TAMPERE UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

A GUIDE BOOK FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Nina Suontakanen

Bachelor’s thesis
May 2018
Degree Programme in Tourism

ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Degree Programme in Tourism

SUONTAKANEN, NINA:
A Guide Book for Customer Service

Bachelor's thesis 48 pages, of which appendices 22 pages
May 2018

The purpose of this bachelor’s thesis was to produce a guide book for customer service for Fysioline Fressi Oy, specifically Fressi Tampere. The idea for the topic rose from necessity as there was no previous document of the kind. The company had provided guidelines to employees in different formats but it was important that they would be compiled to better meet the needs of both new and more experienced employees.

The theoretical framework of this thesis consists of orientation and induction, customer service and customer experience. The data for this study were drawn from the author's own experience working for the mentioned company for approximately eight years. Previous material concerning induction provided by Fressi was accessed through the company's own intranet, analyzed and utilized as background in the comprising of the new guide book.

It was found that the current induction material was rather scattered and had not been thoroughly updated to meet the needs of employees. Some new instructions were given on the chain-level but there was a need for more specific information about the local deviations and especially about the everyday responsibilities in this particular location.

This study and the end result were found to be largely useful for both new and more experienced employees alike. Both the author in her role in the company and other company representatives experienced the guide book to facilitate a more uniform and effective induction process. Given the changing work environment and introduction of new products and services, the guide book will have to be updated accordingly.

To respect the privacy of the company, the guide book has not been published as a part of this thesis but it is included as an appendix.

Key words: customer service, guide book, customer satisfaction

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION ... 4
2 RESEARCH PLAN ... 5
2.1 Thesis topic ... 5
2.2 Concepts and theory ... 5
2.2.1 Orientation ... 6
2.2.2 Induction concepts ... 7
2.3 Research questions ... 8
2.4 Data and methods ... 8
2.5 Research process ... 9
3 THE CASE COMPANY ... 10
3.1 Fressi Tampere ... 10
3.2 Fysioline Oy ... 10
4 CUSTOMER SERVICE AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ... 11
4.1 Customer service ... 11
4.2 Customer experience ... 14
5 THE GUIDE BOOK ... 21
6 DISCUSSION ... 22
REFERENCES ... 24
APPENDICES ... 26
Appendix 1. The Guide Book ... 26
Appendix 2. Orientation checklist ... 26

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this bachelor's thesis was to produce a guide book for customer service for Fysioline Fressi Oy, Fressi Tampere. The book should facilitate a more effective induction process for new employees as well as serve as a reminder for more experienced staff members.

The idea for the work rose from the author's own experience working for the company for several years and training multiple new employees. Having a rather comprehensive understanding of the current situation in the company from the induction perspective, it was clear that the process needed to be updated and elevated. As the work is hectic in nature, resembling that of hotel receptionists', and the training of new employees is usually done during regular work shifts where the work gets interrupted regularly, it is crucial that the induction process should be made as effective and stress-free as possible.

The theoretical framework of this thesis describes orientation and induction concepts as well as the thesis includes theoretical framework of customer service and the process of adding value to the service through exceeding customer expectations.

As a result of this thesis, there is now a more detailed and updated guide book for customer service at Fressi Tampere. The guide book includes an introduction to the services the company provides, manuals on using the software the company uses as well as an updated list of topics each employee should master. The guide book will be utilised in training new employees at Fressi Tampere but can also be used in other Fressi locations to a certain extent.

To respect the privacy of the company, the guide book has not been published as a part of this thesis but it is included as an appendix.

2 RESEARCH PLAN

2.1 Thesis topic

The aim of this thesis was to produce a comprehensive guide book for new employees beginning their career in customer service at Fressi Tampere. The theoretical framework for the thesis concentrated on orientation. The goal was that the guide book will be used during induction but that it may also serve as an aid for more experienced employees.

The idea rose from necessity, as previously there was no one comprehensive and uniform guide book for a new employee in this particular location of the Fressi chain. Fragmented and partly outdated information could be found in multiple resources, such as emails and the company intranet, but the problem was that it may be difficult for new employees to reach the information as they do not necessarily know what or where to search. Thus, it was vital to make it readily available and easily accessible.

With the exception of very few employees, most work part-time and only have few shifts during a longer period of time, thus it is important that the orientation and induction are effective and that all employees may revise what they previously learned independently if there is a need for this. Therefore it was not enough to produce a list of subjects to learn but also to have written instructions on procedures.

2.2 Concepts and theory

In this section of the thesis, the theory of orientation has been explained and various styles of induction have been described. These were utilised as the basis of the research in determining which induction style is the most suitable for this particular organisation. The theoretical background of orientation was most important as the aim of this thesis was to produce an orientation guide book for the company.

