



**LAUREA**  
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES  
*Together we are stronger*

# Service requirements for an English language consultancy startup in Finland

Pakkala, Satu

2015 Leppävaara

Laurea University of Applied Sciences  
Leppävaara

Service requirements for an English language consultancy startup  
in Finland

Satu Pakkala  
Degree Programme in Business  
Management  
Bachelor's Thesis  
September, 2015

Satu Pakkala

**Service requirements for an English language consultancy startup in Finland**

Year	2015	Pages	31
------	------	-------	----

---

The objective of the thesis is to investigate the characteristics, preferences and preferred service offerings of potential customers of Paestum Oy.

The purpose of the research conducted on behalf of this thesis research is to assess the customer needs in relation to different services, to find out whether Paestum Oy's current offered service sufficiently caters to its customer base, and finally to discover whether Paestum currently targets the right customer segments. As the company is still in its infancy and its markets are still somewhat unquantified, the collection of information and insights from the end user's point of view was of high importance.

The theoretical section of the thesis introduces the case company and explains how service design methodologies form the main approach employed by the conducted research. The importance of customer understanding, customer value and the customer journey are also highlighted. The main tool used during the research phase takes the form of a semi-structured interview utilising service cards to engage the interviewees.

The results of the study show that traditional services such as proofreading and translation were most highly valued, however social media management was recognised as a priority. In terms of Paestum Oy's relationship with its customers, communication is of vital importance - whether it be with Paestum's customers, during projects or during check-up calls at later periods. Delivery on what was promised and an open, honest style of work were highly appreciated. Finally, extensive research into potential customers allows for the creation of personalised services and price points, leading to referrals and long lasting business relationships.

Keywords: Service design, customer value, customer journey, qualitative research

## Table of contents

1	The purpose of the thesis .....	5
1.1	Case company introduction .....	5
2	Using service design to increase customer value .....	6
2.1	Customer understanding.....	6
2.2	Customer value .....	8
2.2.1	Customer journey- the value chain of the customer .....	8
3	Methodology .....	9
3.1	Qualitative research .....	9
3.2	Interview.....	10
3.2.1	Semi-structured interview .....	10
3.2.2	Interviewees .....	11
4	Research validity and reliability.....	13
5	Interviews.....	14
5.1	Service cards .....	14
5.2	Customer gains and pains .....	15
5.3	Selecting a service provider .....	15
5.4	Doubts about new services.....	17
5.5	Committing to a service .....	17
5.6	Three most important factors relating to positive service experiences .....	18
5.7	Good cooperation and service .....	19
5.8	Bad cooperation and service.....	19
5.9	Post-communication .....	20
5.10	Sharing a good/bad service experience with others.....	21
5.11	Advice and insights for Paestum .....	21
6	Presenting the interview transcript results.....	23
6.1	Thematisation.....	26
7	Result Analysis .....	26
7.1	Clustered results.....	26
8	Conclusions and suggestions .....	27
	References.....	28
	Figures .....	30
	Tables .....	31
	Appendixes .....	32

## 1 The purpose of the thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to identify the key elements that bring value to the potential customers of Paestum Oy in a language consultancy industry setting. Paestum Oy offers a range of services to its customers, but there is uncertainty as to whether these particular services meet the customer's requirements and subsequently if the right types of customers are being targeted.

The aim of the research conducted during the course of this thesis is to identify the services that are seen as being of most importance to potential customers, as well as assessing which types of cooperation and communication are of most value. This information can then be used for Paestum Oy's future marketing and sales campaigns, as well as focusing Paestum's product range in a more customer-orientated direction.

The research employs a range of service design methodologies. These methods are used to gain a more thorough understanding of the customer's needs and to discover the necessary elements for the creation of a favourable customer experience. Two service design methods are used during the course of a semi-structured interview: participatory need finding and customer journey documentation. All 8 interviewees are representatives of Finland-based companies that can potentially make use of Paestum's services.

### 1.1 Case company introduction

The case company for this thesis is Paestum Oy, a b2b consultancy based in Vantaa that offers English language content and language training services to businesses in Finland. Paestum began life as a sole trader in May 2014. Its founder, John Cozzi, recognised a need for Finnish businesses to utilise native level English language resources in their communications in order to gain a business advantage over their competition.

Paestum initially worked primarily as a subcontractor to a large content and language training company based in Finland. Over the course of several months, the founder of Paestum learned the intricacies of technical proofreading and copyediting, whilst at the same time honing Paestum's business operations.

The founder began conducting industry research and came to the conclusion that more profit was to be made from securing Paestum's own customers instead of subcontractual duties. As a result, Paestum was converted into a limited company in June 2015.

Paestum currently aims its marketing efforts at male and female CEOs of SMEs who live in Helsinki and Stockholm and are aged between 30 and 50 years of age. Paestum also targets communications officers at enterprise level organisations who live in Helsinki and Stockholm and who are between 30 and 50 years of age. Paestum offers a range of services, including copyediting, proofreading, copywriting, language training, inbound marketing and social media marketing.

As Paestum is new to the industry, the founder wishes to know more about the types of services prospective clients may wish to purchase, and the manner in which they are to be delivered. (Cozzi 2015. Pers.com.)

## 2 Using service design to increase customer value

In order to gain a true appreciation of the needs of Paestum's potential customers, service design methodology was extensively used when conducting research for this thesis. Service design is a field of science in which services are researched from the viewpoint of the end user. It is also described as a group of tasks that can be used to innovatively develop services from a user-centred direction. (Mager 2009,38) Service design is also about designing and innovating services with design based methods, with the user being at the centre of the planning. (Koivisto 2007, 142) When designing a service, it should be monitored as an interface between the user and the service provider. It should be useful, usable and desirable to the customer. From the service provider's point of view, the service needs to be efficiently organised, economical and clearly separate from competitors' offerings. (Mager 2009, 39)

### 2.1 Customer understanding

The growing of the customer understanding through activities such as research about the expectations, needs and goals of the target group is one of the critical phases of service design. In the case of Paestum, no prior research focusing on customer needs had been carried out, so this was an essential step in the service design-based assessment process. The focus at this point was to collect and analyse customer information to be used to guide the design process. The service design remit in Paestum's case was to match the needs and hopes of the users, so the recognition of the real needs and motivations of the end users was of particular importance.

