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ROLE OF INFORMING AS A PART OF MARKETING  
COMMUNICATIONS IN THE ORGANIZATION

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# ROLE OF INFORMING AS A PART OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS IN THE ORGANIZATION

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The purpose of this thesis was to study effectiveness of marketing communications in the department store called Sokos Mylly. In the department store is implemented locational changes, therefore informing the customers was current topic. Importance of informing highlights during changes in the organization, in order to keep customers up to date. Primary outcome of this study was to measure current state of customers' awareness and find ways to improve the information flow. Source of information was also relevant to study in order to find most effective channels for reaching the customers.

Customer survey was chosen method for collecting data about the customers' awareness and effectiveness of used communication channels. The questionnaire was implemented for the customers of Sokos Mylly, in the department store during February 2015. In total 119 responses were received. In addition to awareness of the customers and used communication channels, questionnaire aimed also to collect customers' opinions about new arrangements of the department store. In the study qualitative and quantitative research methods were both used, as questionnaire included choice questions and two open questions.

Research shows that informing needs to continue in order to increase customers' awareness to more satisfying level. Changes are still relatively new and informing is needed in the future as well. Recommended is to more intensively use current communication channels and benefit from developed communication channels such as mobile application and social media. As the current state of customer's awareness and usage of communication channels is studied, research findings can be used to compare situation in the future.

# TIEDOITTAMISEN ROOLI OSANA MARKKINOINTIVIESTINTÄÄ ORGANISAATIOSSA

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Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli tutkia markkinointiviestinnän tehokkuutta tavaratalossa nimeltä Sokos Mylly. Tavaratalossa on toteutettu sijainnillisia muutoksia ja tämän vuoksi asiakkaiden tiedottaminen oli ajankohtainen aihe. Tiedottamisen tärkeys korostuu muutostilanteissa, jotta asiakkaat pystyttäisiin pitämään tilanteen ajan tasalla. Opinnäytetyön ensisijaisena tavoitteena oli mitata asiakkaiden tietoisuuden tila sekä löytää tapoja parantaa tiedonkulun tehokkuutta. Asiakkaiden tiedonlähde oli myös olennaista tutkia, jotta voidaan määrittää mitkä viestintäkanavat ovat olleet tehokkaita asiakkaiden tavoittamisessa.

Asiakaskysely valittiin menetelmäksi aineiston keräämiselle, liittyen asiakkaiden tietoisuuden muutoksista sekä käytettyjen viestintäkanavien tehokkuuteen. Asiakaskysely toteutettiin tavaratalossa Sokos Myllyn asiakkaille helmikuun 2015 aikana. Yhteensä 119 vastausta vastaanotettiin. Asiakkaiden tietoisuuden sekä käytettyjen viestintäkanavien lisäksi, kyselyllä pyrittiin myös kuulemaan asiakkaiden mielipiteitä uusista järjestelyistä tavaratalossa. Tutkimuksessa molempia kvalitatiivista ja kvantitatiivista tutkimusmetodia käytettiin, sillä asiakaskysely sisälsi valintakysymyksiä sekä kaksi avointa kysymystä.

Toteutettu tutkimus osoittaa, että tiedottamista tarvitsee jatkaa, jotta asiakkaiden tietoisuus tavaratalon muutoksista nousisi tyydyttävämmälle tasolle. Muutokset ovat vielä suhteellisen tuoreita ja tiedottaminen on tarpeellista myös tulevaisuudessa. Suositeltavaa on intensiivisemmin käyttää olemassa olevia viestintäkanavia, sekä hyödyntää nykyaikana kehitettyjä viestintäkanavia, kuten mobiilisovellusta sekä sosiaalista mediaa. Kun asiakkaiden tietoisuuden sekä viestintäkanavien käytön nykytila on tutkittu, tutkimuksen tuloksia voidaan käyttää vertaamisessa tilannetta tulevaisuudessa.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This Bachelor's Thesis is written in Satakunta University of Applied Sciences in degree programme of Innovative Business Services in cooperation with a department store called Sokos. This thesis focuses on a specific unit of Sokos chain, Sokos Mylly, located in Raisio. Sokos Mylly is part of Turun Osuuskauppa, and owned by co-op members (asiakasomistajat) of Turun Osuuskauppa. Turun Osuuskauppa is one of the independent regional cooperatives of S-group, which is Finnish retailer cooperative organization. Competition in the retailer industry is even higher, as popularity of online shopping is increased and customers consume more carefully during challenging economic situation. Sokos have faced a point where management needs to analyze whether the business is profitable enough to continue operating. Management of Turun Osuuskauppa decided to keep this unit operating but changes needed to be made. These changes includes personnel and rent savings in Sokos Mylly and in other units as well. Turun Osuuskauppa owns two Sokos department stores and one Emotion-cosmetic store, and all these units will face actions to be more cost-efficient.