2.2.1 Orientation

Induction can be described as the steps taken to enable a new employee to work independently; familiarising them with their tasks, teaching them the required knowledge and skills (Kangas 2008, 13). Kangas & Hämäläinen (2000) explain orientation similarly but add familiarising the employee also with colleagues, customers, the workplace as well as the organisational culture. In this case, it was not beneficial to conceive the two as separate processes, as there is a vast amount of information the new employee must master to work effectively at Fressi Tampere.

Kjelin & Kuusisto (2003) point out that even though it is important for the new employee to become familiar with the organisational culture and the company policies to ensure that each employee follows the same procedures, orientation should also be seen as an opportunity to develop ways of working further, thus allowing the new employees to utilise their existing skills. (Kjelin & Kuusisto 2003, 15-16.)

For planning orientation, Kupias & Peltola (2009) separate systematic and personalised planning in their work. Systematic planning is described as planning on a larger scale for a larger audience, for example a company with several employees working in the same position. This kind of planning includes programmes and written manuals, which may need to be further personalised for the individual employee. (Kupias & Peltola 2009, 88.)

Personalised planning is based on systematic planning, but is built with the individual employee in mind. Below are listed some of the factors which need to be considered when tailoring systematic planning to better meet the needs of the individual: (Kupias & Peltola 2009, 19; Helsingin ja Uudenmaan sairaanhoitopiiri 2013, 2.)

- knowledge
- experience
- education
- ability to learn
- learning difficulties

In this case, it was appropriate to begin with the systematic planning when composing the guide book, as there are multiple employees working in the same position in customer service. However, usually there are not many new employees in orientation simultaneously so the personalised planning will be more effective during the actual orientation phase. Kangas & Hämäläinen and Mertala agree that having written material the new employee can study beforehand and then go through with the person executing the orientation will deepen the trainee's knowledge and reduce the chance of misunderstandings. (Mertala 2015, 19; Kangas & Hämäläinen 2007, 10.) This has been also an important goal for this thesis.

2.2.2 Induction concepts

In their work, Kupias & Peltola (2009) go into further detail through explaining five models in which induction may be executed; negotiating, tailored, qualitative, exemplary and observing induction. These concepts are explained in the following and thereafter conclusions have been drawn as to which of these would be best suitable for the case company.

In observing induction, the new employee follows more experienced employees in their work and learns the tasks and procedures through observation. In this model, the trainer has great responsibility in assuring the trainees learn all things vital to their role in the company. The trainer's motivation, knowledge and ability to execute induction as well as time constraints are major factors in this type of induction. (Kupias & Peltola 2009, 36-37.) Although, should the trainer be highly motivated and skilled, it could be a great advantage.

Exemplary induction relies heavily on example material such as written or electronic orientation materials, or guide books provided by the company. This allows larger concepts and general information about the company to be uniformly distributed and preserved. However, this induction concept may prove to be rather rigid and difficult to adapt, thus leading to deficient induction. (Kupias & Peltola 2009, 38.)

In qualitative induction, the main goal is to ensure the continuous updating of the induction process through teamwork. The idea is to divide the responsibility of induction among a team headed by the manager or head of department. This concept works best when there is a shared understanding of responsibility, teamwork and time management, with the materials of exemplary induction and the teaching methods of observing induction. Should the teamwork fail, the manager then becomes responsible for executing the induction. (Kupias & Peltola 2009, 39-40.)

Tailored induction is highly demanding for both the new employee and the trainer. In this concept, the induction is modulated and the modules suitable for the individuals are chosen to build the best possible induction process for them. This induction concept demands the trainees are motivated and strongly interested in tailoring the process to meet their needs as a large amount of discourse is expected between the trainer, trainee and the company. On one hand the discourse could produce a highly committed employee already at the induction phase, but on the other hand it could risk deficient induction should the trainee not be committed. (Kupias & Peltola 2009, 40-41.)

In negotiating induction the discourse between the new employee and the company is pivotal. This concept is usually used when the tasks are new or when nobody has been trained to the position before. This type of induction contains exemplary induction to a certain degree but it cannot cover topics such as company values or general company matters. (Kupias & Peltola 2009, 41-42.)

2.3 Research questions

As mentioned before, the research questions and thus the topic of this thesis evolved from need. Having worked for the organisation for several years and inducting new employees, the author discovered a need for a more systematic and effective induction process at the case company. The author concluded that the research questions answered by this thesis should be: What are the ideal form and content of a guide book for the case company? What is the ideal concept of induction for the case company?

