



VAASAN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Veera Kero

INTERNAL CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Case study for company X

Business Economics
2023

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tekijä	Veera Kero
Opinnäytetyön nimi	Sisäisten asiakkaiden tyytyväisyys
Vuosi	2023
Kieli	englanti
Sivumäärä	53 + 3 liitettä
Ohjaaja	Teemu Myllylä

Tämä opinnäytetyö tehtiin teknologiateollisuudessa toimivalle yritykselle. Toimeksiantaja yritys toimii globaalina johtajana meri- ja energiamarkkinoilla tarjoten älyteknologian ratkaisuja. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli löytää varaosa koordinaattorien sisäisten asiakkaiden tyytyväisyyteen vaikuttavat kehityskohteet ja ratkaisut miten niitä voitaisiin kehittää.

Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys koostuu kolmesta luvusta. Ensimmäisessä luvussa käsitellään sisäisiä asiakkaita ja heidän tyytyväisyyttänsä. Toisessa luvussa käsitellään palvelua ja palvelulaatua. Viimeisessä luvussa käsitellään sisäistä viestintää. Tutkimus toteutettiin kvalitatiivisena teemahaastatteluna kohdeyrityksen varaosa koordinaattorien sisäisille asiakkaille.

Tutkimuksen lopputuloksena toimeksiantaja sai konkreettisen käsityksen kehityskohteista ja miten niitä pystyttäisiin kehittää lyhyellä ja pitkällä aikavälillä. Haastatteluista ilmeni, että varsinkin viestintä tarvitsee kehitystä ja yhteistyötä pitäisi lisätä. Viestintää voitaisiin kehittää parantamalla nykyisiä työkaluja tai kehittämällä jopa uuden työkalun. Sisäiset asiakkaat myös kokivat, että heidän tyytyväisyyttänsä pitäisi seurata ja palautetta pitäisi pyytää ja kerätä.

ABSTRACT

Author	Veera Kero
Title	Internal Customer Satisfaction
Year	2023
Language	English
Pages	53 + 3 Appendices
Name of Supervisor	Teemu Myllylä

This thesis was commissioned to a company which is a global leader in innovative and smart technology solutions. The company operates in marine and energy technology market. The aim for this thesis study was to find the improvement targets and development solutions to Part Coordination Management, Internal Customers, team's internal customer satisfaction.

The theoretical framework of this thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter discusses internal customers and their satisfaction. The second chapter examines service and service quality. The third chapter disclose internal communication. The empirical study of this thesis was made by qualitative theme interview among the parts coordinator's internal customers.

As a result of the thesis study, the client received concrete improvement targets and ideas how they could develop them in short and long term. The interviews revealed that especially communication needs improvements and more cooperation should take place. Communication could be developed by improving already existing tools or even a new tool could be built. The internal customers felt that their satisfaction should be monitored and feedback should be requested and collected.

Keywords	Internal customer, satisfaction, service quality, internal communication
----------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------

CONTENTS

TIIVISTELMÄ

ABSTRACT

1	INTRODUCTION	8
1.1	Research problem, questions and objectives	8
1.2	Case company.....	9
1.3	The structure of the thesis.....	9
2	INTERNAL CUSTOMER SATISFACTION	11
2.1	Customer	11
2.2	Internal customers.....	11
2.3	Customer expectations.....	14
2.4	Customer experience.....	15
2.5	Customer satisfaction	16
3	SERVICE QUALITY	20
3.1	Service	20
3.2	Quality	21
3.3	Service quality.....	22
4	INTERNAL COMMUNICATION	27
4.1	Communication	27
4.2	Internal communication	28
5	EMPIRICAL STUDY	30
5.1	Theoretical framework	30
5.2	Research methodology.....	31
5.3	Research material collection method.....	32
5.4	Research plan	32
5.5	Handling and analyzing the research material	33
6	RESULT ANALYSIS	36
6.1	The interviewees	36

6.2	Service quality.....	37
6.3	Satisfaction	38
6.4	Development	40
7	SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH.....	43
7.1	Conclusion and discussion	43
7.2	Reliability and validity.....	46
7.3	Research benefits and further research proposal	49
	SOURCES	51
	APPEDICES	54

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1. Internal service functions and Internal customer (Grönroos 2001, 381.)	13
Figure 2. Memory of experience (Hänti 2021, Chapter 1.).....	15
Figure 3. Customer satisfaction (Bergström & Leppänen 2003, 429.).....	17
Figure 4. Total perceived quality (Grönroos 2015, 99)......	23
Figure 5. The seven criteria of good perceived service quality (Grönroos 2015, 107.).....	24
Figure 6. The interviewees	36

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. Semi structured theme interview body

APPENDIX 2. Tutkimuksen puolistrukturoitu teemahaastattelu runko

APPENDIX 3. Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey

1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is made as part of the Business Administration degree at Vaasa University of Applied Sciences. The aim of thesis study is to demonstrate and develop the student's expertise and as a researcher. (Arene 2020 a.)

This thesis is made for a technology company operating in the marine and energy business. The aim of this thesis is to find out what aspects should be improved in the service between Parts Coordination Management, Internal Customers, team and their internal customers.

The idea for this thesis research came from the Parts Coordination Management, Internal Customers, team. In the end of year 2022, a survey was conducted for all partners working with Parts Coordination Management, Internal Customers, team. Only two chosen internal customers replied to this survey. In Part Coordination Management, Internal Customers, team's everyday work, they often notice that their internal customers aren't always satisfied. By doing this research, the goal is to find the problems and solutions to develop the internal customer satisfaction.

1.1 Research problem, questions and objectives

Three research question have been formed based on the research problem:

1. How can Parts Coordination Management, internal customer, team serve their internal customers better?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Parts Coordination Management, internal customer, team's service?
3. What are the short and long-term solutions to offer better customer service quality?

The research problem is to find how this Parts Coordination Management, Internal Customers, team can improve their internal customers' satisfaction. By

researching the internal customer satisfaction, the main problems can be found. Analyzing the research results, the strengths and weaknesses can be revealed. The aim is to present short and long-term development suggestions from the results.

The research is limited only on the target company's Parts Coordination Management, Internal Customer, team and their internal customers. The target company has many other parts coordination management teams, but they are directly in contact with the end customers. The other parts coordination management teams processes and way of working differ from the Parts Coordination Management, Internal Customers, team.

1.2 Case company

The case company for this thesis study is a global leader in innovative and smart technology solutions for marine and energy technology markets. The company is listed on Nasdaq Helsinki stock exchange. The company employees approximately 17,500 people globally and operates in more than 79 different countries. The company's sales and service network operate in approximately 240 different locations. The number of personnel in Finland is approximately 3,800. In 2022 the company's Net sales were approximately 5,800 million euros.

The Parts Coordination Management, Internal Customer, team belong to the company's Global Logistic Services unit. Currently there are nine employees working the Parts Coordination Management, Internal Customer, team. The parts coordinators and their internal customers are located in all around the world.

1.3 The structure of the thesis

The thesis study includes theoretical framework and empirical study. After the introduction, the study focuses on the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework is divided into three chapters, which support and open the background of the empirical study. In the first chapter internal customer satisfaction is defined. The chapter also includes theory about studying internal customer satisfaction.

The second theory chapter focuses on service quality. The chapter includes the definition of service quality and theory how it effects on internal customer satisfaction. The third theory chapter discusses internal communication. Communication is defined in this chapter. The chapter also explain the internal communications importance and impact on internal customer satisfaction.

The second larger entity of the thesis in addition to the theoretical framework is the empirical study. The research methodology, research material collection method and the research material analysis method of the thesis are presented in the empirical study. The empirical study is carried with qualitative theme interviews. The purpose is to interview Parts Coordination Management, Internal Customers, team's internal customers to gain deeper qualitative information. In this way, deeper understanding of their satisfaction is obtained.

The last chapter of the thesis focuses on the research results of the theme interviews and the conclusions drawn from the research material. The reliability and validity of the research are discussed. Possible further research proposals, development proposals and the benefit brought by the thesis for the case company are presented.

2 INTERNAL CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

In this chapter internal customers and their satisfaction are defined. The definitions are presented using theory about customers, internal customers, customer expectation, customer experience and customer satisfaction.

2.1 Customer

Customer is a broad term and there are many kinds of customer relations. When a customer is the target of marketing and sales efforts, he is regarded as a customer in a transactional marketing approach. From the customer relationship view, it is an ongoing process. A customer relationship exists even when goods, services, information or other resources are not exchanged. Customers should always have the help and support available when needed. (Grönroos 2015, 27-30.)

Customer is the final judge of quality. To ensure development and that the right things are done, it is necessary to think about who the customer is. It is important to acknowledge customers' needs and values to serve customers in the best possible way. (Lecklin 2006, 79-84.) The basis of customer understanding is the desire to deeply focus on human behavior. Simply looking at the customer's behavior is not enough. You must get inside the customer's world and complexity of decision-making. It requires the ability to put yourself in customer's position, the desire to help and pursuit of a sense of community. (Hänti 2021, Chapter 1.)

