

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN SERVICE INDUSTRY

Case Study of Nokia River Golf

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Bachelor's thesis
December 2012
Degree Programme
in International Business
Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
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ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Degree Programme in International Business

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Case Study of Nokia River Golf

Bachelor's thesis 63 pages, appendices 14 pages
December 2012

The purpose of this thesis was to collect information about the current level of customer satisfaction among the members of Nokia River Golf. As the members of the golf club are a significant source of income, it is important for Nokia River Golf to ensure customer satisfaction to keep the members returning to the club.

The data about the level of customer satisfaction were collected by using an online questionnaire the members of Nokia River Golf were able to respond to. A personal interview was conducted among few members to gain more information about the future project of course expansion. The distribution of the responses was analysed and an average score was calculated for various aspects. The average score was then compared to the average scores from the previous customer satisfaction research conducted in 2010 to see if progress has been made and where the focus should be in the future.

The respondents stated that there are some aspects of the service that need to be improved. These aspects included for example the aesthetics of the golf course and the club house as well as the speed of a round of golf. When the average scores were compared to the average scores of the previous customer satisfaction research, the development was mainly positive. The areas that have been a priority since the last customer satisfaction research now scored higher average scores.

The findings indicate that Nokia River Golf is able to offer a service that satisfies the majority of the customers. The results also suggest that focus needs to be put on even the minor aspects of the service, for example the aesthetics of the golf course and the club house. It can be seen from the results that the customers value professional and helpful personnel. The aspects of the physical environment of the service and the personnel will combine an enjoyable experience for the golfers and should be a priority for Nokia River Golf.

Key words: customer satisfaction research, qualitative research, service quality

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and structure of the thesis

When measuring the success of a golf course, customer satisfaction is the key. Playing a round of golf is an experience for the player, and the goal for the club is to make this experience as enjoyable as possible so that the customers will return. Nokia River Golf (NRG) tries constantly to improve their services to attract new members and to ensure the current members keep coming back.

The best way to get information about how satisfied the customers are in the golfing experience is to ask directly from them. This is why Nokia River Golf conducts a customer satisfaction survey bi-annually. The results of the survey will give NRG valuable information about which aspects of the overall service the customers are happy about and which aspects need enhancements.

This thesis will first introduce the basics of golf as a leisure activity. It is important to understand, for example, that every single golfer in Finland must be a member of a Finnish Golf Union accredited club. Basic theories of services and service quality are also introduced since what Nokia River Golf offers is essentially a service.

The thesis will then move on to explain the theories behind a customer satisfaction research including, for example, qualitative and quantitative data collection methods that will both be used in the research. Questionnaire design will be presented next and the thesis will then introduce the results of the customer satisfaction survey. The thesis will conclude in suggestions for NRG about how to improve the overall service to ensure the customers will remain satisfied.

1.2 Nokia River Golf

Nokia River Golf got its initial push as a company when two business men, Martti Mannerla and Pekka Järvinen arrived at the site of the future golf course in Taivalkunta, Nokia in 1987. It was the time of the global golf boom and the town of Nokia signed a

deal stating that the area would be rented for golf purposes starting from January 1st, 1988. During the golf boom it was common to sell shares for the golf course to raise capital for the building and running of the course and thus River Golf Ltd. was founded. (Kankkonen 2008.)

During the recession of early 1990s the golf course faced financial problems. The members of the club jumped in and bought out the shares from the investors and helped the club financially in other ways as well. The concept of the “Spirit of River” was born. The members were helping the club with voluntary work in any ways possible. The summer of 1990 can be considered as the first proper season of Nokia River Golf. The members were able to play 18 holes and practice at the driving range. There were 245 members in the club and the Spirit of River was widely supported with different events and competitions. The club was considered to be a little community where the members knew each other and were not afraid to get their hands dirty to help the club, all for the love of the sport. (Kankkonen 2008.)

In the over 20-year history of NRG, the club has defeated financial difficulties, grown into 27-hole course, with 18 holes at the River course and 9 holes at the Kartano course, and now has over 1700 members. The club has also now decided to expand the course with 9 additional holes increasing the total to 36 holes as well as a practice course for beginners. This allows the club to facilitate more players at the same time, which is important as the amount of members is growing.

Nokia River Golf is known nationwide due to acknowledgements. An example of this is that the 14th hole of the River course has been selected to the Dream Course of the Golf Digest magazine in a couple of years in a row, voted by players all over Finland. The club was also named the Club of the year in 2010 by the Finnish Golf Union due to the development of the course and the success of the junior and amateur players.

Nokia River Golf employs permanently six people; the CEO, a club secretary, an office secretary and three green keepers. For the summer time, NRG employs a dozen seasonal workers in addition to the permanent ones; two or three in the office as caddie masters and the rest out in the field taking care of the course

1.3 Objectives and methodology

The main objective for the research was to gain reliable data of the current level of customer satisfaction concerning the different aspects of the service offered by Nokia River Golf. As the survey was the same compared to previous years, conclusions can be made about how the level of satisfaction has changed and if previous changes in the operations have been effective. Based on this year's results, suggestions were made concerning how to improve the different aspects of the service to improve the overall level of customer satisfaction.

The customer satisfaction survey was web based and a link to the questionnaire was sent to all the members of Nokia River Golf who have enabled the function to receive e-mails from the club. The online questionnaire was available for two weeks and once the answering period had passed, the data gained was analysed and compared to the data from the previous research conducted in 2010.

Personal interviews of four members were also conducted. The respondents represented different types of members at NRG: one active and one casual female member and one active and one casual male member. The interviews focused solely on the expansion plans of the course since at the moment it is the most important future project for NRG.

2 GOLF AS A LEISURE ACTIVITY

2.1 Definition and playing

The Finnish Golf Union (FGU) defines golf as a sport in which the purpose is to strike the ball from the starting point, tee box, into the hole on the green with as small amount of strikes as possible. A whole round of golf consists of 18 holes which vary in difficulty and length. According to the FGU, there are 132 golf clubs in Finland that have 144 000 members altogether. The amount of golfers has been growing steadily by approximately four to five per cent per year. (Finnish Golf Union.)

For a person to be able to play golf, he has to participate in a green card course and exam. The course consists of learning the basic techniques of various different types of strikes in the game of golf, for example the swing, chip and putt under the guidance of a pro (the teacher). The exam consists of striking tests and a game of a couple of holes on the course, where the pro evaluates the skills of a player. If the pro decides that the skills are adequate, a green card is admitted. (Suomen Golfpiste Oy 2009.)

A person who has just been admitted a green card is given the handicap of 54. This is the maximum handicap a person can have. As the person gets better and is able to get through the course with less strikes, his handicap will decrease. The basic idea of the handicap system is to let people know how many hits over the overall par of the course they are able to have to still play at their own level. The overall par of the course is determined by the length and difficulty of the holes, usually it being 72. The handicap of a person tells the average level of his played rounds of golf. (Suomen Golfpiste Oy 2009.)

2.2 Membership and playing on other courses

For a golfer to be able to play on any golf course in Finland he has to be a member of one or more clubs that are accredited by the Finnish Golf Union, i.e. the whole club is a member of the FGU. To be a member in a club, an annual membership fee must be paid. (Finnish Golf Union.)

A golfer usually has a home club and when playing on any other course in Finland, the golfer has to prove his membership by showing a standardized FGU membership card. If a card is not presented, the person is not allowed to play on the course. A few courses in Finland are exceptions to this rule since they are meant for practice for beginners and do not require a membership in any specific club. (Finnish Golf Union.)

2.3 Different services at a golf course

Different golf courses vary in size and the additional services they offer. Usually golf courses consist of one or more courses, a driving range and a club house. The different services Nokia River Golf offers for its customers are explained in the following.

The main service NRG offers for its customers is the opportunity to play and practice golf in the form of the two courses and the driving range. The golfers can choose from 18 holes at the River course and 9 holes at the Kartano course. The driving range consists of an area to practice long strikes like swings, a close-up game area for chips, practice greens for putts and practice bunkers.

NRG wants to offer a complete golfing experience for the customers and has thus created a variety of additional services to support the core service of playing and practicing golf. The main front of the customer service is in the caddie master's office where the CEO, club secretary, office secretary and the caddie masters work. They serve the customers in the areas of membership advising, administrative tasks and making reservations for the courses.

A pro shop is located in the same premises as the caddie master's office. The pro shop is run mainly by the people in the office but the selling of golf clubs, shoes and bags has been outsourced to Golf Balata, a bigger pro shop that operates at other golf clubs as well. In addition to Golf Balata's products the pro shop offers clothes, golf gloves, golf balls, hats, caps and a selection of other accessories needed while on the course.

A fully licensed restaurant is also present. The restaurant serves lunch every day and meals are also made on order. Sandwiches and other snacks are very popular among the golfers, especially when they have a break while playing 18 holes. Even though the res-

restaurant is its own entity within the Nokia River Golf premises, it has become an integrated part of the Nokia River Golf family, as the owners have been in the business for 15 years. The restaurateurs have now announced to retire after the season, which means that Nokia River Golf has to find new entrepreneurs to run a restaurant in the premises.

An integrated part of the golf services is teaching services. The teachers, that are called pros, offer basic courses for beginners and teaching services for more experienced golfers as well. They are also in charge of training the junior players that compete in a national or even international level throughout the year.

Some of the “club golfers”, i.e. casual golfers like to compete at times as well. This is why Nokia River Golf organizes open competitions throughout the season which means that everyone can participate. There is also a possibility to organize private competitions at the courses for invites only.

To ensure that everything runs accordingly out on the courses, NRG has licensed volunteer members of the club to act as marshals. The marshals play a big role when it comes to the speed and smoothness of the round; their job is to make players move faster if they are too slow. Another aspect of marshal operations is the starter activity in competitions; a volunteer stands in the first tee-box and greets the competitors and tells them when to start.

The Spirit of River has carried its meaning until this day; the members are still active in the development of the club and the services through various committees. These include for example senior, junior and women’s committees. The committees all have their special area to deal with but the main and common goal for all of them is to improve the services Nokia River Golf offers.

Integrated parts of the overall experience are also the environment and the safety of the course. Golf can be a hazardous sport when balls fly through the air at a high speed. The environment of the clubhouse and the course, for example the planted flowers and trees play a role when creating an overall experience for golfers. Another building is located next to the main club house where a bag storage is located. Members are able to store their bags and clubs for the season in the storage room once a fee has been paid

3 SERVICE INDUSTRY

3.1 Definition of a service company

In the competitive business environment that companies have to operate in nowadays, it might be problematic to competitive advantage with just the core product or service. Pricing is not the only competitive aspect anymore as customers will change the supplier as soon as someone else offers the same product or service cheaper. This is when the so called “service point of view” comes into the picture as a mean to reach competitive advantage. Companies focus more and more on the additional services in order to ensure a complete experience for the customer. This will hopefully lead to customer loyalty via customer satisfaction. (Grönroos 2003, 28.)

A company can truly be identified as a service company when they build a network of other services around their core product or service for support and thus trying to improve their position in the market. This is when the company has understood that the additional services are a vital part of the overall experience the customer will receive and can be used as a differentiating aspect among the competitors. The company then moves to operate through the so called “service point of view”. (Grönroos 2003, 58–59.)

Based on the definition of Grönroos (2003, 58–59), Nokia River Golf can be classified as a service company. They have managed to create additional services to support the core service of playing and practicing golf to create an overall experience for the customer. The experience starts from the equipment needed, offered by the pro shop leading all the way to friendly and helpful staff in the office to guide the golfers all the way to being able to have a meal from the restaurant. As there are other golf courses in the Pirkanmaa area, the supporting services play a role when golfers choose where to play. As a part of the Spirit of River, the company wants to create a friendly atmosphere so that the course will be, according to Kankkonen (2008) a “nice place to visit”.

3.2 Definition of a service

Services are usually defined as processes and actions that are intangible and at the same time complex to understand (Grönroos 2003, 78–80). As a service is mainly intangible, it can be hard for a customer to evaluate the quality of the process. However, even in a service environment, there are tangible aspects which contribute to the complexity of a service: there are many aspects to consider.

The extended marketing mix, also known as the 7 P's, is a theory that describes the different aspects of a service. The theory was created by Bernard H. Booms and Mary J. Bitner already in 1981. The established marketing mix of the 4 P's consists of the product, price, promotion and place, or distribution. The extended mix adds process, people and physical evidence to describe the complexity of a service. (Clarity Marketing Ltd., 2005.)

The product aspect consists of all the features the product or service offers and price describes the pricing decisions made concerning the product. Promotion deals with the marketing communications that are used and place equals the distribution channels of the product. Services combine from intangible processes so it is vital to ensure the processes run smoothly. The processes include the interactions between a customer and the company, a tangible aspect for a customer to evaluate. People play a big role when ensuring the quality of a process. When people are well trained, motivated and work together towards a common goal of a satisfied customer, the creation of positive image and customer satisfaction is easier. Physical evidence consists of the environment the service takes place in and other physical; clues: the building, the clothing of the employees and the tangible goods that support the service, to name a few. These factors combined for a service package that the customer evaluates. (Clarity Marketing Ltd., 2005.)

As Nokia River Golf wants to offer its customers an overall golfing experience, all of the aspects of the extended marketing mix are taken into consideration. The three additional ones to the established marketing mix are well focused on as they help to bring tangible aspects to the service. The people in the office are trained and motivated to serve the customers which means that the process which ensures that the interactions between the company and the customers are enjoyable. Physical evidence can also be

found in the employees' clothing according to the golf etiquette, the club house where the interactions take place and the goods offered at the pro shop, just to name a few.

3.3 Service quality

It is difficult to define the quality of a service as services are mainly intangible. The perception of quality comes from the customers and how they perceive the service. In these words, quality is everything and anything that the customers say. The customers usually evaluate the interaction moment between them and the company, what they gain from the interaction and how they think they received the service. The first two parts are easy to evaluate objectively but the last part is subject to a customer's perception. (Grönroos 2003, 98–101.)

The customer compares the experienced quality to the expected quality and based on that makes decisions if he is satisfied or not. A company can affect the expected quality through various methods, for example by marketing communication and promotion, a built image and relationship management and marketing. Positive and negative word-of-mouth and the customer's needs and wants will also affect the expected quality of a service that a customer has. After the customer has taken part in the service process he will evaluate if his expected quality measures were met. (Grönroos 2003, 105.)

SERVQUAL is a method used to determine the quality of service by comparing the expected and experienced level of quality of the customers. SERVQUAL was created already in the mid-1980s by L. Berry, A. Parasuraman and V. Zetithami. The method has been modified throughout the years and now has stabilized into separating the service into five main dimensions: reliability (the service is error free and is performed in the given time span), assurance (the behaviour of the employees make the customer trust the company), tangibles (the physical environment of the company), empathy (the company can relate to the possible problems the customers have) and responsiveness (the employees are willing to help and serve the customers). (Schott 2009.)

The areas of SERVQUAL are being used in the customer satisfaction survey for Nokia River Golf. The questions are related to the physical environment, the employees' willingness to serve and the quality of the service to name a few. NRG's survey does not

take into consideration the expected level of quality that is used in the SERVQUAL technique, or how important the aspect is for the overall satisfaction.

Leaving out the expected level and importance questions may lead the company into making wrong decisions and wasting their resources. There might be a situation where a majority of the respondents is unhappy with a certain aspect of the service. The company then makes conclusions and decides to spend their resources to fix the aspect. Since the company did not ask about the level of importance, a situation may occur when the respondents are indifferent to the changes made in the aspect as it is not important for the overall level of satisfaction. This leads to the company wasting their resources on matters that the customers do not find important

3.4 Customer relationship management and -marketing

Customer relationship management and -marketing are based on mutual and trustworthy co-operation between the customer and the service provider which forces the service provider to know the customers in greater detail than before. Personal contacts are what satisfy the customer and give a competitive advantage for the company. When it comes to the marketing communications, it is important to create a dialogue between the customers and the company rather than one-way messaging from the company to the customers. With a dialogue customers are a part in improving the services making them an integrated and important part of the service. (Grönroos 2003, 62.)

To create a dialogue between the company and the customers, Nokia River Golf has created communication channels. Feedback system has been created to the home page of NRG where customers can leave comments anonymously. The customers are also encouraged to give direct feedback on the service for example to the employees in the office. The bi-annual customer satisfaction survey also gives the members a chance to voice their opinions about the current operations of Nokia River Golf. The communication from the company to the customer consists of the current news updated on the home page, electrical newsletter that is sent to the members, bulletin boards and an annual magazine to name a few. All of these different communication channels ensure that the members have a chance to express their opinions in the operations of the company and thus participate in the development of the service.

For a company to be able to utilise customer relationship management and -marketing, a thorough customer database needs to be collected. This will allow the company to target their marketing communications to specific customer segments with ease, thus making marketing more cost efficient (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 111–113). A proper customer database also makes it easier for a company to communicate with the individual customers directly and opens a channel for dialogue between the two parties.

Rope and Pöllänen (1998, 113–116) introduce five different levels that should be involved in an efficient customer database: contact information, segmentation information, experience and usage information, information of the results of the relationship and the information flow between the customer and the company. Nokia River Golf has a customer database of all their members and customers. For the members the data includes the personal details and family connections, contact information, information about the shares owned, billing information, handicap history and a list of other companies that can use their contact information (for example the Finnish Golf Union). For each member there is also an additional information text field in which the employees can write extra information about for example a payment plan. The members can also be classified into certain segments, for example new members, charter members or juniors. The members can also be added into specific mailing lists, for example women, shareholders or members of a certain committee.

There are various factors that affect the efficiency and the benefits a company can receive from the customer database. In order for the company to get the full benefit from the database, the information needs to be correct, up to date, specific and useful. At the same time the database needs to be easy and cost-efficient to use and flexible, i.e. the information is easy to change. A database with incorrect information that is hard to retrieve, the company is just wasting their resources and time. Another important factor for the company to get a full benefit from the customer database as a tool for marketing is responsive company culture to use one. When the employees are more willing to update the information in the database and know how to search for information, the company has a powerful tool in their hands. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 116–117.)

3.5 Importance of a positive image

Grönroos describes image as the “values that the customers, potential customers, lost customers and other groups of people relate with the company”. In other words, customers create the image for a company via the experiences they have. In this sense, it is very important for the company to ensure that the customers will experience positive encounters with the company so that they will build a positive image. (Grönroos 2003, 385–387.)

Positive image can be a strength for a company in many ways. Marketing communications are better received by customers who have a positive conception of the company. This is also true in word-of-mouth marketing. If potential customers already have a positive image of a company they are more willing to take in other positive news concerning the company. A customer who has a positive image of a company is more prone to tolerate minor technical and other difficulties from the company. Then the positive image acts as a buffer for the company. Image also has an internal effect on the company; employees usually have better motivation to serve customers if the company image is perceived as positive by the customers. (Grönroos 2003, 387–388.)

Nokia River Golf has been able to build a positive image through the fair and personal treatment of the members and by a friendly atmosphere and customer service. Visitors from other clubs give positive feedback of the course and the club on a regular basis directly to the employees at the office. People return to the course year after year as members which can be seen as the growing number of members. To create customer loyalty like this is vital for a golf course as the members are an important source of income.

4 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION RESEARCH

4.1 Basics of a customer satisfaction research

Customer satisfaction research is a type of research which focuses on the encounters between the customer and the company and the satisfaction the customer perceives from these encounters. As it is classified as a marketing research, the general guidelines for a research are applicable here as well: the research must have validity, reliability and regularity. It must add value to the company and have a straight connection to the operations of the company as well. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 83–84.)