2.4 Data and methods

According to Smith & Taylor (2004), the data for research sources can be divided into two types:

– Primary data = data gathered for the first time for a specific purpose

- Secondary data = data already been gathered by someone and now being used by someone else

For the purposes of this thesis, and the resulting guide book, the author used both types of data. The primary data consisted mostly of the author's own observations and work experience but also that of her colleagues and superiors at the company. The secondary data were found in the company intranet and emails concerning company procedures and existing induction material.

This thesis used qualitative research to determine the ideal for and content of the guide book as well as the ideal concept of induction for the case company. Rather than proving already existing claims, qualitative research concentrates on discovering facts. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2000, 152.) The data for this thesis were collected from the author's and her colleagues' work experience as well as pre-existing data provided by the company.

2.5 Research process

This bachelor's thesis is divided into five sections. After the introduction, in chapter two, the key theoretical framework is explained and the research topic is justified. Furthermore, the data and methods used are described and the research questions presented.

Chapter three describes the case company and the larger group of companies it belongs to.

Chapter four introduces theoretical framework on customer service and customer experience, further justifying the need for this research as delivering customer service may either add or diminish perceived service value.

Chapter five introduces the end product of this thesis, the guide book. It shortly describes its contents as the guide book itself could not be attached in this thesis for privacy reasons.

Chapter six draws conclusions based on the theoretical framework and data collected and gives suggestions for the future research.

3 THE CASE COMPANY

3.1 Fressi Tampere

Fysioline Fressi Oy originates from Tampere as the first location was opened there in 1979. That first fitness centre was aimed at only women but Fressi has since expanded its services to both men and women and all over Finland, having 28 locations in total. This makes Fressi the largest domestic company in its field of fitness and wellbeing. (Fressi, 2018.)

Fressi offers services ranging from gym and group exercise classes to personal training, physiotherapy and massages, their main product being types of memberships.

3.2 Fysioline Oy

Fressi is a part of the Fysioline group. Fysioline is best known for its product Ice Power but they offer a wide range of services to both businesses as well as single consumers ranging from gym and rehabilitation equipment to medicine. Fysioline has grown to be a major organisation in the field of wellbeing in Finland, having approximately 800 employees and exporting to over 60 countries. (Fysioline 2018.)

4 CUSTOMER SERVICE AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

4.1 Customer service

There are many definitions for customer service. According to Lovelock and Wright, customer service is the provision of service by employees who are not specifically engaged in selling activities (Lovelock & Wright 2002, 200). On the other hand, customer service is the process of ensuring customer satisfaction with a product or service. Lovelock and Wright have defined customer service from the business point of view, when the other definition is from the consumer point of view. One way of defining customer service is that customer service adds value for a product or service, and it includes all interactions between customers and service or product provider at the time of sale or thereafter. One definition is that customer service is the assistance and advice provided by a company to those who buy or use its products or services. Customer service exists for the customers, which means that satisfying the customers' needs is included, and yet it can be beneficial for the company in the form of sales opportunities.

Through customer service the company gets valuable information about the consumers and the reasons why they are contacting the company along with valuable feedback. Customer service gives a company a possibility to maintain and develop the customer base, and get feedback from the customers. Customer service is one way for the company to gather information about consumer experiences and therefore consumer satisfaction. Service quality is a key element of ensuring consumer satisfaction.

The responsibilities of the customer service depend on the company that is providing it. It can be simple, consumers ask about the deal they have made and the matter is sorted out, or it can be more complex, and the customer service advisor must handle multiple matters simultaneously.

According to Kotler and Keller (2016), satisfaction is 'a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing perceived products' performance or outcome in relation to his or her expectations'. This means that the customer is dissatisfied if the expectations the customer had are not fulfilled by the performance and satisfied in case the performance matches or exceeds the customer's expectations (Kotler & Keller 2016, 80).

In combination with customer satisfaction based on the performances and expectations, Kotler and Keller (2016) define customer perceived value as "the difference between customer's evaluation of all the benefits and all the costs of an offering". Furthermore, they extend this concept by describing customer perceived value as the proportion between total customer value and total customer costs, in which customer value means a bundle of economic functional and psychological benefits such as product, services, personnel, image value and the total customer costs includes product or service costs, time, energy and psychic costs. Only when the benefits exceed the costs, customers will have a positive customer satisfaction and will have the intention to buy the product or service again or recommend it to their close contacts. (Kotler & Keller 2016, 161.)

Lovelock and Wright defined service quality as customer's long-term, cognitive evaluation of a company's service delivery (Lovelock & Wright 2002, 87). Service quality is defined as an assessment of how well a delivered service meets with the customer's expectations. Customer service is a broad concept, and very often there is something to improve.