2.2 Internal customers

Substantial amount of research has been done on external customers satisfaction. Much less has been conducted about internal customers. Internal customer relations have a substantial effect on sustaining external customers satisfaction, loyalty, retention, and long-term financial success. (Gilbert 2000.) The internal customer service is often forgotten when designing and making services. Internal service occurs in many companies where the end customer contacts are supported by other employee or department. Without internal service providers, the

personnel's product knowledge would have to cover company's every product. In many companies that kind of knowledge is impossible to have. Internal customer service is used to help other colleagues to serve the external customers. (Schneider 2004, 20.)

External customers are working or operating outside the company or organization whereas internal customers are working in the same company as the service provider. Often when external customers contact company's employee or department, they are supported by other departments. (Grönroos 2015, 380-382.) When an external supplier delivers the materials, the receiver is an external customer. When the recipient hands over the materials for further processing, the handler of the next process step is an internal customer. The chain continues until the goods are ready and handed to an external customer. (Lecklin 2006, 81.)

In this research, when customer needs parts to be replaced or for commissioning, they contact case company's end customer contacts. The end customer contacts will place a quotation, or an order and they will be supported by the parts coordination management, internal customers, team. The end customer contacts are parts coordinators internal customers.

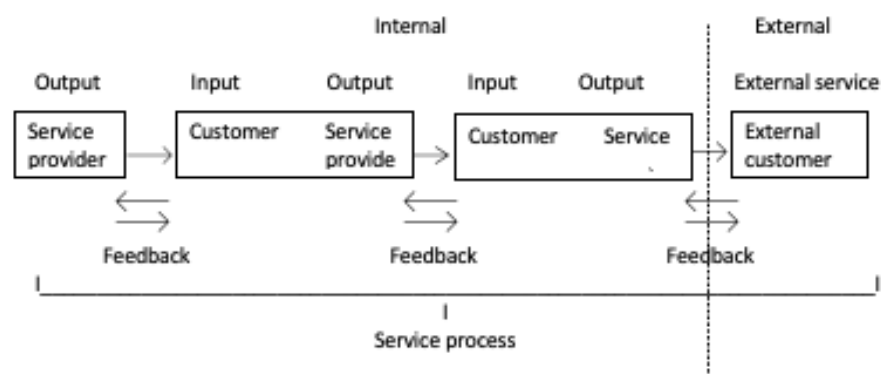


Figure 1. Internal service functions and Internal customer (Grönroos 2001, 381.)

In figure 1 demonstrates, how internal service has an effect on external service. According to Christian Grönroos it is often difficult for the internal service providers to realize the impact of their service to external customers. It is difficult to realize, because the internal service providers rarely communicate and operate together with the external customers. The internal service providers often see their internal customers as fellow colleagues and think that their provided service has no effects on the external service. (Grönroos 2015, 381.) The task of quality management is to make sure that everyone involved in the process know the importance of their own work. One step in the process can affect the whole chain. In supply chain, it is often the weakest link who determinates the quality. (Lecklin 2006, 81.)

The purpose of internal customer service is to support other services inside the company. Internal functions are often referred as company's support function. (Grönroos 2015, 392-393.) According to Albrecht and Zemke (1985,52.) if you don't serve external customers, your job is to help someone to serve external customers. Internal customer service can be moving the work phase to another colleague that finishes the job. The third person may be the only one dealing directly with an external customer. (Albrecht & Zemke 1985, 52.)

The internal service quality and satisfaction are affected by the same factors as external service. Internal customers appreciate that their expectations and needs are taken into consideration. Internal customers tend to notice the interest to perform the tasks, the kindness, empathy, and willingness. The most important factor to affect the satisfaction is how the errors and mistakes are corrected. (Järvinen, Rosti & Ylikoski 2006, 69-70.)

It is important to make assessments to the internal customers. The internal service providers tend to see their own performance in a higher level than it is rated by their internal customers. When team members' own sense of performance is

higher than internal customers rate them, the team is unable to focus on improving the needed areas. This can have an impact on the overall service quality for the external customers. (Gilbert 2000.)

2.3 Customer expectations

Customers' everyday activities and their value-creating processes are the most important things for a firm to know about its customers (Grönroos 2015, 384). Researching and understanding customer's needs and expectations plays a big role in developing services. When customer's needs and expectation are understood, the existing services can be developed to meet them better. (Tuulaniemi 2011, Chapter 2.)

Customers have expectations about the outcome of service, service process and service environment. Expectations have predictive and normative characteristics. When customer is using the service for the first time, they have predictive expectations. With experience the expectations become normative expectations. When customer has used a service and has been satisfied, he will expect the service to be in the same level next time. Customers' expectations are also flexible and two-level. Customers' have expectations on what kind of service is good enough for them and what kind of service they would want to get. The space left between these two levels is the area of acceptable service. (Ylikoski 1999, 119-121.)

Rope & Pöllänen (1998) have connected the above mentioned characteristics and levels and divided them in three dimensions: ideal, predictive and minimum expectations. The ideal expectations reflect on customers wishes that are formed by their values. Ideal expectations are individual, and they aren't valid for everyone. It is impossible to meet every customer's ideal expectation. Companies try to find solutions to that they could serve customer's ideal expectations as comprehensive as possible. The predictive expectations are formed by the

customer's image of company operations. Minimum expectations reflect to the minimum level that customer is willing to accept. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 30-35.)

2.4 Customer experience

Customer experience is the sum of encounters, imagination, and feelings that the customer forms about the company's operations. Feelings and subconscious interpretations have an effect on customers personal experience. Therefore, it is hard to make an impact on the customer experience. (Löytänä & Korteso 2011, Chapter 1.) Jain, Aagja & Bagdare (2017.) define customer as a comprehensive concept that represents the sum of feelings, perceptions and attitudes formed as a result of the service process. It is formed by combining customer interaction, co-creation and personalization. The goal is to create a unique, pleasurable, and memorable experience for the customers. (Jain, Aagja & Bagdare 2017.)

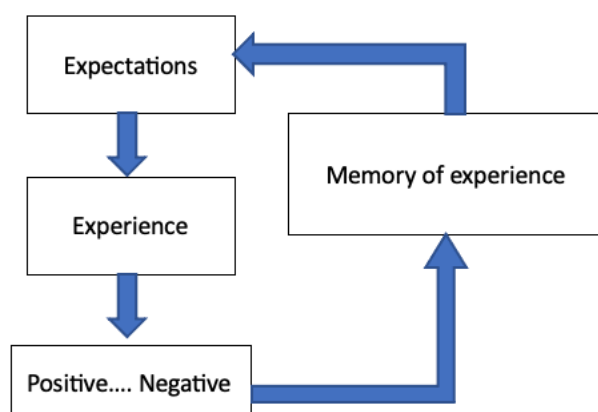


Figure 2. Memory of experience (Hänti 2021, Chapter 1.)

The effect of customer experience to customers' expectation is demonstrated in figure 2. After every experience, customer's expectations are affected by the memory of experience. Customers are having a kind of conversation with themselves regarding past experiences and their expectations for future experiences. (Hänti 2021, Chapter 1.) Exceeding customers' expectations is a key

element of customer experience. Customer experience can be divided into four perspectives. A good customer experience supports customer's self-image, surprises & creates experiences, sticks in the mind and makes the customer use the service again. (Löytänä & Korteso 2011, Chapter 2.)

In the service industry service quality and scope have a big role in customer experience. It is important to understand that serving the internal customers means to help them to serve their customers better. If internal customers have a bad customer experience, it is likely that the external customers experience will not be in a good level. With internal customers the good experience is to have a trouble free and reassuring experience. (Meyer & Schwager, 2007.)

Customer experience management (CEM) maximizes the value given to customer. The benefits on customer experience management are that it makes customers more willing to give development ideas, engages personnel and decreases the amount of negative customer feedback. (Löytänä & Korteso 2011, Chapter 1.) To be able to create a good customer experience, companies need thorough customer understanding. Qualitative research can be used to create overall picture of customers' expectations and needs. A traditional quantitative customer satisfaction survey is not enough to for this goal. (Korkiakoski 2023, Chapter 2.)

2.5 Customer satisfaction

After using the service, customer is either satisfied or unsatisfied. It is easier to have a satisfied customer if the quality is in excellent level. Often satisfaction and quality are used in the same meaning, but satisfaction is a broader term compared to quality. Quality is just one of the factors affecting customer satisfaction. (Ylikoski 1999, 149.) There has been a lot of reflection on whether there is a difference between customer satisfaction and service quality, and if there is a difference, whether the experience of quality comes first and customer satisfaction only afterwards or vice versa. It is generally thought that the

experience of service quality comes first and the feeling of satisfactions or dissatisfaction comes afterwards. (Grönroos 2010, 90-92.)

$$\text{Customer Satisfaction} = \frac{\text{Customers experienced quality}}{\text{Customers need and expectation}}$$

Figure 3. Customer satisfaction (Bergström & Leppänen 2003, 429.)