The changes were made during 2014 and now in year 2015 changes in the Sokos Mylly are implemented; the appearance, size and location of the store are different. Previously Sokos Mylly has been operating in two floors of the shopping center called Mylly. In August 2014 collection for men have been moved from the second floor into own store at the first floor. At the beginning of year 2015, women's collection is also removed from the second floor to the first floor of Sokos. However all the customers are not yet aware of the changes. Customers are necessary resource for the business in terms of sales, therefore customer relationships need to be managed well. To inform customers effectively and maintain customer relationships, integrated communication in the organization is needed. Especially the changes in the organization create need for more effective informing.

Theoretical part of the thesis includes business communication, marketing communications and customer relationship management. This thesis focuses mostly to business to consumer operations instead of business to business operations. The research is implemented as a questionnaire in the store for the customers of Sokos Mylly.

## 2 PURPOSE OF THE THESIS

The purpose of this thesis is to study effectiveness of marketing communications in the case company Sokos Mylly. The aim of this study is to research the customers' knowledge and opinion about the department store at the time. That information can be used to find ways to improve customer's awareness of the products and services Sokos offers and collect improvement suggestions from the customer's point of view. The study of current situation will give information of how to continue in the future. If improvements are recommended to be made, the results can be measured.

With a questionnaire can be studied how aware customers are about the operation and selection of Sokos Mylly, and also to find out via which channel they received the information. One of the objectives is to find out if customers are aware about the relatively new Sokos for Men -store. Wished outcome is to increase customers' awareness that Sokos continues to offer products and services on the first floor of the shopping center.

### 2.1 Research questions

In order to achieve mentioned objectives, following research questions are set to guide the thesis process: How the implementation of the marketing communications have been made, customers' awareness of the current situation, how customers have received the information recently, and how the awareness can be improved.

### 3 RESEARCH METHODS

To gather data for a study there are two methods to use; qualitative and quantitative research method. Qualitative research method is often used when there is not a lot of information available, when results are more based on descriptive information and own conclusions. Qualitative research is often implemented when interviewing selected group of people. Quantitative research is often implemented when information is more numerical, as a questionnaire for a large group.

(Isohookana 2007, 119-120)

In this study mixed research method will be used which combines qualitative and quantitative research methods. This research is implemented as a questionnaire for customers, which refers to quantitative research as answers for questionnaire are analyzed numerically. However the size of this customer group might be relatively small and questionnaire includes open questions, which aims to find out how customers feel. Objectives aim to know how customers have received information and also hear their opinions about the changes. These are things which refer to qualitative research method. Questionnaire is implemented as traditional paper version at the store.

### 4 CASE COMPANY

#### 4.1 Sokos, Mylly

The case company is department store Sokos Mylly, which is managed by Turun Osuuskauppa (TOK). TOK is part of Finnish cooperative group called S-Group, and it is owned by the co-op members (asiakasomistajat). At year 2014, 3,6 Finnish owned S-Group's loyalty card called S-etukortti. The main purpose of the entire S-group is to produce services and benefits for the co-op members. TOK owns two department stores; Sokos Wiklund in Turku and Sokos Mylly in Raisio. (website of Helsingin Sanomat, 1.2015; website of S-group, 1.2015)



Sokos Mylly is part of larger Sokos chain, which contains 21 Sokos department stores in Finland. Product range of Sokos' varies between department stores; bigger ones have clothing-, cosmetics-, sport-, and home departments. Smaller department stores have focused mostly on clothing and cosmetics products. Sokos chain was selected in 2014 to be most appreciated department store concept in Finland. (website of M&M, 1.2015)

This thesis focuses on unit Sokos Mylly, which is located in the shopping center Mylly, in Raisio. Mylly is the biggest shopping center in South-west Finland, with 66200 m<sup>2</sup> and approximately 4.5 million customers per year. Sokos Mylly has faced a lot of changes lately; the size of the store is now approximately half smaller than it was before in year 2014, locations of departments are changed and the amount of personnel is decreased. These changes were made because unit has not been able to reach targeted profit. Based on a turnover of this unit, management of TOK needed to make decisions to decrease costs of Sokos. These cost savings are executed by decreasing human resource costs and rent of the business place. Since January 2015 the actions taken forward these operations are implemented. The second floor of the store is now removed and Sokos continues to operate on the first floor of the shopping center. To be able to keep men's clothing as part of its selection, executive team made a decision to open a new store called "Sokos for Men" to the opposite side of the original Sokos store. Men's store was opened in the beginning of August 2014. (website of shopping center Mylly, 1.2015)

Today Sokos offers cosmetics, women's and men's clothing and hairdresser/treatment services. Women's clothing selection is narrowed from old selection in order to make everything fit into smaller area. Escalator is removed from the store, because second floor is no longer in use, moving escalator also brought a bit more space into the first floor. Leasing contract of Sokos for Men store continues until 2017, after that new arrangement will be considered.