In order to be able to manage and improve service quality it is important to remember recommendations that Kotler and Keller have given. They have mentioned some of the pioneers conducting academic service research like Berry, Parasuraman and Zeithaml offering ten lessons they think are essential for improving service quality. Listening, reliability, basic service, service design, recovery, surprising customers, fair play, teamwork, employee research and servant leadership are all on the list of mentioned ten recommendations. (Berry, Parasuraman & Zeithaml 2003, 61-82; Kotler & Keller 2016, 441.)

Listening to the customer is of great value for services. Companies that offer services should have understanding what the customers really want and this happens only through continuous learning about the expectations and opinions of consumers and future consumers. It is a long-term process that rarely is complete, considering the market is continuously changing and consumers along with it. In the modern society, technology plays a major role in consumers' daily life and this is one way of gathering information and listening to the consumers. Customer service plays a major role in listening to customers.

Reliability is the single most important dimension of service quality and must be a service priority (Kotler & Keller 2016, 441). If the consumers cannot trust the service a company is providing for them, why would they make the purchase or consume its services in the first place. Reliability is very important for every company. Companies that offer services should deliver at least the basic service. Meaning that they do what they are supposed to do, listen to customers, keep promises, keep customers informed, use common sense and are determined to deliver value to customers. When the basic service is covered, the company can add value for the customers that will improve the service experience and increase customer satisfaction. If the company does not reach the basic service, it is hard to develop and increase customer satisfaction.

Even though reliability is the most important dimension in meeting customers' service expectations, process dimensions such as assurance, responsiveness and empathy are most important in exceeding customers' expectations (Kotler & Keller 2016, 441). For instance surprising customers with grace, understanding, uncommon quickness, courtesy, commitment and competence, these are uncommon in the same package, so the customer will be positively surprised.

With service design, service providers should take a holistic view of the service while managing all the many details (Kotler & Keller 2016, 441). Holistic view is a comprehensive view based on the knowledge of the nature, functions, and properties of the components, their interactions, and their relationship in the big picture. Holistic marketing recognizes and reconciles the scope and complexity of marketing activities. In the holistic marketing perspective, relationship marketing includes customers, and integrated marketing includes marketing communications, products and services, channels and price. Holistic view and holistic marketing are a very suitable way of thinking for customer service, because it is a complex whole. The holistic marketing concept is based on development, design, and implementation of marketing programs, processes and activities that recognize both their breadth and interdependencies. The concept acknowledges that everything matters in marketing and that a broad integrated perspective is usually necessary. (Kotler & Keller 2016, 43.) Customer service is an important element for the company's success.

4.2 Customer experience

Customer experience is a popular subject when it comes to the conversations how to improve almost any aspect of the company's operations. When increasing sales, customer base, and marketing, companies are working around customer experience, what does it mean, how can it be enhanced, how can it be measured and so on.

Consumer experience is a broad definition, and it can be interpreted through many different aspects. Nowadays consumer experience is based more and more on the emotions and images that arise in an encounter between the consumer and the company. Consumer experience is a sum of personal interpretations, which is why companies cannot fully influence on the image the consumer forms. Companies have their opinions what kind of experiences they want to create for the consumers. Functional, financial and numerous multidimensional factors have an effect on how the consumer experience is formed.
Berry (2002, 86) has defined consumer experience as the matters that a consumer verifies and identifies, or that a consumer notices missing, and that have impact in forming the consumer experience, and consumer experience is the result of these matters. The matters can be divided into two parts; functional and emotional.

The consumer experience exists, when the preconception, perception, expectations and the experiences of a consumer are combined and they are forming a feeling of some sort. It is up to the consumers how they experience the products and services they are using. Consumers build up their opinions, and their current and previous experiences with the company, their values, wants and needs have influence on the opinions. Companies can only do their best to fulfil consumers' expectations in order to gain good consumer experience.

Companies cannot completely control consumers' experiences but can have effect on them. The experience is a combination of consumers' values, prejudices, perceptions and expectations, and more. Managing the consumer experience is a challenge for companies. Consumers form service expectations from many sources such as past experiences, word of mouth, and marketing communications. (Kotler & Keller 2016, 440.) Consumers are comparing the perceived and expected service. Satisfaction reflects a person's judgement of products' or services' perceived performance in relation to expectations. (Kotler & Keller 2016, 33). This means that in case the perceived service falls below the expected service, consumers are disappointed. If the perceived value is same as the expected one, the consumers are satisfied, and if the perceived value exceeds the expectations the consumers are surprised and delighted.