Rope and Pöllänen (1998, 85) state that customer satisfaction research should be a continuous research, which means that the research must be conducted at certain intervals. When a research is conducted regularly, the company will get valuable data of the development of the level of satisfaction and see if possible changes to the operations have made a difference, one way or another. As the research is continuous, there are a couple of factors that the company must take into consideration: the research must be easy to conduct and measure all the important features every time, be economically viable to conduct and easy for the customer to respond to (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 85).

Customer satisfaction can be used as a measure of how successful the company is at the current situation and how successful it will be in the future. As Rope and Pöllänen (1998, 58–59) note, no matter how high the revenue is at the moment, if the customers are not happy, they will find a different service provider. It is important to collect information of customer service on regular basis to keep the decision makers informed of the current situation. It is also important to remember that customer satisfaction is always subjective and personal so the sample needs to be large enough. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 58–59.)

4.2 Background of the research

The topic for a research is usually arisen from an everyday situation; a company needs information to improve their operations or there is a general sociological need for new information. For the researches that are born from the practical need of companies the function is usually more limited compared to the sociological researches that might take into consideration the behaviour of the whole population. (Ronkainen, Pehkonen, Lindblom-Ylänne & Paavilainen 2011, 32.)

When defining the topic it is important to consider if the research will be valuable for specific needs. There is no point for a company to waste time and other resources on a research that will bring no value for them. As Ronkainen et al. (2011, 32) describe, the need for a research usually rises from the want and need to improve the operations of a company to gain benefits, for example more cost-efficient ways for production or to gain competitive advantage via customer satisfaction.

A research plan is the guide that directs the researcher throughout the research project. A good research plan sets the goal the research is meant to meet and also states what is being researched, why and how. If the researcher faces problems in the research process, the research plan will guide him back onto the right tracks. (Ronkainen et al. 2011, 35–36.)

The sampling process defines the group of people that will take part in the survey as respondents. There are different methods of sampling, especially in quantitative research. One example of a sampling method is probability sampling, in which every single person has the same chance to get picked (Valli 2010, 113–115.). In qualitative research the researcher is able to choose the sample based on the research question. The researcher can find the respondents from his personal network or for example advertise the research in the media (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006). With qualitative research the sample does not need to be as big compared to what is good for quantitative research; sometimes one respondent is enough (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006). The researcher has to evaluate the sample carefully. For example in a case of customer satisfaction research there is not profitable to ask how satisfied non-customers are. They will not have the needed information to answer the questions thus making it impossible for the company to get useful data.

4.3 Data collection

The data used in researches can be classified into primary and secondary data. The researcher can use secondary data which means doing a research based on ready-made material, for example governmental records. When using primary data, the researcher collects the data himself using various data collection methods. The research problem usually defines the type of method that is the most applicable to use. The different types of data collection methods are usually classified into quantitative and qualitative. (Ronkainen et al. 2011, 45–47.)

To design a system of how to collect information about the level of customer satisfaction requires answering the following questions, presented by Rope and Pöllänen (1998, 62–63): how often do you measure the customer satisfaction level, what is the sample going to be like, what are the aspects that will be measured and what method to use. The decisions made in these matters will affect the contents of the data and how precise it is and how the information is applicable to all possible encounters with the customers (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 62–63).

4.3.1 Quantitative data collection and analysis method

Quantitative data collection method focuses on quantities, measuring and numbers. The data is analysed mathematically by using statistical methods which are widely accepted in the scientific world. (Ronkainen et al. 2011, 83–84.)

As the data is analysed mathematically, it leaves little room for the researcher to modify the analysis techniques; the numbers are what they are and there is no room for “free interpretation”. This method is very useful when researching something that requires a large sample. It is easier for the researcher to analyse the data when there are set rules and he can make clear conclusions from the results.

Both primary and secondary data can be used in the quantitative data collection method. Secondary data consists of for example different types of statistics, registers, records and databases maintained by the government. Primary data collection methods include for example surveys, personal interviews and observation methods. The common factor

for all these is a structured form with pre-set questions and answer options that the respondents or the researcher fills out. (Keckman-Koivuniemi 2010.)

The development of technology has made Internet based questionnaires possible. In the data analysis process this is very useful since the electronic answers are easily converted into graphs and there is little or no chance for mistakes when coding the answers. When using an Internet based questionnaire it is very important to consider the target group of the questionnaire. Younger people are usually more receptive of technological solutions and are used to using those compared to senior citizens. (Valli 2010, 113.)

4.3.2 Qualitative data collection and analysis method

The starting point for a qualitative data collection is to find relevance in people's actions. The research is usually subjective and the experiences of people are put on top. Another important feature of qualitative research is that it is researcher based which means that the researcher has an effect on the outcome of the research. In qualitative research the research problem is set more loosely than in quantitative research. The main focus is on the overall process of the research. The analysis methods are not as strict either; the researches will interpret the data to his best knowledge without any set mathematical rules. (Ronkainen et al. 2011, 81–82.)

As the researcher analyses the data with no set mathematical rules, unlike in the quantitative data collection method, the analysis might not be objective. Personal mind sets and previous experience have an effect on the analysis; one researcher may draw completely different conclusions from the same data than another researcher. The researcher needs to be very careful when analysing the data and stay as unbiased as possible.

There are many different qualitative data collection methods. A typical qualitative data collection method is an interview. An interview can be conducted personally or in small groups and they can consist of set questions from the researcher or be just a free discussion (Ronkainen et al. 2011, 116). The difference compared to quantitative data collection method is that there are no structured forms to fill out; the researcher asks open ended questions in which the subject can answer in any way he sees the best (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006). The data analysis takes a lot longer in qualitative re-

search since the answers cannot be put on a scale (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006).

4.4 Designing the questionnaire

The level of detail might be challenging to determine when designing the structured questionnaire to be used in quantitative data collection. The questions must be detailed enough but they should not go too deep in the matter making the questionnaire too long. To balance with this matter, Rope and Pöllänen (1998, 98–100) suggest combining some open-ended questions into the questionnaire so that the customers have the option of explaining the situation in more detail if needed. The method of combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods facilitates the majority of people and their preferences when responding to a survey and this way the researcher will get a more coherent picture of the matter researched.

Another important factor in the designing process is determining the aspects that will be researched. Rope and Pöllänen (1998, 64–67) introduce a couple of different methods of finding out the most important aspects that comprise the product or service. The first method is a direct interview research, which is conducted as a personal interview with the customers. In the interview, there usually is a ready-made list of features out of which the customers decide which ones are the important ones and which ones they disregard. This method leaves virtually no room for the customers to come up with new features they value, as they might think that they have to choose from the list. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 64–67.)

The next method Rope and Pöllänen (1998, 72–76) introduce is the group discussion method. A few customers, usually the amount being five to ten, are collected into a group which is led by the researcher to discuss about the most important features to be researched. As the group discussion is based on free conversation, the researcher will get valuable information from the customers without a pre-made list of features, thus making room for new features to come up in the discussion. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 72–76.)

The third method is to use specialist workshops. In this method, people who are considered to be specialists in the specific area are collected into a group to discuss about the features to be researched. The company needs to ensure that the specialists who participate in the workshop actually are specialists in their area and motivated; otherwise the output might not be reliable.. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 67–72.)

4.5 Validity and reliability

When evaluating the research, validity and reliability are important aspects (Valli 2010, 129). Validity describes the quality of the research which means that the data has been collected in a proficient manner and the research explains the phenomenon it examines (Ronkainen et al. 2011, 129–131). Another factor in the quality of the research is the relationship between the researcher and the entity being researched; especially in qualitative research the personal opinions of the researcher might affect the results. (Ronkainen et al. 2011, 129–131).

Reliability focuses in the reliability of the measurements: how consistent, coherent and accurate they are. It is important to understand that there are always some errors in the measurements. Casual errors occur when an individual measurement is inaccurate. The researcher cannot avoid these types of errors. Systematic errors occur when the environment of the respondents changes so that it affects the responses. (Ronkainen et al. 2011, 131–133.)

5 RESEARCH DESIGN FOR NOKIA RIVER GOLF

5.1 Background of the research

For Nokia River Golf the purpose of the research was to gain information about the level of customer satisfaction in their current operations. NRG wanted to get information of possible development areas to focus on, to ensure the customers are satisfied in the future as well and return to the company. The goal for NRG as a company is to improve their operations continuously, making it vital to get up to date information about the current situation.

Nokia River Golf conducts a customer satisfaction survey bi-annually to be able to monitor the development of the level of customer satisfaction. This way the company will receive information whether the changes made based on previous results have made a difference. It is important to understand that the changes made might lead to a negative development in the customer satisfaction, i.e. the customers are less satisfied than before. When the customer satisfaction survey is conducted on regular intervals, it allows for the company to develop continuously which is the main goal for NRG.

5.2 Data collection

As the purpose of the survey was to get up to date information of the current level of customer satisfaction among the customers, primary data was needed. The data was collected using a quantitative data collection method: an online questionnaire. As the results were compared to the results of the previous survey in 2010, secondary data was also used. No specific sampling method was used for the quantitative data collection; the link to the online questionnaire was sent to all the members who have enabled the function to receive e-mails from the club. Out of these members, everyone was able to respond to the survey if they decided to.

In addition to the online questionnaire, personal interviews were conducted. The interviews represent a qualitative data collection method. The interviews focused solely on the expansion project and gave Nokia River Golf more personal insights on the matter,

for example on the necessity of the expansion and the financial decisions. The respondents were selected based on the judgement of the researcher; there had to be one active and one casual female golfer as well as one active and one casual male golfer to represent the different types of customer segments of Nokia River Golf.

5.3 Designing the questionnaire

As for any company, it was a challenge for Nokia River Golf to narrow the aspects to be researched into a manageable quantity. A variety of different features build the overall experience at the golf course. In the process of determining the aspects to be researched members of the different committees were collected to discuss the matter. A specialist workshop was used as the method as all the participants are considered to have the best knowledge of the field of their committee. As a result of the specialist workshops, Nokia River Golf now has a set of questions that are asked from the customers bi-annually. By asking the same questions each time, the company gets comparable data which allows them to monitor the development of the level of customer satisfaction.

The questionnaire designed by the specialist workshops is divided into 13 parts. The first main part of the questionnaire is the background information where the respondents give basic information about themselves. The questionnaire then moves on to asking the respondents' opinions about the caddie master office's operations, the condition of both River and Kartano courses, the driving range, safety of the course, the marshal activities, competition related issues, clubhouse and its environment, the restaurant, pro shop, teaching activities and other club activities and communication. A changing theme question is placed as the last question, this year it being the course expansion project.

Each of the main parts consists of set questions concerning the different aspects that are relevant, determined by the specialist workshops. The respondents are able to choose an option that best describes their level of satisfaction from six different options. The options range from poor to excellent with score equivalents from one to five (Table 1). The option of 'I don't know' is also included as it is possible that not all members have an opinion to all of the researched aspects.

TABLE 1. The answer options and their score equivalents

Option	I don't know	Poor	Tolerable	Satisfying	Good	Excellent
Score equivalent	0	1	2	3	4	5

At the end of each section there is room for comments and suggestions in the form of open-ended questions. This allows the respondents to expand their answers. At the end of the whole questionnaire there is an open-ended question where the respondents are able to name the three most important development areas for Nokia River Golf. A text box is also reserved for any other feedback the respondents might have of the operations of the club. By combining both quantitative and qualitative questions, the questionnaire facilitates both the respondents who are willing to explain their decisions in greater detail as well as the ones who choose not to.

No modifications to the questionnaire were made this year as Nokia River Golf has made an executive decision to ask the same questions every time. The researcher thus had no control over the design process of the questionnaire.

The questions for the personal interviews were developed by the researcher. It had to be made sure the results would generate valuable information for Nokia River Golf concerning the members' opinions on the course expansion project, especially the necessity of the project and the financial aspects.

5.4 Validity and reliability

Casual errors can be difficult to avoid when conducting a research. Errors occur for example when the wording of a question misleads the respondent or the respondent misreads the questions and thus gives a “wrong” answer. With Internet based questionnaires there is also a problem of the programme not functioning accordingly due to technical issues. These are matters that Nokia River Golf must take into consideration when analysing the data.

Systematic errors occur when the whole environment of the respondents has changed and may cause a distortion in the data. Nokia River Golf announced the retirement of

the restaurateurs just before the link to the questionnaire was sent to the members. This is a big change in the environment of the respondents; people might give the restaurant services a higher grade to give the restaurateurs a positive farewell gift.

The online questionnaire excluded all the members who do not use the Internet. As the link to the questionnaire was sent to those members who have enabled the function to receive e-mails from the club it can be assumed that they are more technologically oriented and thus able to respond to an Internet based questionnaire. There is a chance not everyone received the link to the questionnaire due to incorrect information in the database. If the member has not informed the club of a changed e-mail address the member excludes himself from the survey.

6 RESULTS

6.1 Background information

A link to the questionnaire was sent to all the members of Nokia River Golf who have enabled the function to receive e-mails from the club (Appendix 1). The link to the questionnaire was sent to 1 325 recipients but only 1 299 were reached. 585 people finished the questionnaire which makes the total response percentage to be 45 %. The questionnaire can be found on Appendix 2.

Out of the respondents, 76% were male and 24% were female (figure 1). Almost half of the respondents belong to the age group of 41 to 55 years old. People under the age of 30 are a clear minority among the respondents; they comprise only 12% of the whole group (figure 2).

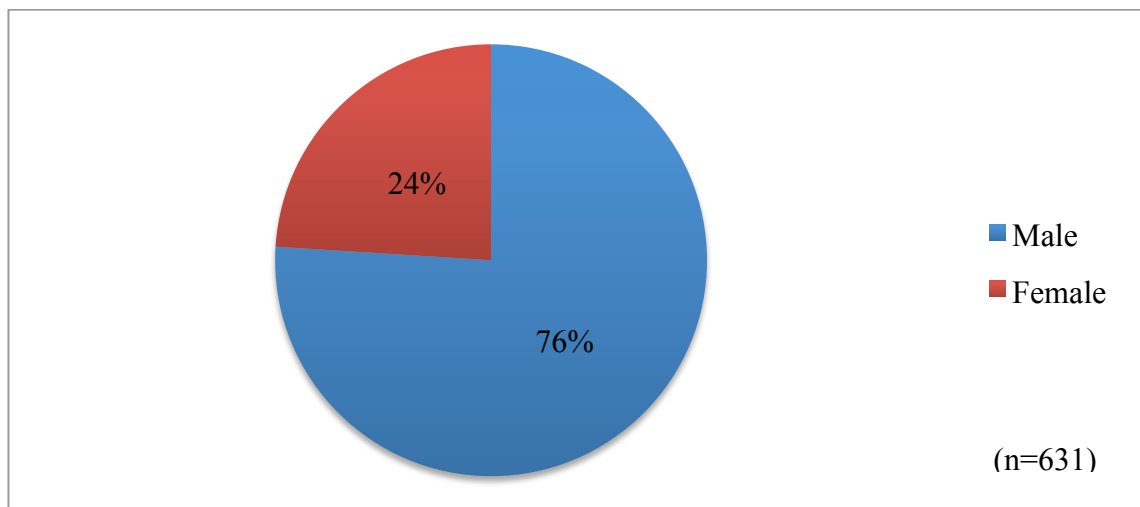


FIGURE 1. Sex distribution of the respondents

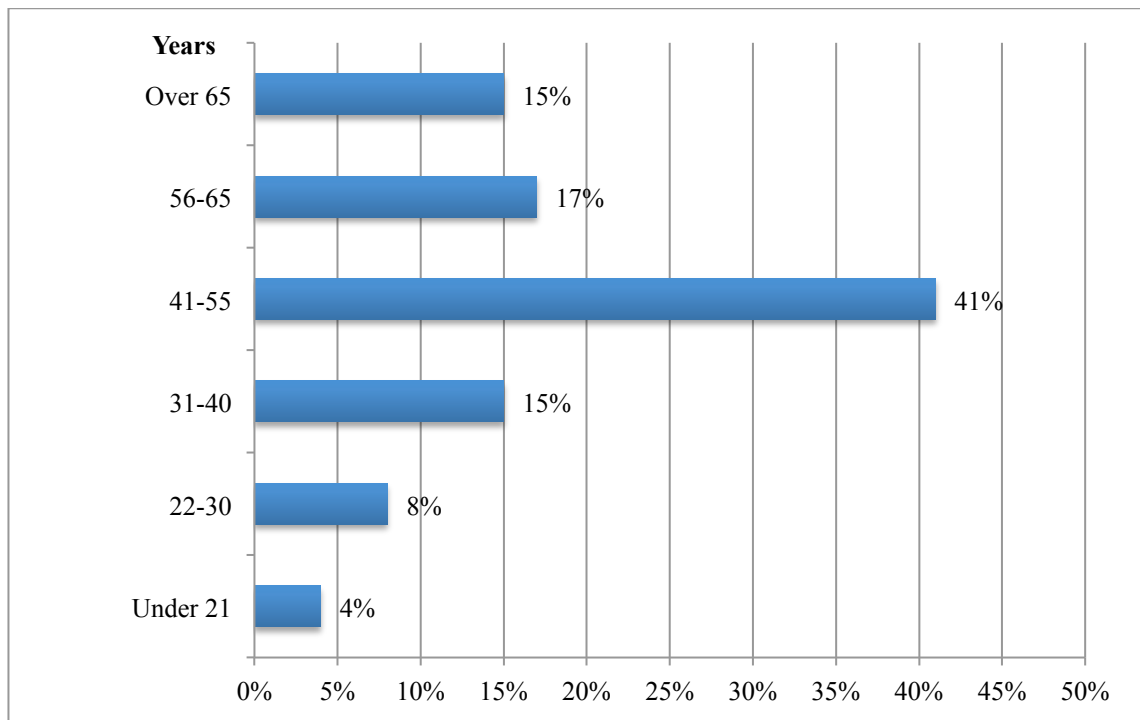


FIGURE 2. The age distribution of the respondents

Out of the respondents half were Nokia River Golf shareholders and the other half people who rent a share. There was an equal distribution on the respondents when it comes to the number of rounds played at NRG as well as on other courses; among the respondents there were active and casual players. The respondents also represent the various handicap classes and number of years played; the respondents are people who have just started and those who have played for many years. The respondents comprise a comprehensive sample of the members of Nokia River Golf.

6.2 Caddie master operations

In the section of the questionnaire that focused on the caddie master office's operations, the respondents were asked to evaluate the opening hours of the office, the professionalism of the employees, the level of quality of the service provided via telephone, the easiness and functionality of making reservations online and how well the employees handle feedback.

In all of the different areas, except in the handling of feedback, over half of the respondents chose excellent or good to describe the current situation, one of the two best op-

tions (figure 3). Almost half of the respondents replied ‘I don’t know’ when they were asked about the effectiveness of the employees to handle feedback (figure 3).

