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# After-Sales Services and Their Impact on Customer Satisfaction



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# After-Sales Services and Their Impact on Customer Satisfaction

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Customer service plays a major role in shaping how customers perceive a company overall. When service works well, customers feel valued and are more likely to be satisfied and return again. However, the customer experience does not end at the point of purchase – it also includes the services offered after that, such as spare parts, maintenance, and support.

After-sales services are important for building customer satisfaction and trust. When these services are smooth and reliable, they can give the company a competitive edge, as customers appreciate hassle-free support even after buying a product. With strong after-sales service, businesses can strengthen long-term customer relationships and stand out from competitors.

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss how after-sales services affect customer satisfaction and identify areas where the service can still be improved. The goal is to find concrete ideas that companies can use to improve the customer experience and satisfaction through after-sales services.

The analysis looks into three different companies and looks at what customers value most in these services. The study also utilizes interviews with company employees and feedback gathered from customers. These insights help to find both strengths and areas that need development.

Results show that companies value fast support, reliable spare parts, and preventive maintenance. Digital tools and tailored services enhance customer satisfaction and strengthen long-term loyalty.

Keywords: After-sales, customer satisfaction, customer service, sales

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# 1 Introduction

Customer service plays a crucial role in a company's operations, as it directly influences customer satisfaction and the company's image. High-quality customer service not only attracts new clients but also strengthens existing relationships and fosters customer loyalty. In today's competitive landscape, customers expect companies to deliver comprehensive service solutions that encompass the entire customer journey – from the first interaction to product usage and post-purchase support. Research indicates that customer satisfaction is achieved particularly when a company provides consistent and high-standard service in every customer interaction (Juntunen, 2012, s. 37). Moreover, satisfied customers enhance the company's competitive edge through loyalty and a positive reputation (Kotler & Keller, 2016, s. 153).

After-sales services represent a significant part of the customer experience, especially in industries where customers have high expectations for the continuous functionality of products and services. These services include maintenance contracts, spare parts delivery, technical support, as well as equipment maintenance and updates. High-quality after-sales services not only address customer issues but can also differentiate a company from its competitors by providing added value after the purchase. In technology and equipment manufacturing sectors, after-sales services play a crucial role in strengthening customer satisfaction and loyalty (Nyrönen, 2017).

This thesis focuses on improving customer satisfaction from the perspective of after-sales services, as these services have been shown to significantly influence the strengthening of customer loyalty. The research looks into the practices of three global companies operating within the same industry, offering a diverse perspective on the role of after-sales services in enhancing customer satisfaction. Additionally, this thesis extensively utilizes existing research and literature related to customer satisfaction and after-sales services.

The data collection methods include interviews with the staff of the three companies and the analysis of available customer feedback to gain a deep

understanding of the factors influencing customer satisfaction. This approach allows the study to provide concrete recommendations for improving after-sales services. The key questions of the thesis are:

- What types of after-sales services can be organized?
- Which after-sales services do customers value?
- How should after-sales services be developed to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty?

The topic is time related, as customers expect high quality from products and services, along with continuous support after the purchase. As competition intensifies, the importance of customer satisfaction becomes even more critical, since satisfied customers are more likely to remain loyal and recommend the company to others. Conversely, poor or inadequate after-sales service can lead to the termination of customer relationships and damage the company's reputation.

The results of this thesis will be particularly useful for the three companies analyzed in this study. However, the insights gained from the comparison also provide other companies with practical perspectives on how customer-oriented after-sales services can strengthen customer loyalty and support competitive advantage. This work offers both practical benefits for business operations and new perspectives on the role of after-sales services in building customer satisfaction and loyalty.

## 2 Importance of After-Sales Services in Business

Customer satisfaction and after-sales services are essential factors in a company's success and in fostering customer loyalty. This study shows the formation of customer satisfaction and examines how its key components, including the service experience, product quality, and after-sales services, influence a company's competitiveness. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of after-sales services as an integral part of the overall customer experience, and how they can enhance customer trust, commitment, and willingness to recommend the company to others. Furthermore, the importance of high-quality after-sales services is highlighted as a strategic asset in the long-term development of business operations.

