizability is a branding case by focusing on certain part of branding. The brand equity consists of many things such as recognizability, its quality, brand associations and brand loyalty. [14, p. 67] The AMA (American Marketing Association) defines the brand as the name, term, symbol, sign, or any other feature that identifies one product or service of one seller as distinct from those of other sellers. [21, p. 330]. The ongoing brand relationship development phase makes the customer accumulate a specific brand knowledge or image of the brand. That differentiates one

physical good, relationship or solution or service from others and that can be positive or negative. The brand is something that needs continuous developing to have a brand relationship created. There customer forms a differentiating image of a good or a service, or it can be a solution including goods, services, information and other specific elements based on all kind of brand contacts that the customer is exposed to. [21, p. 334] The further focus is on the recognizability part which is about how people recognize the brand helped or not and to add recognizability with brand mastering.

4.4.1 Branding in Business Markets

To understand how customers understand or notice the company brand is a key element for brand mastering. The customers differ in their observation of the importance of branding in the purchase phase. The idea is that there are low interest customers, highly tangible, and between them are the branding receptive ones. In each customer sector, the marketers can benefit by analyzing the implications of branding. The marketers analyze the price, the product itself, distribution level, advertising, promotion and a personal selling result. [12, p. 525]

To attract highly tangible customers, there is a need to focus on many concrete, quantum and objective benefits of the product and the manufacturer behind that. Physical improvements are important, but the stress needs to be on the features which closely matching and benefits the customer. There is a need to identify how to more objectively evaluate the even more non concrete benefits of the product such as decreasing noticed risk, uncertainty and company financial stability. [14, p. 70]

The branding on low interest sector customers may communicate the potential importance of purchase decision. Marketing can be based on attractive web sites and product catalogues to increase customer interest and attempt in the purchase decision. The aim is to investigate why certain products are better known and more attractive than the others. The investigation could be done with analyse of the customers who in the past did not buy a certain product. The tools for that could be the small case studies. The product may be a good one, but not useful alone. It could then be added within bigger entirety when selling the solutions, not only as a single product. It may be worthwhile sometimes to put resources for the online ordering via websites and phone

to make the ordering and to find the product information easier. The personal selling can prominently optimize product awareness and ease of the ordering process. That could be the case especially with accessories and 3rd party products. [12, p. 532]

The group of branding receptive customers values unique nature and objective guidance on each purchase process. Highly reputable, flexible and well established manufacturer is a great value. In the marketing communication the goal is to be adduced the high quality product and the compounded services included and to adduced self-expressive and the emotional benefits of the product. These customers value especially the strong company brand and the company's efforts to find individual brand for them. [12, p. 525]

4.4.2 Brand Architecture to Add Recognizability

Even though the idea may not be to concentrate on the brands too much, but that is not something that can be avoided totally. The companies, which do business in B2B sectors, take care of the brand architecture by the increase of investments in sales force. That is happening at the same time when in fact, the brands could be the best support platform to improve sales. [14, p. 66-67]

When designing the brand and improving product awareness, the recognisability concentrating and being aware of some main issues is crucial. It is not possible to expect too fast results when launching new products because brands are normally the long term means. The brand accumulates meaning for customers for long. It is not possible to have too fast sales expectations either. The sales input the product by delivering the company's promises and they will eventually benefit the efforts when customers begin to trust the brand.

When planning the best solutions for the customers, it may consist of many product brands. The marketing of a collection of brands such as different modalities needs to be designed as a team. Each brand has a different role with and in a tender process those have different risks too. The ideal final combination delivers a coordinated set of responses to the key customers. So the individual positioning of each brand matter as much as the inter relationship between the single brands in the product portfolio. The planning of the product hierarchy is as difficult as determining the customers' risks in

various phases of the purchase process. The inter relationship between the products is a way of addressing the risks mentioned. Two dimensions of offering allow the company to locate them on a product architecture map that suggests optimal solutions for different business customer contexts. Those are centralization-decentralization and standardized-customized offerings. The logical collection of well-positioned brands serves as a very powerful competitive advantage in the customer field. [14, p. 66-67]

4.5 Conceptual Framework

When the company succeeds well in all relationship sectors, the target is how to benefit from its success. The target would be to get from good to the excellent level and to concentrate to get a continuous improvement process underway in the customer relationship management. When focusing on the most crucial things which were discovered in the customer survey, the first and the most valuable part is a communication to improve to have the fastest response and benefits for those. Other topics start to improve already when communication improves. The second part is to find the best overall solutions for the customers and third is to increase the product recognizability.

In communication, the issue is to manage multichannel communication. It is still a personal contact made by phone or visit which gives the best response but be used in combination with other channels. It is important to be aware of the limits of each channel's load. It is about the ideal point of communication when the positive effect of it starts to get lower influenced of excessively of communication. The effect of communication via multiple channels leads to increased repurchase because it shifts the ideal point so that customers present reciprocity up to an increased volume in one or many channels.

Management is the one to recognize different channel relationships and the modelling of their socio economic nature. In tradition, there are three interrelated sets of goals to be separated. Explain exchange behaviour between relationship development and organisations. To understand how the relationship network between all actors evolves. Then knowing how markets evolve and function from the network point of view. It has a strong managerial stress to improve the effectiveness of marketing activities such as

communication. The managerial target is to create interactive communication to the customer relationship.

To find the best overall solutions needs the personnel to be committed and have well trained employees in a company to ensure continuous and long term customer relations. The sales person has to know sales processes social and psychological aspects as well as technical details. People with only technical knowledge and understand is more suitable for the product specialist role to support key customer account people. Even when selling to a big district and facing many representatives it is important to know the customers as individual ones. The promises have to always been kept and the company has to put efforts into sales and marketing collaboration. It is important to separate those and see their different roles but the co-operation is a key to success.

Finally, the product recognizability improves with all mentioned above. To add to it separately, the process is also part of branding. When planning the branding of a new product or re-branding the old one, there are three different channels to be aware of depending to the customer target group. There are the low interest, brand receptive and highly tangible groups which are to be taken care of differentially. The base is to always know that no brand stands alone. The product brands are important to be collected with expertise to serve the each other. The inter relationship between the products is a way of addressing these risks. That gives the best solutions for the key customers and the recognizability of brands are the best support platform to improve sales.