Customer research in a service design context means the collection of relevant and appropriate information, in-depth research into the business case and the industry at large, both of which can in turn be directly used to guide and inspire the design process. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 73)

Information collected from the customer is both qualitative and quantitative, but greater weight is placed on qualitative results due to the practical experiences and customer insights produced by qualitative research methods. Pertinent information about customer behaviour and what brings them value makes it possible to create service concepts that customers are willing to pay for. From these, it is possible to evaluate the profit-expectation for the service provider and the potential value to the customer. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 142-143)

The importance of understanding the customer has been well documented in business literature, especially in relation to marketing planning duties and the actual designing of services. Service design however, offers a deeper approach. The observation methods used in service design have partially been derived from anthropology and ethnography, in which the irrational matters of human behaviour and decision-making are the typical areas trying to be understood. (Shove, et al. 2007,134)

In addition to being user centred, there are five basic principles to service design. Firstly, service design aims to achieve *an overall view* of the situation in question, both defining and taking into consideration all possible parties and the environment for which the service is being designed to operate in. An overall view subsequently requires *interdisciplinarity*, and it is common for a service design project to employ specialists from different fields such as marketing and technology. The user is at the centre of the service and *co-creation*, in other words engagement, is central to the service design process.

According to the fourth main principal, service designers think and act *visually*. Ideas gain new dimensions when they are made concrete in the form of either a prototype or a sketch. A service designer *needs to think radically* and without any preconceptions or prejudice. The aim of a service design project is to challenge existing procedures and policies in order to create new ones, instead of trying to please everyone by making small changes. These basic principles are united by the goal of making a positive user and customer experience a reality. (Mager 2009, 38)

“A service is not a service if no customers are using it” (Tuulaniemi 2011)

Respectively, the quality of service encountered by a customer greatly affects their willingness to continue with a cooperation or to buy more from a company. The attainment of a supreme customer experience has become a vital part of the overall strategy of a business, especially according to management literature. A unique customer experience is said to lead to significant financial profit. (Verhoef et al. 2009)

## 2.2 Customer value

Paestum had a theoretical understanding of its value chain, but no concrete evidence as to how efficient it was in a real world setting. The research carried out during the course of the study aimed to broaden Paestum's knowledge of its value creation for customers.

Customer value is a significant part of external productisation. The value is formed by supporting services and the features of the core product or service. This outlook equals the traditional definition of a value chain of a product or service, in which the value is being refined throughout the life cycle, from production to disposal. (Kaplinsky, Morris 2001) The customer value formed from the usage of a product or service is assessed at various points of the customer journey/value chain lifecycle.

Gaining an understanding of the customer experience however is not simple, as matters that may seem inconsequential from a company's point of view may lead to drastically better or worse customer experiences. Customer experience management requires a definitive definition of the customer journey, beginning with the pre-assumption of the journey and ending in its evaluation.

### 2.2.1 Customer journey- the value chain of the customer

The customer journey is a method of analysing the journey of the customer through the entirety of a service. Customer value should be formed at every service touch point - a point in which the customer becomes in/directly involved with the service provider or comes into contact with them. The customer journey can be considered the value chain of the customer. It can also be used to analyse the formation of value. The customer journey is formed by the choices given by the service provider and the choices made by the customer. (Koivisto, 2009, 143)

A customer journey consists of service moments that further consist of service touch points. Every customer's unique journey is formed by choices made at each touch point. The touch points are the concrete situations or physical entities that the customer encounters when connecting with the service provider. These are the tools by which the corporate brand and service experience are conveyed to the customer. They can be recognised by all 5 senses. (Koivisto 2009, 145) Physical entities may include the user interface, the product itself or a material. In terms of service-based businesses, contact points can be magazines, the Internet, an office appointment, and phone services.

The challenge of precisely defining a customer journey lies in the fact that every service moment may have several touch points. The customer may for instance become interested in a new production method by getting to know the webpages of the service provider, or by seeing an advertisement, hearing a testimonial from a colleague or by participating at a trade fair. The customer may however use the product or service bought in a way different to another customer. This typically occurs when the formation of the value is dependent on the unique user experience. This is why the service provider should not try to “force” the customer to take a certain predefined chain, instead they should observe the customer in different situations and through this form the most generally used contact points. (Koivisto 2009, 147)

A greater understanding of the Paestum customer journey will help highlight inefficiencies and areas for improvement, whilst simultaneously directing operations towards best practices.

Figure 1 illustrates 1 potential customer journey of a Paestum customer:

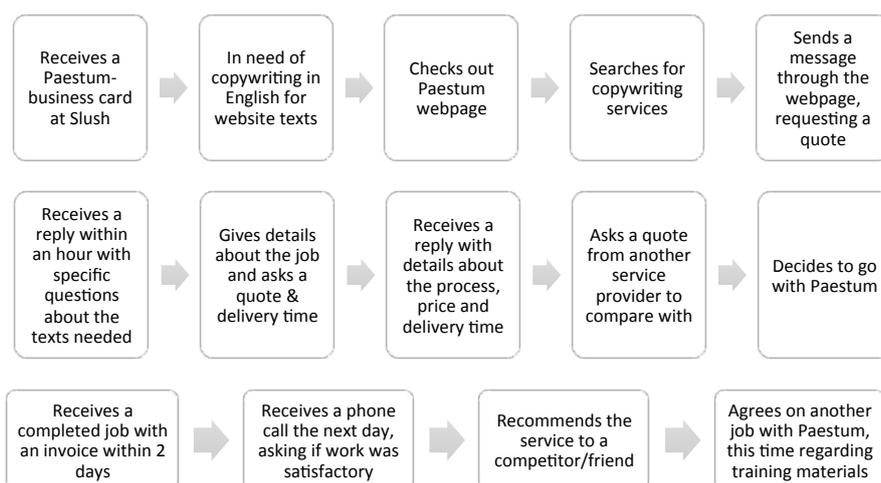


Figure 1: Typical customer journey

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Qualitative research

In qualitative research, the aim is to understand the phenomenon being researched. This means examining the meaning or purpose of the phenomenon, and achieving a more thorough and deeper understanding of said phenomenon. In practical terms, this usually means giving space to the visions and experiences of the people being researched and familiarising oneself with the thoughts, emotions and drivers regarding the researched phenomenon. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 143)

## 3.2 Interview

Interviews serve to gather information about the lives, thoughts and experiences of customers in terms of both service creation and utilisation. Interviews also build understanding of the typical daily routines of customers. This information is crucial to the service design process. In short, an interview is an ethnographically based observation method. The interviewer is interested in the life and actions of the interviewee and poses questions aimed at understanding why certain actions are being performed. It is also important to try to create a natural environment and atmosphere for the interview, so the actual needs, attitudes, problems and motivations can be seen. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 147) This formed the decision to not use the names of the interviewees or to link the actual companies represented by the interviewees in this report.