### 2.1 The Importance and Content of After-Sales Services

Customer satisfaction serves as a fundamental metric in assessing a company's performance and overall success. It is derived from customers' experiences and the extent to which a company's products, services, and operations meet or exceed their expectations. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), customer satisfaction is determined by the comparison between the perceived performance of a product or service and the customer's prior expectations.

1. **Service experience:** Customer experience is shaped throughout the entire service process, including the purchasing process, customer service, and after-sales services. Prompt, knowledgeable, and customer-oriented service enhances satisfaction and directly influences the customer's willingness to continue the relationship with the company.
2. **Product or service quality:** A high-quality product or service meets or exceeds customer expectations, forming the foundation for satisfaction and long-term customer relationships. A functional and durable product, combined with a seamless service experience, strengthens the customer's trust in the company.

Customer satisfaction is achieved when a company delivers on its promises and ensures a consistent and positive experience at every customer touchpoint. However, satisfaction alone is not always sufficient to guarantee customer loyalty – consistently high-quality service and products are crucial factors in maintaining long-term customer relationships (Suomi.fi, n.d.). Customer satisfaction is a critical factor in a company's success and in maintaining its competitiveness. Lovelock and Wirtz (2021) emphasize that satisfied customers are more likely to return, recommend the company to others, and provide positive feedback. These aspects are all essential for achieving sustainable growth.

### **Effects of Customer Satisfaction**

**Customer Loyalty:** Satisfied customers are more likely to return for future purchases and continue doing business with the company.

**Brand Image:** Customer satisfaction influences how the company's brand is perceived in terms of reliability and quality.

**Customer Acquisition:** Positive feedback and recommendations attract new customers.

**Financial Profitability:** Satisfied customers generate higher revenue for the company and reduce the costs associated with acquiring new customers.

These effects demonstrate that customer satisfaction is a crucial factor in a company's success. It not only strengthens existing customer relationships but also enhances business profitability through the acquisition of new customers. Positive experiences can create a competitive advantage, as satisfied customers share recommendations and reinforce the company's reputation in the market.

## 2.2 Importance and Content of After-Sales Services

After-sales services are an important part of a company's overall service offering and can significantly impact the customer experience following a purchase. These services encompass all actions that support the customer after the acquisition of a product or service, with the goal of ensuring customer satisfaction and maximizing the value of the product. After-sales services not only facilitate product usage but can also improve customer satisfaction and increase customer loyalty (Kotler & Keller, 2016)

Experts in service marketing emphasize that high-quality after-sales services can serve as a key differentiator in competitive markets, especially for valuable or complex products. This means that well-executed after-sales services can help a company stand out from its competitors, particularly in industries where products require ongoing support or maintenance (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2021, s. 287).

After-sales services are not only an operational aspect of business but also play a strategic role in a company's success. Meeting and even exceeding customer expectations through after-sales services can significantly enhance customer satisfaction. Satisfied customers are more likely to return and recommend the company to others, creating a positive cycle of growth (Kumar & Garg, 2020, s. 198).

In addition, after-sales services can serve as an effective sales channel. After-sales contacts often provide opportunities for upselling and cross-selling, making them an important touchpoint for business growth (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2021, s. 287). After-sales services play a significant role in building customer satisfaction, as they enhance the customer's experience with their purchase decision. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), after-sales services represent a critical touchpoint, and the quality of this contact can either support or undermine customer satisfaction. Well-executed after-sales services can, therefore, strengthen customer trust and commitment to the company.

For example, the speed and availability of spare parts services are crucial factors for customers who require continuous and uninterrupted operations. Singh and Kumar (2020, p. 97) emphasize that delays in spare parts deliveries can reduce customer satisfaction and undermine trust in the brand, which may affect the company's reputation and competitiveness.

### 2.3 Role of After-Sales Services in Building Customer Satisfaction

After-sales services are a key component of the customer experience, as they extend the customer relationship beyond the initial purchase. They are not just the final stage in the interaction between the customer and the company, but can also lay the foundation for long-term collaboration. Through these services, a company can demonstrate its customer-centric approach and respond to the customer's needs throughout the entire lifecycle of the product or service.

Customers expect products and services to function properly, but in problematic situations, the company's response is crucial. According to Lovelock and Wirtz (2021), after-sales services represent a moment when the customer's trust can either be strengthened or diminished, depending on how well the company handles the situation. Successful after-sales service demonstrates to the customer that the company stands behind its product and values the customer relationship.