In figure 3 the way of measuring customer satisfaction is demonstrated. In customer satisfaction research satisfaction is measured with customers experienced quality, need and expectation. (Bergström & Leppänen 2003, 429.) Customer satisfaction can be defined as a positive emotional reaction to the service experience (Ylikoski 1999, 109.) The expectation level can be considered as a starting point and a basis for the comparison for experiences. When aiming for customer satisfaction, it is important to try to influence both the customer's expectations and the customers experiences. (Rope 1998, 29-31.)

If a company wants to affect on customer satisfaction, they need accurate information about what makes their customers more satisfied. General information about customer satisfaction can be found in literature. To be able to influence customer satisfaction, companies need industry specific and direct information from customer. (Ylikoski 1999, 149.) Researching customer satisfaction refers to marketing research on customer satisfaction and related issues conducted using research methods. (Rope 1998, 56). Understanding the customer and the market gives an opportunity to plan and develop the operation to correspond the needs. Feedback allows companies to gather information about their customers and other stakeholders' satisfaction. (Lecklin 2006, 18.)

Situational and individual factors of customer satisfaction can be such as the customer's hurry or personality. Customers experience of satisfaction is strongly related to what kind of benefit he feels he will get when buying the service through

its features and the consequences of using it. The customer's satisfaction with the organization's operations is also influenced by individual service events and their entirety. (Ylikoski 1999, 151-152.)

Generally, customer satisfaction is monitored continuously to be able to assess development in the long-term and to react to problems on time. New methods of service can be developed through feedback. Customer satisfaction can be monitored by the spontaneous feedback, surveys and quantity of recommendations. Spontaneous feedback signifies the complaints, thanks, wishes and development ideas coming from customers. Surveys measure the current satisfaction level based on their expectations and experiences. (Bergström & Leppänen, 2003, 429-430.) As a starting point for customer satisfaction research is to define why the research is needed and where is the information used. Also, it is important to define that from whom is the information gathered, what kind of information and how widely the information is needed. (Rope 1998, 58-63.) The same principles and tools that are used to measure external customers satisfaction can be used to measure the internal satisfaction (Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2010, 191). Customer satisfaction research goal is to improve customer satisfaction and to monitor the developments. Customer satisfaction research has four main goals. First one is to find the key influencing factors. Second one is to find out what is the current level of satisfaction. Third one is to provide a development proposal. Fourth one is to monitor the development of the customer satisfaction. (Ylikoski 1999, 156.)

Qualitative research is suitable for mapping the influencing factor of customer satisfaction. Qualitative research can be conducted by interviewing with customers. The discussions may bring up important factors affecting customers satisfaction that wouldn't otherwise be revealed. Another qualitative research method is critical incident technique. In this method customers are asked to remember these service situations that went really good or bad and describe them in detail. Based on the results, communication can be improved and customer

satisfaction may increase. Whereas quantitative research method is used to measure customer satisfaction. Questions about known customer satisfaction factors and personnel's the point of view can be supplemented to the questionnaire. From the customer satisfaction factors, the most critical and most appropriate issues are selected, which the questionnaire wants to measure. A few open questions are used in the end of the survey to give customer an opportunity to express his opinion in his own words. (Ylikoski 1999, 157-165.)

After forming the customer satisfaction questionnaire, an inquiry is held. The information can be gathered by phone interviews or a survey can be sent via email. The collected data is analyzed and presented. The measures and solutions to improve customer satisfaction are determined based on the analysis. If the level of satisfaction is already in a good level, it is important to focus on maintaining that level. After the development targets have been determined, it is important to get the personnel to commit to common goals. Personnel should be aware of the current customer satisfaction level and what changes are needed to improve the development targets. The main rule is that research can only be repeated when the corrective measures according to the previous examination have been carried out. (Ylikoski 1999, 165-170.)

3 SERVICE QUALITY

The concept of service quality will be described in this chapter. Interest in service quality rose in the 1980s. In service marketing literature, quality began to be considered with the concept of perceived service quality and total service quality models. (Grönroos 1998, 59-60.)

3.1 Service

Service as a word has a lot of different meanings from personal service to service as a product. Service is a process including a series of intangible activities. The actions are provided to customer as a solution to their problems. Service can be bought and sold, but not physically touched. Many different resources are used to produce service. These resources can be tangible such as machines and equipment, or intangible such as knowledge. (Grönroos 2001, 59-62.) Commonly service is known as interaction with the service provider and the involved parties don't always acknowledge that. Customers don't often acknowledge these interactions until there is a problem to be solved. Service can be a process or an action. Service is usually produced and consumed at the same time. (Grönroos 2009, Chapter 3.)

According to Christian Grönroos services have three main characteristics. Services are processes that include actions or a range of actions. Services are produced and used at the same time. In some measure customers participate in the production process of service. (Grönroos 2009, Chapter 3.) From customers point of view every action which they feel to be paying for is service. Customers feel that they are also paying for waiting. The production of the service may be linked to goods, but the service event is immaterial. (Ylikoski 1999, 20-21.) Customer is the main factor when considering service. Customer is participating in the service process, by interacting with the service provider before, during and after the service process. In these interactions the service provider and customer can also affect how the process proceeds and what is the end result. (Grönroos 2009, Chapter 3.)

Because service is an intangible, subjective experience and customer is in a centered role, every service is different. Even if examining the same service, but in different customers' perspective, every service situation would be different. Customer behavior, relation and customers personal qualities differ compared to other customers. Therefore, every customer behaves and reacts differently even if the service situation is the same. (Grönroos 2009, Chapter 3.)

Services can be series of actions, events, or acts in other words service processes. (Ylikoski 1999, 24.) One of the main purposes of service process is to bring customers processes and actions more value. Service can be seen as one perspective to bring value not just as a resource for problem solving or to achieve the wanted outcome. The whole service process effects on the value creation. Value creation begins when customer is thinking about using a service. Value creation can continue even after the service process by customer thinking their service experience. It is important to see the use of service more like a process rather than as an end result. (Grönroos 2009, Chapter 3.)

3.2 Quality

Quality is hard to describe in a few words. Quality can mean how well the goods or services meet the customer expectations. Quality is customers perception of how well the good or service has been delivered. Customer is the interpreter of quality. Customer's experience of quality is formed by the end result and the entire customer service process. The third quality factor is customer's image. (Ylikoski 1999, 118-119.)

Customers reflect on their expectations and experience in their quality assessment. Based on the comparison of expectations and experience customers build pictures of what kind of quality they have received. If customers' expectations are met, quality is in good or acceptable level. If customers' expectations are not met, quality is low. When customers' expectations are unrealistically high, the quality is more likely to be perceived as low. (Ylikoski 1999,

120.) In service quality literature, quality has been defined to be whatever customers perceives it to be. (Grönroos 2015, 94.)

If customer is satisfied with the received goods, company's operation is high-quality. The efficiency of internal operations and flawless end products do not guarantee high quality. Companies can't achieve high quality without an external evaluators review. Understanding customer and the market gives an opportunity to plan and develop operations to meet customers' needs and expectations. With the help of processes, operations are brought to a level that satisfies the customer. (Lecklin 2006, 18.)

The quality of internal customer service is affected by the same factors as external service quality. Error correcting was seen particularly important by the internal customers. External customers easily blame the customer service for errors or mistakes when the real problem could be caused by the internal service providers. The problems could be caused by the internal service mistakes or from slow service. Correcting errors and delivering fast service pay a big role on customer satisfaction. (Järvinen, Rosti & Ylikoski 2006, 69-70.)

3.3 Service quality

For decades quality has been basic element for company's market success and business performance (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 155). Service quality is about being accurate and dependable service provider. When a company is providing a service carelessly, it makes preventable errors and it fails to deliver the promises made to the customer. This unsettles customers' trust and makes harder to earn reputation for service excellence. (Dhurup 2012, 4186-4187.)

A minimum level should be defined for all stages of the service process. The minimum level is the lowest acceptable level of service. In addition, good and excellent service levels should be defined. What these levels include and how they would be possible to achieve. The level of service quality should be constantly

monitored. Before service quality can be monitored, customers' expectations should be discovered. Better service experiences can be offered by improving the amount of service, availability, service methods and service environment. It is important to focus on technical and functional quality. The amount of service and service methods should meet customers' needs and expectations. Customers appreciate friendliness, speed, expertise and honesty. (Bergström & Leppänen 2021, Chapter 4.)