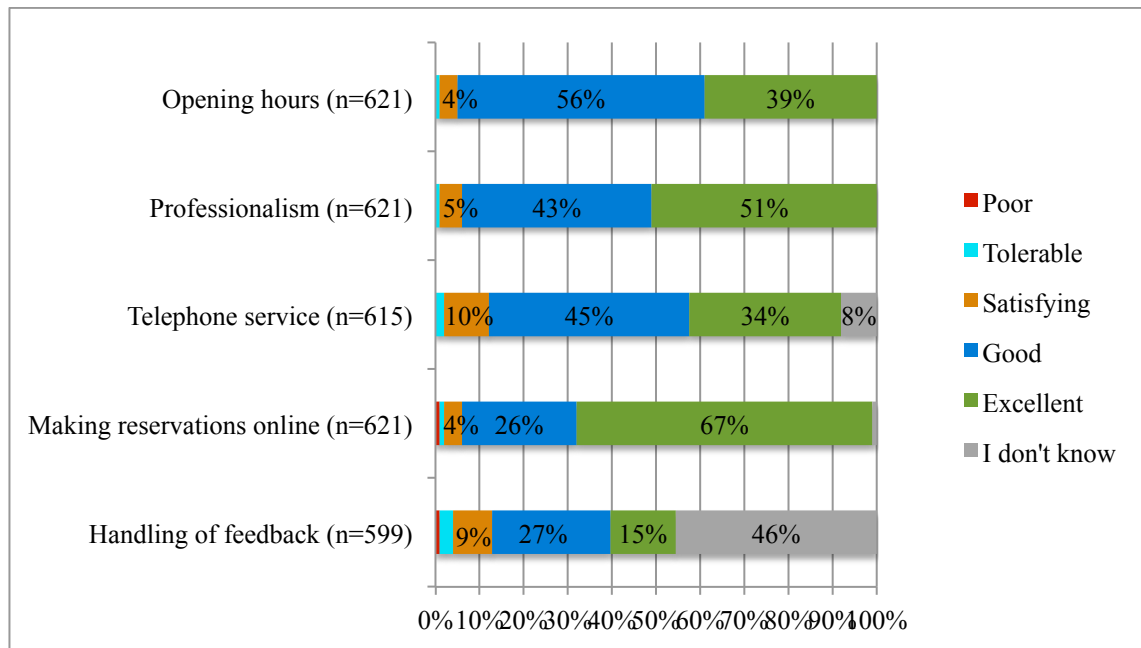


FIGURE 3. Distribution of responses for the caddie master operations

The respondents were given a chance to leave comments and suggestions concerning the caddie master operations in an open-ended question. The respondents gave positive feedback of the friendliness and helpfulness of the staff in the office and hoped that it would stay the same. Two aspects people wanted to see a change in were the telephone service and making reservations. Even though both of these aspects got good responses in the previous questions, people wanted both to be more efficient. Sometimes it is hard to reach the employees via phone and people wanted a solution for this. The respondents were also irritated by the fact that some people make reservations and cancel at the last minute or do not show up and there is no penalty for it.

The average scores for different aspects were compared to the results of the survey in 2010. The results from 2010 were retrieved from the rapport conducted by FeelBack Oy. When calculating the average scores, the ‘I don’t know’ responses were excluded. The average scores for caddie master operations were better in professionalism of the staff, handling of the feedback and telephone service, even though the respondents wanted more improvement in that. For the caddie master operations, all of the different areas received an average score of 4 or better (figure 4).

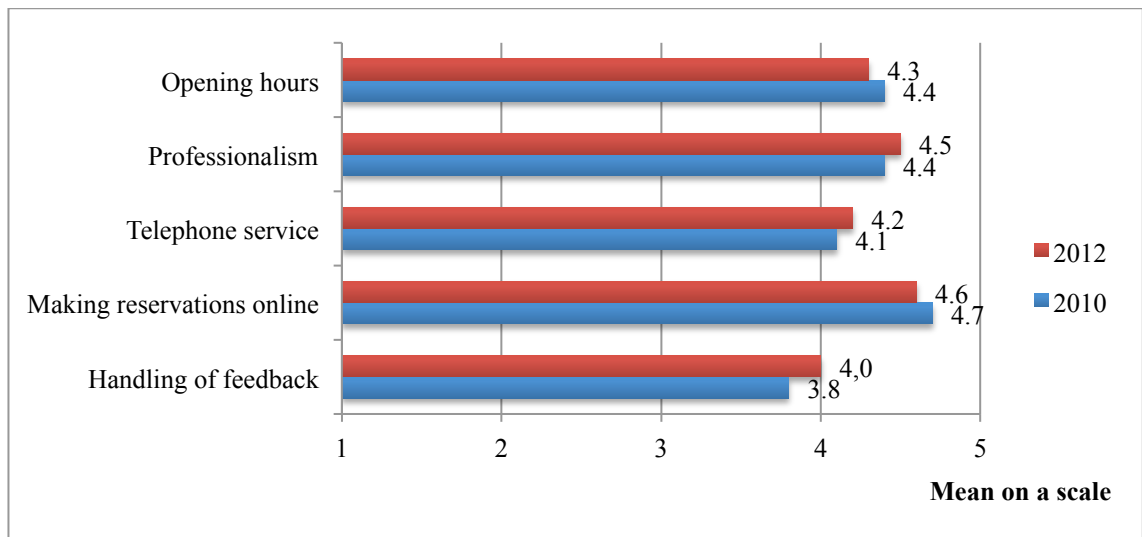


FIGURE 4. The average scores for caddie master operations in 2010 and 2012

6.3 River course

When people were asked to evaluate the condition of the River course, the results show a great level of satisfaction; 93 % of the respondents evaluated the condition to be excellent or good (figure 5). 79 % of the respondents evaluated the markings and guidance, which include for example distance markings and guidance to the next tee-box, on the course to be excellent or good as well (figure 5). Over half of the respondents assessed the speed of the round of golf at River course and the availability of tee-off times to be satisfying or worse (figure 5).

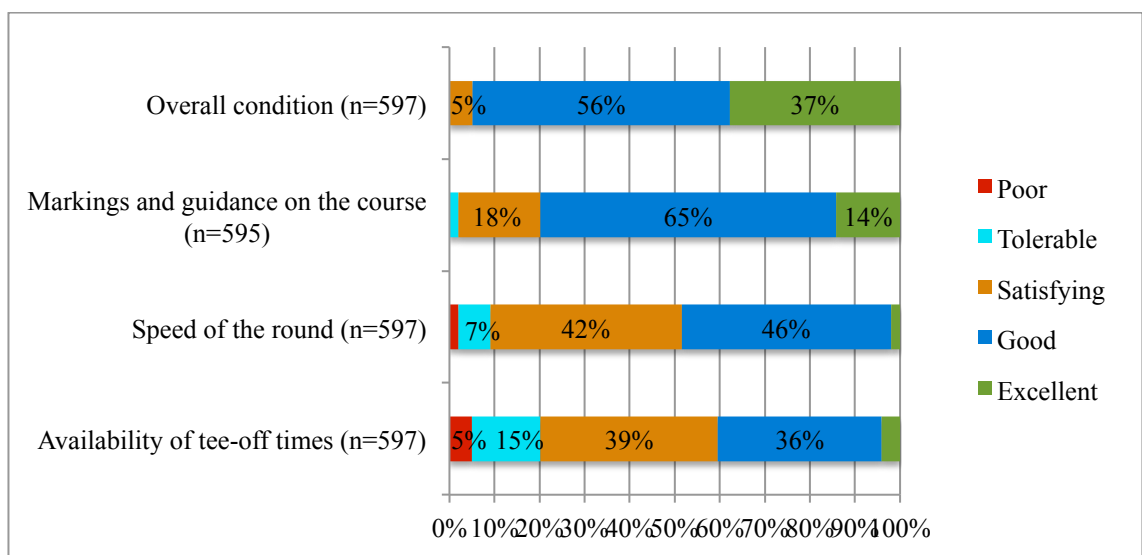


FIGURE 5. Distribution of responses for the River course

In the open-ended question many respondents gave positive feedback of the condition of the course even though it had been a rainy summer and many courses around Finland have suffered. Due to the good condition of the course there have been a lot of players and the respondents felt it is sometimes difficult to get tee-off times for the course.

The main aspect the respondents wished changes to be made into is the speed of round. Now the respondents felt they had to wait a lot on the course and the round was not as smooth as possible. The 13th, 14th and 15th holes of the River course are located on the other side of the main road which causes a bottle neck. On these holes people have to wait the most and the respondents were wishing some sort of changes to it. The respondents also wished to have the tee-off times on 10 minute intervals throughout the year whereas now the longer intervals are used only during the busiest months of June, July and August. On other times the interval is only 9 minutes.

Even though the respondents evaluated the condition of the course excellent or good there are still some aspects they wished improvements on. The respondents wanted the bunkers to be softer with more sand, the greens to be faster with shorter grass and the water hazards to be tidied up. As women and men have their tee-boxes at different distances from the green, many were wishing for there to be trash cans and places to wash your clubs and balls at the women's tee-boxes as well.

In comparison to the survey of 2010 the River course received a better average score in all of the evaluated areas except for the availability of tee-off times. As many of the respondents mentioned in the open-ended question as well, it has been hard to get tee-off times for the River course due to the popularity of the course (figure 6).

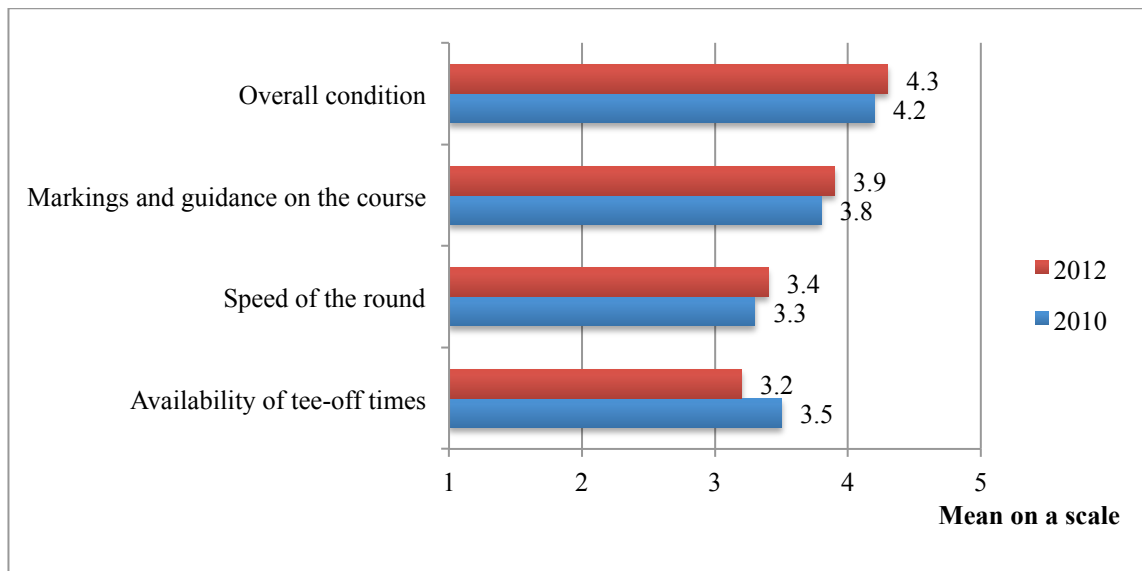


FIGURE 6. The average scores for the River course in 2010 and 2012

6.4 Kartano course

The same questions were asked about the Kartano course as were about the River course. When asked about the overall condition of the course, 87 % of the respondents evaluated it good or excellent and 78 % of the respondents assessed the markings and guidance on the course excellent or good as well (figure 7). Compared to the River course, the respondents were more satisfied with the speed of the round as well as the availability of the tee-off times. Out of the respondents 73 % said that the speed of round and 86 % that the availability of the tee-off times was excellent or good (figure 7).

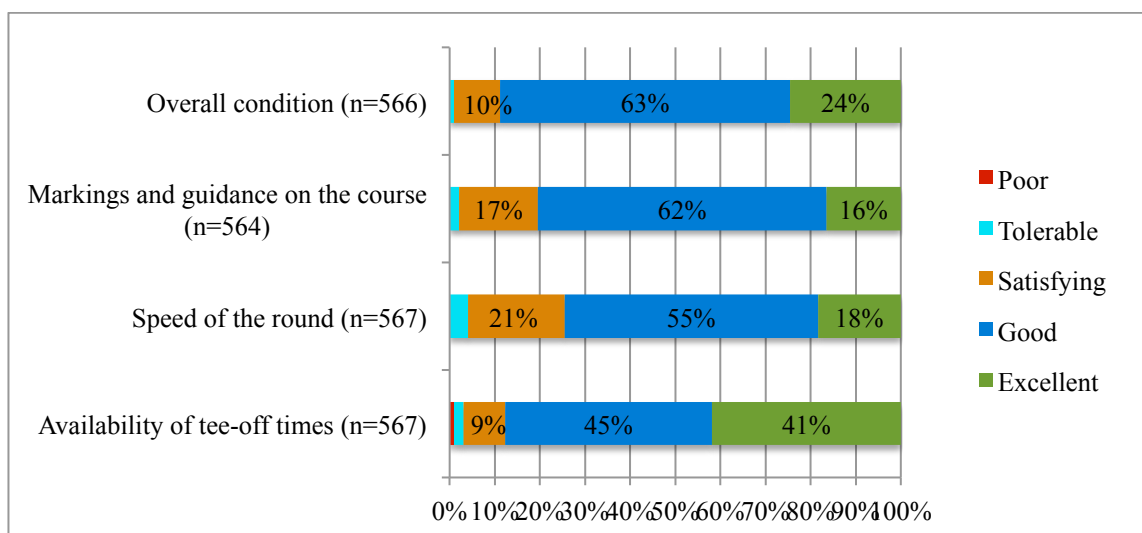


FIGURE 7. Distribution of the responses for Kartano course

As for the open ended question, the replies were similar to the ones about the River course. The respondents wished there to be more sand in the bunkers and maintenance work to be done to ensure the aesthetics of the course. The respondents were wishing for more trees to be planted and the water hazards to be weeded.

The respondents have been content with the availability of the tee-off times on the Kartano course; both in 2010 and 2012 the issue of availability received an average score of 4,3 (figure 8). When comparing the average scores to the results of 2010, the respondents were more satisfied with the overall condition and the markings and guidance on the Kartano course this year (figure 8).

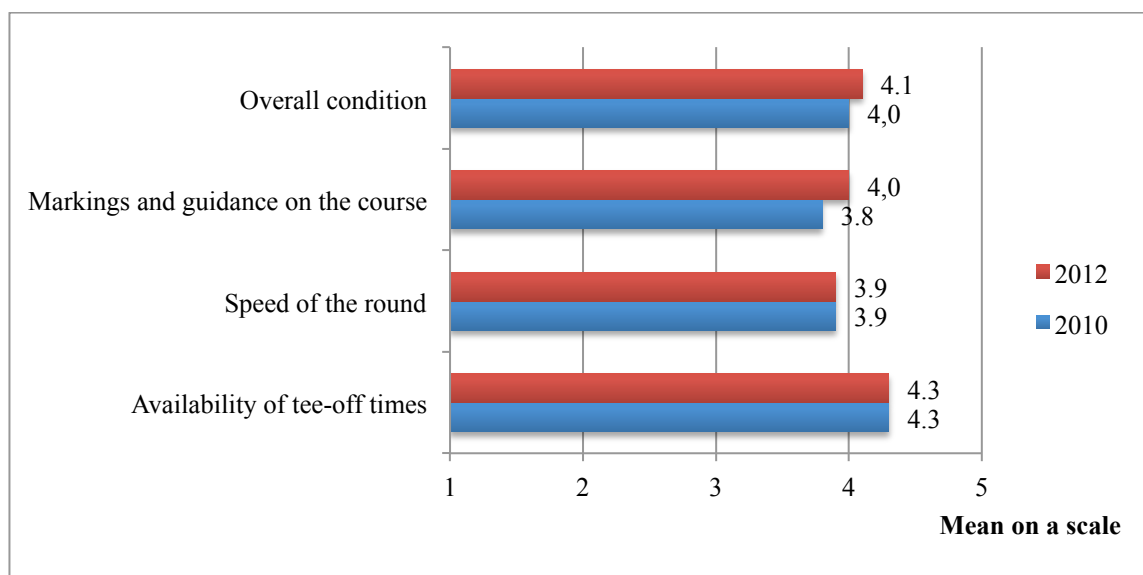


FIGURE 8. The average scores for the Kartano course in 2010 and 2012

6.5 Safety issues

The respondents were asked to evaluate the safety on the driving range and on the course while playing. They were also asked about the traffic around the golf course and the club house and how safe they felt crossing the road to get to the 13th, 14th and 15th holes of the River course.

In all of the different areas over 75 % of the respondents evaluated the safety to be excellent or good. Approximately one fifth of the respondents assessed the safety to be satisfying (figure 9).

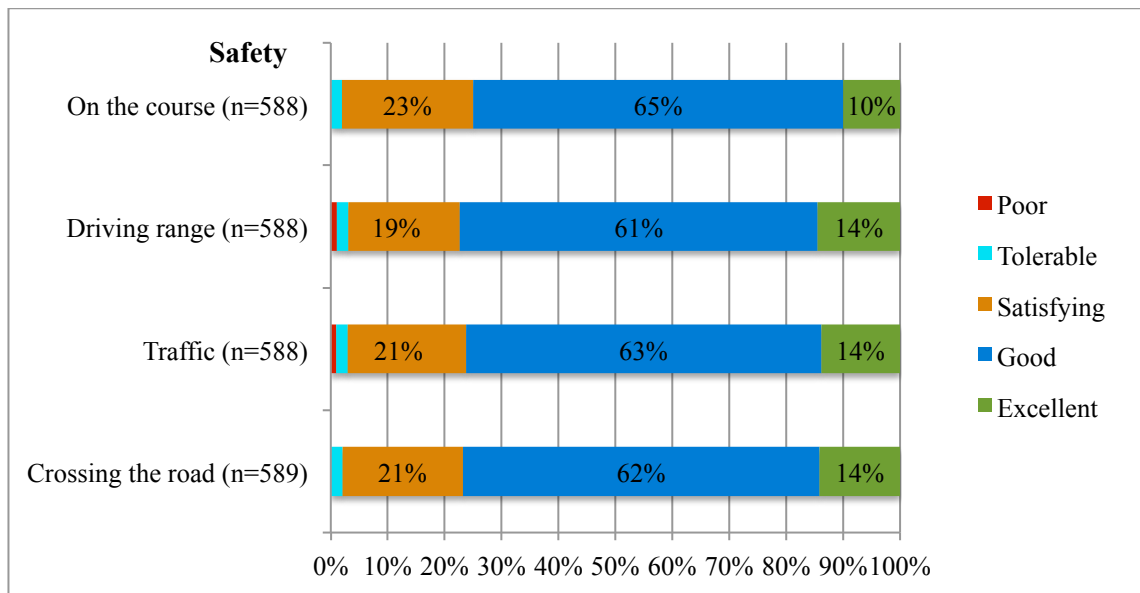


FIGURE 9. Distribution of responses for the safety issues

The respondents were given the opportunity to explain any dangerous situations they have encountered during the season. The main issue that majority of the respondents talked about was stray strikes. There are a couple of places on the course where this happens a lot according to the respondents. When players take their first strike from River course's 7th hole, the danger is that the ball finds its way to the tee-box of Kartano course's 4th hole. Also the opening strikes from River's 16th hole sometimes fly over to the driving range. Another problem with stray strikes is parallel holes that run in opposite directions, for example River course's holes 10, 11 and 12.

If a stray strike occurs the players are obliged to yell out 'Fore' as loud as possible so that other players can take cover; players are told to turn their back to the direction of the 'Fore'. Another major issue that rose from the open-ended question was the lack of 'Fore' yells on the course. According to the respondents a ball has landed close to many players without hearing a warning from anywhere.