The conceptual framework that summarizes these approaches is shown in Figure 10 below.



Figure 10. *Conceptual framework of the study.*

5 Building the Improvement Proposal

This section presents the proposal split into several sub-sections. The target was not to build large detailed strategies, but collect ideas to make improvements and be aware that there may occur similarities to the company's processes that were probably overlooked in practise.

5.1 Continuous Customer Communication

In the world as we live now where the communication is very easy, the side effects of the communication have to be handled also globally. Big companies can lose customers because the head office in another country is presented in journals at bad lights because of some mistakes has been made. The news concerning global companies effects also globally and can discredit even the smallest units causing inconvenient feelings in the customer fields. Too fast reactions in a small crisis can grow bigger because of sloppy words. In a target company case, the customer complaints about the product failures or malfunctions are the adversities that may occur. To handle those properly are very important to keep customers satisfied. It is possible to live a long time with minor inconveniencies until some line has reached and then decided to make the official complaint. It is possible that the malfunction has already damaged brand's credibility and quality. The company's role is to react in a very professional way and fast to minimize the negative effect of it.

The following sub-section concentrates on the chosen communication area, customer communication and how to improve it.

5.1.1 Interview Findings on Communication Improvements

The case company has started to use the newsletter generator in the laboratory diagnostics department to send the latest news for a wide customer group. There are problems in the field about the product recognizability. There may be the marketing channel problems, also the quality of communication or amount of communication can be poor. The customer relationship management tool is powerful but not used conscientiously.

Call the client immediately when things are not went so proficient and problems are important to be solved soon as possible.

A new email tool for equalize the email communication has implemented and trained for all sales and marketing people. CRM tool use has increased to the upper level and need more focus. Sales interests need to be connected with the proper active use of the customer relationship management tool. There would be important to measure all sales opportunities, communication activities, and some service link could be made to know what is going on at customers' sites. The customer segmentation should be done better in the imaging sector.

5.1.2 Communication Channels

In the customer survey it was asked how the customers prefer to be contacted. There were choices such as a personal visit, a phone call, e-mails, the internet, social media, letters, during seminars and during training events. The responses presented in Table 6 summarize the responses.

Table 6. *The preferred marketing channels.*

The order of marketing channels' popularity
1) Through training events
2) Personal visits
3) Through seminars
4) Via e-mail
5) Phone call
6) Internet
7) Letter
8) Social media

Table 6 shows that training events and theme days such as modality specific lessons were rated very high. There is a need to have product information and other marketing

information at the same time. The customers from the laboratory and imaging sectors are willing to have mostly contacted by product specialists, and it is obvious that the training or seminar lecturer is a product specialist or someone with similar competence. So the responses are in the same line in both cases.

The unexpected results were scored by the lack of preference through social media. Most of the respondents gave the grade 4 in the scale 4 to 10 to the use of social media. It looks that there is presently no reason to use media channels such as Facebook and Twitter at a country level. Still those are the tools that are growing extremely fast and can not be forgot in the future. The company corporation has the Facebook site and many other media in use globally. Interesting finding was when using Google search with word RSNA (Radiological Society of North America) and its annual event, the first ads is the case company the customer called: "What's new at RSNA?" Next, there came a Facebook message from the company which advertised the iPhone application of RSNA. After downloading it starts with the company's advert and there was a guide to the company's fair departments and the latest news. That is the one example that could be told to the customers which may visit to the event.

The company has specified seminars for specific customers and holding the training events. Sales and product specialists have lectured in many big customer events too. It is easy to see the reason for this order when estimating the results considering that the customers are very busy. The customers do not have time to have phone calls, to read all e-mails, search the information from the internet or update social media profiles. The best marketing results will be reached, when timing the communication to the moments when clients have time for that. Based on the findings the moments for that are seminar days and similar events.

The e-mail channel offers customers the ability to view rich visual representations of the information being conveyed. There can be also send the very powerful video streams. The responsible sales key account manager could make the short video once a while where to tell the latest news for the customer of his interest area. The product specialists could sometimes do their own short presentations to talk over the new product or feature. The e-mail channel is not so intrusive than calling. The reason is that is not disturbing the receiver in real time. It is possible to review or delete mes-

sages later when the receiver likes to. It is a possible flag the sender so that the future messages go directly to the junk too.

The telephone channel is maybe the most intrusive among these channels. The telephone call disrupts the receiver in real time. If a voice message is left it forces, the receiver to process it at least to determine whether she or he wants to delete it. On the other hand, it is a channel to have a direct response. Telephone channel reactance is generated in even lower volumes when customers receive high levels of e-mail contacts. If some customers prefer not to be contacted by phone the ideal point of telephone contacts is null and to use the telephone in case such as this continues of course, not to a positive response when building a relationship. Many clients do not like to have postal mails. On the other hand, the letters are not easy to ignore.

The unsolicited e-mails are more intrusive than postal mails. In the best situation, the negative reactance can be prevented when the customer can control and avoid exposure to the marketing message. The customers would like to that it is possible easily control the messages. It is of course more difficult when multi channels are in use. It is important to examine the effects of multichannel communication volume. That has to be done by considering the impacts of the one specific channel, and the combinations of channels.

5.1.3 How to Improve

The resources are limited for many personal visits per year. So it would say that when most of the customers like to be contacted quarterly or even rarely the channel may vary and be planned customer specific. For example, when knowing some customer to be visited in the certain seminar every year that is the one place to contact. Second may be the sales person's hospital visit, third could be the application training event included in service contract and the fourth phone call, nevertheless that there may not be coming acquisitions.

Broadly speaking it is a base of sales work to know customers, their agenda, and their way of working and communicate. Then manage the communication based on that not focusing on a group of customers but taking one target as individual. The use of multi

channels to understand that the sales people are not only people to do the marketing. It is possible that even service people can give information on coming new features and products during planned maintenance. The application trainer is in the key role often to tell the customers improving proposals regarding the workflow and the quality of patient care.