Consumers usually select the offerings of products or services based on how they perceive them to deliver the most value, the sum of tangible and intangible benefits and costs. Value is a central marketing concept and is primarily a combination of quality, service and price, called a customer value triad. Value perceptions increase with quality and service but decreases with price. (Kotler & Keller 2016, 33.)

Consumers nowadays have higher education and they are more informed than before, and information is available because of the internet. Therefore, they have the tools to find out about claims of companies and search for better alternatives. Consumers choose for whatever reason the offer they believe will deliver the highest value and act on it (figure 1). In case the offer lives up to the expectations, consumers will more likely to purchase again.

The customer perceived value is the difference between the customer's evaluation of all the benefits and costs of an offering and the perceived alternatives. The total customer cost is the perceived bundle of costs the customer expects to encounter in evaluating, obtaining, using and disposing the given market offering, including monetary, time, energy and psychological costs. The total customer benefit is the perceived value of the bundle of economic, functional and psychological benefits the customer expects from the given offering because of the products, services, personnel and image. (Kotler & Keller 2016, 151.)

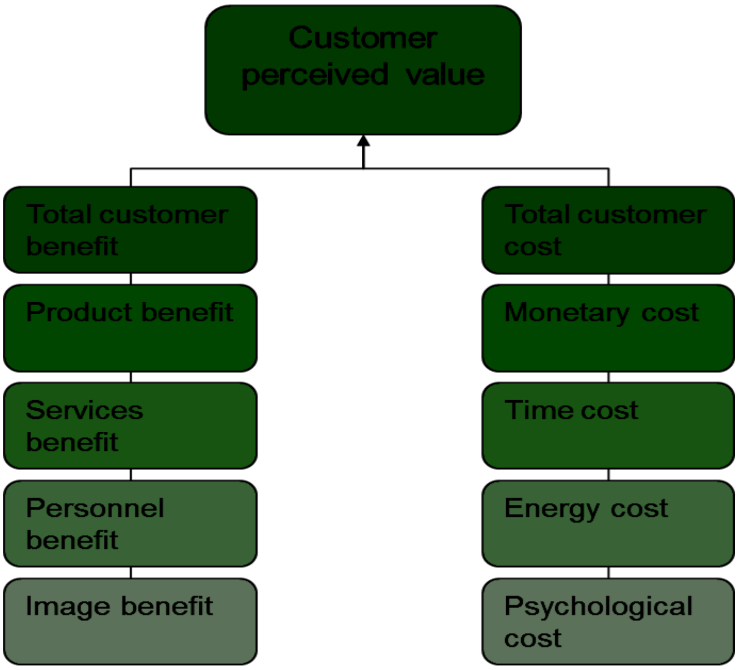

FIGURE 1. Customer perceived value (Kotler & Keller 2016, 150)

Customer perceived value framework is useful in many situations and gives multiple insights. It implies that in case the seller is at a disadvantage, there are two options: either to increase the total customer benefit or decrease the total customer cost. The former stands for strengthening or augmenting the economical, functional and psychological benefits of the offering's image, product, personnel and service. The latter on the other hand calls for reducing the price or cost of ownership and maintenance, simplifying the ordering and delivery process, or absorbing some buyer risk by offering a warranty, to reduce the buyer's costs.

When searching, purchasing and using a service, consumers can occur a variety of nonfinancial expenses that represent time, effort, and discomfort, and these have an impact on the experience. Time expenditures are intrinsic in the service delivery process. Time can be wasted simply by waiting for the service. This is an opportunity cost involved because consumers could have spent the time in another way. Time expenditure is one of the four nonfinancial expenses. Physical effort is the second. This can include discomfort, fatigue, and at times even injury that might incur during visiting a company's self-service location or visiting a service factory. Third expense is a psychological burden, like mental effort, feelings of imperfection, or even fear might accompany the tasks of evaluating service alternatives, making a selection and using the chosen service. Services that are high in experience and credibility attributes, might create psychological burdens like anxiety, because the service outcomes are more difficult to evaluate. (Lovelock & Wright 2002, 173.) Last, but not least are the sensory burdens that can relate to unpleasant sensations affecting any of the human senses. They might include noise, unpleasant smells, drafts, excessive heat or cold, uncomfortable seating, lighting or visually unappealing environments and unpleasant tastes.

There are some common intervening factors that impact on the consumers' purchase decisions, even the perceived values and experiences are supporting making the purchase. Other persons having an influence on consumer's decision, with their attitudes towards the product or service in question, is a common issue. There are two matters, one is the intensity of the other person's negative attitude towards the preferred alternative, and the other is the consumer's motivation to comply with the other person's wishes. (Kotler & Keller 2016, 199.) The purchase decision on the other hand is an evaluation phase where the consumer forms preferences among the alternatives and brands, and the consumer may form an intention to buy the most preferred brand. When executing a purchase intention, the consumer might make as many as five pre conclusions before the final choice. The pre conclusions can be about the brand, dealer, quantity, timing and payment method. These decisions help the consumers to make the final purchase decision with the best match to their needs and expectations.