Hazardous situations occur on the driving range when people are practicing and hitting the balls to the same practice green from various directions. The balls cross each other and if the strike is too powerful the ball may fly over to the other person. The respondents were asking for a change in this; it would be better if all the players would practice from the same direction.

Some of the respondents were also concerned about the traffic around the club house. Cars drive really fast and in addition there are golf carts as well. The respondents were wishing for speed bumps to slow people down thus making the environment of the club house safer.

When compared to the results of 2010 it can be seen that the respondents are more satisfied in the level of safety or it has remained on the same level (figure 10). Even if there golfers do encounter some dangerous situations they still feel like the overall safety of the course is good.

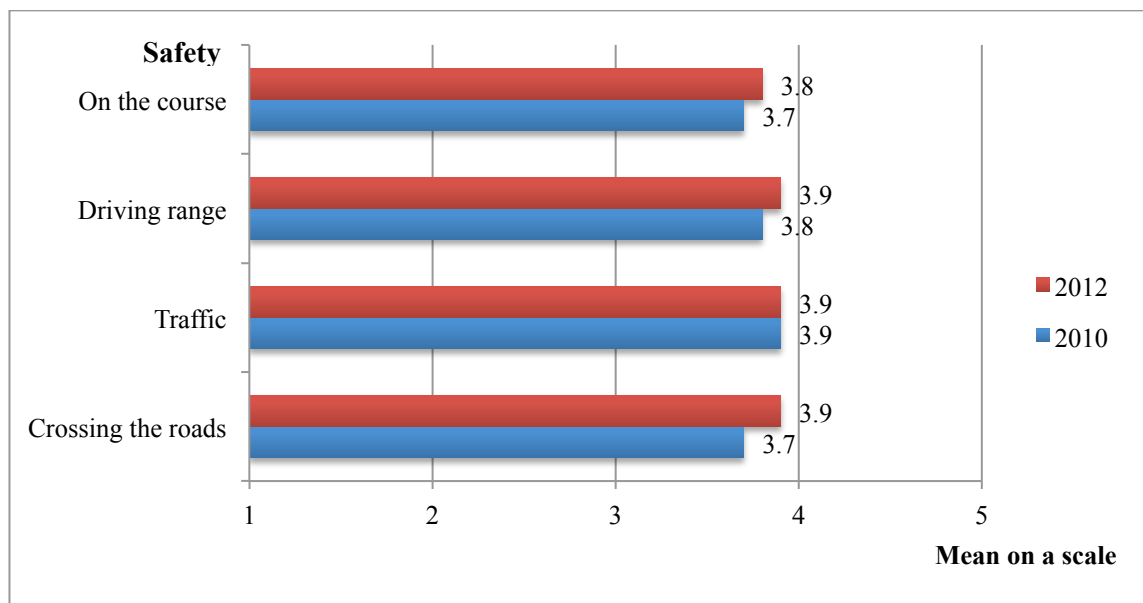


FIGURE 10. The average scores on safety issues in 2010 and 2012

6.6 Marshal operations

The respondents were asked to evaluate the effectiveness and sufficiency of the marshals as well as the friendliness and professionalism of the volunteers. 91 % of the respondents evaluated the friendliness of the marshals to be excellent or good (figure 11). On the other hand, the sufficiency, effectiveness and the professionalism got lower scores, for example 22 % evaluated the effectiveness to be tolerable or even poor (figure 11). The respondents were mainly satisfied with the starter activities, even though 22 % of the respondents said 'I don't know' (figure 11).

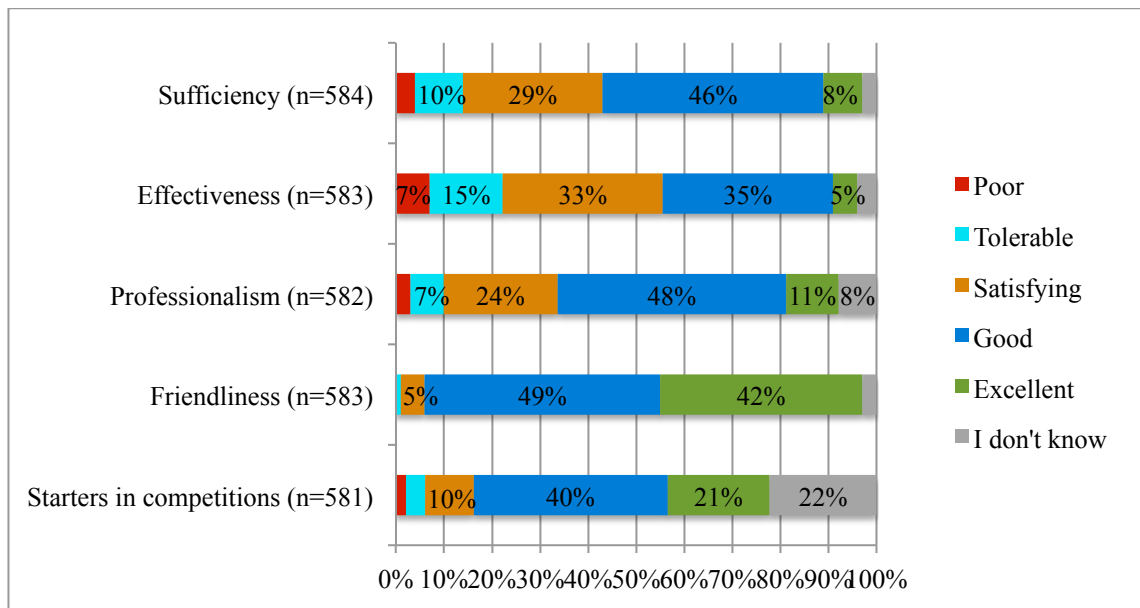


FIGURE 11. Distribution of responses for the marshal operations

In the open-ended question it was clear that the respondents want more marshals to be out on the course and for them to be stricter. The respondents felt like the marshals do not have any control over the speed of the game, no matter how much they remind the players of the ideal speed of the round.

In comparison to the survey of 2010, the respondents seem to be more satisfied in the friendliness of the marshals and in the starters in competitions (figure 12). The respondents are less satisfied or the level of satisfaction has remained the same in the areas of sufficiency, effectiveness and professionalism of the marshal activities (figure 12). In these areas the average score ranged from 3,2 to 3,6 which is considered to be satisfying (figure 12).

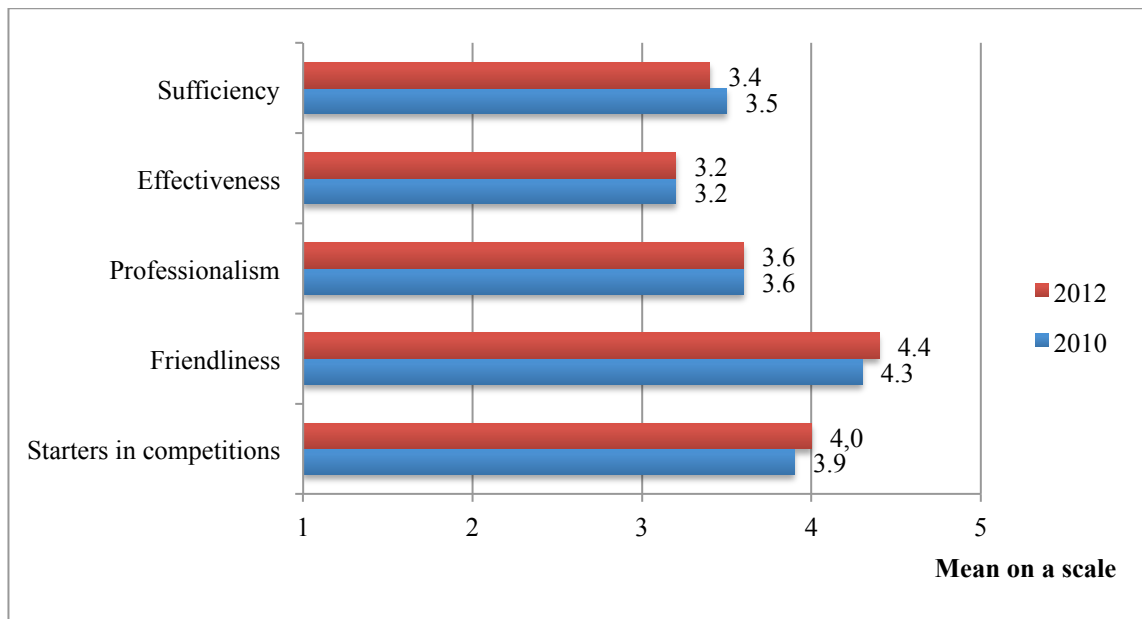


FIGURE 12. The average scores for marshal activities in 2010 and 2012

6.7 Driving range

Over half of the respondents evaluated the overall condition of the driving range, greens and bunkers on the driving range, the close-up game area and distance markings to be excellent or good (figure 13). The striking areas, both mats and the grass, scored lower than the other aspects with majority of the respondents choosing good or satisfying to describe their level of satisfaction (figure 13).

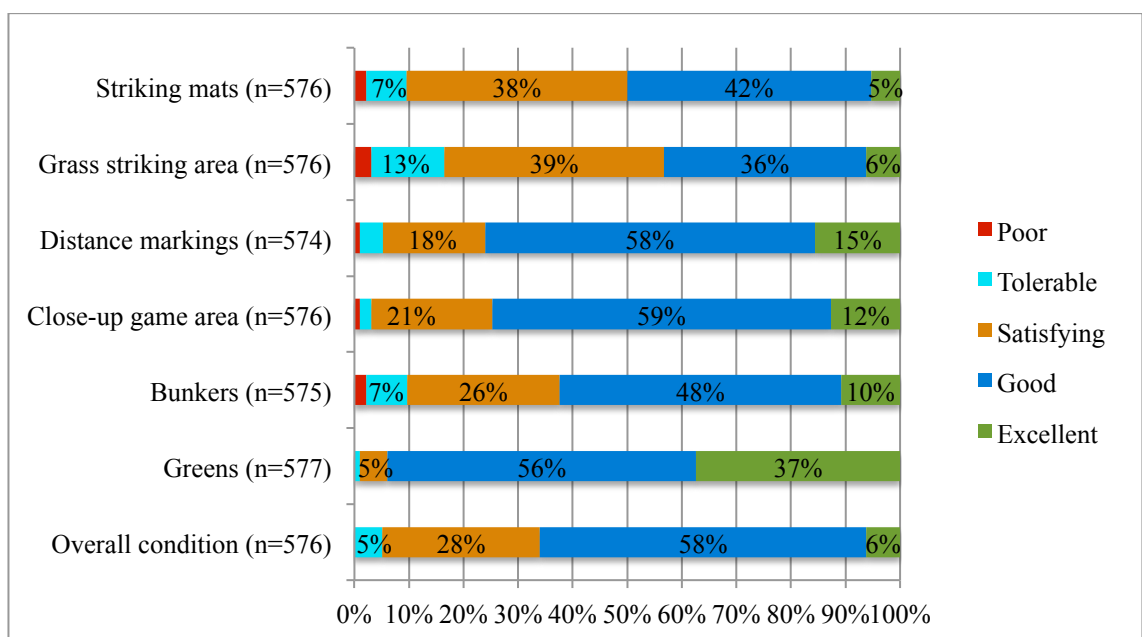


FIGURE 13. Distribution of responses for the driving range

The respondents really want improvements to be made on the striking area. Some people want to strike from the mats whereas others from the grass. At the moment it is either or. With the grass striking area the respondents suggested the area to be moved slightly more often; now when people strike from the same spot for a long time the grass suffers.

For the close-up game are the respondents wished for more versatility; the opportunity to strike from various distances and more distance markings. They were also hoping to have a bigger area for the close-up game as now the area is quite small. As discussed in the safety part as well, the issue of striking from various directions rose up again; the respondents wanted to make it clearer of where to strike to avoid stray strikes and balls from crossing each other mid-air.

The same as for the actual courses, the respondents wished for more sand in the bunkers to make them softer and shorter grass on the greens so that they are faster. Some of the respondents also wished for more covered areas to strike from to enable practicing in rainy conditions as well.

The driving range has undergone some changes since the last survey was conducted in 2010. The respondents are more satisfied with all of the aspects of the driving range now after the changes, except for the striking areas (figure 14). As the respondents mentioned in the open-ended question already, the striking areas have not been in good condition this year, especially the grass area. The level of satisfaction on the distance markings on the driving range has increased the most but still leaving the practice greens the only aspect to receive an average score of over 4 (figure 14).

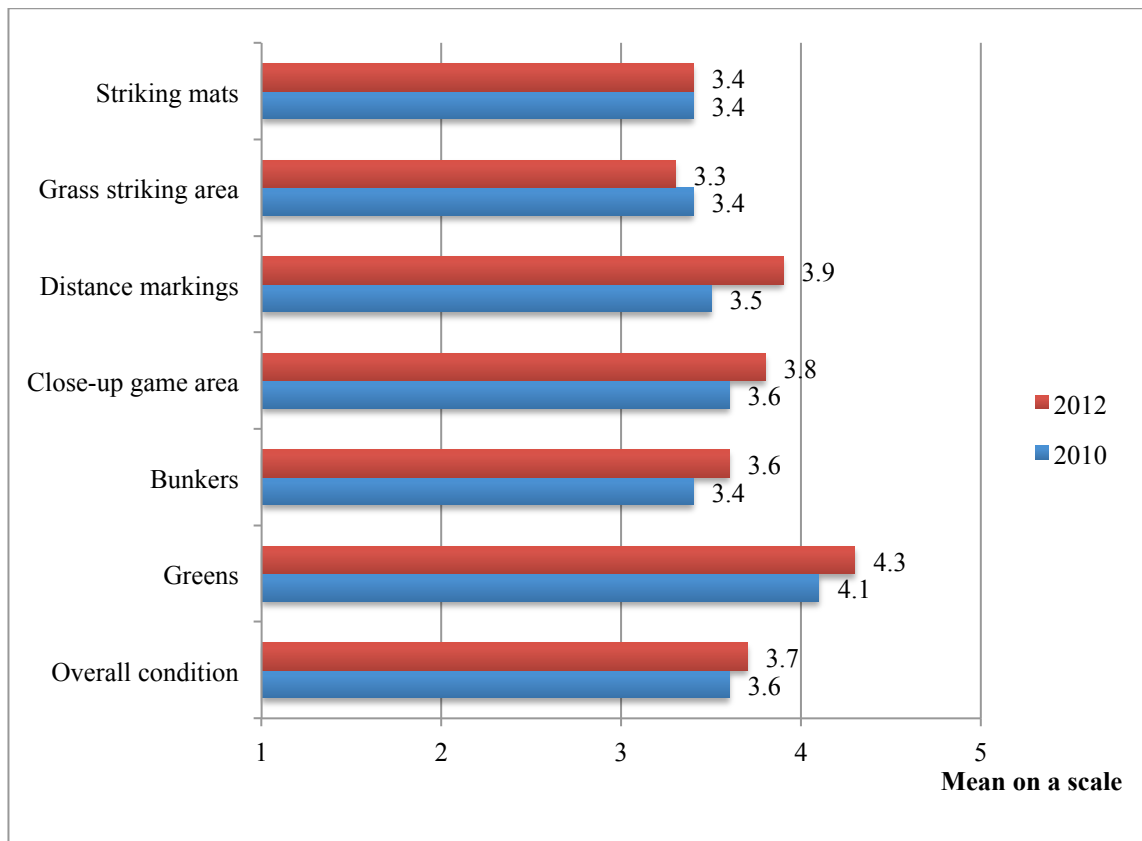


FIGURE 14. The average scores for the driving range in 2010 and 2012

6.8 Competitions

When asked about the competitions at Nokia River Golf, it is important to note that approximately a quarter of the respondents did not give an answer (figure 15). It has to be remembered that not all players participate in competitions. Over half of the respondents rated the amount of open competitions, overall competition arrangements, the result counting process and the clearness of tee-off times and results online to be excellent or good (figure 15). The aspect the respondents rated lower was the amount of company events with 50 % saying it is either good or satisfying (figure 15).

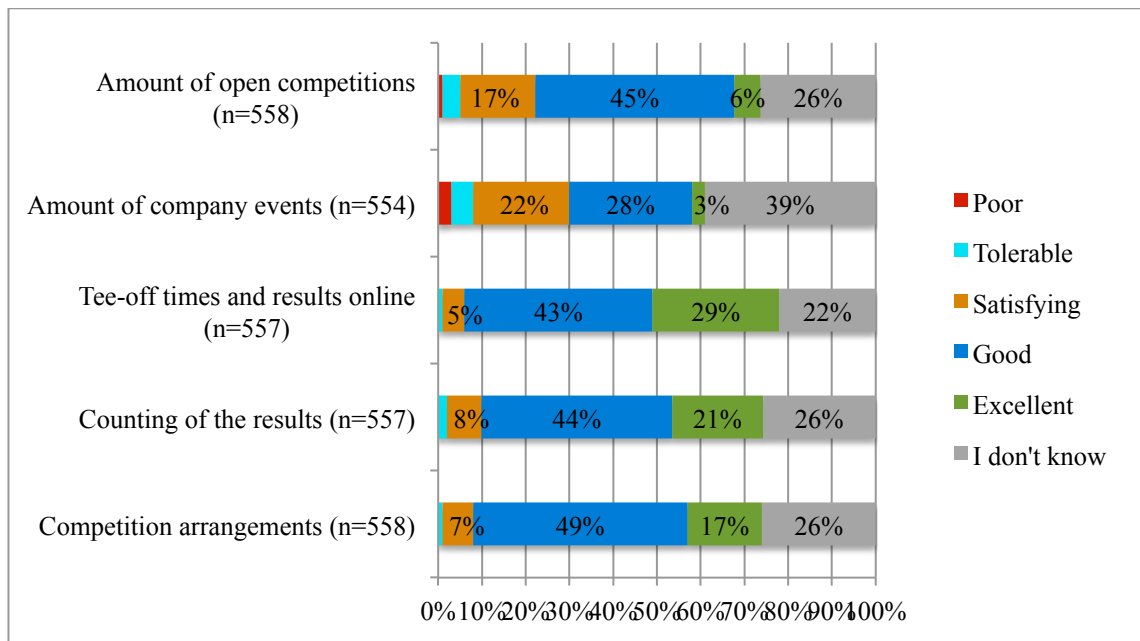


FIGURE 15. Distribution of responses for competition activities

In the open-ended question, majority of the respondents stated that the current amount of competitions is suitable; they do not wish to have any more. As many noted, competitions close the course and non-competing players are thus left out.

The respondents were encouraged to give suggestions of the types of competitions they would like to see at Nokia River Golf. An idea that many of the respondents had was competitions for different levelled players, for example competitions for beginners that are not that serious and harder competitions for the more advanced players. Many also wanted more team competitions, for example teams within family. Tours were also mentioned where there are many competitions throughout the season and an overall winner is determined by the overall score of all the competitions.

When comparing the average scores of the different areas of the competition activities to the ones from 2010 there is not a big difference. The level of satisfaction has remained exactly the same except for when evaluating the amount of open competitions; the average score has dropped from 3,8 to 3,7 (figure 16).