Based on the theme interviews it is shown that the marketing management people would need either the effective enterprise resource planner or similar data collection feature in one application tool. A very strong leadership to manage the communication and its channels needed. Looks that the use of CRM application has done more controlled in the laboratory diagnostics department. The data has been collected partly in personal electrical binders and calendars, some information is reported in order to Excel, and major part saved in a certain CRM tool. The precise use of such application comes more important when employee leave the company or a new person start working. The experienced people who have worked long time in the company can handle his own area customer relationship, but when leaving or in case of holidays or sickness there are too much data on one's binders and a head. When a new person started, it would be easy to show a detailed data of the customers with the updated statistic of the customers' location, its area of responsibility, systems that are in use, last contact date, becoming purchases, etc. That is the part of a good work orientation. When the resources changed, that needed fast reaction from the customer relationship management side. The current situation has to be analysed and the resources targeted correctly to the most important customer segments. Customer segmentation is crucial to be flexible as possible and based on facts that are collected through the years and be updated every time when changes occur in the customers' field, in the sales organisation and in the product portfolio.

5.2 Best Overall Solution Sales

Knowing customers' needs is the base when trying to sell something. It is not enough to establish the connection to decision maker that may not know details of the user group's agenda and workflow. It has seen that the decision making has slightly moved further from users to economics and financial directors and investment committees. It can happen that the whole buying process is outsourced. It is possible that some spe-

cialists who does not even work in the same hospital tell a third party procurement company what the unit would be important to be included. Then to find the correct responsible person from the customer's side can be hard to find, but the company which can affect the tenders' demands is closer to win the deals.

There are many reasons why knowing the customers' agenda is essential and important one is that customers' way of working and profile is changing all the time. It is very important to stay in the customers preferred vendor list to enable the continuous communication and re-sales and delivering always the technology that the customers require. Customers are not necessarily need to buy the expensive unit with the highest level technology but the value is the key to fulfil their needs. Again, to know customers is a key to offer the value to them because one need and appreciates different things than the other one. There is no sense in telling the customer how well trained and product knowable employees are and how extremely high end products the company can offer. The target is to go to a customer's level and not to push them buy something with no use.

5.2.1 Interview Findings on Sales Improvements

With correct communication the long term customer relations is a base of knowing customers' needs and agenda. Increasing the expertise is important and third party equipments are important to choose well and offer those. The sales needs to focus on influencing the tender requests, contents and quality. The long term relationship makes possible to influence the customer's tender requirements. The life cycle follow-up is the goal. The biggest customers of the laboratory sector are under continuously communication. Those customers are targets and get the information what are the needs in the field. To have too many small customers to contact may happen because of lack of the recourses. In the laboratory sector, the customer field and equipments differs from the imaging sector and are handled slightly different. The need is nowadays more to sell value than only solutions. It is more like intuitive selling which needs to know customers' agenda and customers well.

The marketing would need more resources to handle all modalities well. The presentations are good but not the only channel to sell the products. The sales work is to ask

and ask again to clarify the customers working culture, what are the expectations and how the customers like to work. By expertise people learn correct terms to speak to the customer.

5.2.2 How to Improve

The start is to collect all data from customers to the customer relationship management tool. Feedback could be collected from training events, all information that service department provides, how the latest delivery project has gone, how the customers such as the latest update there are installed and so on. All this would be easiest to be found under the customers' name.

There are not so many people who are working in the field. All collected data has some value for sales and marketing. Constant communication and update information is needed to be presented immediately when implemented. The fast response to customers' requests is crucial. The products have been made for customers' needs and development work has been done together with customer specialists. Ideally, the sales could observe some Finnish top specialist's opinions as a part of a development process, and then use that in marketing point of view.

The best sale outcome is a long term process. The customers need to know the sales representatives and trust them. It is not possible without at least several meetings and contacts to start to create the relationship. It is very clear that when a sales person succeed once the re-sale is easier. Most of the customers are not professional buyers and they may act as consumers. The customers cannot require all needed features and need a reliable and familiar seller telling them the important parts what they need to have in the workflow. When the sales person is not so familiar, the customers prefer to communicate with product specialists.

The customer services and application training were also the products that customers value high and the case company succeeds in these areas. The service and the after sale including the application training would be the values to be considered and marketed effectively when planning the best solution for the customers. It would be important to increase the resources to that area which would make a real competitive advantage.

5.3 Increase Product Recognizability

Product recognizability improves when the communication and use of the customer relationship management tools are enhanced. The case company has invested a lot in product development and has succeeded in creating many new innovations to MRI, angiography, CT and PET technology areas. The new products and features needs to be presented to the customers immediately when implemented. Marketing needs to be targeted correctly for the customers so that the customer who receiving the message gets the data for his needs only. It feels then more personalized and shows the company's interests to serve the customers.

5.3.1 Interview Findings on Recognizability Improvements

It would be important to information customers of new products without any latency. It grows the company as a brand to a very innovative producer. The marketing should be targeted correctly. It would be important to add campaigns for the administrative level and for those who are making the big decisions about investments. The whole imaging and laboratory diagnostics opportunities would be worthwhile to be presented. There are many strong areas such as delivery, service and excellent products to show. Focus should be on the use the CRM application to target the companies correctly. There could be use mass marketing tools for smaller customer sites which sales can not reach.

5.3.2 How to Improve

The company name itself is a strong brand and there are strong well known products. The vision and the orientation are partly targeted to present the company both the imaging and the laboratory sector provider. The target group is the same as web interview results shows, the administrator group of the customers. There are huge hospital projects going and coming in the future and there may be possibility to offer for customers to have the whole diagnostic solutions from one company. That would be the ideal situation but hard to execute with the current resources.

To add recognizability is also something that needs effective use of the marketing tools. The targeted information would be better to be sent always based on segmenta-

tion with correct marketing channels and resources. In the imaging sector, when new features and excellent products are released often the information is a marketing value and important to be introduced to all potential buyers immediately. In Finland are many small sites where the latest information is often not updated. To see how the company's resources are used, the customer sites are crucial to be found and categorised. When started to look at the target group for the web interview, 79 public hospitals were found in Finland. The number of healthcare districts in Finland is 20. The number of member municipalities differs from 4 to 29 in one district. Almost all municipalities have their own health-care centers and there are totally 160 of those. When adding the private hospitals and private clinics the company has hundreds of customer sites. One big hospital can include many imaging departments and in every department can be many users such as physicians, nurses and doctors. The final number of customers is more than one thousand. It is impossible to contact and know all needed customers personally with a few account managers. When the segmentation is done it should be checked if there is possibility even in theory to handle those. It would be important to considered if marketing assistants could use more powerful to fulfill the limited market resources and what are their roles.