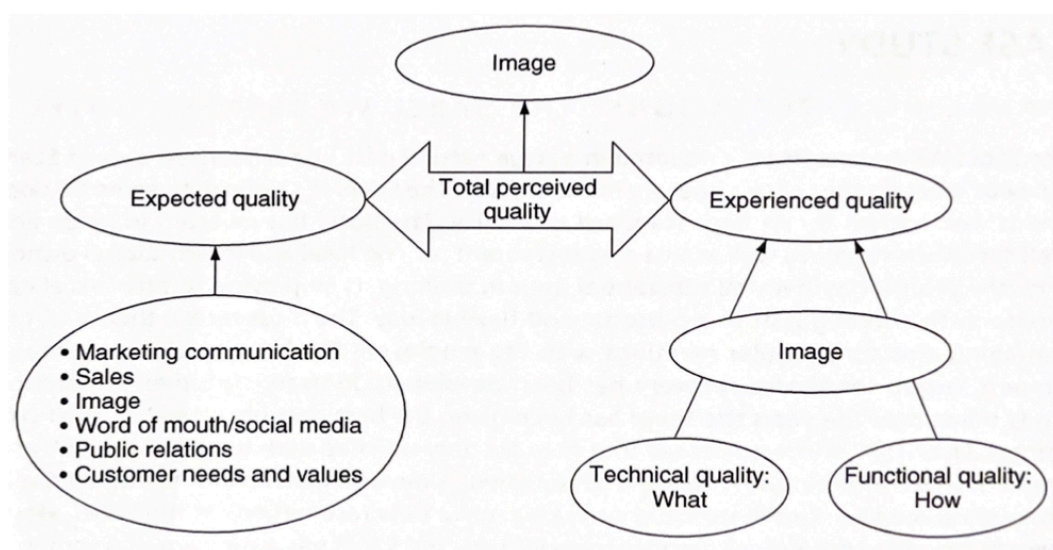


Figure 4. Total perceived quality (Grönroos 2015, 99).

In figure 4 the total perceived quality is demonstrated. The figure shows how customers expected and experienced quality form customers total perceived quality. Good level of perceived quality is achieved when customer expected quality is in the same level as the experienced quality. Customer expectations on quality are affected by marketing communication, sales, image, word of mouth, public relations, needs and values. (Grönroos 2015, 98-99.)

Customers experienced service quality has two dimensions, technical and functional. Creating technical advantage in service is more difficult to create than in manufacturing. Even when an excellent technical solution is attained, the company can be unsuccessful. Badly managed or handled service encounter can cause unsatisfactory functional quality and it can nullify the technical quality

achievement. In service the technical quality is normally in a good level and it must be at least in an acceptable level, defined by the company's strategy. Even if technical or functional quality is in excellent level, it doesn't mean that the total service quality is in a good level. A service provider competes with functional quality (Grönroos 2015, 97-98.)

1. Professionalism and Skills
2. Attitudes and Behavior
3. Accessibility and Flexibility
4. Reliability and Trustworthiness
5. Service Recovery
6. Servicescape
7. Reputation and Credibility

Figure 5. The seven criteria of good perceived service quality (Grönroos 2015, 107.)

In figure 5 Grönroos (2015, 107.) has gathered a seven criteria of good perceived service quality list. First criteria, professionalism and skills, is related to the outcome criteria which can be referred as technical quality. The seventh criteria, reputation and credibility, is image-related criteria. The other five criteria are process-related criteria which can be referred as functional quality. The first criteria are professionalism and skills. Customer should be able to see that service provider's employees, physical resources and operational systems have the skills and knowledge to solve their problems in a professional way. (Grönroos 2015, 107.)

By attitudes and behavior Grönroos refers to that customers want to feel that the service provider is concerned and interested in solving their problems. Customers want to see how the service employees relate to them. Attitude is important part of this criteria because customers want their problems solved in a spontaneous and friendly way. Customers want to have service that is accessible and flexible. The service needs to be easily accessed by its location, opening hours, employees and operational systems. The company and service need to be prepared to adjust

to customers' demands and wishes in efficient and flexible way. Reliability and trustworthiness mean that customers want to rely and trust on their service provider. When something is agreed with customers, the promises should be always kept. Companies and service providers should perform in customer's best interest. (Grönroos 2015, 107.)

The fifth criteria is service recovery. When mistake occurs or something unpredictable happens, customer should be able to trust that the service provider will immediately to react. The company or service provider should actively control the situation and find a new acceptable solution to customers problems. The sixth criteria is servicescape. This criterion is related to company's or service encounter physical surrounding and other aspects of the service environment. This should have a positive impact on customers experience of the service process. The last criteria is reputation and credibility. Customers want to trust service providers and get value for their money. Customer wants their service provider to provide good performance. Company and service providers must have values that customer can accept and share. The list is not cast iron. Different industries and different customers can value certain criteria more than others. Also, there might be other criteria that are more important to determine industry's quality but aren't listed here. (Grönroos 2015, 107.)

One of the most used service quality measurements is the SERVQUAL instrument. The instrument was developed by Berry, Parasuraman and Zeithaml in the 1980s. (Parasuraman et al. 1988.; Dhurup 2012, 4187.) Its purpose is to evaluate the customer's observations about the service quality. With the result better services can be developed. (Bergström & Leppänen 2021, Chapter 4.) The instrument measures customers perceived quality based on the customers' expectations and experience of the service. (Grönroos 2015, 102.)

It measures service quality in five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, assurance, empathy and responsiveness. Examples of tangibles are the appearance of physical building, equipment, employees, and communication material, which

reflects images of service that consumers use to judge quality. The consistency and dependability of a company's performance are referred to as its reliability. The assurance dimension covers the company's competency, the courtesy it gives to its customers and the company's and its employees capacity to engender trust and confidence. Empathy encompasses a company's caring and personalized attention to its customers. The willingness to serve clients and deliver prompt service is referred to as responsiveness. (Dhurup 2012, 4187.)

While the original SERVQUAL instrument has been reformulated, revised and refined, its primary content remains unchanged. SERVQUAL can be used by departments and divisions within a company to assess the quality of service they provide to employees in other departments and divisions by making appropriate changes. (Dhurup 2012, 4187.) According to Grönroos the SERVQUAL instrument should be applied carefully consider the situation where it is used. (Grönroos 2015, 104.)

4 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

In this chapter, communication is discussed. The communication is reviewed through communication in general and internal communication. Internal communication is an important for this research since it effects the work community and the internal customers satisfaction.

4.1 Communication

Communication is interaction between people, where more than one person can be a part of it at the same time. Communication can be done face-to-face or by email, text message, letter or even as an article in the general section of a newspaper. Communication can be both verbal and non-verbal. Verbal communication consists of different words that make up writing and speaking. Nonverbal communication includes facial expressions, gestures, movements and looks, which are also an essential part of communication. Nonverbal communication can be done consciously or unconsciously. (Lohtaja-Ahonen & Kaihovirta-Rapo 2012,11.)

Communications is part of the organization's daily operations. The main purpose of communication is to support the organization's operations and basic tasks. Communication is used to negotiate, take care of customer service, hold meeting and also to lead and discuss issues. The purposes of communication can be divided into different groups. The work community communication can be grouped into four different parts. The first three parts are supporting the basic functions, building community and commitment. The fourth part include community building, information, profiling and interaction. Support for basic operations is included in the organization's everyday operations as a pillar of communication. In communication, support for the basic functions covers, for example meetings, e-mail and negotiations. Engaging and building a sense of community aims to get the partners and staff committed and motivated toward the organization. Familiarizing personnel with the organization's operating methods contributes to

engagement and is therefore considered one of the basic tasks of engagement. Employees are introduced to the organization's operating methods, their own work tasks and the work community. (Honkala, Kortetjärvi-Nurmi, Rosenström & Siira-Jokinen 2017, 11-13.)

4.2 Internal communication

Internal communication takes place within the organization between the staff and the work community. Internal communication is reflected in the organization's success. When internal communication is effective, it is one of the keys that positively affects the working atmosphere. A good work atmosphere has a positive effect on the staff, which in turn affects the work motivation and attitudes, which in turn leads to better customer satisfaction. (Kauhanen 2012, 173.)

The problem for organizations communication is often the flood of communication. The organization uses too many communication channels and the personnel feels that information comes from many places, which makes managing it too laborious. In successful communication, the information reaches people who it affects. (Lohtaja-Ahonen & Kaihovirta-Rapo 2012, 49.) The main purpose of internal communication is the flow of information within the organization, between the staff and work community. That is why it's good to take care of the internal communication and constantly develop it. Effective communication can prevent misunderstanding and additional problem situations that may arise when the message does not reach the recipient. When choosing the internal communications channels, you need to take into consideration how the information gets delivered as quickly as possible, but in a way that the message stays unchanged. (Kauhanen 2012,173.) Different communication situations require different communication channels. Usually, once something is heard or read, it is not internalized or understood. Depending on the matter, a short narration and information may be sufficient for informing, or the matter has to be communicated several times and through different channels. The management

supervisors and experts must think together about how to communicate about different things. (Österberg 2015, 199.)

Communication includes more than just passing on a message. Communication happens all the time, and it strongly involves interaction, emotional states, meeting other people and anticipation. The purpose of communications is to inform and make things understandable. Communication should be open, in which successes and also the shortcomings are shared. Communication must take place at the right time, that the information is shared in time. In this way, we get the benefit that communication is aiming for. Communication should also be comprehensive enough to provide enough information. Sometimes it is also important to know how to say that there is nothing to inform. (Hagerlund & Kaukopuro-Klemetti 2013, 6.)

A functioning work community can be recognized by a functioning information flow. However, problems with the flow of information are experienced in several organizations' work communities. Employees should receive information to support their own work. The functionality of the work community suffers if the employees experience a lack of information, or they do not get enough of it related to their own work. (Österberg 2015, 194.)

5 EMPIRICAL STUDY

This chapter will cover the empirical study. The previous chapters will be the theoretical framework of this thesis. This chapter will disclose the used research methodology, planning and execution.