## 4.2 Customer segmentation

As Vuokko mention in a book *Markkinointiviestintä, merkitys, vaikutus ja keinot*, “The best way to recognize the target group is to face the customers, trough that experience learn about the customers and understand them better.” (Vuokko 2003, 14) Relevant for the salespeople is to know their customers in order to be professionals in the customer service. From marketing point of view recommended is to do segmentation based on customers’ needs, purchase behavior and ways they react to marketing. More specific methods for segmenting consumers can be:

- Geographical, according to location of the customer
- Demographical, such as age, gender, or an educational level
- Customer relationship history, such as purchases and the loyalty of the customer, or based on how profitable customer is for the business.

(Oksanen 2010. 178.)

Segmented groups should be large enough so that customizing the products, services and marketing is profitable. If segmentation is implemented based on very detailed information, are needed resources too large compared to benefits. Segmentation need to meet customers’ needs and have positive affect to the business. (Korkemäki, Lindström, Ryhänen, Saukkonen & Selinheimo 2002, 129.)

In the marketing of the case company segmentation is used for selecting a target group for a direct marketing, for example based on amount of customer’s yearly purchases in the store. For the most profitable customers is offered some benefits, as a reward of being a loyal customer. Another way of using segmentation for marketing is to send direct marketing letter for certain group such as students, and introduce products and services based on their interest. Segments which appear strongly in the S-group are the co-op members and customers who are not members. Co-op members receive a lot of information and benefits related to S-group’s operations, such as discounts and special attention for example invitations to customer events. Co-op members are more easily reached via different channels such as customer magazines. Segmentation is visible in the store too. Seasonal products are usually targeted for a chosen group based on a need or interest, for example cloths and makeups for a youngster’s graduation on spring or campaign for the co-op members.

### 4.3 Loyalty program

Customer loyalty program is one tool in managing customer relationships. Loyalty programs are often used for collecting information about the customers, such as where they shop, what they purchase and how frequently. (Korkemäki, Lindström, Ryhänen, Saukkonen & Selinheimo 2002, 143.) That is also a way to get customer's basic information such as age, gender, phone number, and e-mail address. With this information the organization can have more targeted marketing and maintain customer relationships. To have loyal customers is very valuable for any organization and to get new customers is much more expensive than keeping the current customers. Referring to Hoffman, customer loyalty can be seen as commitment that customer will rebuy a products or services of an organization (Hoffmann 2013, 21.) Loyalty marketing is the most successful for a business where; customer visits often in the organization, customer is interested about the products and services of the organization and in the field is lot of competition and organization needs to compete about the attention of the customer. (Korkemäki, Lindström, Ryhänen, Saukkonen & Selinheimo 2002, 175, 158.)

In the S-group a sign of the membership is S-Etukortti card, meaning customer is co-op member or part of a co-op member household. Information collected via memberships is used for targeted marketing, sharing information, maintaining customer relationship but also for paying bonus for the customers based on their monthly purchases made within S-group. Amount of bonus varies between zero to five percent, depending on total monthly consumption of the household. The more committed customer/household is to use S-group's services, the bigger is the bonus customer will receive. With an S-etukortti card can customer get also product and service benefits within S-group and from its business partners. S-Etukortti card with rewarding system is competitive advantage for all S-groups' units, including Sokos. S-group wants to highlight that co-op members are the owners and that way create emotional bond between the customer and the S-group.

#### 4.4 Communication channels

To be able to reach customers, organization has to have communication channels. Channels which customers are using vary a lot between different customer segments, for example between age groups. To reach as many customers as possible it is important to have more than just one communication channel. As Sokos is part of bigger chain, most of the marketing decisions are made in centralized marketing department of the organization. Modified communication strategy based on customer segmentation should not be underestimated, as loyal customers of the units can vary a lot from each other, for example based on location of the unit. Communication channels used in Sokos Mylly are personnel, customer magazines, mobile application, electric newsletter, and in-store posters and in-store radio.