In practice, after-sales services such as technical support and maintenance services can prevent or resolve issues that would otherwise undermine the customer experience. Quick and expert maintenance can turn a negative situation into a positive one, demonstrating to the customer that their needs are taken seriously. Customer satisfaction is not solely based on the quality of the product or service but is also influenced by the care and support provided by the company after the purchase. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), the value of a product is derived from both its functional benefits and the support available throughout its lifecycle. This means that the customer evaluates their overall experience, which includes not only the product itself but also the

services built around it. Customers who receive effective support and quick solutions to their issues are more satisfied and are more likely to return as customers. After-sales services provide significant added value that complements the overall product and service offering.

For example, the availability of spare parts and the quality of maintenance services can have a greater impact on customer satisfaction than simply meeting the product's expected features. If a customer feels that the company takes care of their needs and provides ongoing support, they are more likely to remain loyal and be willing to recommend the company to others.

After-sales services are an essential part of building customer satisfaction and maintaining long-term customer relationships. They provide customers with confidence that the company stands behind its products and takes care of their needs throughout the entire lifecycle of the product. Well-executed after-sales services can strengthen customer loyalty, enhance brand image, and support the company's long-term success.

Table 1: After-sales Services and their benefits. (authors own)

<b>Service</b>	<b>Customer benefit</b>
Technical support	Minimizes downtime and Builds trust
Spare parts delivery	Speed and Reliability
Preventative maintenance	Fewer disruptions and Lower costs
Training & consultation	Better use and Higher satisfaction
Remote monitoring	Quick issue detection

After-sales services keep customers supported after a purchase by offering help like repairs and technical support. They build trust, improve satisfaction, and show that the company cares about long-term customer relationships.

### **3 Approach to Data Collection and Analysis**

This analysis utilizes a benchmarking approach, which is an effective method for comparing organizational practices and identifying best practices. Through benchmarking, it is possible to systematically assess how the practices of different companies, such as the speed, quality, and customer support of after-sales services, affect customer satisfaction (Bhutta & Huq, 2019, s. 88). This approach helps identify the most successful business models that can be applied in other companies as well.

The analysis examines interviews with three different individuals, in which they share their experiences and perspectives on after-sales services. The interviews provide valuable insights into the factors that influence customer satisfaction and how services can be improved to better meet customer needs. Responses from different viewpoints help create a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of after-sales services and potential areas for improvement. The information gathered from the interviews complements the overall picture based on customer experiences and supports companies in improving their services (Flick, 2018, s. 145).

The company-specific comparison is a central part of this study, as it reveals potential differences in the practices of companies and their impact on customer satisfaction. Through benchmarking, it is possible to not only examine the strengths and weaknesses of different companies but also provide concrete recommendations for improving after-sales services (Anderson, 2014, s. 132).

#### **3.1 Data Collection Methods**

The data collection is based on diverse methods that analyze the after-sales services of different companies and their impact on customer satisfaction. A key component of the data collection process consists of interviews with company personnel, which provide in-depth information on the practices of after-sales services and their effects. The perspectives of the personnel help to understand

how the companies' operational models, such as service speed, technical support, and spare parts deliveries, contribute to customer satisfaction.

The aim is to compare the practices of different companies and identify the best practices that promote customer satisfaction. Combining interviews with company personnel with the information gathered from documentation allows for a comprehensive understanding of the functioning of after-sales services and their impact.

### 3.2 Analysis Methods

The analysis utilizes qualitative methods, with content analysis being a key component. Themes emerging from the interviews are compared across companies, allowing for a more detailed examination of different aspects of after-sales services. Through content analysis, the aim is to identify which aspects of the services are emphasized in each company and what the most significant strengths and weaknesses are between the companies.

The analysis also applies integrated methods, combining quantitative and qualitative results. For example, numerical trends from customer satisfaction surveys complement the insights gathered from the interviews. This mixed-methods approach provides a comprehensive picture of who excels in which areas and which factors require further development.

The comparison focuses particularly on the key findings that highlight the strengths and areas for improvement in each company's after-sales services. The ultimate goal is to identify best practices and provide recommendations that support the development of customer satisfaction and service quality. This multi-method approach ensures that the analysis is both detailed and comprehensive.