### 3.2.1 Semi-structured interview

The goal of a quantitative research interview is to maximize the reliability and validity of the research by forming a structured interview framework through the utilisation of specific, pre-determined questions. (Bryman 2012, 168). In a semi-structured interview on the other hand, the interviewer forms a rough interview framework that guides the course of the interview. In this analysis, a semi-structured interview methodology was utilised. As the research problem is multi-dimensional, a freeform conversation that is allowed to drift in pertinent directions was seen as being the most functional method. The lack of rigidity allows unexpected and interesting points to be raised during the course of the conversation. This may therefore lead to a more thorough set of results than those produced by a set of predetermined questions.

The interviews began with general questions regarding the goals and core competences of the companies. These were used to map out the business model and the possible points for improvement. Physical Service cards (12 pc, figure 2) were next presented to the interviewee. The use of service cards was intended to engage the interviewee and to raise conversation. The cards included a range of services (12) offered by Paestum with the aim of discovering which were seen as the most important and why. If the interviewees chose either Social Media (figure 3) or language training (figure 4), they were also asked to provide further specification and clarification as to which particular real world examples they felt were applicable.

The interviewees were also given the opportunity to state whether they felt the presented services were comprehensive or if some examples were missing. The interviewees were asked to select the cards that represented their current business needs, as well as those that they found interesting in a business context. A more thorough discussion followed, detailing the

motives of the customer and why they found some services were interesting when others were not.

With the service cards serving as focal points, the remainder of the interview focused on learning about how the companies choose service providers and which qualities most highly valued in the selection process. The interviews ended with a question in which the interviewee was invited to freely discuss any additional thoughts and share any further advice they may have for the case company.

### 3.2.2 Interviewees

Both CEOs of small and medium-sized companies and marketing experts were chosen as interviewees. All interviewees represented companies that currently operate in or are aiming to secure customers in international markets. It was assumed that the chosen companies either currently outsource or are aiming to outsource their English language content production duties. It was also assumed that these companies would potentially benefit from raising the business English levels of their employees. The interviewees were either responsible for the overall business operations of the companies in which they worked, or they were in charge of their company's marketing and sales departments. They all have areas of responsibility that overlap with the production or ordering of English language content.

POSITION	COMPANY	DATE
CEO	Company A	17.6.2015
CEO	Company B	17.6.2015
Marketing Specialist	Company C	22.6.2015
Key Account Manager	Company D	24.6.2015
CEO	Company E	26.6.2015
Founder/CEO	Company F	26.6.2015
Purchasing manager	Company G	26.6.2015
Marketing manager	Company H	30.7.2015