There may be in the laboratory sector even more customer contacts. There are a lot of small sites with small units and in the other end they have big laboratory units with a lot of automation. It looks that the marketing is done in the laboratory department with wider resources and more controlled than in imaging. There are differentials in the company history and between the customers and products but would be prominent to be discussed what to learn each other's and even how to use the resources together if possible.

The marketing resources have to be focused on most important buyers. It is very important to communicate continuously with the customers that are already the company's customers. Next to focus all the customers that are able to buy product repeatedly. Last to target the customers that are able to buy but have competitors' equipment. The customer groups that are not buying anything in the next few years do not frequently need the information.

5.4 Summary

Communication is the base of all kind of relationship in real life. In business life, the communication can be even more complicate than in private life. There are usually no possibilities to build personal relationships between the deliverer and buyer. Communication is managed in the companies from the size of one man to big organisation groups.

Among the most critical steps are, first, that the customers have to be segmented and the plan for communication has to be done and managed. Second, the communication and the recognizability of the products and brands are normally made via multi-channel data. The company's communication strategy has to be managed and guided with a customer relationship management tool.

There is a need to check the customer segmentation, decide which ones are the target groups for each modality and product. The preferred marketing channels for each customer have to be found. That can be done with customer surveys. Then make the plan of the communication how often, which channels and amount of the volume. The marketing people have to organized and check the resources if there is the needed volume to reach the aim. The communication is important to be controlled and managed well. The customer relationship management tool has to be used very actively. The amount of the communication on every channel has to be measured and the right amount, the ideal point has to be researched with customer interviews and following internal sales figures. The feedback from the field via the company's own people is very important and has to be logged. There should be considered to possible process critical actors when looking the markets. Those actors may be derived from customer relationship management application in use and can be generally identifiable in trust and technique up to the not existence and feature of the relationship management application.

When pushing a lot efforts into one channel and still there is no effect from customers' side, there should be checked whether there is wrong channel in use, the amount is wrong or the targeted products are not suitable and the combination of the channels are critical, as Godfrey, Seiders and Voss [10] found in their research that there is a fine line in executing multichannel relational communication. Basically it could be

thought that customer response to relational communication continues a continuum where reciprocity explains the response to lower activity levels of communication. The ideal point that was mentioned before describes a transition phase which is important to be found.

In the empirical tests have found that the impact to repurchase is to be effected negatively after the certain point. The negative response can come even worse the use of multiple channels but attenuate when aligning communication channels with customer's affections. Be always aware that the complex effects of using multichannel for communication can drive a customer away from rather than closer to the company. To find the correct channels and to measure the effect needs time and patience. All this has to be lead and manage by marketing manager.

When the communication has put in order the best overall sales and product recognizability are important to be improved. Important is to keep sales personality committed and in the company. No company can afford to cut the relationship between the key customers and sales. The sales are very often face to face operate, which needs a long term personalized relationship, the connection to the customers' life and work, the promises that has to be kept and fulfilled. It also requires the mindset of sales people who are fully committed. The selling is also about a good attitude and that is possible with people loving their work. When the customer relationship is braced often, the sales can manage to get short term victories but the key thing is to manage to create long term success. The true loyalty of customers and partnership are the goals. The best-selling results need the sales people to handle the whole knowledge of sales correctly and marketing including the technical details of the products but also the social and psychological elements of the sales process. It is vital for management to recruit the professionals who are experts in all those mentioned sectors. When hiring one with only technical skills, the best role is product specialist. That kind of person can go deeper to details and customers' needs of the features that benefit them. The best marketing result may be reached together with sales and application specialist.

When the relationship has founded the knowledge of the customers and their agenda is strengthening. Then the possibility to influence the contents of the tenders appeared. It is possible to tell them what are the best solutions fulfil their needs using the company's products. The new products are easier to present when the target customers are willing to receive the information when knowing that the presented product is valuable for them. All employees that are working on a customer field are able to act as a marketer.

5.5 Proposal for Action Plan

Based on the results, a list of the proposals for the company was developed to do the improvements in the chosen topics. These proposals are based on the data and other findings from the thesis. Here in the study the researcher provides a reduced version of the improvement proposals. The detailed plan needs more knowledge of the company's processes and it is reserved for the company use. The detailed proposals summarized for this study contain the following suggestions:

1. Based on the findings, it is recommended to check how the customers are segmented and re-evaluate that. The customers should be segmented carefully and the plan for communication has to be done and managed. Section 5.1.2 explains the effects of preferred channels. The channels would be the best to use consistently for both lab and imaging departments concerning for example e-mail and brochure layouts. It is also important to make these materials look similar.
2. The company's country specific communication strategy would work more effectively when managed and guided using the customer relationship management tool. Section 4.1.2 explains how the channels should vary and be planned customer specific. The use of CRM tool concerning this area would also be important to check.

3. The findings also told that the targeted information would be better to be sent always based on segmentation through the correct marketing channel and resources. New features and excellent products are released quite often and the information should be introduced immediately. That supports also calls for the effective use of CRM application.
4. All employees should collect data from customers and store it into the customer relationship management application because all collected data has some value for sales and marketing. It would be also a value to collect the feedback from training events, feedback to the latest delivery project has gone, information about how the customers like the latest update that they have had. There could be measurements also for all sales opportunities, communication activities, and important to have a service link to know what is going on at the customers' sites and then have the information that service department provides. Healthcare portal is already in use but not linked to the customer relationship management application.

The CRM application would also work more effectively when more data is centralised in one place under the customer's name. It is very important to know customers and their agenda, to know their way of working, and communicate accordingly. In the findings the selling itself was found to be more like intuitive selling which is especially based on knowing the customers' agenda and customers well. When knowing them better, it can be possible to manage the communication not focusing on a group of customers but taking every target individually. The marketing would also be done more effectively using the multi channels with understand that the sales or marketing professionals are not only the people to do the marketing with. The CRM application is the core of marketing, selling and managing the customer relationship. It would be good to check how intensively the CRM system is in use and if there are certain areas to improve.