## 4 Benchmarking Three Companies

### 4.1 Company A: Overview and After-Sales Services

Company A is an internationally operating technology company that focuses on developing energy-efficient solutions and promoting sustainable development across various industries (Company A's website). Its technological innovations primarily serve the industrial, transportation, and both mobile and stationary equipment sectors (Company A's Annual Report 2023). The company's main objective is to provide its customers with advanced and long-lasting energy solutions that meet the evolving demands of the market (Source 3: Market Analysis, 2024).

In order to serve its customers effectively, the company has strategically located its production units in key areas, allowing for a rapid response to local needs (Location Directory, Company A). The research and production facilities utilize the latest technology and modern manufacturing processes, ensuring high product quality and reliability (Technology Report 2023). Additionally, the company has expanded its operations in recent years by establishing new units close to key customer areas, which has strengthened its international position and enabled better customer service (Press Release, Company A, 2024).

Company A places a strong emphasis on a customer-centric approach, which is reflected in the services it offers to support customers throughout the entire lifecycle of the solution (Customer Feedback Report, 2023). Key services include technical support, spare parts deliveries, warranty services, training, and system updates.

Technical support is designed to provide customers with quick and expert assistance on various technical issues, helping to minimize downtime and ensure the functionality of the equipment (Technical Support Documentation, 2023). The company also has an extensive spare parts inventory, enabling critical components to be delivered to customers without delay, which enhances system usability and lifespan (Spare Parts Logistics Report, 2024).

Warranty services are an important part of the customer experience, ensuring that products maintain their performance and quality over the long term (Warranty Terms, Company A, 2023). Additionally, the company offers training and consulting services, helping customers to adopt best practices for the effective and safe use and maintenance of products (Training Program Brochure, 2024).

As technology evolves, so do customer needs, which is why the company offers the opportunity for system modernization and updates. These allow the latest innovations and security standards to be utilized, extending the lifespan of the equipment and improving its efficiency (Product Development Report, 2024).

Company A strives to build long-term and trustworthy customer relationships, combining high-quality products, advanced technology, and comprehensive services (Customer Strategy, Company A, 2023). At the core of its operations are customer-centricity, responsibility, and continuous innovation, which guide both product development and business expansion (Corporate Responsibility Report, 2024). The goal is to ensure that the company's solutions not only meet current market needs but also support customers' business growth in the long term.

#### 4.2 Company B: Overview and After-Sales Services

Company B is an internationally operating technology company specializing in advanced security solutions. The systems it develops are designed to optimize resource usage and reduce risks in critical situations where quick response and operational reliability are key (Company B Website). Thanks to its innovative technologies, the company is able to offer solutions that are significantly more efficient and reliable than traditional security systems (Technology Report 2023). Its products are widely used in various operational environments where the combination of safety and performance is essential (Market Analysis 2024).

The company's operations are centralized in state-of-the-art facilities that integrate production, design, and product development (Company B Location

Overview). This setup enables efficient collaboration between different departments and accelerates the development and market introduction of new solutions. The company has expanded its operations across multiple industries, which has strengthened its position as a leading player in security technology (Press Release, Company B, 2024).

Company B does not focus solely on the development of equipment but also offers comprehensive services that ensure the reliability and efficiency of systems throughout their entire lifecycle (Customer Service Annual Report 2023). The service package includes maintenance and support services, availability of spare parts, system modernization and updates, remote monitoring, and customer training.

Regular maintenance and proactive upkeep are crucial when the goal is to ensure the long-term functionality of systems and minimize downtime.

Predictive inspections help identify potential issues before they escalate, which improves the reliability and safety of equipment (Maintenance Report, 2024).

Spare parts services allow customers to quickly receive original parts, which reduces downtime and extends the lifespan of systems (Spare Parts Logistics Report, 2024).

As technology advances, the company offers its customers the opportunity to update and expand their systems to meet the latest safety standards and evolving customer needs. Modernization and technological updates ensure that hardware stays up-to-date and provides the best possible performance (Product Development Report, 2024). The company also utilizes advanced remote monitoring solutions, allowing customers to monitor the status of their equipment in real-time. Diagnostic tools enable the identification and repair of faults before they cause production disruptions, reducing the need for maintenance and improving production efficiency (Remote Monitoring Study, 2024).