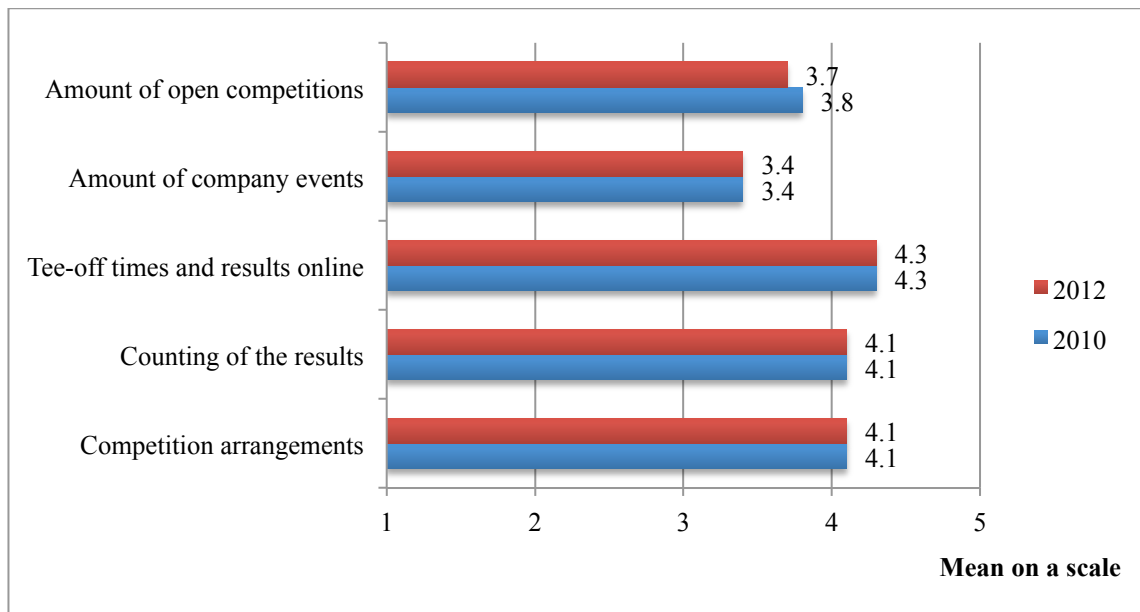


FIGURE 16. The average scores for competition activities in 2010 and 2012

6.9 Clubhouse and the environment

When evaluating the clubhouse as a building and the outside areas, over 80 % of the respondents said both the caddie master office and the terrace and outside areas in general are excellent or good (figure 17). For the condition of the toilets, 75 % of the respondents evaluated it to be good or satisfying and 14 % said it was tolerable (figure 17). For the sauna and showers 56 % of the respondents evaluated the condition to be good or satisfying while for the dressing rooms 61 % gave the same scores (figure 17).

It is interesting to see that 28 % of the respondents chose 'I don't know' as their reply for the condition of the sauna and showers and for the dressing rooms 20 % of the respondents chose the same alternative (figure 17). The share of the respondents who did not evaluate the condition of a certain part of the clubhouse is the biggest when talking about the bag storage; 64 % of the respondents chose 'I don't know' (figure 17).

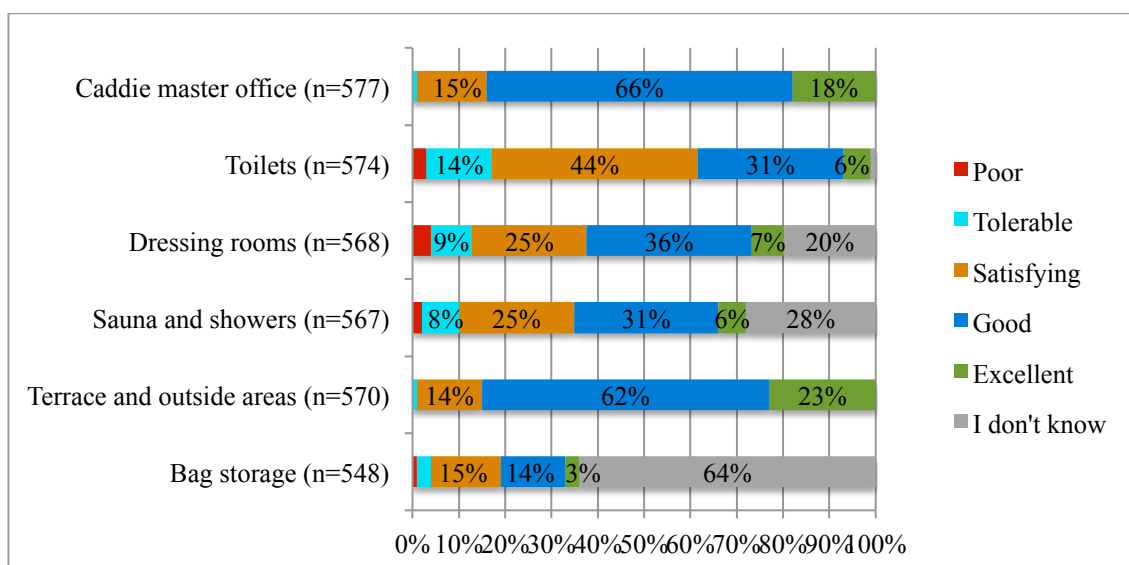


FIGURE 17. Distribution of responses for the clubhouse and the environment

In the open-ended question the majority of the respondents were wishing for the sauna, showers and dressing rooms to be updated and fixed to be more modern and to facilitate more people. The respondents noted that at the moment they do not wish to go to the dressing rooms as they are not up to date. At the moment both women and men share the same sauna and the respondents were requiring for a change in this; a separate sauna is needed.

Another issue the respondents highlighted was the renovation of the upstairs so that the members could enjoy the beautiful view over the courses. At the moment the upstairs functions as a storage area for the caddie master office and the restaurant. Some suggestions were to make a meeting room or a lounge for the shareholders.

The average level of satisfaction has remained the same or even dropped compared to the survey of 2010 when evaluating the sauna and showers, the dressing rooms and the toilets (figure 18). All of these areas received an average score of 3,2 to 3,4 which is the lowest of all the different areas evaluated (figure 18). Even the score for the caddie master office has dropped from 4,2 to 4 (figure 18). The average scores for the terrace and outside areas as well as the bag storage had increased when compared to 2010 (figure 18). Both of these areas have been renovated in between the two surveys and the respondents have seen the change.

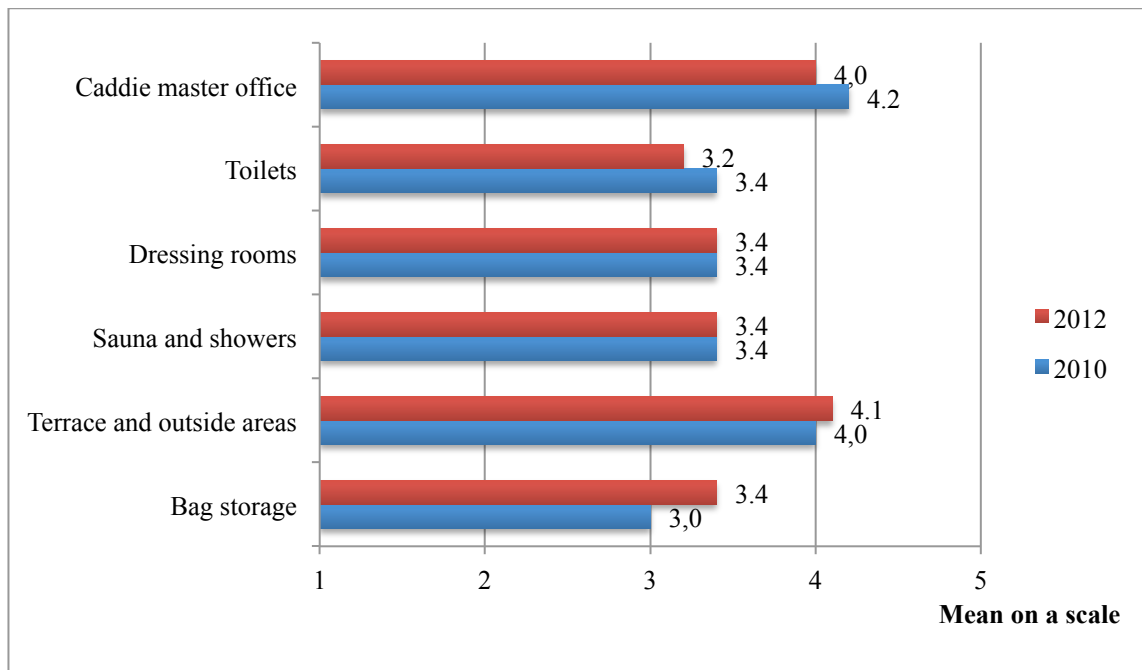


FIGURE 18. The average scores for the clubhouse in 2010 and 2012

6.10 Restaurant

In every category about the restaurant, the majority of the respondents evaluated the quality to be excellent or good (figure 19). For example when asked about the friendliness of the service, 49 % of the respondents said it was excellent (figure 19).

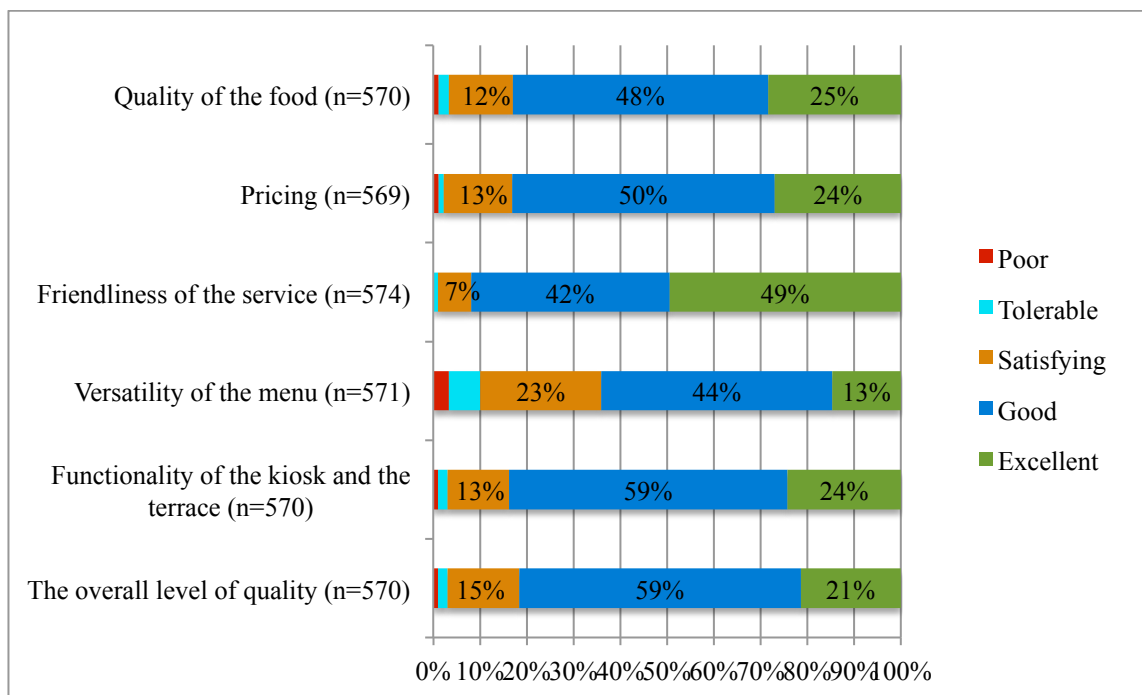


FIGURE 19. Distribution of responses for the restaurant

Even though all the aspects were evaluated to be good or excellent by the majority of the respondents, there were some issues the golfers wished changes to be made into. The respondents desired more versatility on the selection of food, especially for the snacks. At the moment a quick snack you can have on the break is a sandwich, a piece of fruit or something sweet with your coffee whereas a desire was to have more savoury snacks, for example meat pies. The respondents also wished to be able to choose the fillings to their sandwiches as now they are pre-made with a couple of options.

More options for the main meals were desired as well. At the moment the lunch buffet consists of the soup of the day, the main meal and a salad buffet. In addition to these there are some à la carte options to choose from. The respondents felt like that it is not enough for a proper restaurant.

Another issue that was highlighted was that the restaurant needs some renovation as well. As the clubhouse is an old mansion it sets its challenges for the facilities. People were wishing for a more open and spacious restaurant. The respondents also wished for the price level to stay the same with the new restaurateurs as they are contented with the current situation.

In comparison to the survey of 2010, the average level of satisfaction has remained the same in all of the different aspects of the restaurant service except for the pricing and friendliness of the service; in these ones, the average score has increased (figure 20). In 2012, all of the different aspects have received an average score of 4 or higher, except for the versatility of the menu with a score of 3,7 (figure 20). The highest average score was received by the friendliness of the service with the score of 4,4; the respondents were very satisfied with the service they get from the restaurateurs (figure 20).

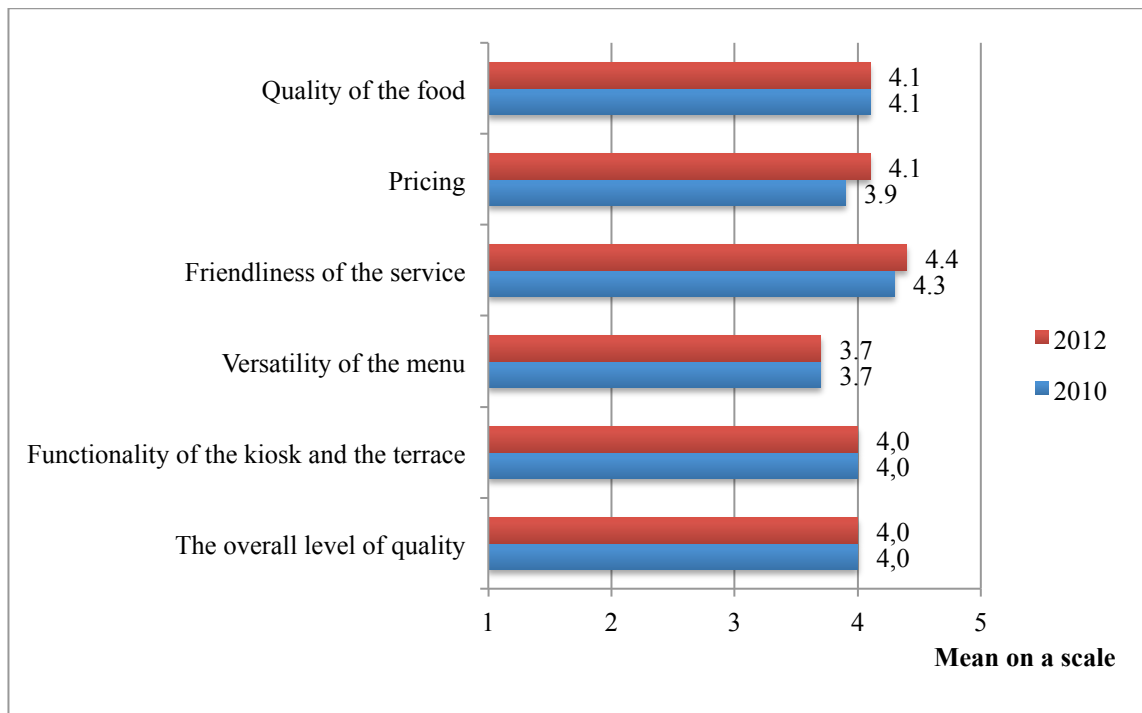


FIGURE 20. The average scores for the restaurant in 2010 and 2012

6.11 Pro shop

72 % of the respondents assessed the selection of the pro shop to be good or satisfying and for the pricing the equivalent amount was 68 % and for the service and guidance 64 % (figure 21). Approximately one fifth of the respondents were not able to give an opinion in these categories but instead chose 'I don't know' (figure 21).

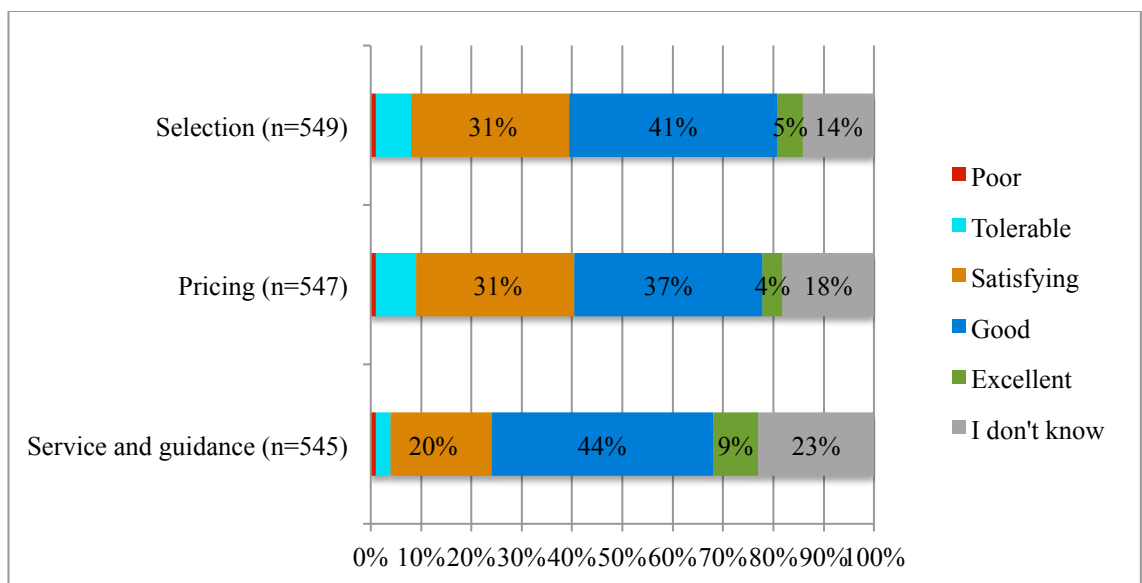


FIGURE 21. Distribution of responses for the pro shop

In the open-ended question the respondents were wishing for more selection both in the clothing and in the clubs, balls and other accessories. The fact of the lack of space was well acknowledged among the respondents and they were wishing for some changes in the space to facilitate a larger selection of products.

Some of the respondents were confused with the fact that some of the products come from Golf Balata and some are Nokia River Golf's own. It was suggested to have a full time person to take care of the pro shop as a whole as now the golfers see the owner of Golf Balata once a week which is also the day the ordered items arrive.

Many were also concerned about the fact how little the caddie masters know about the products in the pro shop, especially the ones that come from Golf Balata. The respondents suggested that there needs to be training sessions for the caddie masters, unless a full time trader is employed to take care of the pro shop.

Pro shop has been an emphasis for Nokia River Golf for a couple of years already. During this time the pro shop has gone from almost nothing to offering all the basic equipment needed in golf. Unfortunately, the development cannot be seen when comparing the results from 2010 and 2012. The selection has scored 3,5 when before it was 3,4, making it the only aspect to have a better average score than in 2010 (figure 22).