5.1 Theoretical framework

In theoretical framework, relevant theories for the researched object and the latest research results are disclosed. The framework is build using versatile sources, like academic articles, literature and previous studies, which are related to the research questions of the thesis. Theoretical framework must have a clear connection to the research questions. Framework can be arranged in three different orders: chronological, methodological and according to the theme. Generally, the theoretical part is in chronological order because theory and models develop over time. (Kananen 2015, 112-117.)

The theoretical framework for this thesis research was built from three main themes, internal customer satisfaction, service quality and internal communication. Through these two themes, research study about internal customer satisfaction for company x can be formed. Internal customer satisfaction chapter defines the meaning of internal customer and recapitulates what is customer satisfaction. The chapter also includes how internal customer satisfaction is formed and it can be studied. Theory about service quality include the definition of service quality and how it can be studied. The internal communication chapter defines internal communication and explains why it is important. The internal communication effects on the internal customer satisfaction. Through customer satisfaction research, communication can be improved and customer satisfaction may increase.

5.2 Research methodology

Research methods are used to solve research problems. The aim is to find a solution to the problem by justifying and utilizing the necessary information. Used research method needs to produce relevant information for the research. The research material collection method used aims to refine the observed information in the conclusion of the research problem. (Kananen 2015, 63-65.)

Quantitative research method is a statistical study method. It measures observed phenomenon with different variables. Quantitative research method answers to questions what, where, how much and how often. It is used to answer question related to numbers and percentages. This method requires a large and representative sample to define the emerging dependencies. Commonly standardized survey form is used to gather data. (Heikkilä 2008, 16-19.) Qualitative methodology is used to understand the research the target, for example company or customer. This method helps to explain reasons to behavior and decisions. Qualitative research is usually limited to a small number of samples and they are usually gathered with discretion. Qualitative research answers to questions why, how and what kind of. (Kananen 2008, 16-17.)

Qualitative methods goal is to get deeper knowledge of the target or phenomenon. Qualitative research method is generally used when there is no earlier precise knowledge, theory or research of the target. This research method can bring new hypothesis and theory about researched issues. Because only few observations units are used, the results cannot be invoked to generalize or measure observational values in any scale. The obtained results can only be true in the case of the subject study. (Kananen 2017, 32-36.)

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods can be used in the same research. Combining these to research methods is called triangulation. In this research method the finding of one study can be checked with the other study method. The goal is to enhance the validity of the findings. (Brannen 1992, 59-60.)

Qualitative research method is used for this thesis. Through qualitative research the research question can be answered. The goal is to get deeper and qualitative knowledge how to improve the customer satisfaction and what are the strengths and weaknesses. Through the qualitative research the short and long-term solutions can be found. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods was considered, but it could have made the research too broad and long.

5.3 Research material collection method

Collected research materials can be primary or secondary. Secondary research materials are already existing, for example documents and literature. Primary research materials are specifically gathered for the research problem. Primary research materials can be collected from observation, interviews and inquiries. The researcher solves the research problem by analyzing the gathered material. The research material is analyzed by research material specific analysis methods. (Kananen 2017, 82-83.)

Interviews are the most used method for qualitative research. Most used interview form is theme interviews. Researchers goal is to understand and get a perception of the research problem through theme interviews. In theme interviews researcher presents the themes to the interviewee and interviewee gives researcher knowledge from the phenomenon. Interview can be seen as puzzle where the answers are part of the entirety. (Kananen 2017, 88-91.) For this thesis research, interview is chosen as the research material collection method. Interviews give needed qualitative information about the phenomenon. The influencing factors of internal customer satisfaction can be revealed better in an interview than in a survey.

5.4 Research plan

Qualitative research methods were chosen for this thesis study. The choice is supported by the research question. For this thesis qualitative method gives more

deeper knowledge than quantitative methods would. Numerical answers wouldn't reveal the solution for the research problem. The research material collection method chosen for this study is the most generally used theme interview. Theme interview gives an opportunity for more versatile interpretation and analysis. The researcher and interviewee discuss one theme at a time. The themes have been carefully selected by the researcher. (Kananen 2017, 88.) Theme interview is an intermediate of survey and in-dept interview. The interview topics are already known by themes, but the order and form of questions isn't defined precisely. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 208-209.)

The semi-structured interview body consists of four themes. The interview body is structured based on the theory. The goal is to gather as much essential information as possible about the phenomenon. In the first theme basic information about the interviewees team, job experience and position are gathered. In the second theme the aspects affecting service quality are discussed. The interviews third theme is satisfaction, where the internal customers' expectations, experience and satisfaction are discussed. The last theme is development, where the interviewees are given an opportunity to present their development ideas to improve the internal customer satisfaction. Also, the current way of gathering feedback is discussed in the last theme.

The interviewees have to be carefully selected in qualitative research. The selected interviewees must have as much information about the phenomenon as possible. (Kananen 2017, 128.) The interviewees are selected from the case study company. The selected interviewees work as end customer contacts and are part coordination team's internal customers. The selections are made to gain as much qualitative and deeper knowledge as possible.

5.5 Handling and analyzing the research material

This thesis study's interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Transcription is a written form of record. For example, recording or videos can be transcribed so

that they can be analyzed. Transcription can be made in different levels, verbatim, standard language and propositional. The verbatim transcription is the most accurate, where every sound occurrence is recorded in the transcription. In standard language transcription, the record is transcribed in written language. All dialect and spoken language are deleted and modified to written language. In propositional transcribe only the core content of communication or observations are written down. (Kananen 2017, 134-135.) The thesis interviews will be transcribed in standard language. Verbatim transcription isn't necessary for this thesis study and it doesn't add any value for this research.

One of the biggest challenges of theme interviews is that the research material can be huge, if the researcher interviews many different interviewees or interviews the same persons several times. It is difficult for the researcher to utilize all the gathered research material, and mostly it isn't necessary. The selection of material analysis method helps researcher to stay on the right track before, during and after the interviews. In qualitative research the material can be decompresses at the same time as it is collected. The researcher can try different analyzing techniques since there are no standardized techniques for it. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 135-138.)

The theme interviews will be analyzed by theme and the essential information is gathered. The researcher will make notes during the interviews. During the analysis of the research material, the purpose is to group the gathered material into parts and categories, trying to combine the similarities. This phase is followed by synthesis, where the material is analyzed in its entirety again, trying to understand the phenomenon of studied theory again. The purpose of the synthesis is to understand the theoretically studied phenomenon in-depth. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 144.)

The theme categorization can be done by writing the point of views and theories expressed in the interview into a table. With the help of the table, the interviewees possible expressions to the theme can be visualized. (Puusa, Juuti & Aaltio 2020,

Chapter 10.) The table can also be used to analyze the saturation of the study. The researcher can gather research material until there is no new information. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 182.)

6 RESULT ANALYSIS

In this chapter the results of the study are reviewed and analyzed. The results of the interviews are presented by theme in the same order as they were interviewed using the interview form (Appendix 1 & 2.) All six interviews were organized via Microsoft Teams. All the interviewees were asked the same question. Due to the flexibility of thematic interviews, it was possible to ask more questions to receive more detailed and broader answers if needed.

6.1 The interviewees

The target group of the interviews was discussed with the contact person of the case company. The contact person presented a point of view about whom would be the possible candidates for the interviews and other supervisors were contacted to give suggestions. All the interviewees work as an end customer contact in the case company and are parts coordination management team's internal customers. The interviewees were selected by their ability to give qualitative information about the phenomenon. Six candidates were invited to the interviews considering that the research material would not grow too wide. More interviews would have been conducted if saturation was not detected.

Interviewees	Work experience in current position	Team
A	0-5 years	Commisioning
B	10-15 years	Warranty
C	0-5 years	Commisioning
D	10-15 years	Commisioning
E	0-5 years	Warranty
F	0-5 years	Warranty

Figure 6. The interviewees

The interviewees background information is presented in figure 6. In the beginning of the interviews questions about the interviewees background were asked. The background information is essential for the research because it can be used to determine the factors that influence their perspective. All the interviewed persons

are working as parts coordination management team's internal customers, but some of them have additional assignments such as being the contact person between their teams and parts coordination management, internal customers, team. The persons with additional assignments will not be disclosed in this study to protect their anonymity. Also, the interviewees specific teams and work experience in their current position will not be disclosed either to protect their anonymity.

The interviewees A, C and D work in commissioning as end customer contacts. From the warranty side, interviewees B, E and F were interviewed. The interviewees A, C, E and F have been working in their current position from zero to five years. The interviewees B and D have been working longer in their current position from 10 to 15 years.

6.2 Service quality

In service quality theme, we wanted to find out which aspects affect internal customers experienced service quality and how they perceive the service quality. The goal was to find what the internal customers value. The internal customers were asked about what they perceive as parts coordination management, internal customers, team's strengths and weaknesses in service quality.

The interviewees A and D said that the service quality has improved over the years. Before they had to wait weeks and chase someone in order to receive updates and replies. The interviewees B, D, E and F said that the service quality varies between the parts coordination management, internal customers, team. According to them some team members are more careful and have the needed knowledge. Two interviewees stated that with newcomers, they have to be more patient because it takes time to learn.