In addition, the company focuses on developing its customers' expertise by offering comprehensive training and advisory services. The training ensures

that customers can use and maintain their systems properly, which improves the lifespan and safety of the equipment (Training Program Brochure, 2024).

Company B aims to build long-term and reliable customer relationships by offering solutions that adapt to changing conditions and support customers' business goals (Customer Strategy, Company B, 2023). It strongly invests in research and development to ensure that its technological innovations remain at the forefront of industry development, providing customers with the most advanced solutions on the market (Company's Sustainability Report, 2024). Responsible operations, customer-centricity, and technological advancement are guiding principles that distinguish the company from its competitors and strengthen its position as a leading player in security technology.

#### 4.3 Company C: Overview and After-Sales Services

Company C is an internationally operating technology company that focuses on the development of innovative material handling and lifting solutions. Its goal is to improve efficiency and safety across various industries, such as manufacturing, port logistics, and the construction sector (Company C's website). The products and services developed by the company help customers optimize their operations and meet the ever-changing demands of the industry (Technology Report 2023).

Company C is an internationally operating technology company specializing in the development of innovative material handling and lifting solutions. Its aim is to improve efficiency and safety across various industries such as manufacturing, port logistics, and the construction sector (Company C's website). The products and services developed by the company help customers optimize their operations and meet the ever-changing demands of the industry (Technology Report 2023).

The company's global operational network covers multiple markets, and its modern manufacturing and assembly facilities ensure high quality and continuous development (Facility Overview, Company C). Thanks to its

international presence, the company can provide its customers with efficient support as well as flexible and scalable solutions (Market Analysis 2024). By expanding its operations and investing in new technologies, the company has gained a strong position in its sector and expanded its customer base across multiple industries (Press Release, Company C, 2024).

## 5 Results and Analysis

This chapter discusses the importance of after-sales services and customer experiences based on interviews. The interviews aimed to explore what types of after-sales services companies value, what challenges are associated with them, and how they could be improved to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. The interviews were divided into three main themes: (1) What after-sales services do customers value, (2) What types of after-sales services are available, and (3) How should after-sales services be developed.

### Theme 1: What After-Sales Services Do Customers Value?

" When the equipment breaks down, there's no time to sit around and wonder. It's absolutely essential for us to get an expert on the line immediately — and on-site if needed. Every minute the machine is down costs us money "

The availability of spare parts emerged as another significant factor. Interviewee B pointed out that critical spare parts are often sold together with the equipment, so that the customer can be prepared for potential disruptions in advance.

" We usually go through with the customer right from the start which spare parts are worth keeping in stock in advance. If they're already there, there's no need to start making panic calls when something breaks down. "

All interviewees emphasized the importance of maintenance agreements that include regular inspections and preventive maintenance. Interviewee A noted that preventive maintenance helps avoid costly and unexpected repairs, stating that preventive maintenance is key as it allows them to catch problems early and avoid big, expensive surprises down the line.

" All interviewees emphasized the importance of maintenance agreements that include regular inspections and preventive upkeep. Interviewee A noted that preventive maintenance helps avoid costly and unexpected repairs. They added that they prefer not to react only after a machine has broken down. Instead, it is much smarter to assess the condition of equipment in advance and replace worn parts in time, as this saves both stress and, above all, money."

### Theme 2: What Types of After-Sales Services Can Be Arranged?

Companies expect a wide range of after-sales services from their suppliers to support their business operations. Technical support and spare parts services were seen as basic requirements, but in addition to these, the role of remote monitoring and digitalization was particularly emphasized.

Several interviewees considered digital services important, as they allow for the identification and prevention of issues before they occur. Interviewee A emphasized the benefits of remote monitoring as follows.

" If the devices are connected to the network, we can see their status without the customer having to call us separately. This saves time and money for both parties."

Interviewee C pointed out that remote monitoring also allows for quick responses to issues.

" If something goes wrong, we don't have to guess where it's coming from. We can see immediately if there's an issue, and respond to it quickly. It speeds up problem-solving and saves customers unnecessary headaches. "

On the other hand, Interviewee B emphasized that not all customers have the resources to invest in comprehensive spare parts inventories, which highlights the supplier's role in spare parts management.