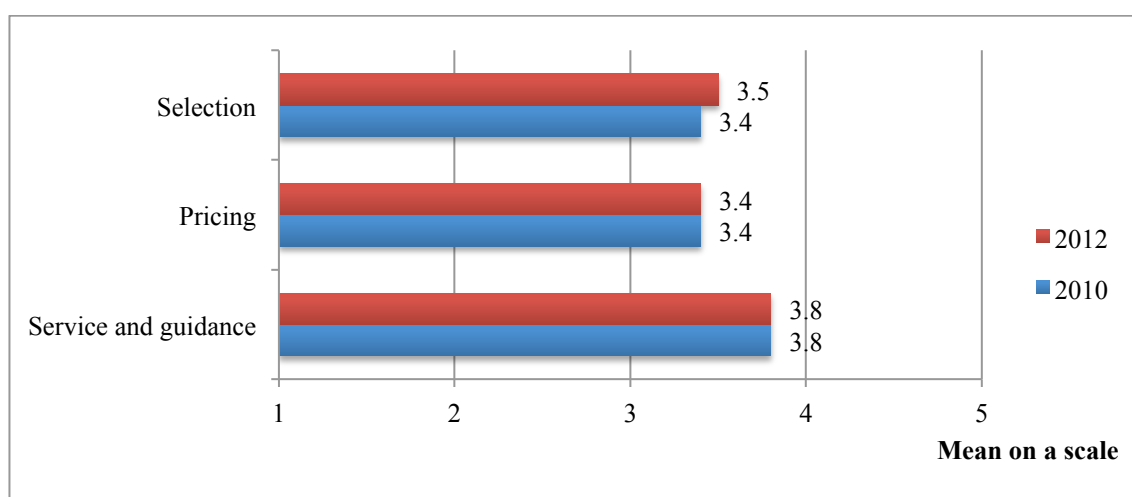


FIGURE 22. The average scores for the pro shop in 2010 and 2012

6.12 Teaching

When evaluating the teaching services offered at Nokia River Golf, the amount of respondents who could not evaluate their level of satisfaction but instead chose the ‘I don’t know’ option ranges from 27 % in the availability of teaching up to 53 % in the quality of teaching (figure 23). Out of the respondents who were able to evaluate their level of satisfaction in the different areas of teaching, majority rated the service to be excellent or good; ranging from 38 % in the quality of courses to 65 % in the availability of teaching (figure 23).

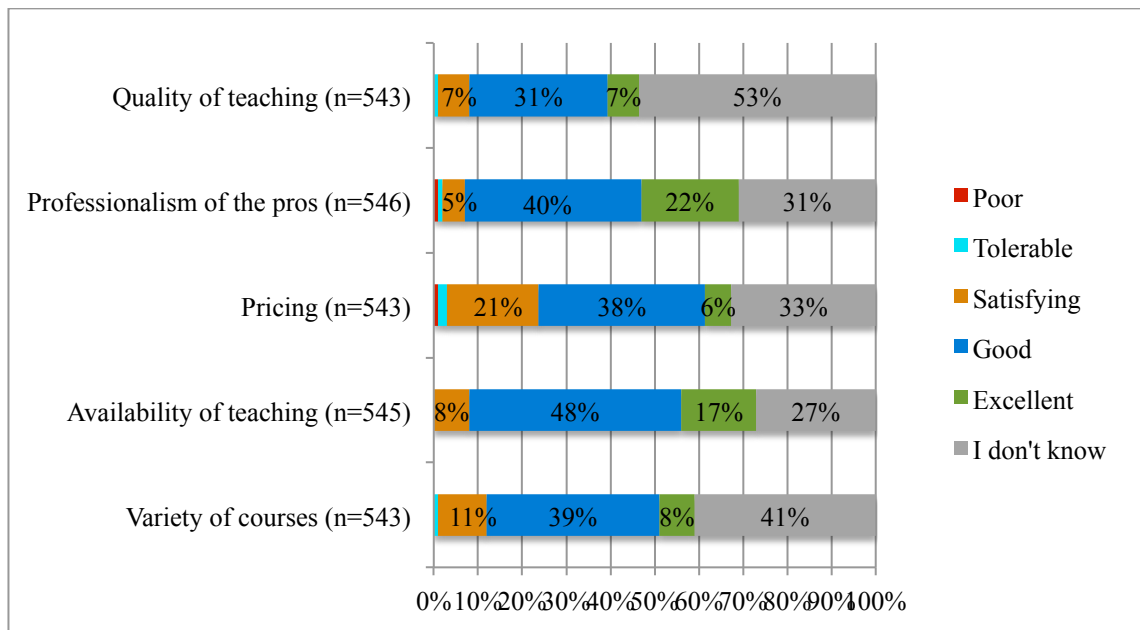


FIGURE 23. Distribution of responses for the teaching services

The respondents wanted more approachable pros. The fact that one pro out of the two options only speaks English limits the alternatives for those who are not comfortable with speaking another language. Some highlighted that the teaching in Finnish is not professional and committed enough and would like to see a change in that. The respondents also wanted to see a change in the teaching methods of the teachers that deal with children; the practices need to be more fun and motivating.

As for courses the respondents were wishing for courses for specific groups, for example for beginners, men, women and children. In these specific groups the teaching could then focus on issues that are relevant for that group. In a group for more advanced players the teaching can focus on more detailed issues compared to the teaching for begin-

ners. Another issue highlighted was to have courses that last for the whole season; the respondents wanted continuum in their learning process instead of taking private lessons every now and then.

The respondents also wanted teaching in other golf related areas than just striking the ball. Especially for the beginners the emphasis should be also on the etiquette of the golf course; how to dress, how to behave and what to do on the course if you accidentally hit the ground and the grass comes off, just to name a few.

The average scores for the teaching have dropped from the scores of 2010 except for the pricing and the variety of courses that have remained the same (figure 24). Even though the scores have dropped in the quality of the teaching, the professionalism of the pros and the availability of teaching, they still range from 3,9 to 4,2 which can be interpreted as good (figure 24).

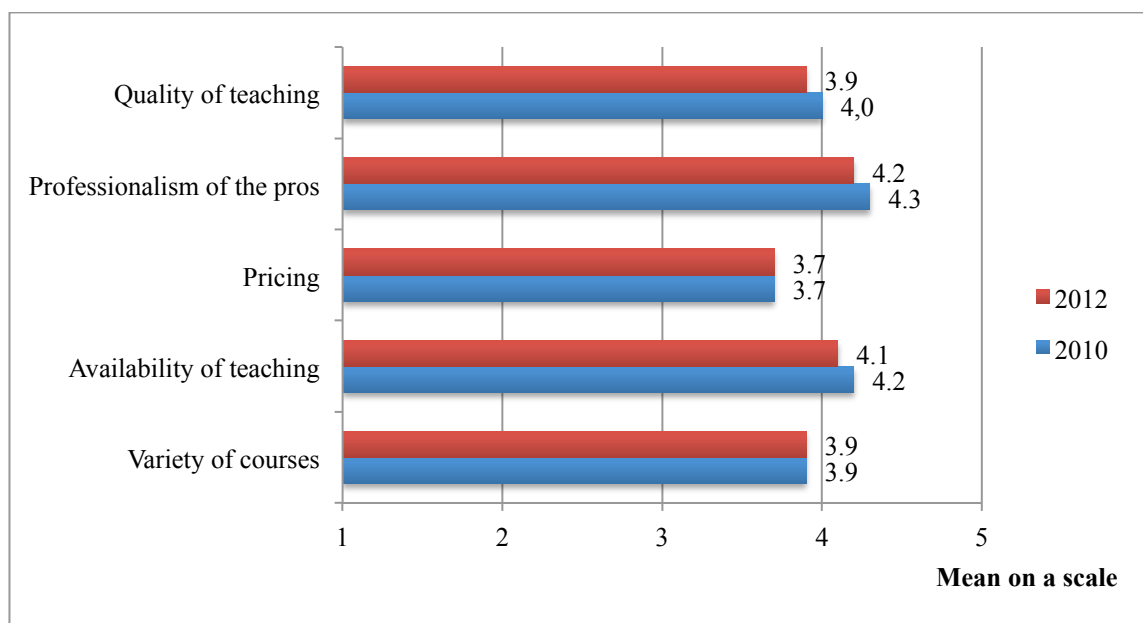


FIGURE 24. The average scores for the teaching in 2010 and 2012

6.13 Club activities and communication

When asked about the level of satisfaction in the activities of the junior, women's and senior committee, over half of the respondents chose the 'I don't know' option (figure 25). This can most likely be explained by the fact as the committees are directed for a

certain group and if you are not a part of that group you are not aware of the activities of the committee. Majority of the respondents who were able to evaluate their level of satisfaction rated the activities of the different committees as excellent or good (figure 25).

Half of the respondents were not able to evaluate their satisfaction on the trips to other courses or other events organized by Nokia River Golf (figure 25). 40 % of the respondents evaluated the trips and events to be good or satisfying and 4 % said they were excellent (figure 25). As a whole, 86 % evaluated the club activities to be excellent or good (figure 25).

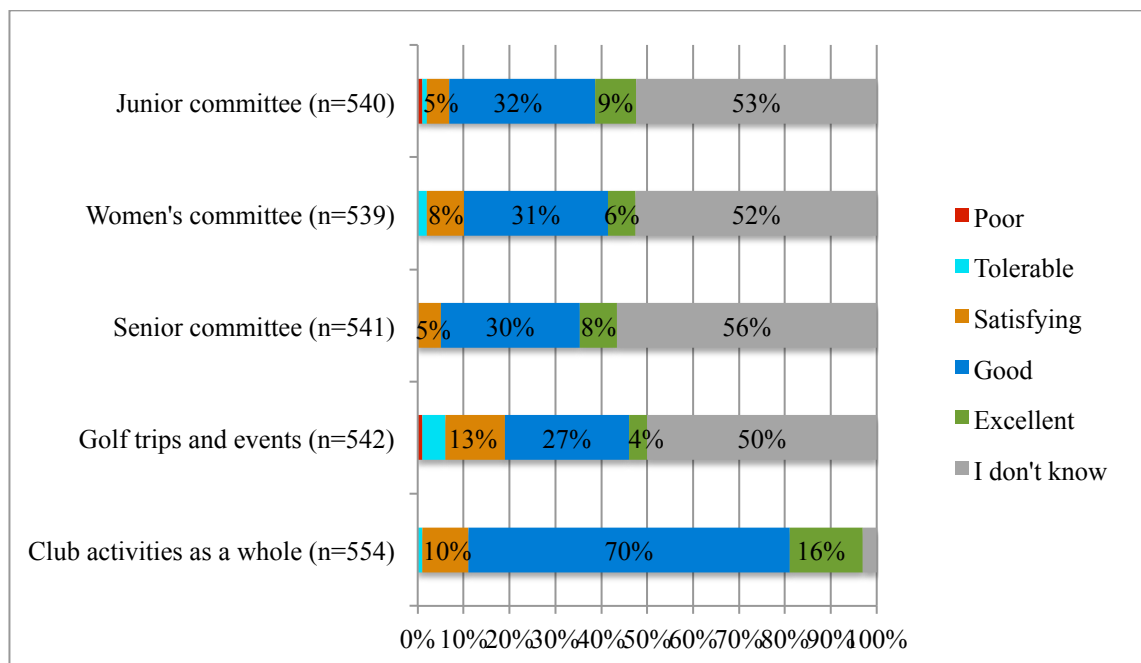


FIGURE 25. Distribution of responses for the club activities

The respondents were wishing for the different club activities to take place at a more reasonable time, available for more golfers. The respondents wanted for more of these events to take place during the weekends. For the activities of the junior committee the respondents were asking for more qualified coaches.

Some of the respondents were very concerned about the lack of the Spirit of River which has been an integrated part of the club culture at Nokia River Golf from the beginning. As the amount of members has increased over the years it is even more important to cherish a sense of belonging among the members. Many wished for more social events at the club where you can get to know the new and existing members of

the club. These should also be organized so that majority of the people can attend: on the weekends.

When comparing the average results of the various club activities to those of 2010, it can be seen that the level of satisfaction has dropped concerning the women's, junior and senior committees (figure 26). All of these still received a score of 3,9 or 4 which can be interpreted as good (figure 26). The satisfaction concerning trips to other courses and other events remained the same whereas the overall satisfaction for the club activities was risen (figure 26).

The amount of responses that were taken into consideration when calculating the average score is a lot smaller in the aspects of different committees as well as for the golf trips and events than the total amount of responses. For junior committee, 255 responses out of 540, for women's committee 257 responses out of 539, for senior committee 237 responses out of 541 and for the golf trips and events 269 responses out of 542 were taken into consideration.

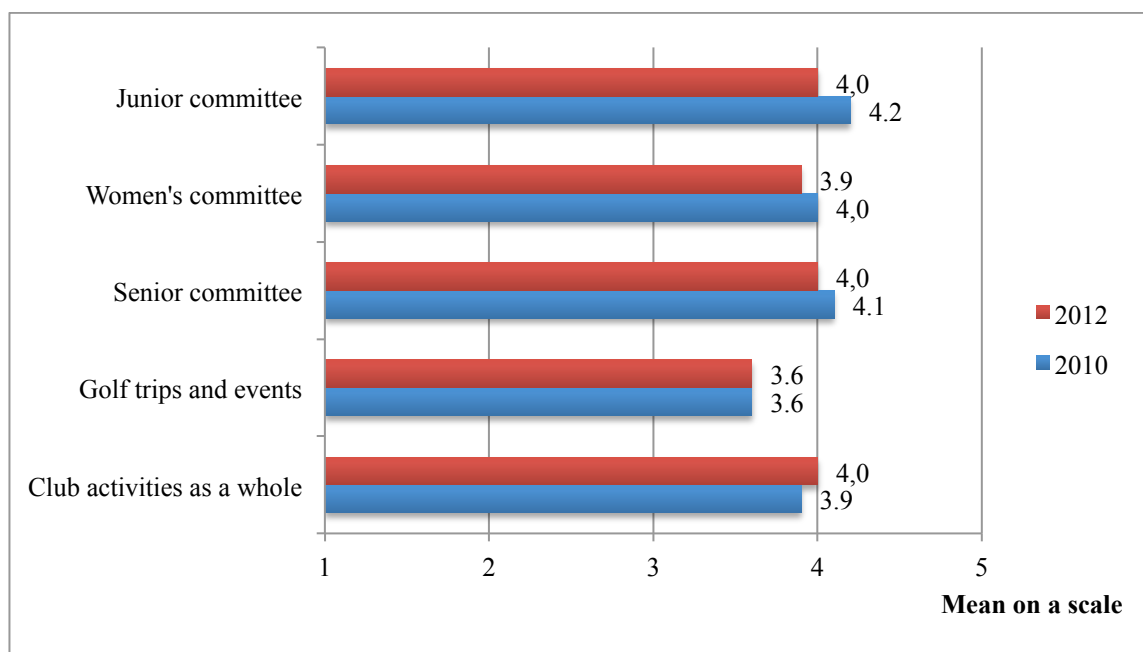


FIGURE 26. The average scores for the club activities in 2010 and 2012

Over 75 % of the respondents said that the methods of communication are excellent or good (figure 27). No poor scores were given to any of the communication methods (figure 27).

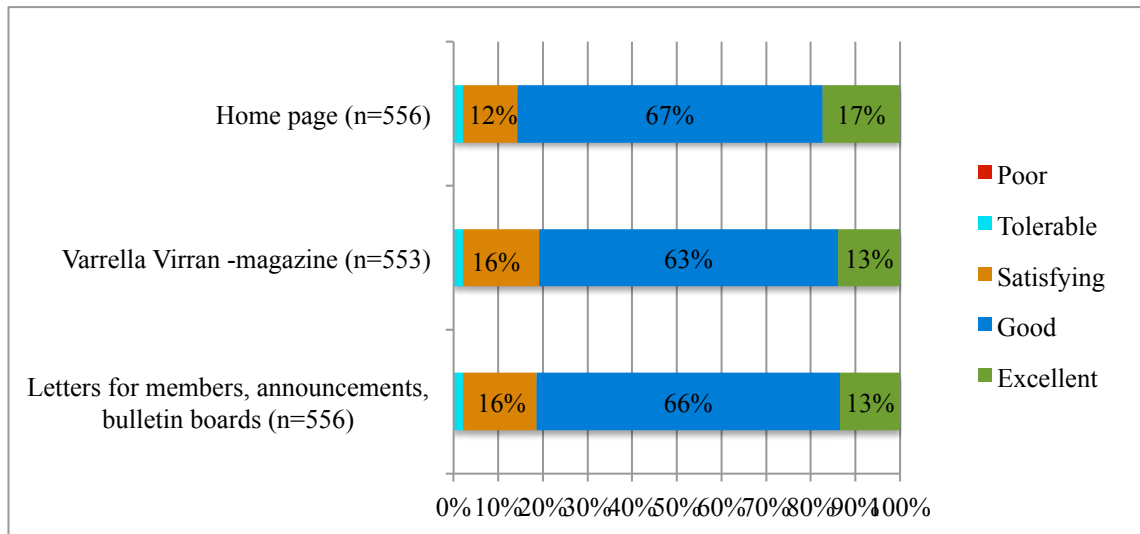


FIGURE 27. Distribution of responses for the communication methods

Even though the respondents were generally very satisfied with the methods of communication they still wanted more. It was said in the open-ended question that there can never be too much communication between the club and members. The respondents wanted more current news, for example what is being done for the course at this time. They also hoped for an updated look for the home page and the magazine.

When comparing the results of the average level of satisfaction on the communication methods, the area of sending letters to the members and updating the bulletin boards is the only one that has received a higher score (figure 28). When asked about the home page and the Varrella Virran –magazine, the satisfaction level has remained the same; 4 for the home page and 3,9 for the magazine which are both good (figure 28).

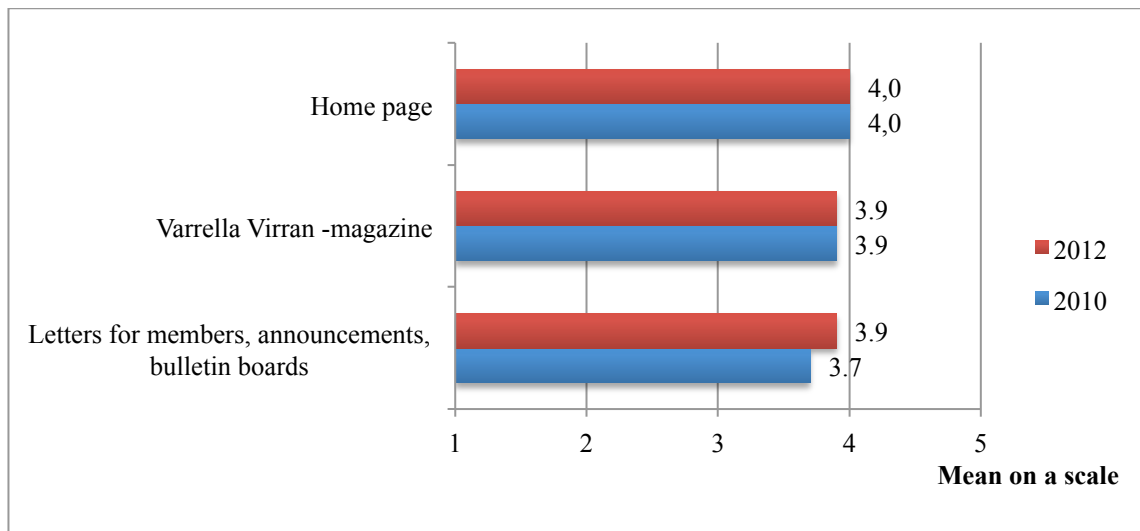


FIGURE 28. The average scores for the communication methods in 2010 and 2012

6.14 Expansion project

Before answering the questions concerning the expansion project, the respondents were asked to familiarize themselves with the plan. Out of 563 respondents, 87% were already familiar with the plan and a further 42 respondents explored the plans before continuing with the questionnaire. The results look really good as over 80 % of the respondents said the different parts of the expansion look good or excellent (figure 29). The respondents were especially excited about the new par 3 practice course with 41 % rating it as excellent (figure 29).