5. There is found some differences in the way of working between the departments. It would be workable to have a small project to unify the procedures and to have the meetings to learn from each other. The subjects could be, for example, how both departments manage the customer relationship including the resource issue.
6. When the resources change, for example, when someone left or the new one starts in the company that needs fast reaction from the management side. The current situation should be analysed and the resources targeted correctly to the most important customer segments. Customer segmentation should be made flexible and based on facts that are collected through the years and be updated every time when changes occur in the customer's field, in the sales organisation or in the product portfolio. In these topics, the experienced use of CRM application is again the target.
7. For the case company, it is very important to stay in the customers preferred vendor list to enable the continuous communication and re-sales with delivering the technology that customers' require. It is important always to remember that the customers are not necessarily need to buy the expensive unit with the highest level of technology but the value for customers is the key to fulfil their needs. Thus, it is necessity to always provide certain value for the customers when contacting them.
8. It would be good to get rid of the overlapping reporting files such as multiple Excel sheets. If there are multiple places where the customer data are collected, no-one finally knows where the latest updates are located. Moreover, Excel-sheets are not made for customer relationship management database but a matrix use. Employees have to have a proper training and introduction for using the company's IT tools well. It is quite usual that when one does not know how to use CRM applications correctly he or she starts to require others to report using other applications such as Office Excel. That one has been made for calculations but should not be in use regularly for CRM use.

9. The company has had specified seminars and training events for the customers. Based on the findings in the current state analysis described in Section 3.2.9, the training events would be profitable to be arranged more in the future. The events should be marketed and planned together with the academy to have the best response. More application specialists should be hired and the company could use them more for marketing functions.
10. In the findings the customer services and application training were also the products that the customers value very high. Based on the findings the company succeeds in those areas quite well. The service and after sales including the application training should be considered and marketed effectively when planning the best solution for the customers. There may also be a need to increase the resources in that area to turn it into a really competitive advantage.
11. Customer complaints should be handled fast. The responsible sales or service substitute should take care of the situation and keep the customer updated all the time. The fast response to customer's request is crucial.
12. When looking at the recognizability part of the customer survey in Section 3.2.3, there is a need to start a campaign for the administrative level target group concerning the overall knowledge of the company's product range. The knowledge that the company currently provides all diagnostics tools and IT solutions seemed to be weak. It is also important to be aware that there are big hospital projects going on around the country. The hospitals are more interesting to have the turn-key projects and may have interests to have complete diagnostics services from one provider.
13. The marketing channel idea that could work is to do short (1 min) video streams to present the latest news and the link would be emailed to the target customers. This could be done by the responsible sales key account manager, product specialist or application specialist. There are already workable presentations in the media such as YouTube to use. These links could be used as marketing material. Still it is best always to have familiar faces and tell the story in Finnish.

14. The findings also indicated that the company's internet pages were very difficult to find. This was not based on the findings from the customer survey and the data but found by the researcher when searching through the internal data of the company. In the customer analysis, the internet was not a very popular way to have the information from the company. But in the future to serve the customers better, the pages should be found easily with a search engine such as Google.

After the proposals were developed, they were presented to the company representatives who had a discussion what points to take into deeper investigation.

6 Validation of the Proposal

This section presents the recommendations and evaluation of the proposal by interviewing managers who lead the sales and marketing in the case company's customer relationship management process. This section describes the interviews results and presents the final proposals after validation.

6.1 Management Feedback on Proposals

It was decided to validate the proposals through the meetings with the management. The plan was to meet one by one and all together to have consensus with all. The draft of the thesis was sent beforehand with a short explanation of the project and its status. The interviewees were informed that it was possible to send comments also via email. The managers were selected to validate the proposals because they are the ones responsible for the company's operations in these areas.

The interviews started with a short description of the thesis and then proposals were presented. To explain the basis of the proposals the current state analysis and data collection results were shown to the interviewees. The aim was to describe shortly how and why the proposals were created.

The interviewees discussed the case company's customer relationship management system that is in use and how it is used. They explained the structure of the customer segmentation that is currently used. Two departments were chosen as the focus for this study. It turned out that there are differences between the departments in the basic elements of segmentation such as the most important customers and the way how the low end customers are selected, from the marketing point of view. The customer base is also different, the number of sales and marketing people differs and the products and the purchasing criteria are different. As mentioned in 5.3.2 the number of customer sites and the structures of the healthcare districts and its social and healthcare services are very complicated and the departments continue to the special needs when segmented.

The interviewees told how they use the segmentation for the marketing purposes, what the idea behind that is and how they benefit from that kind of segmentation. The laboratory part of the company was merged some years ago and the CRM structure has been established after that. The marketing operational employees are all in the same country and help to use the tools and make the changes more effectively. The imaging department has made the CRM plan together with other countries and is harder to manage and change.

The interviewees found the proposals very interesting concerning customer relationship management application use. The interviewees found, based on the proposals, that there may be a need to re-evaluate things and have a new look at the segmentation and the processes that such as communicating channels in use and amount of the communication. The interviewees also discussed a new customer complaint process that has recently started to have a faster response from a factory for product based complaints. The process and the company based complaint handling were re-designed, but there still has to be the personnel which could take care of customer communication and keep the customers updated.

The interviewees also found the proposal no 12 about increasing product range recognisability as interesting. The interviewees recommended checking if it is needed to enhance the administrative level customers' knowledge about having all diagnostics equipment and IT tools coming from one company. It depends on the target customer because in some healthcare districts totally separated organisations are working in the laboratory, IT and imaging.

The interviewees also supported the idea to use video clips for advertising and marketing purposes from the proposals. They recommended looking into how the idea could be forwarded for use, and checking the company policy and the tools how that could be done and what would be the costs for that.

The interviewees also confirmed that the internet pages are difficult to use when trying to find the country specific information. The global web pages are working better. It was recommended to check what improvements could be done to find local pages easier with the search engines.

The proposals 9 and 10 were found good to use in the future. These are the ones that need resources to improve and have a responsible person to start marketing. One specialist has been hired recently with strong market analysis skills and the goal is to improve the application training services. The open trainings are also the ones that they promote and are the ones that the customers' value. The number of these needs to be increased and the target is to cover many modalities and customer groups. The need to increase the application trainers should also be taken into consideration.