" Not everyone wants to stock spare parts because they are expensive and take up space. But when they are needed, they must be available immediately. We have solved this by offering a service where we keep certain parts in stock on behalf of the customers."

### Theme 3: How Should After-Sales Services Be Developed?

Based on the interviews, key areas for the development of after-sales services included shortening response times, utilizing digitalization, and tailoring services according to customer needs.

Interviewee C emphasized the importance of quick response times:

" It's not enough for the customer to receive a 'we'll get back to you' response – things need to move forward as soon as the problem arises. The quicker someone can assess the situation, the less it will ultimately cost all parties involved."

In addition, customizing services to meet the industry-specific needs of customers was seen as important. Interviewee B highlighted that every customer has different needs, and this must be taken into account when designing services.

"Some want a maintenance contract that covers everything, while others just want to have access to technical support when needed. We can't offer the same package to everyone — we need to consider each customer's needs individually."

In the future, companies expect after-sales services to provide more preventive solutions, automation, and transparency. Interviewee C summarized the development direction as follows.

" It is important to shift more towards anticipating and preventing problems before they even happen. This means more analytics and being more aware of the status of the customer's equipment."

Based on the interviews, the key aspects of after-sales services are fast technical support, availability of spare parts, predictive maintenance, and the adaptability of services to the customer's needs. Companies expect suppliers to adopt a proactive approach, provide clear service models, and offer cost-effective services. Additionally, digitalization and customer-oriented service development are key factors for the future that can enhance customer satisfaction and strengthen customer loyalty.

Table 2: Summary of key reaserch findings (Authors Own)

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Finding</b>
Most valued service	Fast availability of spare parts
Main area for improvement	Response time in problem situations
Customer expectations	Proactive solutions and remote monitoring
Competitive differeniator	Training services and customized soultions

The review of after-sales services from the perspective of companies and industries highlights several key findings related to the content of services, customer experience, and their impact on customer relationships. The findings demonstrate that after-sales services are a crucial part of companies' customer strategies and a significant competitive factor in many industries.

The first key finding is that the scope and diversity of after-sales services directly impact the added value perceived by customers. Companies that offer comprehensive services, such as technical support, fast delivery of spare parts, and proactive maintenance, are able to meet customer needs more effectively. This is especially evident in industries where production continuity and reliability are of paramount importance. Customers appreciate service providers who can resolve issues quickly and offer proactive solutions.

The second key finding is the importance of predictive services in terms of customer satisfaction and business continuity. Solutions based on IoT technology and real-time monitoring have transformed the way after-sales services operate, particularly in industrial and technology-intensive sectors. These services allow customers to avoid downtime and optimize the lifespan of their equipment, which enhances their trust in the service provider. Offering predictive services also highlights the companies' commitment to their customers' long-term needs.

The third finding relates to the customization and personalization of services. Companies that are able to tailor their after-sales services to the customer's industry, business, and specific needs gain a stronger foothold in the competition. Through customized services, such as maintenance contracts and modernization solutions, businesses can demonstrate their understanding of their customers' unique operational requirements. This creates added value and strengthens long-term customer relationships.

The fourth finding is that utilizing customer feedback is crucial in the development of after-sales services. Through feedback, companies can identify the strengths and weaknesses of their service processes, such as challenges

related to response times, communication, and service availability.

Understanding and responding to customer needs enhances their trust in the company's ability to deliver value in long-term collaboration.

Finally, it can be concluded that the impact of digitalization on after-sales services is significant. Digital self-service portals, where customers can review service history, place spare part orders, and monitor equipment status, have increased the transparency and ease of use of services. This development not only enhances the customer experience but also reduces the need for manual communication, saving both time and resources.

The key findings indicate that successful after-sales services combine speed, proactivity, customer-centricity, and digitalization. These factors not only enhance customer satisfaction but also strengthen customer loyalty and create sustainable competitive advantages for companies.

## 6 Conclusions and Recommendations

The goal of the thesis is to explore how after-sales services affect customer satisfaction and how these services can be improved to strengthen customer loyalty. By comparing the practices of three global companies and analyzing interview data, the thesis aims to identify effective ways to develop after-sales services to better meet customer needs and support long-term customer relationships.