All six interviewees pointed out that communication and information sharing is not in a good level. According to the interviewees sometimes the Part

Coordination Management, Internal Customers, team process new orders, but never send the order confirmation. Sometimes the changes in schedules aren't notified to the internal customers. Interviewees A, D and F pointed out that they often have to contact the Parts Coordination Management, Internal Customers, team to receive updates on their orders. Interviewee B said that the communication and information sharing was better before COVID-19 when most of the team was working in the same office.

According to the interviewee F internal customers don't have the trust that everything is done correctly. The interviewees B, D, E and F told that there have been situations where the delivery or country specific instructions haven't been followed. They also told that there have been situations where changes have been made to the orders or delivery terms without confirming or informing them.

As strength four out of the six interviewees said the understanding their needs for quick schedules. The interviewees saw that the parts coordination management, internal customers, team are proactive and self-initiated to find alternative solutions when ordered materials are needed fast but aren't available in stock. The interviewees A, C, E and F said that when they contact the parts coordination management, internal customers, team, they are always willing to assist and promptly provide good replies. Three interviewees said that the parts coordination management, internal customers, team is highly capable handling high workload.

6.3 Satisfaction

In satisfaction theme, the questions were formed to get information about the internal customers satisfaction. The internal customers were asked about their expectations. They were asked to describe their experience working together with the parts coordination management, internal customers, team. The critical incident technique was used in the theme interview. The internal customers were asked to describe situations that went really good and really bad. (Ylikoski 1999,

157-165.) The last question in the theme interview was to the internal customers to describe their satisfaction to parts coordination management, internal customers, teams service.

All six interviewees said that their expectation is to have their order handled quickly and that the parts are delivered correctly to the correct address. The internal customers want to be informed and kept up to date along the process. Interviewee A said that he wants to be informed but doesn't want to participate to the process if all needed information has been given. Interviewees B and F said that they want to be involved when communicating with other supporting departments to be able to be informed more efficiently.

According to the interviewees experience, most of the times the expectations are met. Interviewees A & D's really good service experience was a situation where multiple urgent orders were placed. They received immediate support from a parts coordinator. They communicated efficiently, no unnecessary questions were asked and all needed information was provided. According to interviewees B and E a really good service experience is clear and smooth. Interviewees C & F talked about experience where urgently needed materials weren't available in stock. The parts coordinator was able to borrow some of the parts from a different order and have some of the parts delivered from a different warehouse to another in one day. According to them this was possible because they cooperated together, and the coordinator was focused and careful.

Interviewee A's bad service experience was a situation during high workload. He placed orders that were processed, but he was never informed that the materials aren't available, and the orders weren't released. Interviewee B talked about a situation where an order was not moving for a long time. Eventually the end customer realized something was wrong and placed a new order themselves. The end customer received the parts in couple of days from the new order, sooner than from the original order. The interviewees C, D and E's worst experiences working with the parts coordination management, internal customers, team were

situations where parts had been sent to the wrong address. The interviewee D told about a situation where an order was sent in two partial deliveries. The first delivery went to the right address. When the coordinator was asked to change the address for the second delivery, he changed it to a whole different address in a different country. The parts were stuck in customs for a long time and eventually they had to import those parts. The interviewee F told about a situation where changes were made to the delivery terms without confirming with them. The delivery got stuck in customs. The coordinator wanted to fix the situation and made a new delivery. Eventually the end customer had to pay for two customs clearances.

According to all of the interviewees most of the time they have been satisfied. The most affecting aspect to their satisfaction is the cooperation, communication, visibility, efficiency, diligence and knowhow of the service providers. Interviewee A, C and D said that they have been satisfied even when the parts coordination management, internal customers, team has been having a high workload. Interviewee A pointed out that both teams have a good understanding of the needs and issues in their work. Interviewees B, D, E and F pointed out that it is important to have enough employees to handle the high workload.

6.4 Development

In the development theme, the interviewees were asked about how the parts coordination management, internal customers, team's service could be improved. The goal was to find out how the parts coordination management, internal customers, team could satisfy their internal customers better. The interviewees were asked about how their feedback is currently gathered. In the last question in this theme and interview, the interviewees were given opportunity to fill in their answers or bring up something that would be relevant to the research.

As a development target all the interviewees mentioned communication and information sharing. All the interviewees said that the delays, changes and

problems should be communicated. In addition to the communication, the interviewees mentioned visibility. Three interviewees pointed out that currently the once a week sent excel sheet about the open orders should also be sent to everyone that is involved in the project. Three interviewees pointed out that the currently once a week sent excel sheet is not enough and that the open order's situation should be informed live or daily. The interviewee A suggested that a tool could be developed that would provide all the needed information and situation of their open orders. This tool could eliminate a lot of unnecessary emails and messages. Three interviewees also mentioned that the high workload isn't communicated enough. They only find it out when they notice delays on receiving the order confirmation. The interviewees suggested that the high workload should be communicated and that there could be a tool built where they could see their orders place in line. The interviewees A, B and C told that especially the technical identifications orders visibility needs improvement. Often, they have to wait for weeks to get an update and in worst cases they are not informed that the order is under processing. Four interviewees stated that they want to be included in the email chain when discussing with other internal service providers. Three interviewees also said that there is currently a lot of information shared but it is spread in many different channels and it is hard to find when needed.

Five interviewees brought up that there should be enough skilled employees. Especially with the newcomers, the training should be developed that they receive all needed information to handle orders. The needed information and instructions should be easily available to all, to be able to handle different orders to different locations. Interviewee D also mentioned that maybe the responsibilities could be divided based on the skills. If someone isn't good at communication, maybe they could be utilized with tasks that doesn't require good communication skills.

Four interviewees said that the cooperation should be improved and that there could be more meetings together where information, feedback and development ideas could be shared. They also suggested that there could be more job rotations.

Through job rotations, they could have even better understanding of each other's work, needs and values. During the job rotation, they would have an opportunity share information and knowledge.

Four interviewees told that their general feedback isn't currently gathered or requested. They have a claim form that they can fill in problem situations. Two interviewees said that the feedback is discussed on coffee breaks with colleagues. In some cases, the feedback is given directly to the parts coordinator or their team leader but often it is not given, or it is forgotten since there is no clear channel for it. According to the four interviewees, feedback should be requested and gathered continuously. They said that it would help to measure the satisfaction and develop service and efficiency. One interviewee brought up that their feedback was not gathered before, but now they have started to collect and share it.

7 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

In this chapter, the thesis study is summarized. The conclusion is examined and reflected. The reliability and validity of this thesis study is evaluated. In addition, the benefits of the thesis study and possible further research suggestions are presented.

The aim of this research was to find how this parts coordination management, internal customers, team can improve their internal customers' satisfaction. Three research questions were formed from the research problem. The research goal was to find answers to the three research questions.

Three research question were formed based on the research problem:

1. How can Parts Coordination Management, internal customer, team serve their internal customers better?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Parts Coordination Management, internal customer, team's service?
3. What are the short and long-term solutions to offer better customer service quality?

7.1 Conclusion and discussion

The theoretical framework was formed to be the base for the empirical study. After the theoretical framework, qualitative research was conducted using theme interviews. The theme interviews collected comprehensive information about the research topics and phenomenon. This thesis study used the customer satisfaction research methods mentioned in chapter 2.5. The chapter describes how to approach and carry out customer satisfaction research.

The first research question was how the Parts Coordination Management, Internal Customers, team could serve their internal customers better. Internal customer assessments are important to find the areas that need improvements (Chapter

2.5). As a conclusion of the results, communication is not in a good level and it should be improved. According to the chapter 4.5, internal communication has a direct effect on the internal customers satisfaction. During the interviews the communication was brought up multiple times by all six interviewees. Delays and changes in orders and schedules should be communicated to the internal customers. Also, the communication should be done in an efficient way. Visibility was mentioned together with communication during the interviews. As a conclusion visibility could be used as a method to improve the communication. Based on the answers to service quality theme and to the critical incident question, the parts coordinators should be more careful and follow the instructions more when handling orders.

The second research question was about the strengths and weaknesses of the Parts Coordination Management, Internal Customers, team's service. The interviewees saw the understanding of the schedule as a strength. The interviewees experienced that the coordinators are proactive and self-initiated to find alternative solutions to their problems. As a conclusion, the proactivity and initiative were seen as strengths. Also, the willingness to help and assist was seen as a strength. As mentioned in the earlier paragraph, the interviewees saw the lack of communication and information sharing as weakness. The internal customers saw negligence as weakness. As a conclusion from the results, the differences in skills and knowledge between the parts coordinators were seen as a weakness.