Finally, the interviewees thought it was important to have opinions and a fresh view on the processes they use. They found that this research has strengthened the trust for improvement processes the management has just started and added some new topics to pay attention to in the future.

6.2 Final Proposal of the Action Plan

After the discussion on the proposals, the proposals were validated to be taken into further investigation. Some improvements have been found already partly in process. The final proposals can be present shortly in this way.

1. The current CRM system would be good to use more effectively and kept updated.
2. The customer segmentation and the targets for each segment should be re-evaluated. The segmentation should be more flexible and easy to change
3. The multi/overlapping reporting should be taken into the focus to eliminate it.
4. The co-operation between the departments should be increased. There may be found some frequent interests and even possibility to use resources jointly.
5. The number of the training events should be increased and this process has already started in the beginning this year with great success.
6. Seminars are also important events to be held more for marketing purposes.
7. Customer services and app trainings should be used more for marketing purposes.
8. The video clips for marketing use need to be checked for use in the future
9. The info in the company's internet pages should be checked and re-planned.

7 Conclusions

This section draws conclusions on the results of this thesis. It presents the summary and practical implications to consider when putting the Action Plan in practice. The section ends up with evaluation describing how reliability and validity was taken into account in this study.

7.1 Summary

The researcher got the idea for this thesis when met with the case company's general manager. The company was in the change situation where two company departments from the same group have been started to combine. The company liked to know how well the customers' know the company and their products. There was the internal process implemented to become one big healthcare diagnostics company. The need was also to know how the company success in customer relationship management and how to improve. The objective for the thesis was to investigate that situation.

The researcher started the thesis with the current state analysis to clarify the recognizability and the strong and weak areas of the customer relationship management. Some areas were for improvement. The targets were agreed with the company's representatives and the supervisors of the thesis. The chosen targets were

1. Continuous customer communication
2. Best overall solution sales
3. Increase in product recognisability.

After the targets were set the researcher searched for the literature from the academic databases to find the best and reliable information and a strong theory base for improvements. After the data was collected the researcher conducted five interviews with the case company's management and account managers to improve the knowledge about the improvement areas, how they are working in practice and how the company see the improvement areas could be developed from the company's perspective.

After the improvement proposals were formulated, there were 14 proposals addressing three main targets. The improvement proposals were then evaluated with the managers of the marketing and sales which was done by short interviews. Since some improvements have been already taken into consideration during the period of the thesis project, there was not need to make the changes after validation. The company found that the researcher has come with conclusions that strengthen the company and its marketing operations. Some of the things found were known in the existing operations and processes but not in use; some were taken into deeper investigation as for how they could change the processes and start the new ones.

During the validation of the results, the attention was drawn to the difference between the two diagnostics departments and their working cultures. It was seen that some things were made more effectively in one department and some in the other unit. Cross functional cooperation did not work well in both. One of the reasons was different management practices, but on the other hand the operations could be done in the same way. The company saw the need to unify the same operations and have meetings periodically in the future to improve the cooperation and certain operations. There was also a need indicated to open a position of local marketing management in the imaging department because it does not exist in Finland at the moment.

7.2 Practical Implications

This study suggests considering the following implications for the proposals to be put into use:

- The problem with CRM data is that many customer contacts have changed their positions often and the status of each person is then difficult to follow. There is a need to reserve a certain workload to keep the contact database updated.
- The segmentation and the CRM database need to be kept updated
- The customer data should always be kept in the current place such as Share.
- The target for the future is on further increase co-operation between the two departments. This co-operation has already increased; for example, it has been implemented the One Healthcare project to improve all actions.
- There seems to be a need for a local marketing manager in the imaging department.
- Someone should also take care of the local marketing functions, and it should not be the one trying to lead it from abroad without the local knowledge.
- The company has started to increase the number of the training events. Seminars should also be the target events to hold more for marketing purposes.
- The customer services and application trainings should be used more for marketing purposes.
- The proposed use of video clips for marketing purposes should be checked for future use.
- The company's internet pages should also undergo further improvement. Some parts are already changed and some should be changed into more informative.
- In the current state analysis it was found that the social media is not something that the customers like to use as an information channel. Still that is the marketing channel which grows extremely fast, and it is about time when the company has to consider that channel also.
- When target is to increase product recognizability the base is the communication. By exercising a good communication strategy, the company can get closer to its customers and start to know them better, and strengthen the customer relationship. With a working relationship the company will be able to market and sell the new features and products more, and increase the sails of those which are yet unknown.

7.3 Evaluation

This section compares the objective of this thesis with the results. It shows how the topics have been implemented throughout this thesis project compared with how the issues have been planned in Section 2.1.

7.3.1 Objective vs. Outcome

The objective of this thesis was to improve the product recognizability and suggest improvements for the customer relationship process to make that possible. When looking into the results, the study developed 14 improvement proposals presenting the most critical improvement suggestions for the case company described in Section 6.2.

All the improvement proposals target to improve the case company's processes and are changing the company's customer relationship management to a more tailored approach to the customers' needs. The managers who were chosen for evaluation were also very determined to use the results and appreciated the findings.

It was clear from beginning that the results cannot be tested during this thesis project. The improvement topics were chosen to have the fastest response but still it is clear that the effect can be measured after one or two year period. The final process improvements are made after the planning and changing period they need, so the final implementation may happen during this year.

The thesis project was conducted by following the plan shown in the flowchart in Section 2.1. First the case company's characteristics and the area they work were shown in the introduction and business problem section. In Section 2 the process, data collection and method were shown. In Section 3, the thesis continued with the current state analysis to find the topics for the improvement research work. In Section 4 the data was collected from the literature and the best practices discovered and linked to chosen topics.

All three improvement areas were illustrated in related sub-sections in Section 4 to follow them systematically. Section 5 showed how improvement proposals were built based on the data and theme interviews continuing to proposals. The theme interviews were done based on the findings in Sections 3 and 4. The improvement proposals were built based on the findings from the current state analysis, data collection and the theme interviews. At the end of Section 5 is a summary where all proposals were put together.

After that the proposals were evaluated by the case company management. In some of the findings, there is found some similarities with recently started improvement projects in the company while some other findings were totally new. All proposals were found useful and in the near future the management will decide which would be taken for further investigation before put into use in the company. Thus, the thesis objective can be considered to be reached. The final feedback can be collected after a year or two after the implementation, when the proposals are tested in practice.