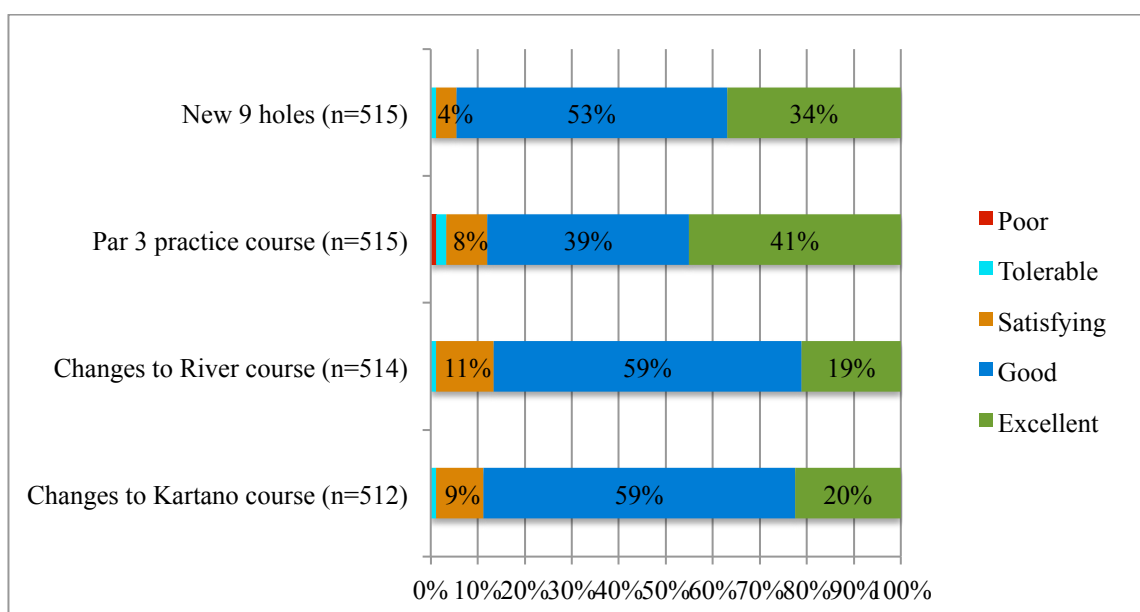


FIGURE 29. Distribution of responses for the expansion project

Nokia River Golf has introduced an increase in the membership fees as one possible way to cover for the costs of the expansion. The respondents were asked how much they would be willing to pay more to cover for the extra costs. Only 14 % of the respondents were not willing to pay any extra which means that the vast majority is willing to commit to the project (figure 30).

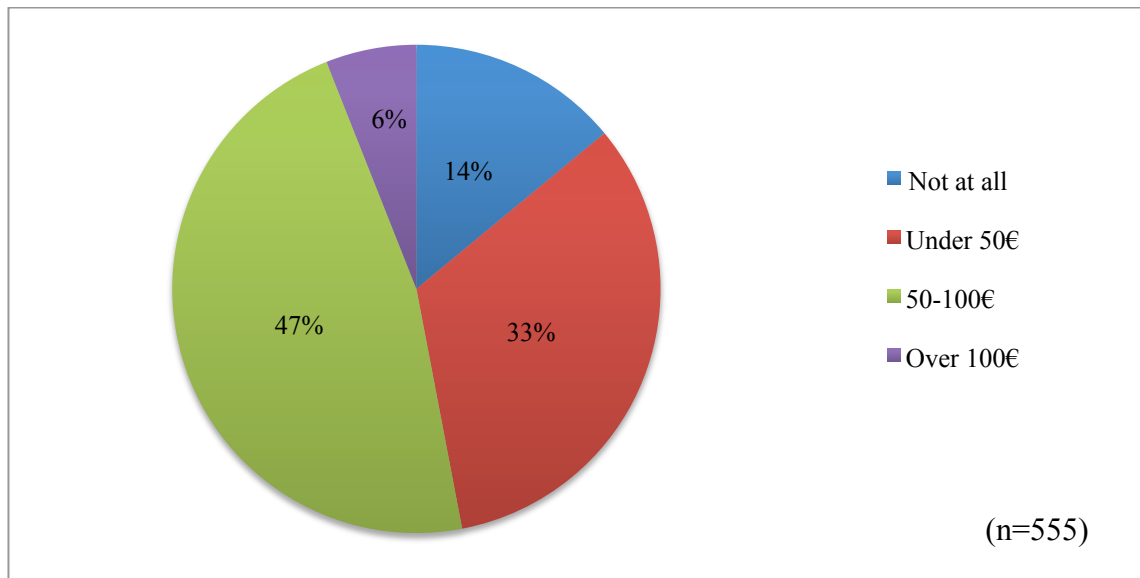


FIGURE 30. Distribution of responses for how much more the members are willing to pay on membership fees annually

The respondents were most concerned about the money issue in the open-ended question. Even if they are willing to pay for the increase in the membership fees, it is not enough to cover for the whole project. The respondents stated that outside capital is needed in the form of loans to ensure the hobby is not too expensive to continue due to an increase in the payments. They were also hoping that the expansion would pay for itself in the form of more new members and visitors that bring money to the club. All in all a concern was raised if there is enough money to go through with the plan. The respondents were hoping for openness from Nokia River Golf concerning the money issues; they want to see a plan of how to pay for all of this.

The respondents wished for some aspects to be taken into consideration already in the building process; enough sand in the bunkers, longer fairways and more trees to increase safety from stray strikes. These aspects are similar to the ones the respondents were hoping improvements on with the existing courses. In the building process it is also important to make sure that there are enough facilities to cover for the increased

number of players; toilets all around the course and the availability of drinking water and food were discussed in the open-ended question.

The par 3 practice course consists of four holes in the plan and the respondents were concerned that the fourth hole makes the area too tight and risky. All in all they were very impressed that the needs of beginners have also been taken into consideration with the practice course.

Money aside the respondents were very excited about the project and were hoping for the building process to start as soon as possible. They thought the plan looked really good and cannot wait to play on the new course and see the changes take place on the existing courses.

Personal interviews

In the personal interviews that took place among four members, it was clear to see that the active members were more eager to start the expansion project as they wished for more variety on the course. They also thought that the additional holes would bring more members and visitors to Nokia River Golf. The active members thought the additional holes would ease the problematic situation of tee-off times at the moment; with more options, more golfers can play at the same time.

The casual players considered the pros and cons of the project more carefully and then made a decision. The female casual golfer decided it was better not to build additional holes as it would require big commitment from the members as well. She thought the possible benefits from the expansion would not cover for the costs of building it. Casual golfers agreed that the additional holes would help the situation of being able to get tee-off times during prime times, but still thought that the benefits gained from this are not great enough to cover for the costs.

Among all the interviewed members, the financial aspect of the project was a concern. All acknowledged the fact that members are a source of income for NRG and thus part of the financial planning. The casual members thought it would be better to pay off a certain amount at once, counted to represent the current number of members. Once the

amount has been paid, one would not have to worry about any future stress on the financial aspect. The casual golfers noted that the club cannot be sure that there will be a certain amount of members in the future to bring in the income needed for the project but if everyone pays at once the money needed has been collected already.

The active members were more willing to pay a little bit more on the membership fees each year. They also noted that the payments for visitors should be increased to get more income for the club. They were also more willing to buy shares as long as there are some benefits to that, for example cheaper prices and priority when making reservations for the courses. The active members were also more tolerant for getting a loan from a bank and then paying the debt off throughout the years, in addition to the money collected from the membership and visitor fees.

6.15 Development areas and other feedback

The respondents were given the opportunity to name three of the most important issues to be developed in the future. The expansion project received a vast majority of all the possible suggestions.

Different types of renovations on the existing courses and the driving range were the second most common suggestion as an important area to develop. It is safe to say that the members of Nokia River Golf want the most essential facilities for golf to be developed as a priority. The availability of tee-off times and the speed of the rounds were raised as a concern among the respondents as well.

The renovations of the clubhouse as well as the development of the restaurant services were mentioned by many as the third most important area to develop. Some of the respondents were worried that the Spirit of River is disappearing and wanted changes into that; more social events and making sure everyone greets each other and plays by the same rules.

An issue that was raised by many, on various occasions, was the benefits for being a shareholder. At the moment the only benefit a member gets from being a shareholder is lower annual membership fees as they do not need to rent a share. At the current rate it

takes years for the share to pay for itself with the money saved from the renting fees. River Golf Ltd. does not pay dividends to the shareholders either. The respondents were wishing for some privileges for the shareholders, for example cheaper prices on products, set tee-off times or a specific lounge just for the shareholders.

The respondents gave a lot of positive feedback and thanked the staff for another great season. They also wanted more surveys to be done and to see the results. Another big issue was to see some changes made based on the results to show that the members have been listened to.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Focus on the physical evidence and the people of the service

The actual courses and the driving range combine the most important part of the physical environment where the service of a golfing experience takes place. For majority of the golfers the courses and the driving range are the main aspects when evaluating the quality of the service. The respondents also chose the course related issues as one of the most important development areas for Nokia River Golf. It is thus safe to say that emphasis should be put on the physical environment of the service to ensure customer satisfaction.

The respondents were satisfied with the overall condition of both River and Kartano courses even though a rainy summer has had an effect on them. General aesthetics of the courses should not be disregarded either as that and the overall condition of the courses both affect the experience of golfing; people enjoy it more if all of the features of the course are looked after, not just the fairways. The driving range has undergone some renovations since the last customer satisfaction research and now it can be seen if the members are happy with the changes or not. When looking at the average scores of the different aspects in general, the renovations of the driving range have paid off with majority of the features receiving a higher average score now than in the survey of 2010.

The club house is a major part of the physical environment of the service as well. It is the place where all activities other than playing and practicing golf take place. As the clubhouse at NRG is an old mansion, constant renovations are needed. It is vital to ensure that all different areas within the club house are up to date and members feel comfortable using them. Especially the dressing rooms, showers and the sauna got low average scores from the respondents meaning that these areas should be invested into.

The goods provided at the pro shop act as physical evidence to the overall experience at the golf course as well. It is vital to ensure that the members can find what they need from the selection, especially the most commonly used accessories. The respondents were wishing for a larger selection of all the goods offered at the pro shop which re-

quires a lot of space. At Nokia River Golf the space is limited which means that the layout of the pro shop should be planned better to provide a variety of goods. A high turnover of the products will create a sense of a large selection with new products throughout the season.

The caddie masters, club secretary, office secretary and the CEO combine the most visible part of the people of the service. They are the main customer service front at Nokia River Golf and are the company's representatives on daily encounters with the customers. In this sense it is positive to see that all aspects of the caddie master operations received an average score of four or more which is the best out of all the researched aspects. To ensure that the golfers remain satisfied it is important to train and motivate the people on regular basis to keep them performing in a way that is beneficial for Nokia River Golf.

As well as the personnel in the caddie master office, the people in the restaurant create a point of interaction between the customers and the company. The people in the restaurant also need to be trained and motivated to serve the customers. Nokia River Golf announced the retirement of the restaurateurs a couple of weeks prior to the link to the questionnaire being sent to the members. It was a concern that the announcement would affect the results as the respondents would give higher scores for the restaurant services as a farewell gift. When comparing the results to those of the survey of 2010, the average scores are very similar, with pricing and friendliness of the staff scoring higher while other aspects remained the same. In this sense the announcement of the retirement of the restaurateurs did not cause a systematic error in the data.

An alarming large portion of the respondents were not able to give an answer about their level of satisfaction when it comes to the teaching services. The members might feel that the teachers are just for beginners, and this is why courses for more advanced players need to be advertised more. At the moment there are only two pros at Nokia River Golf out of who one only speaks English. This might be a problem for some golfers if their knowledge in the English language is not adequate. This leaves these members with just one option to choose from. As with any service, more variety is needed for the customers to choose from and to facilitate different preferences. As with the other people of the service as well, the pros need to be motivated and trained to serve the customers.

7.2 Ensuring an enjoyable round of golf

When asked about the River course, the availability of tee-off times was the only aspect that received a lower average score compared to the survey of 2010. As the course has gained popularity through various honourable mentions from the Finnish Golf Union the amount of players has increased; both members and visitors. As there is only a certain amount of tee-off times, it is hard to facilitate the growing number of players. Also with last minute cancellations, the golfers take away a chance to play from other people leaving empty slots on the schedule. The cancellation policy is something Nokia River Golf can focus on and thus reduce frustration among the members of unused slots on the course.

Amount of competitions plays a big role when the golfers are asked about the availability of tee-off times. With competitions on the River course, only the participants are able to play while others have to resort to Kartano course or play at a later time. As the biggest competitions are usually organized on Saturdays they take out a huge portion of the most popular tee-off times. The availability of tee-off times for non-competing members has to be ensured. At the moment the respondents are happy with the amount of competitions and there should not be more. Only the types of the competitions should be altered to create more versatility to facilitate the preferences of more players. The respondents were happy with the competition arrangements in general as well.

Especially for the River course, the speed of the round was a concern among the respondents. At the moment it takes too long to go around the course and the golfers have to wait at times which causes a negative experience. Nokia River Golf has to focus on different issues that will improve the speed of the round. Once the round of golf is as smooth as possible, people enjoy it more as they do not have to wait for their turn for a prolonged time.

7.3 Members as a priority

Club activities need to be developed to reach all the members. Some women, for example, are not aware of a women's committee that organizes events and trips for the female members of Nokia River Golf. New members need to be contacted as soon as they

join the club by organizing social gatherings. This is a way to also ensure that the Spirit of River will stay strong as the members are more involved in the club activities. Different trips to other courses and those social activities need to be communicated systematically to all the members so that they are aware of the different events.

The respondents were very satisfied with the current communication between the club and the members. Keeping the members posted about current news and projects is a way to make them feel more involved and important. For a customer to feel this way is important to keep them coming back to the same service provider.

Communication is the key when conducting the expansion project as well. The members need to know at what stage the project is and what will be the next steps. Openness from the club is needed, especially when it comes to the financial planning. A solution needs to be found that facilitates all of the members as well as possible. For example if the membership fees are increased substantially, casual members are more likely to change to a different club with lower annual fees. This means that suddenly NRG will get less income from the membership fees, if there are no new members to cover for the lost ones.

Many of the shareholders were hoping for some compensation for purchasing a share of Nokia River Golf. At the moment the only reward the shareholders have is lower annual membership fees due to not having to pay for rent of share. Even though NRG treats all of their members equally, the shareholders should be rewarded for their financial help for the club. Guidelines of how to improve the different aspects of the service offered by Nokia River Golf can be found in Appendix 3.

7.4 Conclusions

As the extended marketing mix suggests, a service is combined of various different aspects: product, price, place, promotion, physical evidence, people and process. All of these different aspects play a role when customers evaluate their satisfaction in the service.

As services are mainly intangible processes between the customer and the company, physical evidence is a key when building the overall experience. For Nokia River Golf

this means taking care of the courses, the driving range and the club house. These three aspects combine the most important physical environment for a golfing experience.

Main aspects the golfers evaluate in terms of customer satisfaction include the encounters with the company. These encounters consist of interactions with the personnel of the company as well as the communication between the customers and the company. The motivation and the tendency to serve the customers of the personnel are important features when the customers evaluate their level of satisfaction.

As said, services are combined from various different aspects that the customers take into consideration when evaluating their overall satisfaction. For Nokia River Golf it is important to ensure that all the different aspects that are related to the service are looked after. This way they can offer an overall golfing experience for the customers; starting from friendly and helpful staff all the way to the aesthetics of the course. When customers are satisfied with the service, they will return. The concept of customer loyalty is important as the members are a significant source of income for the club.

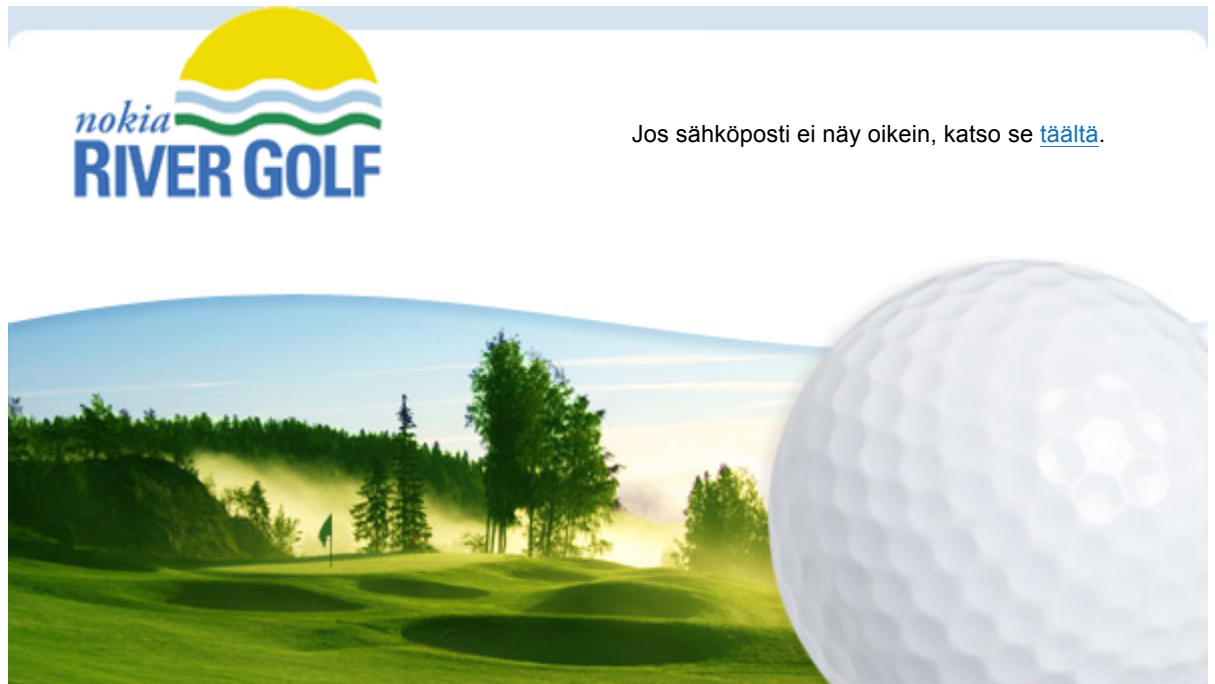
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APPENDICES

INVITATION TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX 1



NRG jäsenkysely 2012

NRG Jäsenkysely

Arvoisa Nokia River Golfin jäsen!

Palvelujen kehittäminen on jatkuvaa toimintaamme. Tässä työssä tarvitsemme sinunkin mielipidettäsi. Toivomme vastaustasi oheiseen jäsenkyselyyn.

Ennen kyselyyn vastaamista, tutustu kenttälajennussuunnitelmaan [tästä](#).

Kaikkien nimellä vastanneiden kesken arvomme 300 euron arvoisen Pro-shop lahjakortin.

Voit osallistua Nokia River Golfin jäsenkyselyyn 2012 [tästä](#).

Vastausaikaa on 26.9.2012 asti.