The interviewed internal customers had many development ideas and suggestions. Communication was mentioned several times during the interview. Communication is essential factor when working in an organization and it has a clear effect on customer satisfaction (Chapter 4.2). The Also, visibility was mentioned together with communication. All the interviewees felt that they want more communication and more information. The interviewees suggested to build or develop a tool that could be shared to all internal customers, and everyone involved in the case or project. The tool could provide all needed information of

the open orders situation. The tool could be live or updated and shared daily. The tool could be used to communicate the unprocessed orders situation and place in line. The visibility could be improved by this tool since the internal customers would have access to the needed information. If all this information could be found from this one tool and there would be a possibility to filter, it would be easier to find the needed information. As a short term solution, the communication, information sharing and visibility could be improved by utilizing already existing tools. Clear guidelines should be made what is communicated, how and where. All information should be shared in a clear way and they should be stored in a way that it is easily found when needed. As long term solution, a tool could be built or developed to serve and share all the above listed information.

Based on the interview results, the training of newcomers should be developed. The interviewees told about the variability of the team's skills and knowledge. By developing the training and training material, the skills and knowledge could be transferred from the old employees to the new employees. As a short term solution, the already existing training materials and instructions could be updated and transferred to one place. As mentioned in chapter 4.2, the needed information is hard to find when it is spread in many different places. As a long term solution, a clear training plan could be developed.

A third development idea was that the cooperation could be developed. According to the results the cooperation could be developed by having mutual meetings. In the meeting ideas and information could be shared. Job rotations were suggested as another way to improve the cooperation. Job rotations could give possibility to get to know each other and each other's work better. Job rotations could also increase the knowledge of internal customers needs and values. As a short term solution, mutual meetings could be organized. Job rotations could be more a long term solution.

Customer satisfaction and feedback should monitor continuously. Based on the result developments can be assessed. Feedback enables to react to problems on time and new methods can be developed. (Chapter 2.5) Based on the results, most of the interviewees feel that their feedback or satisfaction isn't gathered or measured enough. The situation varies between the teams. As a conclusion, the feedback is currently only gathered by the internal customers. The interviewees suggested that the feedback should be requested and assessed regularly. The service and efficiency could be developed through the satisfaction assessments. As a short term solution, a survey should be sent to all internal customers to receive feedback and measure the overall satisfaction. As long term solution, the feedback should be requested and the satisfaction should be measured and assessed regularly.

7.2 Reliability and validity

The aim of thesis study is to create new, reliable and truthful information. In scientific research the reliability is traditionally examined using two main concept, reliability and validity. The aim is to minimize possible errors in the research with the help of these two concepts. Every study is prone to various errors that can be caused by the researcher, studied person or phenomenon. The researcher has the greatest influence on the reliability of the study. If desired, the researcher can consciously choose a theoretical framework or data collection method that will support the conclusion of the research. Interview is an interaction between researcher and interviewee, where the researcher can influence the interviewee and vice versa. In addition, the researcher can be affected by the relationship of the researcher to the phenomenon, which can distort the result of the research. Distortion is called reactivity, i.e., "contamination". The researchers always investigate through their own perspective and reality. Therefore, they are also prone to various interpretations errors during the research process. It can be challenging for a beginner researcher to approach research objectively. (Kananen 2015, 337-343.)

The permanence of research results is examined using the scientific concept reliability. This means that the same results are obtained when the study is repeated. However, it is challenging to measure reliability in the qualitative research. In research literature this is explained by human behavior, and it often depends on the context, i.e. it can vary according to time and place. If the study is repeated at a different time, it is unlikely that the same results would be obtained. However, it is good to understand that this does not mean that qualitative research is a weak research method. The difference between the two research occasions is only due to the changed context. In this thesis study, the examination of reliability is challenging, because the studied phenomenon is tied to a specific time. If the same study was repeated at a different time, the results would hardly be the same. If changes and developments are made to satisfy the internal customers better, the interviewees could give more positive answers about their satisfaction and the developments targets could be different. For this reason, it is better to examine the reliability of this study from perspective of researcher's activities, i.e., how reliably the interview material has been analyzed and whether all possible material has been taken into account. The results should reflect to the interviewees thoughts and vision as well as possible. In this study, reliability was examined according to whether the researcher was able to take into account all the information provided by the empirical research material. The researcher went through the material several times during the transcription phase, carefully analyzing the interview. For this reason, it can be stated that the research is reliable. (Kananen 2015, 343; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 186-189.)

The correctness of research results is examined with the scientific concept of validity. Validity also examines that the interpretation of the research's theoretical framework and analysis methods are done correctly. The validity of qualitative research can be investigated with the help of structural validity. The researcher must justify how the certain approach was chosen to study the phenomenon. The researcher must use concepts in the research that directly reflect from the studied phenomenon. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 187-189.) In this thesis study, the right

concepts and approach to study the phenomenon were chosen on the basis of already existing theory. The interview questions provided answers to the research problem and have a direct connection to the theoretical framework. This thesis study is valid because the right things were studied and measured.

The reliability of qualitative research can also be examined using other criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and saturation. Credibility means that the research results are truthful and correspond to the research phenomenon. It is examined with the help of documentation. The results are derived in way that it is possible to trace the correctness and logically follow the researcher's chain of thought. The transferability criterion is met when the research results can be transferred to another phenomenon or situation. This requires that the research is described accurately enough that the transferor understands the starting point of the research. The research is dependent when a person outside the study interprets the material and comes to the same final interpretation. Confirmability can be examined with the interviewees. The interviewees of the empirical study read the researcher's research results and confirm the interpretation. In this way, it can be considered that the results are not made up and the interviewees confirm that the information is correct. The last criterion is saturation. The interviews are continued until they no longer provide new information or repeat each other. In this point the researcher has reached saturation. (Kananen 2015, 352-355.)

In this thesis study, the researcher tried to manage possible risks. The reliability was examined during the entire research process. The researcher was able to anticipate possible errors and detect if a selected method was not the best of all. The thesis study results are reliable because saturation point was reached during the interviews. There was a lot of repetition in the interview answers, despite a few differing opinions.

In every research, it is important to keep the research ethics in mind. Research ethics i.e., Good scientific practice means that the research respects copyright and

understands the difference between plagiarism and acceptable quoting. During the research process, the researcher must master good scientific practice and the responsibilities it brings, the general principles of human research and ethical pre-assessment. The researcher must be careful, open and honest during the entire research process. The thesis must comply with the valid data protection regulations and laws. (Arene 2020 b.) Good scientific practice was followed during the writing process of this thesis study. During the empirical study, special attention was paid to the privacy protection and processing of personal data. Before starting to record the interviews, the interviewees were asked for their permission to record the interview. They were informed how the recorded material will be processed and how their privacy will be protected. The interview material was collected solely for the needs of this study and were destroyed after the publication of this study. The identity of the interviewees was not revealed at any point of this study. The transcriptions were made with identification letters, not with the name of the interviewees. Sources have been referenced in the work appropriately and with respect to the original works.

7.3 Research benefits and further research proposal

This thesis study goal was to find out how the Parts Coordination Management, Internal Customers, team could serve their internal customers better. The case company receives qualitative information about the internal customers satisfaction. Based on the research results, the case company received short and long-term development ideas.

As an end product of this thesis, the client will receive a survey that can be send to the internal customers to receive feedback and to measure their satisfaction (Appendix 3). The survey can be used as a tool to monitor the internal customers satisfaction and to receive development suggestions and ideas. The survey could be sent to the internal customers every quarter to follow the developments. The survey was formed based on the interview results and theory chapters 2 & 3. The

survey is kept short that the internal customers are more willing to answer it and that it is easy to analyze.

As a further research proposal, similar research could be carried out to the other stakeholders, for example purchasing and goods delivery. The research could bring up information how the cooperation could be developed. Another further research proposal could be about the internal communication. The problems in communication were brought up many times during the interviews. With the communication research, the internal communication problems could be revealed even more in depth, and more detailed improvements could be made based on the research. The research could be studied using qualitative or quantitative method. As a result of the research, a concrete tool could be built or developed.

SOURCES

Aarnikoivu, H. 2005. Onnistu asiakaspalvelussa. Helsinki. Talentum.

Albrecht, K. & Zemke, R. 1985. Service America. Homewood. Irwin Professional Publishing.

Arene. 2020 a. Vastuullinen opinnäytetyö. Ammattikorkeakoulujen opinnäyttöiden eettiset suositukset. Arene. Referred 25.4.2023.
https://www.arene.fi/wp-content/uploads/Raportit/2020/Arenen%20ONT%20eettiset%20ohjeet%20esitysmateriaali%202020.pdf?_t=1578486373

Arene. 2020 b. Ammattikorkeakoulujen opinnäytetöiden eettiset suositukset. Referred 07.05.2023. https://www.arene.fi/wp-content/uploads/Raportit/2020/AMMATTIKORKEAKOULUJEN%20OPINNÄYTETÖIDEN%20EETTISET%20SUOSITUKSET%202020.pdf?_t=1578480382

Bergström, S. & Leppänen, A. 2003. Yrityksen asiakasmarkkinointi. Helsinki. Edita Prima Oy.

Bergström, S. & Leppänen, A. 2021. Yrityksen asiakasmarkkinointi. 19. uud. Painos. Referred 25.4.2023. E-book. Helsinki. Edita.
<https://www.ellibslibrary.com/book/978-951-37-8306-8>

Brannen, J. 1992. Mixing methods: Qualitative and quantitative research. Hants. Avebury.