Table 1: Interviewees

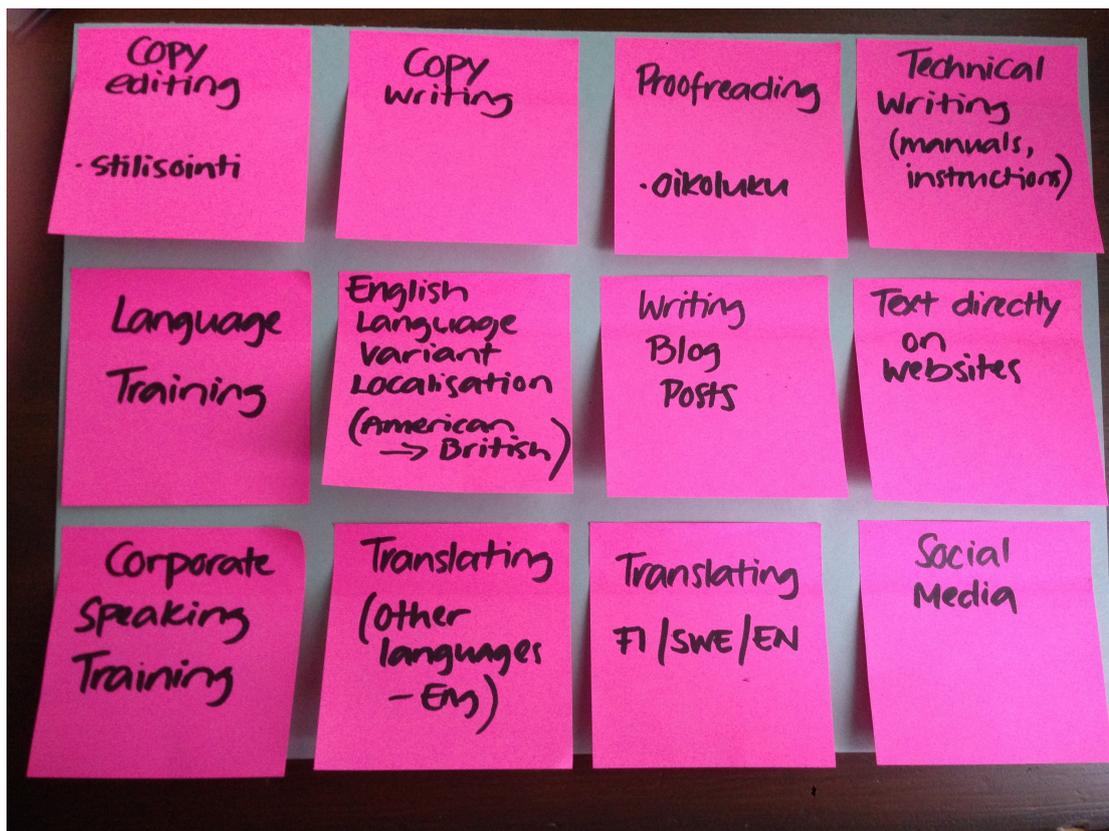


Figure 2: Total service card selection

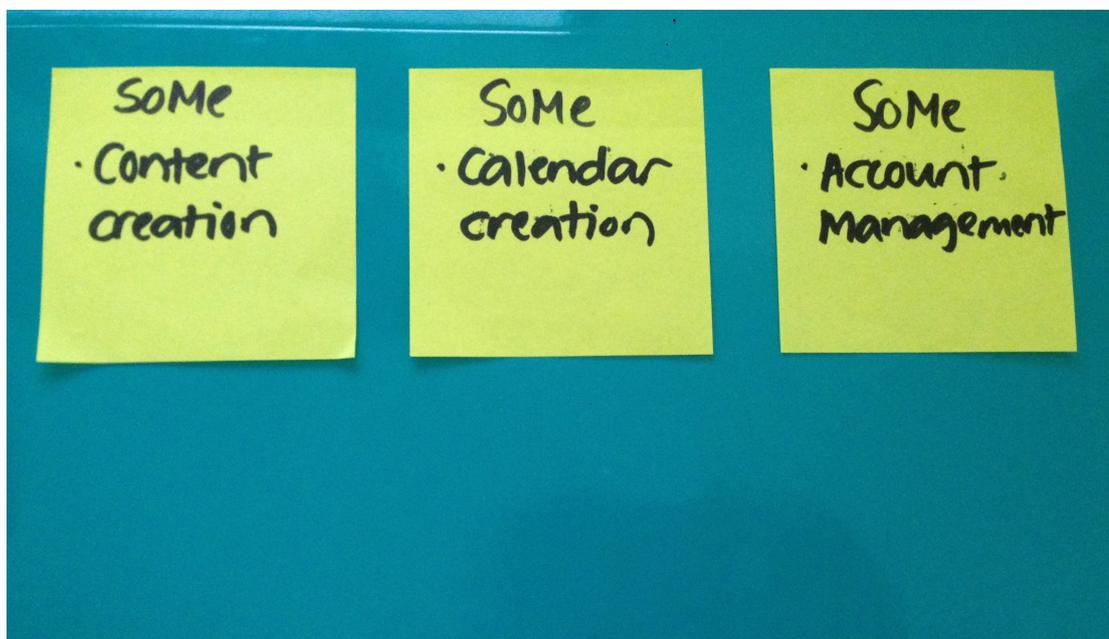


Figure 3: Social media service options

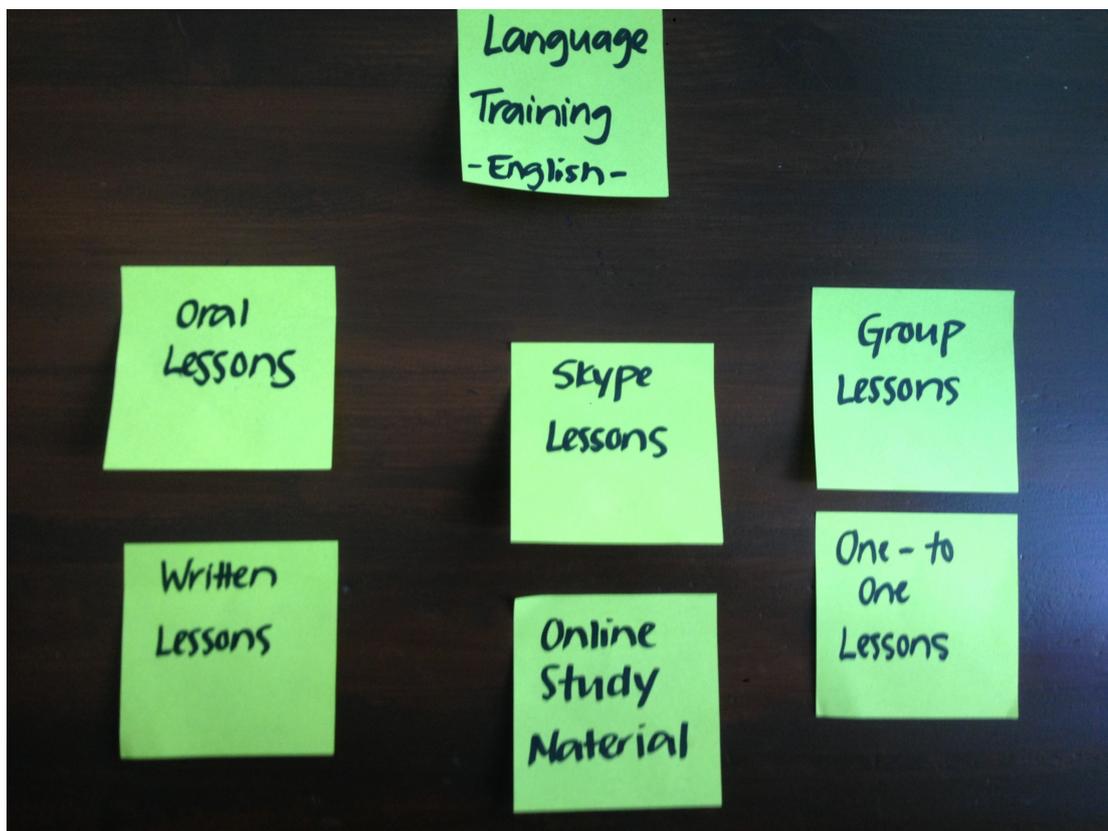


Figure 4: Language training service options

#### 4 Research validity and reliability

In terms of qualitative research, validity relates to the competency and validity of said research. The main issues to be considered are whether the research has been thoroughly made and if the delivered results were the “right” ones. Thorough consideration of the constituent parts of the research process and a clear description of the formation of the material can increase its reliability and validity. Both can also be increased by describing the principles used when recording, transcribing and analysing the findings as thoroughly as possible. It is important that the choices made and the challenges or problems that arise in the research process are studied and reviewed throughout the process. (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka, 2006.)

It is also essential to document the factors that have affected the flow and the results of the research. In evaluating the reliability of the research, the results should be related to the research problems and the methods used. It is important to consider how the research problem and the nature of the research have affected the answers given by the interviewees, and to maintain a critical approach to the research results. (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka,

2006.) For this research the interviewees were chosen from different fields of business in order to increase the sample variety. The interview was semi-structured, and the conversation therefore free flowing, meaning interviewees were not guided in a particular direction, nor were any answer options given to them beforehand. Also, reliability was easier to quantify in this particular research case as the interviewees were allowed to keep their anonymity.

## 5 Interviews

The following section presents quotes selected from the interview transcripts that best address the themed questions presented during the course of the interview. The interview process was insightful and opened up a new perspective on the case company. All interviewees were comfortable sharing their opinions and thoughts concerning their respective fields and any insights they may have in relation to the case company.

Information that could be considered confidential was also shared on occasion as a result of the anonymity of the interviewees. The selection of an anonymous semi structured interview as the primary research tool was intended to elicit honest, valuable information, and in this respect the interviews. All interviewees gladly shared their views about the services on offer and gave extensive advice to Paestum Oy.

### 5.1 Service cards

The service cards utilised during the interview process represented the services that Paestum offers. The services that were considered as being the most important by the interviewees were proofreading, copyediting, website textual input, translation (from Finnish to English, but also other languages) and social media management. Proofreading was chosen by five interviewees, whereas copyediting and adding text directly on websites were chosen by three and four interviewees respectively. Translation from Finnish into English was chosen by two interviewees, whereas translating from Finnish into several different languages was chosen by three interviewees. Two interviewees also selected technical writing as they commonly dealt with different manuals in their daily work life.