Quality is a perceived value by the customers and how well the experiences reach, exceed or go with the expected quality. Lovelock and Wright defined quality as the degree to which a service satisfies customers, by meeting their needs, wants and expectations (2002). Christian Grönroos described that it should always be remembered, what counts in quality as it is perceived by the customers (Grönroos 2000, 63). He described also that the perceived service quality is to a large extent interpreted subjectively and the process is more complicated. Quality is not only the experiences of the quality dimensions that determine how the quality is perceived, as good, neutral or poor.

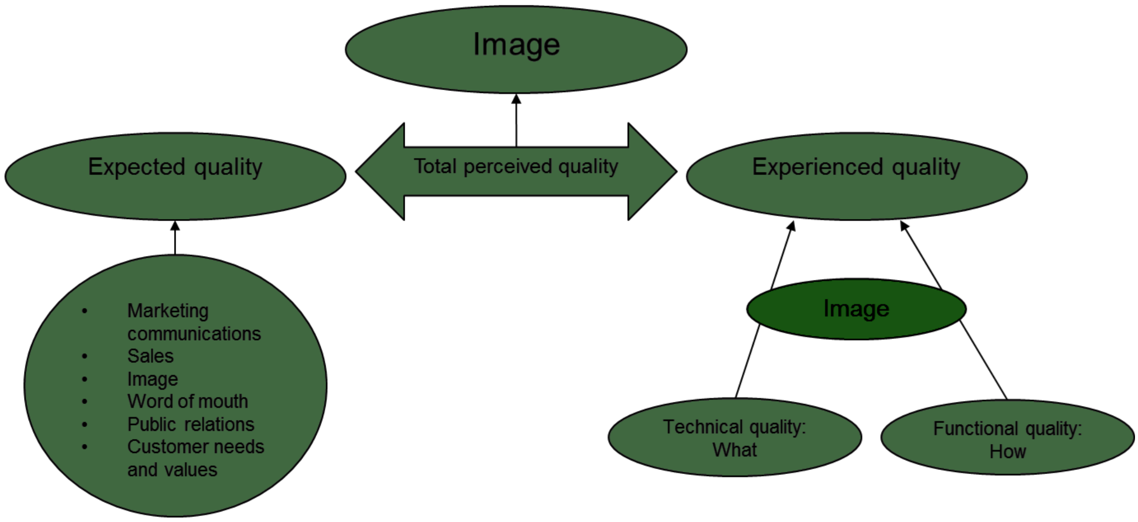

FIGURE 2. Total perceived quality (Grönroos 2000, 163)

All the aspects of quality are important to the company but the far most important is always the quality the consumer experiences.

When comparing the expectations with the perceived performance of a product or service, the result of that comparison is the consumer satisfaction. The feelings of pleasure or disappointment indicate how satisfied the consumer is. According to Grönroos (2007, 89), the consumer first perceives the quality of the features of a product, and only then, perhaps taking into account price and other sacrifice-related issues, finds out whether, or not he or she is satisfied with the product. A person consuming a service first perceives the quality of the dimensions of the service, and only then, again perhaps considering other issues as well, is either satisfied or not with the quality of that service. A perception of service quality comes first, followed by a perception of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with this quality (Grönroos 2007, 89).

What about the expectations of quality? It may often be the best to use no comparison standard at all, but simply to measure consumers' experiences of various quality attributes. Customers' expectations do theoretically form an important factor influencing the perceived service quality both on an episode level, service encounter, and on a relationship level. In order to understand how the quality is perceived in an ongoing relationship, one has to understand how expectations develop throughout the relationship. (Grönroos 2007, 99.) This is significant for a few reasons. First, it is critical to understand that consumers may not expect the same aspects of quality at a later stage in the relationship as they do in the beginning, and why this change has taken place. Second, one has to know the inherent mechanisms of the dynamics of expectations to be able to manage expectations (Grönroos 2007, 99). Therefore, it is advisable to do consumer surveys, employee researches and other forms of data collection on a regular basis. If the company is not aware or does not conduct surveys of any kind, it does not get the crucial information about its consumers' expectations from anywhere, and that makes the foreseeing and improvement of consumer experiences very difficult if not impossible.