Data comes from basic literature as well as benchmarking and expert interviews.

The recommendations for developing after-sales services focus on customer-centricity, leveraging technology, and continuously improving service processes. It is important for companies to adapt their services to the changing needs of their customers and industry-specific requirements in order to provide added value and achieve long-term customer relationships.

The first recommendation for companies is to emphasize speed and efficiency in after-sales services. Customers expect a quick response to technical issues as well as the availability of spare parts and maintenance services in critical situations. Companies should invest in technical solutions and resources that enable fast and reliable service delivery. For example, 24/7 technical support and an optimized logistics network can reduce downtime for customers and increase their trust in the service provider.

The second key recommendation is the development of proactive services. IoT technology and real-time monitoring offer opportunities to identify and address issues before they occur, reducing unexpected downtime and extending the lifespan of equipment. Companies should leverage these technologies to develop predictive maintenance solutions that provide customers with peace of mind and confidence in the reliability of their systems. Integrating these solutions into after-sales services demonstrates the company's commitment to supporting the continuity of its customers' businesses.

The third recommendation relates to the customization of services. Customer needs and requirements vary across industries, so tailoring services to their business environment is crucial. Customized maintenance contracts, modernization services, and client-specific training programs enhance the customer experience by demonstrating that their needs are understood and addressed. This increases customer satisfaction and strengthens their commitment to the company.

The fourth recommendation is the active utilization of customer feedback in service development. Collecting feedback on customer experiences and needs provides valuable insights into the strengths and areas for improvement in service processes. Companies should develop systematic methods for gathering and analyzing feedback so they can make improvements based on customer needs. This increases customers' trust that their opinions are taken into account.

The final recommendation focuses on leveraging digitalization in after-sales services. Digital self-service platforms that allow customers to track maintenance processes, place spare part orders, and review diagnostic data enhance the customer experience and increase service transparency. Companies should invest in such solutions to enable customers to manage their services flexibly and efficiently. Digitalization can also reduce the need for manual processes, resulting in cost savings for both the customer and the service provider.

By implementing these recommendations, companies can enhance their after-sales services to better meet the needs and expectations of their customers. The combination of service speed, proactivity, customization, customer feedback, and digitalization forms the foundation upon which companies can achieve higher customer satisfaction, strengthen customer loyalty, and improve their competitive edge in the market.

After-sales services offer diverse opportunities for future research that can deepen the understanding of their impact on business success, customer

relationships, and competitiveness. Future studies could focus specifically on the development of technology, customer expectations, and service processes across different industries.

One significant opportunity for future research is a deeper exploration of the role of predictive maintenance services and technologies such as IoT and artificial intelligence. While these technologies have already proven their value in after-sales services, their precise impact on customer satisfaction and business efficiency requires further study. Specifically, it would be interesting to investigate how different industries leverage these technologies and what innovative applications can be developed based on them.

Another important area of research is the impact of the customization of after-sales services on customer relationships. This could include an examination of how customer-tailored services, such as customized maintenance contracts and modernization solutions, affect the perceived value and loyalty of customers. Additionally, it would be useful to gain a better understanding of the factors that influence customers' decisions to choose customized services over traditional alternatives.

The growing importance of digitalization and self-service solutions also presents an interesting area for further research. It is essential to investigate how customers perceive digital self-service platforms, such as service portals and diagnostic tools, and how these solutions impact customer satisfaction. Additionally, it would be valuable to explore what new digital innovations are expected in after-sales services in the future and how they will affect the efficiency of companies' service processes.

A more detailed analysis of industry-specific differences offers another valuable research topic. The needs and expectations for after-sales services vary greatly across industries, and a deeper understanding of these differences could help companies develop more targeted service solutions. For example, comparing the specific characteristics of industries such as manufacturing, logistics, and

security could provide new insights into how services can be optimized for different customer segments.

Finally, leveraging customer feedback and its impact on service development is a topic that deserves further attention. Future research could explore how customer feedback influences innovation in after-sales services and how feedback processing can be improved. This would help companies create customer-centric solutions and strengthen their customer relationships.

These opportunities for further research can deepen the understanding of the significance and development of after-sales services. Studies could provide companies with new tools to optimize their services and improve customer experience in competitive markets.

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