Blog posting and social media content creation were both chosen by two interviewees. Language training, aimed at corporate management, was chosen by one interviewee. According to these results, the main emphasis was given to text creation and -correcting, whereas language training was of less importance.

Blog post creation was also considered to be useful, however this form of online visibility was not commonly used at the time of interview. The companies saw the English language pro-

cessing of manuals, agreements, healthcare contracts and technical writing services to be of more immediate, practical use.

During the course of the interviews it also became apparent that several services were unfamiliar to the potential customers, and therefore were maybe not valued as highly. It was also quite clear that the types of services on offer are not necessarily budgeted by companies. This makes the provision of proof, examples or case studies detailing the money saving aspects of these services extremely important for Paestum.

## 5.2 Customer gains and pains

The initial aim of the interviews was to find out about the businesses in which the interviewees work and to discover the types of events that either bring positive or negative feelings to a typical workday. It was discovered that matters that caused feelings of success and fulfilment during workdays mainly related to financial achievements. Employee satisfaction was also seen as being important, and that things progressed. For many entrepreneurs and managers saving time was also essential, and therefore outsourcing tasks such as social media management, translation and copyediting were seen to give time to focus on their own expertise.

Workday setbacks often included (besides financial losses) time wasted on tasks secondary to their primary role. In addition, a nebulous purchasing strategy with no clearly defined buying process also caused problems. A common occurrence was deals being negotiated by employees without the relevant area-specific knowledge. An example given was the negotiation of a deal being initiated by a sales person only to later find out from engineers/technicians that the promised changes were not physically possible. Clear communication with the relevant people is therefore significant when doing business with bigger companies. A situation may arise wherein the service provider has misunderstood what has been requested and the service is either incorrectly implemented or significantly delayed.

## 5.3 Selecting a service provider

Interviewees mainly selected service providers that were recommended by their contact networks. Google was utilised less frequently than expected. References, work quality proof and financial savings were appreciated.

“I choose a service provider mainly by the feeling, good conversation, good communication, if it feels that the other person is genuinely interested. The attitude counts, even though I do background checks and see the webpages beforehand, read references etc. But sometimes

you get a lot of offers by phone, and I don't want to even start the conversation if I don't have the right need just then. I just tell them to get back to me in half a year." Founder/CEO company H

"I choose a service provider by focusing on one provider. If we find a good one with good prices we will focus our functions there. We're also quite a big buyer, whether it is buying energy or .. Hartwall for instance provides all the beverages for us. If we find a good one we will use it everywhere." CEO company B

"I try to get a few offers from a few companies. After that it is about the activity of the sales person, trustworthiness." CEO company F

"We haven't looked at the references when making these decisions, it's been more about feelings. And price within our budget. I find these companies from Google, or I ask from my competitors or people I know." CEO company F

"I try to pick one which suits my company size. Then I ask for references from people I know. I don't necessarily trust public references, although those are good to have as well, but I'd still ask someone I know." CEO company D

"Unfortunately in the majority of the companies I've worked for the main factor has been the price. But it isn't my top priority. But the sales person needs to be really up to date about what he is offering and to whom. Sometimes you see ridiculous prices too, compared to the others providing the same thing." Key Account Manager company A

"The most important thing for choosing a service provider is that it functions. It's fast, according to the instructions and it's sensible. Price is secondary if everything works well. Sometimes there might be a really fast need for a product/service and the provider just needs to adapt to it. It becomes more expensive if the service doesn't function." CEO company B

"Relevant experience from the field, good references or recommendation from someone I know." Marketing Specialist company C

"Price is important if the finances are limited. I listen to other people's experiences and references as well." CEO Company F

“It’s also good to have a chance to do a try out without buying first, whether it is regarding “renting” employees from an agency or using some marketing firm. “ Key Account Manager, company A

“I’ve learned from my experiences so now I request a free trial.” CEO, company F

#### 5.4 Doubts about new services

The majority of interviewees had doubts about taking on a new service provider. This was mainly due to previous negative experiences, failure to deliver on service promises and/or service providers over-estimating their skills and schedules. Service providers that offered free trials before making a bigger deal were appreciated.

“Yes, that’s why I tend to buy just a little bit first, a trial or a pilot. No point in committing for a long period if you don’t know whether it’s going to work. Everyone claims to be good, the best, if you look at the webpages of a b2b- company, they all say they’re the best, none of them say they’re average. But only a small percentage are great.” CEO, company D

“People in our business say that a reclamation is a chance for a new sale. If you handle the reclamation well you will potentially get more business with the company.” CEO, company F

“Always. The business world everywhere is changing, so much is happening everywhere and people have good, fresh ideas that are fun to listen to, especially in the marketing field. But I’m very critical. Customers are interested in the facts. That you can show references which show as much as possible. “We did this for them and this increased their sales this much...” Key Account Manager, company A

#### 5.5 Committing to a service

Long-term relationships were valued more highly than one-time deals offered by different service providers. Trust was usually gained if the services functioned efficiently and agreed items were received. Personal service and being treated as a valued customer were appreciated. Openness and honesty were the characteristics that were seen as being most important throughout duration of a service process or project.

“I commit to a service if there’s success. I think that when a service is being offered it would be good to already discuss in the first meeting that now we’re starting a long term relationship, cooperation, and not just offering one single one-time product. The best deals are long term. So “When this is done we could do this, and when we’re here I will contact you “ (and

actually contacts). The worlds easiest selling process, you don't need to repeat your selling pitch!" Key Account Manager, company A

"I am committed and convinced if the other party does what is agreed but maybe they also bring something of their own vision or ideas, suggestions to the project. We're a small company so we also appreciate being treated equally and not being secondary compared to the bigger ones." Marketing Manager, company E

"No need to describe or specify the way we do things every time, the service provider knows us and remembers our practicalities. A lot of the time the small offices are better at this as they have less changing factors. The service provider keeps us informed and lets you know when they've received your email, gives realistic time frames and sometimes surprises by being ahead of time. " Marketing Specialist, company C

"I commit if I get what has been agreed." Purchasing Manager, company G

"I'm not too picky, I've been in either managerial-or owner-positions all my life and in those you always have 5 times too much work to do so if I'm able to outsource some of the tasks I'm happy." CEO, company D

#### 5.6 Three most important factors relating to positive service experiences

It seemed that the most valued qualities of a good services were functionality, personalised service and honesty in the communication.