Sometimes, the perceived or experienced service is not consistent with the expected service. In this case, there is a gap between the perceived service and the expected service, and this results in negatively confirmed quality and a quality problem, negative word of mouth, a negative impact on corporate or local image and lost business. (Grönroos 2007, 118.) The gap can also be positive, which leads to a positively confirmed quality over quality. This so called gap analysis model is a possibility for management to find out where reasons for quality problems lie and discover appropriate ways to come over these gaps. The gap analysis is a straightforward and appropriate way of identifying inconsistencies between service provider and consumer perceptions of service performance. Addressing these gaps is a logical basis for developing service in which expectations and experiences consistently meet. This way the likelihood of good perceived service quality will increase. The full gap analysis model is illustrated in figure 3.

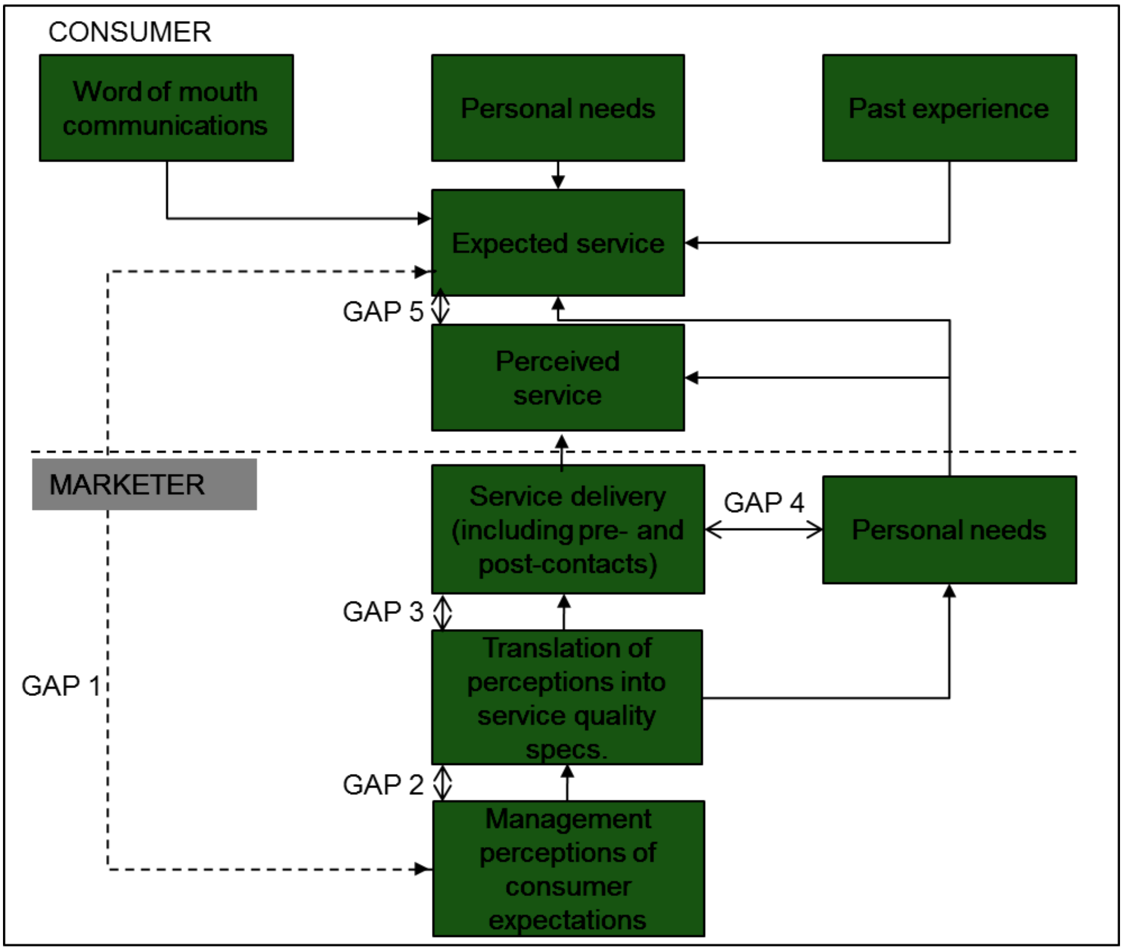

FIGURE 3. The gap analysis model of service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1988, 36)

5 THE GUIDE BOOK

To respect the privacy of the company in question, the guide book itself has not been published as a part of this thesis but it is included as appendix 1.

The guide book includes basic information about the company itself and the services it provides as well as more detailed instructions to the software the company uses. It describes the duties and responsibilities for each customer service representative set on chain-level but also goes into more detail about the local particularities which may deviate from the norm.