##### 4.4.1 Customer magazines

Sokos chain publishes each month a customer magazine with benefits for the co-op members. This magazine is the same for all Sokos department stores in Finland, but availability of the products varies between the stores. The magazine includes discounts of a seasonal products and information about current campaigns. This is remarkable way to reach customers each month and wake their interest towards products. Before the magazine is delivered for the customers each month but is recently changed so that every second month customer receives magazine to home, when not it can be read in the Internet or customer can get it from the store. As the content of the magazine is the same in all regional cooperatives, information cannot be targeted for specific customer group in defined area.

TOK publishes also magazine for its own co-op members, which is called Ostokset. Ostokset magazine includes information about TOK's units and partners, such as local events and current offers. It is sent every second monthly for all co-op members of the TOK. When Sokos Mylly and Wiklund arrange sales campaigns or have new services to offer, these can be informed in the Ostokset magazine.

The third magazine customers receive from the S-group is called Yhteishyvä. Yhteishyvä magazine is S-group's common, so it does not include TOK's own news. It includes articles related to home, food, sport, and seasonal articles example a summer jobs in the S-group. The magazine also includes product informing such as new products of the S-group's own brand. Yhteishyvä can be read in the Internet but it is also delivered to home six times per year for the co-op members. (website of Yhteishyvä, 1.2015)

#### 4.4.2 Mobile application / electric newsletter

Sokos Wiklund and Sokos Mylly together had mobile application for loyalty customers to use, but it is now replaced with S-group's common mobile application called S-Mobiili. S-Mobiili is useful tool for the customer of the S-groups. It enables to use bank services via mobile phone, see the amount of collected bonus and receive information and offers from the S-group's units. Mobile application is a rather new channel of direct marketing. Downloading the application usually offer some benefit for the customer such as discounts, coupons, or useful information. When the customer downloads application she/he offers a channel to reach her/him and also contact information for the company's further use such as phone number and e-mail address. These are important information for the company to be able to keep connected with the customers. The e-mail addresses are used for direct marketing as well, via electric newsletter. Electric newsletter is used to inform the customers about current campaigns and services/products of Sokos. (Website of Sokos Wiklund, 1.2015; Website of S-mobiili 1.2015.)

#### 4.4.3 Personnel

Employees of the organization are directly interacting with the customers and represent the organization, therefore they are very important channel of communication. Each employee affect to the image of the organization, so important for the organization is to should focus on job performance of the personnel. Motivated and satisfied employee gives more likely a positive image about the organization than an unsatisfied employee. Employees work as an adviser for the customers, their job is to help

customers in the store. Employees inform customers about current news and changes, so employees should be well trained and informed. Internal communication in the organization must work efficiently. (Drake, Gulman & Roberts 2005, 39)

In Sokos Mylly employees are informed in the meetings and via weekly newsletters with current matters in the organization. Employees need to participate to communication by reading newsletters from the e-mail and collect the information. Feedback from the employees is wished to create two-way communication between the management and personnel. At the beginning of each shift should employee check if new information is available. Also communication with other employees is important to make sure the flow of information works and work can be as effective as possible. With good internal communication misunderstandings, overlapping work, conflicts and confusion can be avoided. Employees are trained to be professionals in their field, to be able to offer quality service for the customers. To offer professional customer service they need to know the products and be able to tell about products and services the company has to offer.

In use of personnel of Sokos is intranet called Sokdooris. The main purpose of the Sokdooris intranet is to share timetables, but also to inform about organizational matters. Employees can also express their wishes related to timetables, so it enables interaction between employees and the management. S-group delivers also a common magazine called Ässä to share seasonable news, for its whole personnel

#### 4.4.4 In-store posters and radio

When the customer have made a decision to come to the store, there is more information available than many of the customers notice. In windows of the department store are usually visible seasonal products and/or campaign information. Next to the doors is listed what departments are available in the store. When the customer walks in the store there is information available such as discounts, direction signs and product/service information. Information is present in paper form and also in store's televisions. Part of the customers ignores this information and then the importance of the personnel as a source of information highlights. Radio is one of the communica-

tion channels in the department store. Most of the time there is music playing but occasionally radio informs about current campaigns, products and happenings.

## 5 BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

### 5.1 Communication

Laswell's model of communication describes an act of communication with following: Who says What, in Which Channel, to Whom with What Effect? Communication process needs to have an objective: the effect to the receiver that is wished to be achieved. If the receiver has a motivation to receive information, communications will more likely be successful. (Vuokko 2003, 28-31.)

Business communication can be shared into two categories; internal and external communication. Internal communication is communication within the organization. External communication is communication with all interest groups, such as customers, other businesses, suppliers, support organizations etc. (Gopal 2009, 8.)