"Quality, that it functions well, flexibility" CEO, company B

"You get what you ordered, billing is correct and they're interested to listen to the customer and not just trying to push for more. It annoys because it takes my time, which I don't have too much." Marketing Manager, company E

"First email reply, if I get an answer to my first email (request) within a couple of hours or one day, saying they're looking into this and some kind of schedule and cost-estimation. Information during the project frequently, and honest info about delays or problems." Purchasing Manager, company G

"Certainty about the delivery, easy to do business with, additional value -positive surprises." Marketing Specialist, company C

“Relationship-openness, doing what’s been agreed or informing if delays/problems, and that the end result is good, even though it is not necessarily what has been agreed. The pricing is not the most critical, if it’s within reasonable frames. “ CEO, company B

“The service provider knows who he’s selling for, references/cases from the seller, with in the sales pitch, reasonable offer.” Key Account Manager, company A

### 5.7 Good cooperation and service

Honesty and openness were seen as key characteristics of good cooperation. It was appreciated when project information was freely shared and the customer was kept up to date, even during problematic periods. Subsequent feedback requests and occasionally calling to “check up” were seen as good service. Background checks were considered mandatory, allowing the seller to understand the company to which they are selling and the person with which they are dealing with.

“Good cooperation is when everything works even when there’s a problem. People in our business say that a reclamation is a chance for a new sale. If you handle the reclamation well you will potentially get more sales from the company.” CEO, company F

“Trustworthiness and that both parties benefit from the relationship.” Purchasing Manager company G

“That we’re “on the same map”, same level, bringing new ideas to the project and not force-selling anything. “ Founder/CEO, company H

“Regular updates throughout the projects.” Marketing Manager, company E

”Fluent, no heart attacks. A simple process from the order to paying the bill.” Marketing Specialist, company C

”Honest, not trying to please, being genuine, about the topics which are relevant to me, not to the other party.” Founder/CEO company F

### 5.8 Bad cooperation and service

An example of bad service given was when the salesperson didn’t undertake background research about the client. Short term thinking and pursuing one deal with no consideration being paid to any future relationship was also seen as being negative. Prioritising the needs of

big companies over SMEs was also perceived as being negative. Other negative service examples included unrealistic time frames or price estimates and poor quality work or a perceived lack of interest.

“In general no efforts made, attitude being “this is just the way it is, cannot do anything.”  
Founder/CEO company H

“Feels like I’m paying too much, maybe I’m not getting as much as their bigger customers.”  
Founder/CEO company H

“A woman shopping at car dealers.” Purchasing Manager company G

”Negative surprises and unrealistic estimations, for instance bigger costs, longer delivery time than promised.” Marketing Specialist company C

”I’ve seen advertising agencies that design a campaign for you with spelling mistakes there.”  
CEO B

”Not keeping the promises, or if the quality is not as agreed. Also if the provider only thinks about this deal instead of making a good impression for the future- wants to just get the money from this one deal.” CEO company F

“No sense of situation, no relevance to my business. The seller needs to have done the background check so he knows who he's selling to.” CEO company E

## 5.9 Post-communication

Communication that took place after a project’s completion was considered important. Feedback requests by phoning were seen as being courteous and professional. The majority of interviewees did not have time to read emails and answer feedback forms. It was also considered part of a good business relationship when service providers call back at a later date to check in with the client and see if additional services are required.

“Keeping the contact, maybe the service provider could call after sometime (months, half a year, depending on the project) and just ask how we’re doing. I don’t really like complicated feedback forms, I’d prefer like an email that just has for instance a smiley face that you can click, and that’s it. Personally I like to give feedback face to face, instead of writing anything. “ Marketing Manager company E

“It’s a shame how little time people have to fill the feedback forms, because sometimes the really specified ones can be really good and helpful for the company. “ Key Account Manager company D

“I don’t like feedback forms but I fill them to help out. I’d prefer a phone call, it would be more personal and also another sales opportunity for the seller. We’ve thought about sending monthly newsletters but then again, I don’t read the ones I receive either. Especially if they’re really long. “ CEO company B

#### 5.10 Sharing a good/bad service experience with others

Every interviewee shared their service experiences with colleagues, friends and even competitors on occasion. The experiences of other people or companies were very highly valued, and were often held in higher regard than references gathered by the service provider.

“I share a good service experience if the end result is more than I expected. I tend to share these. For instance there’s a bank who’s services I don’t recommend to any students because my experiences from there are so bad. I don’t share these in social media or anything but if someone asks me I will.” CEO company D

“Always, and all my friends do the same. It’s like when recruiting people.” CEO company B

“I share my experiences with people, if I think they would benefit from that service as well, I share because that’s doing a favour to a friend. There are only 5-10% service providers who are good so to know one is valuable information.” CEO company D

“Sharing is the best marketing channel, “not bribed”, if someone asks I’ll definitely recommend.” Key Account Manager company A

“Of course! If I can make others life easier why wouldn’t I do that!” Marketing Specialist company C

#### 5.11 Advice and insights for Paestum

“If you’re dealing with the public sector it’s good to know their budget limitations, laws regarding the public procurement etc.” Purchasing Manager company G

“Every person who has ever sold anything knows that the best place to sell is when you’re buying something.” CEO company B

“We did one project together and it was nice that they also suggested checking my websites. It was additional service for me that they had checked the overall situation. “ Founder/CEO company H

“Networking, that’s how decisions are being made. If you know someone is good you will recommend him/her to your friends as well. If you have even small doubts about the company not doing their best you won’t recommend it. And then it doesn’t matter what kind of materials you have. So know the right people who can open the doors for you. And after that you can start selling your service or product. And make sure your sales materials and communications are clear and tidy, no spelling mistakes and well done. As you’re selling knowhow and specialised services all that needs to be top quality, 100% and nothing less.” CEO company B

“Try to have a meeting with the customer twice a year, about the development, but also to keep close with the customer.” Marketing Manager company E

“An interesting service, and I see the market for this. You should check the pricing, that the prices are high enough. If something is expensive the customer often tends to think that this is high value. If the price is too cheap the customer might think that do they know what they’re doing. Especially bigger companies could pay more. We’re a small company so we cannot necessary afford expensive services. But maybe it would be good to create the relationships with smaller prices and once the connection is there is easier to use the service in the future too.” CEO company B

“Try to approach students who are writing their thesis or PHD’s. Even if the students are not willing to pay for the proofreading of their thesis, maybe their parents will be.” CEO company F

“You could use different pricing for companies and private people” CEO company F

“You could use different pricing for different texts, e.g. 120€/hour for technical text, 80€ for some other, 60€ for blog text, and if there’s a bargaining situation you could say you can get the technical text for the price of xxx 80€/h. CEO company F

“The customer segment needs to be the right one, the ones who want the language to be improved from good to excellent. And the sales need to be directed to those who need the quality English.” CEO company D