It was deemed important to update the already existing orientation checklist to cover the current procedures, services and software, this updated checklist is included as appendix 2.

6 DISCUSSION

This thesis aimed to answer the questions “What are the ideal form and content of a guide book for the case company?” and “What is the ideal concept of induction for the case company?” The main goal has been to make the orientation process as efficient and fluent as possible. The author wanted to ensure that the product of the thesis, the guide book, could be utilised by both new and more experienced employees.

The induction in the company is usually executed by having the new employee working alongside a more experienced staff member for a number of shifts. The author discovered that Kupias & Peltola's (2009) observing and exemplary induction concepts are most used and ideal for the case company due to the hectic nature of the work, where the induction is interrupted regularly. This created a need for written material which can be used as an aid. Thus it is also important for the guide book to be rather detailed in its instructions and examples instead of broadly outlining company procedures.

The resulting guide book is satisfying as it meets the goals set in the beginning of the project. It describes the company and the services it provides. It has detailed instructions on company procedures with examples and illustrated guidelines on how to use the company software. During the work, the author discovered an outdated orientation checklist, which was also updated to meet the current criteria.

Through having this updated guide book and elevated orientation process, the company may create a solid basis for Kotler’s & Keller's (2016) reliable, basic service ensuring all employees first have the knowledge to deliver what is expected of them by customers and further move on to exceeding these expectations and creating surprisingly positive customer experiences.

The guide book will be used at the customer service at Fressi Tampere but it may also be utilised at other Fressi locations to some extent as, with the exception of few, most of the procedures are the same on chain-level. The book is most helpful when inducting new employees but it is also useful in revising situations which occur infrequently.

Since the field the company operates in is prone to change and the procedures may shift abruptly, it is important that the guide book is kept up to date with the current information. It may be suggested that the guide book be kept in electronic form, which facilitates easier updating. Copies may be printed out but they should be regularly checked to coincide with the electronic version.

To further study the subject, a questionnaire could be carried out with the current employees to revise their observations about the orientation process when they first begun their career at the company. This could provide the company with vital information on what aspects of orientation and induction already work and where room for improvement is seen.

Finally, to make the service quality better, the author would suggest the company to do customer surveys on a more regular basis to discover the customer expectations described by Grönroos (2009). This would aid in building customer value and steer the gap between the perceived and expected service in the favourable direction.

REFERENCES

Book references:

Berry,L, Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml,V. 2003.”Ten Lessons for Improving Service Quality”. MSI ReportsWorking Paper Series, No 03-001. Cambridge. UK

Grönroos, C. 2000. Service management and marketing. Customer relationship management approach. 2nd edition. England: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Grönroos, C. 2007. Service management and marketing. Customer management in service competition. 3rd edition. England: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Hirsjärvi, S., Remes, P. & Sajavaara, P. 2000. Tutki ja kirjoita. 6th edition. Vantaa: Tammi.

Kangas, P. 2008. Perehdyttämisen suunnittelu ja toteutus. 2nd edition. Helsinki: Työturvallisuuskeskus.

Kangas, P. & Hämäläinen, J. 2000. Perehdyttäminen palvelualoilla. 1st edition. Helsinki: Työturvallisuuskeskus.

Kjelin, E. & Kuusisto, P. 2003. Tulokkaasta tuloksentekijäksi. 1st edition. Jyväskylä: Gummerus.

Kotler, P. & Keller, K.L. 2016. Marketing Management. Global edition. England: Pearson Education Limited.

Kupias, P. & Peltola, R. 2009. Perehdyttämisen pelikentällä. Helsinki: Palmenia.

Lovelock, C. & Wright, L. 2002. Principles of Service Marketing and Management. 2nd edition. England: Pearson College Div.

Smith, P. & Taylor, J. 2004. Marketing communications: An integrated approach. 4th edition. London: Kogan Page Limited.

Electronic references:

Fressi yrityksenä. Read 26.5.2018.
https://www.fressi.fi/yritys/

Fysioline – Hyvinvoinnin edelläkävijä. Read 26.5.2018.
https://www.fysioline.fi/pages/yritys

Helsingin ja Uudenmaan sairaanhoitopiiri, Yhtymähallinto. 2013. HUS perehdytysohjelma. Read 27.5.2018.
http://docplayer.fi/1842890-Hus-perehdytysohjelma.html

Mertala, S. 2015. Työpaikkaohjauksen prosessi ja perehdyttäminen. Read 27.5.2018. http://www.tyollisyysportti.fi/@Bin/299218/Ty%C3%B6paikkaohjaajat+1++koulu-tusp%C3%A4iv%C3%A4+perusteita.pdf

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. The Guide Book

Appendix 2. Orientation checklist