### 5.2 Internal communication

As mentioned earlier internal communication includes communication within the organization, meaning within the personnel. Depending on how well internal communication works in the organization, reflects it outside and affects to the image of an organization. Internal communication in the company needs to work well in order to achieve effective marketing communications. Internal communication can have many levels; managers inform about the strategies and objectives, team leaders report about the current situation and expectations, and employees tells how everyday operations are going. Cooperation between the departments is crucial to achieve common objectives. (Isohookana 2007, 121-122.)

According to Isohookana internal communication has following purposes:

- commit employees to the business idea, values and vision
- commit and motivate employees for the objectives and profitable operation
- affect to the fluency of everyday work
- inform about issues
- affect to the effectiveness of the use of resources
- create positive working environment and community
- avoid and resolve conflicts
- affect to the brand and company image
- support marketing and marketing communications

Employees need to be committed to the business idea and values in order to represent the organization in a proper way. The business idea tells the purpose of the existence of business. Values illustrate which things are important and appreciated in the organization. Vision is set to guide the business toward its objectives and to show what is wished to achieve. When everyday work is fluent can overlapping be avoided and work is more efficient. Internal communication also affects to the working environment, when two-way communication works in the organization is personnel more satisfied with their working environment. Communication is needed to avoid and resolve conflicts between employees. When choosing a channel of communication the target, purpose, message, and the timing need to be considered. Many channels can be used to implement the internal communications and organization needs to choose most effective ways for them to implement the communication. (Isohookana 2007, 223-226.)

Internal and external communication needs to be well connected and support each other. The personnel needs to be well-informed about organizational issues such as objectives and changes in the organization, to have comprehensive picture about the organization. (Isohookana 2007, 16.)

### 5.3 External communication

External communication can be determined to marketing communications and business communication. Marketing communications is targeted for the customers, and it



is supporting activity for sales. Business communication is targeted for other stakeholders of an organization, to offer information they need. External communication effects to the recognition of the organization, its products/services and to its image. (Isohookana 2007, 16.)

The most important factor for the business is their customers. That is why communicating with the customers in a right way is very important. Employee in a customer service job needs to be a good listener and responder to be able to satisfy customers. Even new channels of communication are developed, importance of personal contact cannot be underestimated. Communication skills are needed in order to make sales. Gopal point out that “Organizations that can communicate better can also sell better.” (Gopal, 2009, 8)

Also dealing with other stakeholders requires good communication skills. By having effective communication with suppliers the company is able to avoid for example wrong orders and misunderstandings with the delivers. Sometimes organization might need to deal with the government or press, those can have high impact to the image of an organization. They have power which can be used against or on behalf of the organization, so proper communication is needed. (Gopal 2009, 8-9.)

## 6 MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

### 6.1 Objectives of marketing communications

Marketing communications is a part of organization's external communication, and can be defined as communication with the market. Marketing communications is the “promotion” part of the marketing mix which consist; product, price, place, and promotion. All pieces of the marketing mix need to support each other, in order to create efficient entirety. Promotion need to tell about the other pieces of marketing mix which are the product, price and place. Purpose of the marketing communications is to affect to customers' awareness and interest to the products/services, create and maintain customer relationships and trough these to increase the sales. According to

Isohookana marketing communication can be shared into different areas; personal selling, customer service, advertising, sales promotion and informing. But as network and mobile communication are nowadays fastest growing areas of marketing communications, can those be added into pattern. (Isohookana 2007, 63; Vuokko 2003, 23.)

Sharing information with the customers is important to be able to maintain customer relationships, especially during changes need the information flow be activated. That enables to keep the customers up to date with a situation, and customers know where to find a products and services they are looking for. The importance of lasting customer relationships for a business is that the customers use the products and services frequently, they might tell about their positive experience for others, which is very valuable marketing for the business. (Isohookana 2007, 64; Mäntyneva 2003, 16.)

According to Vuokko, with marketing communications organization aims to affect to the all stakeholders, not just to the customers. Other stakeholders are for example suppliers, investors and media. Communication between stakeholders is necessary to be able to maintain business operations. All marketing communications in the organization need to be integrated to be able to create one common image. All the marketing materials do not need to look the same but messages need to be planned so that those support each other and form connected image. All parts of the marketing mix communicate; price, product and place create images as well. Strategic marketing decisions as target group of the communication need to be clear and connected (Vuokko 2003, 15-16, 328-329.)