“From management's point of view you won't invest to things before it is mandatory, or if it's not the right moment. So Paestum could try to think which segmenting criteria will help them to find the customers, to whom an excellent English will be in the next half year-year becoming important or necessary, if there's an item which indicates that. For instance, if you were a company providing driving school lessons, would you market to the 17-year olds, or would you direct the marketing to their parents?” Marketing Manager, company E

“It is important to understand when negotiating with people, that even if you can see that they need you they don't necessarily see the same need and buy from you. It's important to from early on to highlight the issues to the customer instead of giving a long sales pitch without it going anywhere but also it's important to revisit these companies in 6-12 months because maybe they've grown a bit and have therefore different needs.” Marketing Manager, company E

“The companies which have their HR-department in another country definitely would need these, target those. It's a struggle sometimes having majority of the things, materials, info etc. only in Swedish or Finnish (healthcare...) and you don't have any locals to do the materials. Finland's biggest private health care companies, such as Mehiläinen and Diacor, do not have their materials (such as what is being covered, how to do Kela applications...) in English and that's really stupid. They'd get so many more deals with big companies if they could provide the materials/agreements in an international language. Every big corporation that wants to start doing business in Finland is required to provide health care for their employees. Terveystalo had their material in English but it was really bad English, like done by a Finn or even Google Translator.” Key Account Manager company D

“Social media is important, companies in Finland that want to be international, growing companies, and social media is so important.” Key Account Manager company D

“I don't recall anyone coming and directly offering me translating services. But probably the major need is in company's internal materials. Usually those are being done by someone in a translating agency, who just sits in his office and doesn't have any contact or idea about the business, then the result will usually be lousy. This is why we stopped using those and started creating the materials by us. But if you had one single guy who knows the company, the field, and you have a long term business relationship with him, then it'll work.” Marketing Manager company H

There were two methods used to initially deconstruct the information gained from the completed interviews. The first method was thematisation by word-to-word transcription, in which conclusions are made and themes are coded directly from the source material. According to researchers, this method is better suited to ethnographically orientated research material gained from observation and engagement. (Oliver et al. 2005) Drawing direct conclusions from recorded material is easier when the number of interviewees is small and the interviews themselves are short in length. (Hirsjärvi, Hurme 2014, 138) All relevant comments were either directly transcribed or notes were made pertaining to general themes of interest. The interviews were listened to and read through several times so as to identify all relevant themes.

The second stage involved presenting the gathered information in a requirements matrix. Upon analysis of the text, six main themes were identified as being pertinent to the research question and quotes relating to the themes of Trust, Price, Quality, Flexibility, Communication and Recommendation were placed in the Table 2. The interviewees were listed in descending order of company size in order to facilitate the spotting of themes and similarities. The following page shows a matrix of themed responses gathered from the interviewees.

	Trust	Price	Quality	Flexibility	Communication	Recommendation
Interviewee A	"Updating the customer, doing what's been agreed"	"Not my main principle"	"The most important thing"		"Clear communication from the first meeting" "Casual"	"The best marketing channel"
Interviewee B	"I focus on one service provider for all operations if they prove to be good" "It has to work with no babysitting"	"Price can even be secondary if the service works"	"A service can become really expensive if it doesn't function"	"They have to have the ability to ship a product fast under unforeseen circumstances"	"Sometimes even big companies miscommunicate and we end up invoicing work that hasn't officially been sanctioned"	"I definitely recommend good service providers to my partner network"
Interviewee C	"Certainty about the delivery" "Doubts unless experience from before"		"Additional value-positive surprises"	"Our projects may appear suddenly and time tables are critical"	"Fluent, simple process. No harrasing"	"I always recommend a good service and I trust other's recommendations as well"
Interviewee D	"I've used the same accountant for 20 years now"	"Billing needs to be correct"	"Even average is ok if it saves my time"		"Honest, genuine, topics relevant to me"	"References from people I know"
Interviewee E	"Honest updates even if something goes wrong"		"Results more than expected"		"Honest communication"	"I listen to references from peers"
Interviewee F	"We commit if we get what has been agreed"	"Budget is an important factor" "Different pricing tiers for different company sizes"	"Good cooperation is when everything works, even when there is problem"	"If a service provider can do a whole job I might outsource the whole thing"	"We've bought work that has been promised by a salesperson but management couldn't deliver"  "Regular updates throughout the project are essential"	"I check Google reviews and people I know"
Interviewee G	"Sometimes smaller companies feel ignored for the sake of larger clients"	"Price is super important for tight budgets"	"We would like to have the same service level as larger clients"	"Deadlines are important - they have to be met"	"A clearly structured, systematic communication process with regular emails, scheduled phone calls and more"	"We will definitely use recommendations from people we know"
Interviewee H	"Doing what was said by the date mentioned is normal practice for me"		"Small businesses have to make big impressions"	"Trying to go beyond, and surprising us with something extra"	"Clear and prompt communication" "Background checks"	"I like to meet the person or at least call them before working with them"

Table 2: Service provider themes

## 6.1 Thematisation

Thematisation is the process by which transcriptual information can be aggregated into thematic groups, thus rendering analysis easier to carry out. Quotes can be used to bolster the interpretation made by the researcher. Thematisation can be an example from the material, it can enliven the text, or it can be used to simplify the condensed stories from the material. The interview frame can be used almost as it is in structuring the analysis. (Taanila, 2007)

It is important for the researcher to objectively study transcripts for common themes, as it is not uncommon for said themes to differ from original hypotheses. In practice, pertinent interview segments are copy/pasted into groups by theme. The resulting information can then be rearranged into a number of display models as per the preference of the researcher. (Taanila, 2007)

## 7 Result Analysis

The most important results of the empirical research are presented in this chapter. Both experience-based insights and tabulated data extrapolation using coded interview transcripts formed the main focus of analysis during the interviews.

General themes included the fact that cost savings were central issues to the working lives of all interviewees. The presented services were found to be interesting and were seen as "part of the future", however they were not currently invested in to any great extent. A common theme was the average to decent level of English possessed by Finnish employees, and as such language training services were not viewed as a main priority. Every interviewee did however agree that a significant amount of time would be saved if formal and/or public texts were created by a professional. Buying decisions regarding new services were greatly influenced by references from other people and proven positive results. Long lasting cooperation and business relationships on the other hand were highly appreciated, as well as honesty and informative manners during projects. Price seemed to take a lower significance if the work quality was high. Personalised services and new suggestions were seen as a bonus.

### 7.1 Clustered results

A more detailed analysis of the results shows the frequency of certain clusters of answers. The main clusters fell under the following categories: a trial period in which a service provider proves he can deliver, value for money in terms of quality level by price, lack of mistakes and the ability to smoothly solve problems, agility when reacting to sudden customer de-

mands, choosing service providers upon the recommendation of personal acquaintances, and finally keeping miscommunication to a minimum.