7.3.2 Reliability and Validity

To aim of the reliability is to ensure that the research measures and shows what it was actually intend to do. Whittemore et al. [17, p. 533], Shenton [18, p. 64-69] and Creswell & Miller [19, p. 126] listed the following points to check the validity and reliability of a study. The researcher's comments added to link these points to this thesis.

1. The adoption of research methods is well established both in qualitative investigation in general and in information science in particular. All parts are shown to the reader and written out with explanations for each finding and action. The thesis is made according to the qualitative research method and uses the case study methodology. In Section 2, the data collection and methods are presented. The base of the study was done by conducting mass web-interviews, and the results were collected and analyzed in numbers to find the most relevant topics but the findings were described in words. The next data collection method was theme interviews based on the theoretical framework and the results were also analysed using the content analysis method, in words.

2. Before the first data collection dialogues take place, the researcher developed early familiarity with the culture of the participating organisations. Since the researcher has worked in the case company for almost a decade, the case company's organisation culture as well as the customers' organisations were very familiar to him.
3. Random sampling of the individuals was used to serve as informants in the first iteration of data collection. After that, this approach was further expended by conducting theme interviews described in Section 5. Additionally, many opinions were asked through the thesis project from colleagues and the employees that are working in the investigated sector.
4. Triangulation was used in the data collection for the study. Triangulation may involve the use of different methods, for example, to combine observation, focus groups and individual interviews, which often form the major data collection strategies in qualitative research. In this study, observation was added with the web-interview results and accounts given in interviews. For the web-interviews, a sufficient number of participants were involved making the interview base quite substantial. The current state analysis questions were planned and then the results were analyzed together with the company representatives. There were also theme interviews held when the improvement proposals were made together with the management.
5. To help ensure the honesty of informants when contributing data, each person who was approached in this study was given opportunities to refuse to participate in the project so as to ensure that the data collection sessions involve only those who are genuinely willing to take part and prepared to offer the relevant data freely and openly. The persons involved were honesty interested in obtaining genuine results in the study and helped the researcher through the project.

6. There were also frequent debriefing sessions held between the researcher and his superiors, such as a project director or steering group. The debriefing sessions with the steering group and superiors added to the researcher's own observations.
7. The study also underwent peer scrutiny during the research project. Opportunities for the scrutiny of the project were exercised with the colleagues, peers and academics, and feedback offered to the researcher at these presentations (e.g. at conferences and thesis seminars) was documented and taken into account. The thesis has also been presented to the supervisors many times through the working period.
8. The results of the study were backed by the extensive experience, background, and qualifications of the investigator. The researcher of this thesis has 18 years of working experience in a healthcare sector with imaging products, customer services and project management, with three different suppliers and the researcher has made his engineering studies during the working career to fulfil the experience of the needed sectors through these years.
9. The study also utilized the opportunity to analyse the current state data collected with a web tool, with the results stored and added to the appendices of the thesis. When the theme interviews were held these notes were analysed also together with the interviewees, in the team member checks. The draft of the thesis has been sent several times to the relevant parties and the accuracy of the data has also been checked. The participants have had time to check and implement the feedback received from the member checks.

10. Finally, the study offers a detailed description of the phenomenon under scrutiny. In the area of this research, this is an important provision for promoting credibility as it helps to convey the actual situations that have been investigated and, to some extent, the contexts that surround them. These areas and the contexts are visible on the table of contents and in the structure of research. In the introduction, the business problem and objective of the research are presented. In the Research Approach Section, the research process, data collection methods, data sources are introduced. The best practises of chosen topics are presented in the background Section, and the data obtained with the web-based and theme interviews are discussed in the current state analysis. The data was collected from the customers with considerable expertise in the area, and the theme interviews were done with the case company's professionals. The best practises were collected based on the three target topics and based on the peer reviewed the scientific publications of well-known researchers.

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Appendix 1.

The sample of the customer survey

Markkinatutkimus opinnäytetyötä varten.

Seuraavassa pyydän mielipidettänne Siemensin markkinointiarvoista ja niiden toteutumisesta.

Vastaus jälleen kouluarvosanoin, 10(erinomainen),9 (kiitettävä),8 (hyvä), 7(tyydyttävä), 6 (kohtalainen), 5 (välttävä), 4(heikko)

12. Kuinka arvioisitte Siemensin onnistumisen seuraavilla osa-alueilla.

	10	9	8	7	6	5	4
Asiakassuhteet yleisesti?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Esiintyminen liikekumppanina?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kommunikoinnin taso markkinointi- ja asiakaspalvelutilanteissa?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Asioinnin helppous ja tavoitettavuus?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Myyntiprosessien onnistuminen ja myyjien asiantuntemus?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Miten koette Siemensin arvostavien teitä asiakkaana?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Miten Siemens ottaa tarpeenne huomioon?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Miten hyvin Siemens löytää teille sopivia kokonaisratkaisuja?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kuinka koette asiakassuhteen luotettavaksi?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

13. Miten Siemens onnistuu mielestänne seuraavissa asiakassuhteiden vaiheissa?

	10	9	8	7	6	5	4
Asiakassuhteet yleisesti, kun hankintamenettely ei ole ajankohtainen?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Laitteistojen ja tuotteiden tarjousvaiheessa?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Markkinatutkimus opinnäytetyötä varten.

Millaisia ominaisuuksia näette tulevaisuudessa oman työskentelyenne, tai vastualueenne kannalta merkittävänä? Esim. 10(erittäin merkittävä) 7(huomioitava) 4(merkityksetön)

14. Työskentely-ympäristön ekologisuus?

10 9 8 7 6 5 4

15. Löytää uusia menetelmiä potilashoidon parantamiseen, sekä teknisiä ratkaisuja ja uusia tapoja tehokkuuden ja laadun parantamiseen?

10 9 8 7 6 5 4

16. Löytää paras mahdollinen tekninen ratkaisupaketti edistyneeseen terveydenhuoltoon, kuten täydellinen valikoima kuvantamiseen, laboratoriotutkimuksiin, terveydenhollon IT-järjestelmiin ja integroida ne?