## 6.2 Channels of communication

The most effective way of communication is personal communication, meaning changing information between two or few people, this gives a possibility to interact with other party. For example face to face sales situation, this requires a lot of human resources from the company which is not always possible. Another way to reach population is the mass communication. Purpose of the mass communication is to effect to the large amount of population at the same time, trough channels such as

magazine and television. Mass communication does not require specific location and the same message can be delivered for many people at once. Common practice in marketing is to mix personal and mass communication in order to benefit from good qualities of both ways of communicating. (Vuokko 2003, 32-33.)

Referring to Maaninka current areas of marketing at 2014 were marketing automation, social media, mobile marketing and power of video. For a year 2015 he forecast more creative and interactive ways to communicate with the customers, technology is so developed that amazing new things can be done. Marketing and communication need to be integrated and use developed technology to achieve faster results of marketing. (J. Maaninka, 1.2015)

Defining the target groups is one of the basic steps when planning a marketing communications in a company. Need to know what information people are looking for, what are their expectations and what channels they currently use to receive the information. Based on the customer segmentation it is important to find right channels, the channels which customers use most actively. When target group is clear, can message be defined, what it is that customer should remember. When delivering a message can focus on the content of the message or into form of it, meaning how we deliver it. The message must be planned and executed based on the target group. When defining the message, is the used channel in important role. The channel can be for example a television, mobile phone or Internet; all of these are used for different kind of messages. As can be seen in Image 1, customers are surrounded with messages from many channels, so important is to stand out from others.

The customer can receive information example about the new product from other people such as friend, family member or sales person. When customer uses a computer or mobile device is information available in the Internet; different webpages and e-mail is filled with information. (Isohookana 2007, 102-107.)

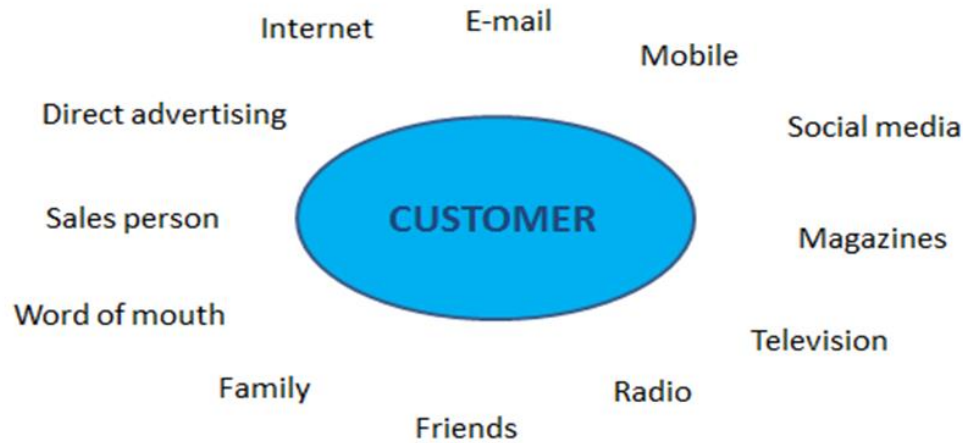


Image 1. Possible channels for the customer to receive information.

As information technology has developed also the amount of data has increased significantly. Information in the Internet is easily available all the time, and it is not dependent on place or time. Sharing information and opinions via blogs and networking groups is becoming more popular. This enables consumers to interact with each other and share experiences, good and the bad ones. In social media consumers can create the content and decide what they want to share for other people. Communication between people, word of mouth becomes more important and people want to hear opinions of others'. At the same time negative attention in the networking groups can have very bad influence to the business, information spreads fast and widely. Popular social media channels are example Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, all of these can be used in business as well. Social media channels are used to reach and interact with the customers. Via Internet extensive contents of information can be shared and can be used to create two way communications with the target group. Company's website is the most popular form of digital communication. The website enables easy and fast access for the customers to find information about the organization. Important feature for a website is its usability. Customer must find easily what she/he is looking for. If not, customer will change into different website. Design and attractiveness of the website is important to be able to keep customer's interest. When customer is interested about the website it opens a possibility to deliver the wanted message, make sales and to create new customer relationship. (Agresta and Bough 2010, 3-4; Isohookana 2007, 252, 255, 274-275; Dilenschneider, R. 2010, 2-3.)

Mobile communication is a personal way to reach customers directly, with a short message. Mobile phone messages get high attention from the customer. As many people carry their mobile devices especially mobile phone with them all the time, is interaction independent on the time and place. Also mobile applications have become popular in business. It can be a useful tool for the customer or for the employee who is out from the office. Mobile applications include information and functions which can be updated frequently. (Isohookana 2007, 266; Keskinen 2001, 20-21; Mäntyneva 2003, 66.)