By far the most frequent result clusters were acting upon the recommendation of others and the utilisation of a trial period in which a service provider earns the trust of the customer. This underlines the importance of keeping promises, acting with integrity and portraying a positive image towards prospective clients. Additionally, Table 2 shows that larger companies tend not to focus too heavily on overall price, rather added value gained by purchasing a service.

On the other hand, agility and miscommunication were common factors for all company types. This underlines the importance of fluid business processes and communication channels in order to maximally take advantage of changing conditions whilst limiting mistakes.

Major clusters	Trial period to earn trust	Value for money	Mistake free	Agility	Recommendation	Miscommunication
Frequency	6	3	3	4	7	4
Minor clusters	Price level	Additional improvements	Regular communication			
Frequency	2	2	2			

Table 2: Service provider thematic clusters

## 8 Conclusions and suggestions

It can be concluded that Paestum needs to focus on targeting companies that stand to benefit most from their services, namely companies hoping to expand into international markets. Such companies need English language content of the highest quality, and subsequently need to communicate with clarity and skill. Paestum additionally needs to pitch its services in a manner that best showcases its benefits for customers. Figures, numbers, facts, case studies and testimonials are all of vital importance and should be highlighted in their marketing material and sales processes.

Paestum should also work to secure high quality references and to work for prestige brands. Doing so will exponentially raise its market standing in the eyes of Finnish businesses. Networking will therefore be of essential importance, and a significant amount of Paestum's marketing efforts should be focused on face-to-face meetings and networking events.

In terms of attracting a wide range of customers, Paestum should look to offer different price points to different target groups so as to appeal to as wide a range of budgets as possible. Finally, Paestum should look to contact organisations with high volumes of documentation such as Finnish healthcare companies.

Paestum has a potentially significant opportunity to expand and to take advantage of today's international marketplace. By following the guidelines laid out in this report, Paestum should be able to apply greater focus on its potential customer needs, thus making it a more attractive service provider and a long-term business partner.

## References

Bryman, A. 2012. Social research methods. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Oxford University press.

Cozzi, J. Co-founder and owner. 2015. Paestum Oy. Conversation with the founder. 15 May 2015. Personal communication.

Hirsjärvi, S. & Hurme, H., 2014. Tutkimushaastattelu. Teemahaastattelun teoria ja käytäntö. Tallinn: Raamatutrukikoda.

Hämäläinen, K. & Lammi, M. (2009), Service Design as a tool for innovation leadership. In: Miettinen, S. & Koivisto, M. (ed.) Designing Services with Innovative Methods. Kuopio: Kuopio Academy of Design.

Kaplinsky, R. & Morris, M. 2001. A handbook for value chain research. IDRC. Accessed 05 July 2015.  
<http://www.prism.uct.ac.za/Papers/VchNov01.pdf>.

Mager, B. 2009. Service design as an emerging field. In: Miettinen, S. & Koivisto, M. (ed.) Designing Services with Innovative Methods. Kuopio: Kuopio Academy of Design.

Miettinen, S. & Koivisto, M. (2009) Designing Services with Innovative Methods. Kuopio: Kuopio Academy of Design.

Miettinen, S. 2014. Muotoiluajattelu. Tampere: Tammerprint

Oliver, D.G., Serovich, J.M., Mason, T.L. 2005. Constraints and opportunities with interview transcription: Towards reflection in qualitative research. Social Forces, 84(2), pp. 1273-1289.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1400594/>

Osterwalder, A., Pigneur, Y., Bernarda, G., Smith, A. 2014. Value Proposition Design. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Pine, B.J. & Gilmore, J.H. 1998. Welcome to the experience economy. Harvard business review, 76, 97-105. Article from HBR Harvard Business Review. Accessed 01 July 2015.  
<https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy> ss review

Litterointi. Anita Saaranen-Kauppinen & Anna Puusniekka. 2006. KvaliMOTV. Accessed 8.10.2015 [http://www.fsd.uta.fi/menetelmaopetus/kvali/L7\\_2\\_1.html](http://www.fsd.uta.fi/menetelmaopetus/kvali/L7_2_1.html)

Shove, E., Watson, M., Hand, M., Ingrma, J. 2007. The design of everyday life. Oxford: Berg Publishers.

Taanila, A. 2007. Laadullisen aineiston analyysi. Oulun yliopisto. Accessed 8.10.2015.  
[http://kelo.oulu.fi/jatkokoulutus/AT\\_Laadullisen\\_aineiston\\_analyysi\\_170407.pdf](http://kelo.oulu.fi/jatkokoulutus/AT_Laadullisen_aineiston_analyysi_170407.pdf)

Tuulaniemi, J. 2011. Palvelumuotoilu. 2nd edition. Helsinki: Talentum.

Verhoef, P.C., Lemon, K.N., Parasuraman, A., Roggeveen, A., Tsiros, M., Schlesinger, L.A. 2009. Customer experience creation: determinants, dynamics and management strategies, 85 (1), 31-41. Article from Journal of Retailing. Accessed 10 July 2015.  
[http://www.rug.nl/staff/p.c.verhoef/jr\\_customer\\_experience.pdf](http://www.rug.nl/staff/p.c.verhoef/jr_customer_experience.pdf)

Figures

Figure 1: Typical customer journey .....	9
Figure 2: Total service card selection.....	12
Figure 3: Social media service options .....	12
Figure 4: Language training service options.....	13

Tables

Table 1: Interviewees.....	11
Table 2: Service provider themes .....	25
Table 3: Service provider thematic clusters .....	27

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Interview Questions . . . . . 34

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. The core competences of the company?
2. The vision of the company?
3. The goal of the company?
4. To which direction would they like to develop the goal?
5. Value chain of the company?
6. How is the value chain organised in the company?
7. How to develop the value chain?
8. Give an example of a good day at work
9. Give an example of a bad day at work

### Service Cards

- The most important ones
  - Why not the others
  - Are there other needs, not mentioned?
- 
1. Give an example of a bought service, from which you had
    - a positive experience?
    - a negative experience?
    - describe those!
  2. How do you choose a service provider?
  3. What makes you to commit & be convinced by a certain service?
  4. Do you have doubts about a new service/cooperation?
  5. Most important (3) factors of a positive service experience?
  6. What is good cooperation?
  7. What is bad cooperation?
  8. How would you like the after –communication to happen?
  9. What makes you to share your experiences?
  10. Would you recommend good service to others?
  11. Why?
  12. Any other thoughts about this service?