Dhurup, M. 2012. Determinants of internal service quality and the relationship with internal customer satisfaction. Referred 16.04.2023. African Journal of Business Management. Vaal University of Technology. South Africa.
<https://academicjournals.org/journal/AJBM/article-full-text-pdf/B80999D35613>

Gilbert, G. 2000. Measuring internal customer satisfaction. Managing Service Quality: An international Journal. Referred 6.3.2023.
https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/09604520010336704/full/html?casa_token=CI0qAvhn500AAAAA:YZ8aZC84I6RoZJajV-o5zbxvEqGcX9UtgL_UbDCnvTPZUlwhpjnPbwCuB5qjP7y2oMdgJPxmhFGo9xDAYR7ANQt0MU2jko4HAV4opm-t4U92MPN-pVDM

Grönroos, C. 2009. Palveluiden johtaminen ja markkinointi. Referred 17.3.2023. E-book. Helsinki. Talentum.
<https://www.ellibslibrary.com/tritonia/9789521443541>

Grönroos, C. 2015. Service management and marketing: Managing the Service Profit Logic. Chichester. John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

- Hagerlund, T. & Kaukopuro-Klemetti, H. 2013. Työyhteisö viestii jotta olisi olemassa. Helsinki. Suomen kuntaliitto.
- Hänti, S. 2021. Asiakkaista ansaitaan: asiakaskeksinen liiketoimintamalli. Referred 25.4.2023. E-book. Helsinki. Alma Talent. [https://bisneskirjasto-almatalent-fi.ezproxy.puv.fi/teos/JABBBXETEB#kohta:Asiakkaista\(\(20\)ansaintaan/piste:TLR](https://bisneskirjasto-almatalent-fi.ezproxy.puv.fi/teos/JABBBXETEB#kohta:Asiakkaista((20)ansaintaan/piste:TLR)
- Heikkilä, T. 2008. Tilastollinen tutkimus. Helsinki. Edita Prima Oy.
- Hirsjärvi, S. & Hurme, H. 2008. Tutkimushaastattelu: Teemahaastattelun teoria ja käytäntö. Helsinki. Gaudeamus Helsinki University Press.
- Hirsjärvi, S., Remes, P. & Sajavaara, P. 2009. Tutki ja kirjoita. 15th ed. Helsinki. Tammi.
- Honkala, P., Kortetjärvi-Nurmi, S., Rosenström, A. & Siira-Jokinen, S. 2017. Linkki: Työyhteisön viestintä. 6th ed. Keuruu. Otavan Kirjapaino Oy.
- Jain, R.; Aagja, J. & Bagdare, S. 2017. Customer experience- a review and research agenda. Journal of Service Theory and Practice. Referred 07.03.2023. https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JSTP-03-2015-0064/full/html?casa_token=6-yvqR5yDCwAAAAA:BuxnRiMECRSbVgdDHHTy3FSJ_hk1A6pFL2nJKrLMs88Ga7ucl2ExihQu7oVob2U2gLwRAb_x2lsmu7G5zQpOsFjj_ckG6A_sePU0b6ThFbyX2wWGf_2Q
- Kananen, J. 2015. Opinnäytetyön kirjoittajan opas. Jyväskylä. Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulu.
- Kananen, J. 2017. Laadullinen tutkimus pro graduna ja opinnäytetyönä. Jyväskylä. Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulu.
- Kauhanen, J. 2012. Henkilöstövoimavarojen johtaminen. Helsinki. WSOY pro.
- Korkiakoski, K. 2023. Huomisen asiakas. Referred 25.4.2023. E-Book. Helsinki. Helsingin seudun kauppakamari. [https://kauppakamaritieto-fi.ezproxy.puv.fi/ammattikirjasto/teos/huomisen-asiakas-2023#kohta:Huomisen\(\(20\)asiakas](https://kauppakamaritieto-fi.ezproxy.puv.fi/ammattikirjasto/teos/huomisen-asiakas-2023#kohta:Huomisen((20)asiakas)
- Lecklin, O. 2006. Laatu yrityksen menestystekijänä. Helsinki. Talentum.
- Lohtaja-Ahonen, S. & Kaihovirta-Rapo, M. 2012. 2nd ed. Tehoa työelämän viestintään. Helsinki. Sanoma Pro.
- Löytänä, J. & Korteso, K. 2011. Asiakaskokemus: Palvelubisneksestä asiakaskokemukseen. Referred 15.3.2023. E-book. Helsinki. Talentum. <https://www.ellibslibrary.com/book/978-952-14-1686-6>

Meyer, C. & Schwager, A. 2007. Understanding Customer Experience. Harvard Business Review. Referred 08.03.2023. https://idcexed.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Understanding_Customer_Experience.pdf

Ojasalo, J & Ojasalo, K. 2010. B-to-b-palvelujen markkinointi. Helsinki. WSOYpro Oy.

Österberg, M. 2015. Henkilöstöasiantuntijan käsikirja. 5th ed. Helsinki. Helsingin kauppakamari.

Parasuraman, A., Zeithami, V. & Berry, LL. 1988. SERVQUAL: a multi-item scale for measuring consumer perception of service quality. J. Retail. 64(1):12-39.

Puusa, A., Juuti, P. & Aaltio, I. 2020. Laadullisen tutkimuksen näkökulmat ja menetelmät. E-book. Helsinki. Gaudeamus.
<https://www.ellibslibrary.com/book/9789523456167>

Rope, T. 1998. Asiakastyytyväisyysjohtaminen. Juva. WSOY.

Schneider, B. & White, S. 2004. Service quality: research perspectives. Thousand Oaks. Sage Publications.

Tuulaniemi, J. 2011. Palvelumuotoilu. Referred 25.4.2023. E-book. Talentum Media Oy. <https://bisneskirjasto-almatalent-fi.ezproxy.puv.fi/teos/BABBGXETEB#/kohta:Palvelumuotoilu/piste:tUp>

Ylikoski, T. 1999. Unohtuiko asiakas? Helsinki. KY-Palvelu Oy.

APPEDICES

APPENDIX 1

SEMI STRUCTURED THEME INTERVIEW BODY

Duration:

Research objectives have been presented:

Research permit obtained from the subject:

Theme 1: Basic information

Team?

Please describe your position.

How long have you been working in your current position?

Theme 2: Service quality

How would you describe the quality of the parts coordination team's service?

Please describe the strengths of part coordination team's service.

Please describe the weaknesses of part coordination team's service.

Theme 3: Satisfaction

Please describe your expectations to parts coordination team's service

Please describe your experience working with the parts coordination team.

Please describe a situation that went really good or bad and describe them in detail.

How would you describe your satisfaction working with the parts coordination team?

Theme 4: Development and feedback

How would you improve the parts coordination team's service?

How is your feedback currently gathered?

Do you have anything else to add?

APPENDIX 2

TUTKIMUKSEN PUOLISTRUKTUROITU TEEMAHAASTATTELU RUNKO

Kesto:

Tutkimuksen tavoitteet esitelty:

Tutkimuslupa saatu tutkittavalta:

Teema1: Haastatellun tiedot

Tiimi

Työnkuvaus

Työkokemus nykyisessä pestissä?

Teema 2: Palvelun laatu

Kuvaile varaosa koordinaattori tiimin palvelun laatua.

Kuvaile varaosa koordinaattori tiimin palvelun vahvuuksia.

Kuvaile varaosa koordinaattori tiimin palvelun heikkouksia.

Teema 3. Tyytyväisyys

Kuvaile millaisia odotuksia sinulla on varaosa koordinaattori tiimin palvelusta.

Kuvaile kokemuksiasi työskennellessä varaosa koordinaattori tiimin kanssa.

Kuvaile yksityiskohtaisesti palvelutilanne mikä meni erittäin hyvin tai huonosti.

Miten kuvailisit tyytyväisyyttäsi varaosa koordinaattori tiimin palveluun?

Teema 4: Kehitys ja palaute

Miten kehittäisit varaosa koordinaattori tiimin palvelua?

Miten teidän palautettanne kerätään?

Onko sinulla mitään lisättävää?

APPENDIX 3

Internal Customers satisfaction survey

1. Which team are you currently working?

Merkitse vain yksi soikio.

Warranty

Commissioning

Answer options: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

2. Communication is smooth and effective

Merkitse vain yksi soikio.

1 2 3 4 5

3. The parts coordinators skills and knowledge are in a sufficient level

Merkitse vain yksi soikio.

1 2 3 4 5

4. The parts coordinators are service-oriented

Merkitse vain yksi soikio.

1 2 3 4 5

5. The parts coordinators are easily and quickly accessible

Merkitse vain yksi soikio.

1 2 3 4 5

6. The parts coordinators provide consistent service quality

Merkitse vain yksi soikio.

1 2 3 4 5

7. The parts coordinators are punctual

Merkitse vain yksi soikio.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. The parts coordinators actively reacting to problem situations

Merkitse vain yksi soikio.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. The parts coordinators understand our needs

Merkitse vain yksi soikio.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. I am satisfied with the parts coordinator service

Merkitse vain yksi soikio.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Any additional feedback or suggestions?