E-mail messages are also a personal way to reach the customers but are easily ignored, that is why message sent should be short and interesting. E-mail is easy and inexpensive media for an organization to use and it can reach large audience. When creating an e-mail message, should focus on communication style and be specific to avoid misunderstandings. The company should be careful not to send e-mail messages too often to avoid customers get bored with swollen e-mailbox and starts to ignore the messages. (Isohookana 2007, 99, 264, 276.)

Visual design supports the content of the message and creates impression. With visual effects message achieves the customer's attention more easily and looks interesting. The visual design includes factors such as colors, shapes, images and effects. If image can explain a lot more than text then it is worth to use, but website should not be full of images. When talking about audio visual design that includes audio and video as well. With audio visual design more information can be delivered in short period of time, but if audio/video is used it must work flawlessly for the user. (Dilenschneider, R. 2010, 16; Isohookana 2007, 107.)

### 6.3 Public relations

A public relations (PR) aim to achieve and maintain the support of the stakeholders. The long term purpose is to affect to the image of the organization, create, modify or strengthen the image. PR can be shared into two different areas; corporate PR, and marketing PR. Corporate PR focuses on corporate image and can be categorized as internal and external PR. The target group of the internal PR is the personnel and tar-

get of the external PR are the external stakeholders. Purpose of the internal PR is to inform personnel about organizational matters and to create better working environment, example via better group spirit to increase motivation of the employees. When internal PR is implemented well, employee feels that she/he is respected in the organization and feels committed to the work. The communication should be open, reliable and interaction between the management and employees need to work fluently. External PR aims to create positive and trust worthy corporate image example for the customers, investors and suppliers. Stakeholders need to be informed about the business operations, future plans and also possible difficulties in order to maintain open communication. Organizations implement external PR example via their website, extranet, press releases and press conferences. Marketing PR is supporting activity of the marketing and aims to have effect to product and service image and interest of the customers toward products and services. Example of the marketing PR is to organize an event for the customers or media representatives in order to promote a new product or service. (Vuokko 2003, 279-287.)

### 6.3.1 Informing

Informing as a part of marketing communication supports the activities of marketing products and services. The target group of this communication is the customers, and the idea is to deliver a message which can be useful for the customer. Informing can be related to new products/services, or it can tell about the changes in the organization. Ways for informing customers are for example; customer magazines, public releases, newsletters, or events. Organization can implement informing from its own initiative, this enables them to choose the time and place for this to happen. Alternative is to inform media about the matters and they might share information forward. Even media is informed there is no guarantee that media will publish it. To gain positive media attention possibilities are to invite media representatives for a visit, sending public release, organizing press conference or sponsor specific subject. Benefits of media attention are that it is often seen as objective and reliable source, and publicity is inexpensive for the organization even it might create additional costs. Downsides are that organization cannot affect to the content and tone of the article media decides to publish. (Isohookana 2007, 176-180.)

## 7 CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

### 7.1 Purpose of customer relationships management

Customers are essential resource for the business, therefore it is important to know and understand the customers and their needs. Customer relationship management (CRM) can have many meanings, but the aim of it is to maintain and develop relationship between the organization and the customer. Effectiveness of the CRM requires interaction, knowledge, database, technology and holistic approach. When customer relationship management in the organization is operated successfully, customers become essential for all operations and decisions made. The purpose of the organization to focus on CRM is to keep its current customers loyal and satisfied, to develop potential of the customership and make customers more valuable for the business. Developed technology has opened new opportunities for the organization to capitalize and gather available data. Customer databases enable more personal marketing communications as more specific information about the customers is collected. Marketing communications have better influence when it is targeted more specifically and through right channels. (Graham 2001, 2-3; Mäntyneva 2003, 74.)

When competition in the market is high, the organization needs to focus on being customer-oriented to achieve success. The whole organization needs to act towards customer satisfaction. Satisfied customers more likely choose to use products/services of the organization again. Organization needs to focus on all areas of performance to add more value for the customers. (Raad, Ajami, Gargeja, Goddard 2008, 15.)

### 7.2 Value of the customership

In marketing CRM is mostly used for recognizing the purchase behavior of the customers, which enables more specific segmentation. Important is to increase profitability of the customer in the different stages of the customer relationship/life cycle. These life cycle stages can be defined as: acquisition, capture, development and maintenance. As Image 2 demonstrates at the beginning of the life cycle customer-

ship is unprofitable, but when relationship develops and becomes permanent it is profitable for the business. One objective of CRM is to recognize these customer-relationships which will become profitable and which will not. (Mäntyneva 2003, 16-17.)