Terveisin

Erkki Mommo

toiminnanjohtaja

Nokia River Golf Ry
Alastalontie 33
37120 NOKIA

faksi (03) 3400 235
puh. 03 3400234

toimisto@nrg.fi
www.nrg.fi

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX 2: 1(8)

Arvoisa Nokia River Golfin jäsen,

Haluamme kehittää Nokia River Golfin toimintaa pitkäjänteisesti. Tässä työssä tarvitsemme jäsentemme näkemyksiä, joita kerätään tällä jäsenkyselyllä. Jäsenten toiveet ja palautteet tuovat arvokasta tietoa kentän, harjoitusalueiden, klubitalon ja seuratoiminnan kehittämiseen. Voit kyselyssä myös antaa palautetta uudesta kenttäsuunnitelmasta. Vastanneiden kesken arvotaan 300 euron lahjakortti NRG:n Pro shoppiin.

TAUSTATIEDOT:

Pelaaminen

- Olen River Golf Oy:n osakas
- Pelaan vuokrapelioikeudella

Sukupuoli

- nainen
- mies

Tasointus

- alle 10
- 10-18
- 18,1-36
- yli 36

Olen ollut Nokia River Golf ry:n jäsen

- alle 3 vuotta
- 3-10 vuotta
- yli 10 vuotta

Olen pelannut golfia

- alle vuoden
- 1-5 vuotta
- 6-10 vuotta
- yli 10 vuotta

Ikä

- alle 21 vuotta
- 22 – 30 vuotta
- 31 – 40 vuotta
- 41 – 55 vuotta
- 56 – 65 vuotta
- yli 65 vuotta

(continues)

APPENDIX 2: 2(8)

Montako kertaa pelasit Riverin kentillä kaudella 2012?

- alle 10 kertaa
- 10-30 kertaa
- 31-50 kertaa
- yli 50 kertaa

Pelasit muilla kentillä Suomessa kaudella 2012

- alle 5 kierrosta
- 5-10 kierrosta
- yli 10 kierrosta

Käytin Nokia River Golfin rangea kauden aikana

- en ollenkaan
- alle 10 kertaa
- 11-30 kertaa
- yli 30 kertaa

Käytin Nokia River Golfin pro'ta kaudella 2012

- en ollenkaan
- 1 – 5 kertaa
- yli 5 kertaa

NOKIA RIVER GOLFIN GOLFTOIMINTA JA OHEISPALVELUT

Seuraavilla kysymyksillä kartoitamme sitä, mihin suuntaan seuramme golftoimintaa ja oheispalveluja tulee kehittää, jotta toiminta mahdollisimman pitkälti vastaisi jäsenistön toiveita ja tarpeita. Kysymykset koskevat pelaamista, kenttiä, valvontaa, harjoitusalueita, kilpailutoimintaa, opetustoimintaa, klubitalea, ravintolaa, pro shoppia ja muuta seuratoimintaa.

CADDIEMASTER- JA TOIMISTOTOIMINTA

Arvioi vastaanoton toimintaa seuraavien asioiden osalta.

Asteikko 0-5: 0=en osaa sanoa, 1=heikko, 2=välttävä, 3=tyytyttävä, 4=hyvä, 5=erinomainen

- Aukioloajat
- Palvelualttius ja ammattitaito
- Puhelinpalvelun taso
- Ajanvarauksen toimivuus internetissä
- Palautteiden käsittely

Kommentit ja kehittämis ehdotukset caddiemastertoimintaan (vapaa palaute)

KENTTIEN KUNTO JA PELATTAVUUS

Arvioi River- ja Kartano-kenttien kuntoa seuraavien asioiden osalta.

Asteikko 0-5: 0=en osaa sanoa, 1=heikko, 2=välttävä, 3=tyyydyttävä, 4=hyvä, 5=erinomainen

River

- Pelin sujuvuus
- Peliaikojen saatavuus
- Kenttien yleiskunto
- Tiiauspaikkojen kunto
- Väylien kunto
- Karheikkojen kunto
- Hiekkaesteiden kunto
- Viheriöiden kunto
- Kentän opasteet ja merkinnät
- Vesiesteiden kunto ja merkintä

Kartano

- Pelin sujuvuus
- Peliaikojen saatavuus
- Kenttien yleiskunto
- Tiiauspaikkojen kunto
- Väylien kunto
- Karheikkojen kunto
- Hiekkaesteiden kunto
- Viheriöiden kunto
- Kentän opasteet ja merkinnät
- Vesiesteiden kunto ja merkintä

Kommentit ja kehittämis ehdotukset kenttien layoutiin, yleisilmeeseen, kuntoon ja pelin sujuvuuteen liittyen (vapaa palaute)

TURVALLISUUS

Arvioi turvallisuutta Riverissä seuraavien asioiden osalta

Asteikko 0-5: 0=en osaa sanoa, 1=heikko, 2=välttävä, 3=tyyydyttävä, 4=hyvä, 5=erinomainen

- Peliturvallisuus
- Teiden ylittämiset pelikierroksen aikana
- Harjoittelu rangella
- Liikenne piha-alueella

Jos sinulle tai omalle peliryhmällesi on tapahtunut vaaratilanteita, kuvaile tarkemmin missä ja kuinka tilanne tapahtui (vapaa palaute)

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VALVONTA

Arvioi kentän valvontaa seuraavien asioiden osalta.

Asteikko 0-5: 0=en osaa sanoa, 1=heikko, 2=välttävä, 3=tyydyttävä, 4=hyvä, 5=erinomainen

- Valvonnan riittävyys
- Valvonnan tehokkuus
- Valvojien ammattitaito
- Pelaajien huomioiminen
- Valvojien hoitama startteritoiminta
- Ystävällisyys

Kommentit ja kehittämis ehdotukset kentän valvontaan ja startteritoimintaan liittyen (vapaa palaute)

HARJOITUSALUEET

Arvioi kentän harjoitusalueita seuraavien asioiden osalta.

Asteikko 0-5: 0=en osaa sanoa, 1=heikko, 2=välttävä, 3=tyydyttävä, 4=hyvä, 5=erinomainen

- Rangen yleiskunto
- Rangen matot
- Rangen nurmilyöntialueet
- Rangen etäisyysmerkinnät
- Rangen harjoitusbunkkerit
- Lähipelialueen yleiskunto
- Piha-alueen harjoitusviheriö

Kommentit ja kehittämis ehdotukset harjoitusalueisiin liittyen (vapaa palaute)

KILPAILUTOIMINTA

Arvioi Nokia River Golfin kilpailutoimintaa seuraavien asioiden osalta.

Asteikko 0-5: 0=en osaa sanoa, 1=heikko, 2=välttävä, 3=tyydyttävä, 4=hyvä, 5=erinomainen

- Avointen kilpailujen (open-kisat) määrä
- Yritystapahtumien määrä
- Tulospalvelu kilpailuissa
- Lähtöajat/tulokset internetissä
- Kilpailuihin ilmoittautumisen helppous
- Kilpailujärjestelyt

Minkälaisia kilpailuja tai tapahtumia toivoisit lisää Nokia River Golfiin (vapaa palaute)

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KLUBITALO JA YMPÄRISTÖ

Arvioi klubitaloa seuraavien asioiden osalta.

Asteikko 0-5: 0=en osaa sanoa, 1=heikko, 2=välttävä, 3=tyydyttävä, 4=hyvä, 5=erinomainen

- Viihtyisyys
- Siisteys
- Käytännöllisyys
- Caddiemaster-toimisto
- Pukuhuoneet
- WC-tilat
- Pesutilat ja sauna
- Piha-alue ja terassi
- Bägivarasto (klubitalon piharakennuksessa)

Kommentit ja kehittämis ehdotukset klubitaloon ja ympäristöön liittyen (vapaa palaute)

RAVINTOLA

Arvioi ravintolan tasoa seuraavien asioiden osalta.

Asteikko 0-5: 0=en osaa sanoa, 1=heikko, 2=välttävä, 3=tyydyttävä, 4=hyvä, 5=erinomainen

- Ravintolatilän viihtyisyys
- Ravintolan siisteys
- Palvelun ystävällisyys
- Palvelun nopeus
- Ruokalistän monipuolisuus
- Ruoka-annosten laatu
- Ruoka-annosten hinnoittelu
- Vitriinituotteiden monipuolisuus
- Pihakioskin valikoima
- Terassin ja kioskin toimivuus ja viihtyisyys
- Ravintolapalvelujen taso yleensä

Kommentit ja kehittämis ehdotukset ravintolaan ja väliaikakioskiin liittyen (vapaa palaute)

PRO SHOP

Arvioi Pro shopin valikoimaa seuraavien asioiden osalta.

Asteikko 0-5: 0=en osaa sanoa, 1=heikko, 2=välttävä, 3=tyydyttävä, 4=hyvä, 5=erinomainen

- Mailat ja bägit
- Pallot
- Kengät
- Vaatteet

- Hanskat ja muut oheistarvikkeet
- Demomailatoiminta
- Demotilaisuudet rangella
- Palvelu ja opastus
- Hintataso
- Pro shopin valikoima yleensä

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Kommentit ja kehittämis ehdotukset Pro shop -toimintaan liittyen (vapaa palaute)

OPETUSTOIMINTA

Arvioi opetustoimintaa seuraavien asioiden osalta.

Asteikko 0-5: 0=en osaa sanoa, 1=heikko, 2=välttävä, 3=tyyydyttävä, 4=hyvä, 5=erinomainen

- Opetuksen saatavuus
- Kurssitarjonta
- Kurssien taso
- Golfopettajien ammattitaito
- Opetuksen hintataso

Kommentit ja kehittämis ehdotukset opetustoimintaan liittyen (vapaa palaute)

RIVERIN SEURATOIMINTA

Arvioi seuraavaksi seuratoiminnan eri osa-alueita.

Asteikko 0-5: 0=en osaa sanoa, 1=heikko, 2=välttävä, 3=tyyydyttävä, 4=hyvä, 5=erinomainen

- Junioritoiminta
- Kilpailutoiminta
- Naisille suunnatut tapahtumat
- Senioritoiminta
- Jäsenille järjestetyt tapahtumat, peliretket jne.
- Seuran kotisivut
- Varrella Virran –lehti
- Jäsenkirjeet ja tiedotteet sekä ilmoitustaulut
- Seuratoiminta kokonaisuutena

Kommentit, toivomukset ja kehittämis ehdotukset seuratoiminnan kehittämiseksi (vapaa palaute)

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TULEVAISUUDEN KEHITTÄMISKOHTEET

Nokia River Golfin suunnitellaan parhaillaan kenttälääjennusta, joka tuo 9 uutta väylää kentän länsipuolelle. Laajennuksen myötä myös nykyisiä väyliä ja pelijärjestystä muutettaisiin niin River- kuin Kartano-kentilläkin. Laajennuksen yhteydessä myös harjoitusalueita on mahdollista kehittää aikaisempaa monipuolisemmaksi. Kenttäsuunnitelma on nähtävissä täällä

Oletko jo ehtinyt tutustua kenttälääjennusta koskeviin suunnitelmiin?

- Kyllä
- Ei

Jos olet jo tutustunut kenttälääjennusta koskevaan suunnitelmaan, mitä mieltä olet laajennussuunnitelmasta kentän eri osien näkökulmasta?

Asteikko 0-5: 0=en osaa sanoa, 1=heikko, 2=välttävä, 3=tyydyttävä, 4=hyvä, 5=erinomainen

- Uusi 9 väylän kokonaisuus River-kentän länsipuolelle (nykyisen 2-väylän oikealla puolella)
- Nykyiselle River-kentälle ehdotetut muutokset
- Kartano-kentälle ehdotetut muutokset
- Par 3-harjoitusalue Kartanon nykyisen 8- ja 9-väylän paikalla

Kenttälääjennus parantaisi toteutuessaan olennaisesti peliolosuhteita Riverissä, lisäisi huomattavasti kenttökapasiteettia ja parantaisi myös harjoittelumahdollisuuksia. Viime jäsenkyselyssämme kenttälääjennus nousi jäsenten toiveissa tärkeimmäksi kehittämistoimeksi. Laajennuksen rahoitussuunnitelmaa laaditaan parhaillaan ja sitä tarkennetaan kustannusarvion valmistuttua

Kuinka paljon seuran vuosittainen jäsen- ja kausimaksu yhteenlaskettuna saisi mielestäsi kasvaa, jos kenttälääjennus toteutuisi suunnitelmien mukaisesti

- Ei yhtään
- Alle 50 euroa
- 50-100 euroa
- yli 100 euroa

Kommentit, toivomukset ja kehittämis ehdotukset kenttälääjennussuunnitelmasta (vapaa palaute)

Mitkä ovat kolme mielestäsi tärkeintä kehittämiskohdetta tulevaisuudelle? (vapaa palaute)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Muu vapaamuotoinen palaute (vapaa palaute)

Kaikkien vastanneiden kesken arvotaan 300 euron arvoinen lahjakortti Pro Shopiin. Täytä oheen yhteystietosi, jos haluat osallistua arvontaan. Henkilötietoja käytetään ainoastaan palkintoarvonnassa eikä niitä yhdistetä antamiisi vastauksiin.

Etunimi

Sukunimi

Lähiosoite

Postitoimipaikka

Puhelin

Sähköpostiosoite

Erkki Mommo

Toiminnanjohtaja

Petri Hurri

Nokia River Golf ry, puheenjohtaja

The courses and the driving range

The courses need to be maintained as well as they have been so far with some additional focus points. The bunkers need to be filled with more sand to make them softer and greens cut shorter more often to create a challenge for the golfers. Water hazards need to be weeded and trees planted to increase the aesthetics of the courses. The trees will also improve the safety on the courses as they tend to stop majority of stray strikes if placed especially in between parallel fairways. Trash cans need to be placed in every tee-box to keep the courses clean.

The striking areas on the driving range need to be modified to better facilitate the golfers. The grass striking area needs to be shifted gradually to prevent for an area to wear out completely. Striking mats need to be placed so that they can be used at all times; now the situation being either mats or grass. For the close-up game area, another practice green is needed so that the golfers can practice their longer strikes on it and leave the other one for shorter strikes. This way the safety will also improve as the golfers strike from the same distance. Clear markings need to be implemented that state from where to strike on the close-up game area to prevent any collisions with balls and players.

Physical facilities at the driving range need to be renovated as well. A toilet is needed in the area as the closest facility is a bit further away at the moment. The covers need to be painted and renovated to give them a more modern look. Aesthetics need to be a concern for the driving range as well; planting of flowers and other plants together with the physical facilities all contribute again to the overall experience for the customers.

The speed of the round is an aspect very important to golfers when talking about the enjoyability of the golfing experience. It needs to be monitored carefully so that everyone can experience a smooth round of golf. Signs need to be placed on the course that state the ideal time that should have been used so far. This way the golfers can monitor their progress on the field by themselves.

(continues)

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Sometimes this is not enough and marshals are needed to remind the people of the ideal speed. Marshals need to go through training prior to the season where common rules are agreed upon to ensure everyone has the same goal for the season. Marshals need to be strict in order for the golfers to increase their speed if they are falling behind on the schedule. Marshals also need to be a visible part of the round of golf so that the players know they will handle any problem situations.

Caddie master operations

Some aspects of the caddie master service can still be improved. The telephone service needs to be more efficient. With the help of a pre-recorded tape Nokia River Golf is able to convey a message that they are busy at the moment but will answer as soon as possible. This way the frustration among the customers will diminish as they know that they will be served shortly. If a customer calls outside the office hours, another pre-recorded tape should state the situation.

The caddie masters also need to be stricter when it comes to making reservations on the courses and cancelling them. A penalty needs to be implemented for the golfers who cancel too late; with this behaviour they are taking away the chance to play a round of golf from someone else. As the availability of tee-off times was one main concern for the respondents, it is vital to pay attention to this issue and the caddie masters are responsible for monitoring this behaviour.

Even though the aspect of handling feedback received an average score of 4,0 compared to 3,8 in 2010, 46 % of the respondents were not able to evaluate it and chose the option of 'I don't know'. This means that the members might not be aware of the feedback channel that has been created and can be found on the home page of NRG. This feature needs to be communicated more to the members as constant feedback will help to improve the service continuously.

To ensure high average scores on the future customer satisfaction researches as well, constant training needs to take place. At the beginning of each season, mandatory customer service training needs to take place where the new and existing caddie masters

together with the club and office secretary and the CEO learn how to handle potential problem situations.

Other services and the club house

As for further improving the level of satisfaction with the restaurant services more variety is needed both on the snacks and the main meals. The golfers need to have a choice between sweet and savoury snacks and possibly even make their own snacks for example by choosing the fillings in their sandwiches. The pricing policy needs to remain at a similar level as now with the new restaurateurs.

As the pro shop is run together with Golf Balata, the co-operation needs to be thorough. There needs to be training for the employees at Nokia River Golf so that they can serve the customers when it comes to Golf Balata's products. At the moment the selling of golf clubs, shoes and bags mainly occurs once a week when the representative of Golf Balata is present. To facilitate a larger variety of different products is problematic for NRG due to lack of space and can only be reached by a high turnover of the products. By organizing sale events NRG clears the shelves to facilitate new products, thus making the selection seem larger.

When it comes to the teaching services, there should be a larger variety on the pros. A female pro was asked for by the respondents and would give another choice for the members. Courses that run for the whole season and are targeted for specific levelled players need to be developed and then communicated to the members. Teaching services need to run throughout the year with focus on other issues during the off-season of winter. These issues include for example the rules of golf, etiquette and how to behave at the clubhouse. When revising the general rules of a golf course, the overall safety will improve as all of the golfers know exactly how to behave in certain situation: for example yelling out 'Fore' in case of a stray strike.

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Competitions are needed for specific levelled golfers as well. Competitions for the beginners can be organized at Kartano course and play only 9 holes. With these competitions the main course would stay open and there would not be a big problem of people not being able to play. The amount of competitions cannot be increased as they take up a lot of space already but instead modify the current ones; more team competitions and tours were asked for. From the current competitions that are organized annually, four could be separated into 'Nokia River Golf cup' where the overall winner would be awarded.

With other club activities it is important to get more active members in the committees. The communication about different events organized by the committees and the club need to be more visible. These events can include for example trips to other courses and social gatherings at the club house. Once the members are active in the club activities, there is a great chance that the overall atmosphere of the club will improve; everyone feels like they are contributing to the club making them an important part of the operations.

Communication in general can be improved between the club and the members. Even though the respondents were very satisfied with the current level of communication, more can be done. The home page of Nokia River Golf needs to be updated to have a more modern look and to include more current news, for example what is being done on the course. As discussed earlier, the feedback channel needs to be advertised more to ensure the members are aware of that communication channel as well.

The shareholders need to be rewarded in other ways than just lower membership fees as well. A discount for the most common accessories, for example golf gloves and balls should be implemented. A volume discount should also be implemented when shareholders charge their range cards; the more you purchase the more you save. These small things will create a feeling among the shareholders that they are valued and the share brings other benefits as well.

As the club house is an old mansion, renovations are needed constantly. The respondents were dissatisfied with the current state of the dressing rooms, showers and the sauna. All of downstairs where these facilities are located need to be remodelled to look

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more modern. The facilities are rather dark at the moment so more lights are needed. Guidance should also be visible on where to find the male and female's dressing rooms and toilets. The sauna needs to be divided into two so that there are separate facilities for both men and women.

The upstairs should be renovated at least partially for the members to use as a lounge. Meetings and other private functions can also be organized upstairs which creates another aspect for the overall service of NRG; renting out facilities for other customers than golfers as well.

Minor touch-ups are needed throughout the whole club house. The furniture needs to be up to date and in good condition. The walls need to have a fresh coat of paint to improve the overall look of the club house. All of these minor details all contribute to the overall atmosphere of the club and are easy to take care of without major renovations.y