10 9 8 7 6 5 4

17. Saada työkaluja työvirran optimointiin, joilla tähdätään työn tekemisen helpottamiseen parantamalla tehokkuutta teknisten sovellusten kautta, mahdollistamalla paremmin henkilöstön, materiaalin ja ajan hyödyntämisen?

10 9 8 7 6 5 4

18. Työprosessien ja -välineiden kehittäminen energiatehokkaiksi?

10 9 8 7 6 5 4

19. Tutkimulaitteiden energiatalouden parantaminen?

10 9 8 7 6 5 4

20. Kuinka pitkälle tulevaisuuteen arvioisitte, että laitteiston hankinnan jälkeisen ajan kustannukset tulee voida laskea hankintahetkellä?

	1-3 v	3-5 v	5-7 v	7-10 v
Huollon ja ylläpidon osalta	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Käyttökustannusten osalta	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21. Kuinka merkittävänä pidätte laitteiston hankintahintaa suhteessa arvioituihin elinkaarikustannuksiin.

- <20%
- 20-50%
- 50-70%
- 70<%



Edell.

Seur.

Appendix 2.

The Theme Interview notes.

Pyydän teitä arvioimaan vapaasti miten parantaisitte noiden aihealueiden toimivuutta? Mitä ajatuksia nuo aiheet herättävät? Mistä syystä asiakkaat kokevat nuo asiat heikoiksi? Tässä ote työstä:

When planned this survey it was hoped to find some certain topics to improve. As mentioned and expected the favourite responses were 7 or 8. In the findings that listed above were chosen the topics with lowest scores where to concentrate and to improve. These are very basic areas in CRM and that's why very crucial also.

1. Customer communication:

- Customer communication when no ongoing or coming acquisitions
- Overall communication.

Next two things are also more or less about communication.

2. Find overall solutions:

- Increase the expertise
- Know customers and their needs better
- Third party equipments should be chosen well and also offered along with the company equipment
- Influence the tender quality.

3. To add recognisability

- It is almost unknown that the case company can deliver all diagnostics products to the hospital. The case company is the only company in Finland that manufactures all those equipments and provides services.
- Imaging sector is the best known part overall. Administrators do not know that The case company provides healthcare IT solutions; and product recognisability is not sufficient in the whole customer sector.

Appendix 3.

The interview of key employees from the company's organization.

Who to interview: 1

Date: 28.11.2013

1. Customer communication

Tools started to use such as newsletter generator, channel may be correct but quality poor or number/load of communication wrong or vice versa. Communication must be shared and targeted via several channels.

2. Find overall solutions

Topics below are basic sales competences.

With correct communication to know customers better, long term customer relations is a base of knowing customers' needs and agenda. Increase the expertise, third party equipments should be choose carefully and also offer those, influence to the tender quality. The long term relationship make possible to influence the customer's tenders requirements.

3. To add recognisability

The case company has to information customers without any latency of new products. It grows Siemens as a brand to very innovative producer. The marketing must be targeted correctly.

Share must be in use intensively.

The interview of key employees from the company's organization.

Who to interview: 2

Date: 05.12.2013

1. Customer communication

New email tool to increase email communication has implemented and trained for all sales and marketing people. Share use has increased to upper level and need more focus. Sales bonus system needs to be connected to proper active use of Share. There must be measured all sales opportunities, communication activities, and some service link should be made to know what's going on at customers' sites.

2. Find overall solutions

Life cycle follow up. The biggest customers should be and are in DX sector under continuously communicated. Those customers are targets and get the information what are the needs in the field. Too many small customer's to get contacted often because lack of the recourses. In DX the customer field and equipments differs from IM and must be handled slightly different. The need is nowadays more to sell value than only solutions. It is more like intuitive selling which needs to know customers agenda and customers well. IM may be (but shouldn't be) more technology stressed and DX focused more features and benefits.

3. To add recognisability

To add campaigns for the administrative level and for those who are making big decisions about investments. The Whole IM and DX opportunities must be presented. There are many strong areas such as delivery, service and good products to show. Use of Share to target the campaigns correctly.

The interview of key employees from the company's organization.

Who to interview: 3

Date: 12.12.2013

1. Customer communication

Problems to take care are

Lack of sufficient resources. Targeting minor resources correctly is not good. The segmentation should be done much better. With only two or three sales people is not possible to do marketing and sales proper way for whole country and all modalities. The segmentation and the calculation how often to contact and which customers are not possible to fulfil so it is useless.

About targeting the communication: To find the new customer to communicate is difficult. Also to be sure if the used customer contact is the one who really influence to the purchase decisions.

When the new sales person starts, there is not time for good work introduction. The new sales person has to go to the customers alone and start to create the relationship and communication from zero. Other colleagues should introduce the new employee to the key customers or even better that the one who leave the company would do the introduce.

2. Find overall solutions

The knowledge and the expertise per modality is not the best. Takes years to expertise this wide modality range and really deeply know those products and features. There is need for separate product specialists.

Would be good have more resources to handle all modalities well. The presentations are good but not the channel to sell the products. The sales work is to ask and ask again how they are working and what are the expectations and how they like to work. By expertise you learn correct terms to speak to the customer. Customers don't necessarily know and use the The case company terms.

The interview of key employees from the company's organization.

Who to interview: 4

Date: 18.12.2013

1. Customer communication

Customer segmentation must be done better

Work orientation should be done better when new sales people starts

Limited resources should be planned better

Not possible to contact all customer groups. Big projects take all time.

2. Find overall solutions

Long process for a new to familiarize to the customers. New sales people go to the site alone and start from beginning. The base is to know customers. Good customer relationship tool would be a solution.

3. To add recognisability

Targeted campaigns

The interview of key employees from targets the company's organization.

Who to interview: 5

Date: 10.1.2014

1. Customer communication

Segmentation has been done but the communication targets should be set differently because of limited resources. Customers are too busy to search information from web- other channels must be used.

There should be one good CRM tool and use it. Key customers must find better and add visits. Modality days could be good channel. The customer doc's should use as speakers.

2. Find overall solutions

Application trainers should be more to give targeted modality specified training. Could help to find correct solutions.

3. To add recognisability

Is it needed to do marketing to all products? Should be focused to important ones based on the customer's needs. Marketing has done globally but not country specific? The marketing has done through congresses and fairs but not regularly. Product specific tours could arrange.