Value of the customer relationship

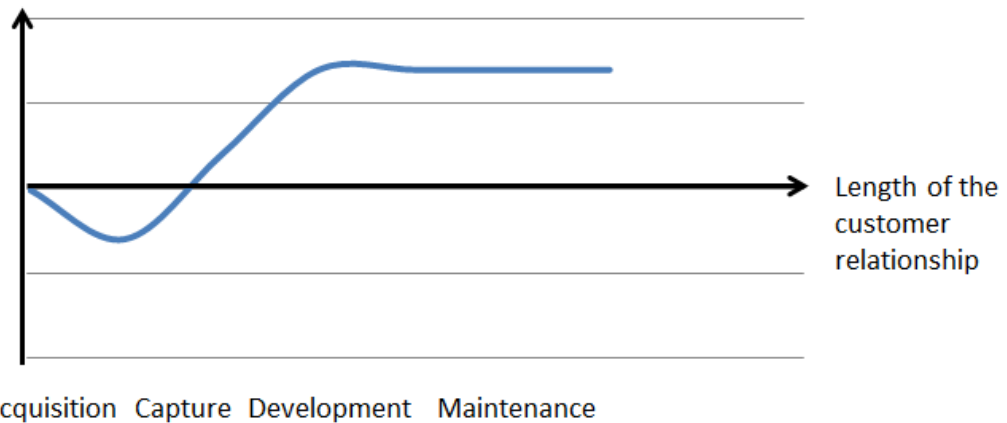


Image 2. Value of the customer relationship during its life cycle

At the beginning of the customership it is important to motivate the customer to try products and services of the organization. Challenge is to get customer commit to use products and services again in the future. At the beginning of the customership organization might use discounts to get customer to try the product or service. Giving discounts decrease the profit margin and makes customership to be less profitable. Important is to be able to develop customership to be profitable and lasting customer relationship. Next step is capturing, when organization should get customer to buy again and try more products/services. If the customer was satisfied with the products/services at the first time, there is a bigger chance that the customer will use it again. The third step is the development of the customership. Organization should try to increase the share of customer's whole purchasing and to get customer to centralize consumption into this organization. The last step is the maintenance, to keep the customer relationship it needs to be recognized. By monitoring customer's purchasing behavior can organization anticipate and react to possible changes. Signs of losing the customer might be decreased purchases or e.g. new address. If the organization is able to keep its most profitable customers and increase the amount of purchases of current less consuming customers, it will probably succeed. Value of the organization depend a lot of how effectively it can get new customers, develop and keep profitable customerships. CRM should focus on acts which increase the length of the



profitable customerships, example customer satisfaction. (Mäntyneva 2003, 12-13, 19-24.)

The value of the customership depends on the revenue the customership brings to the organization. The amount of purchases and gross margin of the products/services affects to the revenue. The value of the customership can be increased with two ways. First is to increase amount of purchases or increase the gross margin. To increase gross margin the prices need to increase or decrease the expenses of the organization. If price of the products/services increases can that have negative affects to amount of purchases. The second option is to decrease expenses of the organization, which in practice would mean example raw material savings or decreasing marketing costs. There is a limit of much organization can decrease expenses, as costs are inevitable to keep organization operating. CRM aims more on increasing the sales revenue than implementing the cost savings. The costs of the customership for the organization can be categorized to acquisition costs, development costs, and maintenance costs. Acquisition costs are caused from the acts of getting new customers, example targeted marketing for the potential customers or discounts. The development costs includes actions towards deeper customer relationship, this can be example investing for better customer service and trough that achieve better customer satisfaction. The maintenance costs can come from the act which organization needs to take to not lose the customership, example developing a product based on customer's needs. (Mäntyneva 2003, 47-48.)

### 7.3 Segmentation

CRM requires customer segmentation. Customers can be divided with many different arguments such as, who is the customer, profession of the customer, what do they buy, where are they located, what is their financial situation, how to contact them, and how valuable they are for the business. With the customer segmentation can be recognized the customers who have similar needs and expectations and who have same kind of purchasing behavior. Purchasing behavior and needs of the customers varies in the different stages of life. People consume differently when they are students or e.g. when they have a family. By using specific information about their cus-

tomers can organization develop more customized products and services, and that way fulfill the expectation of the customers better. Segmentation helps choosing a channel which will be the most effective in reaching group of customers. Organization can also recognize the most profitable and unprofitable customers and that way know which customers are worth to invest in. These are reasons why customer segmentation is important part of the CRM. (Mäntyneva 2003, 25-27; Graham 2001, 154-156.)

#### 7.4 Information technology

CRM system need to support the strategic decisions of the organization and should be integrated with other data processing in the organization. CRM system should be connected with other information technology systems of the organization to be able to use it as effectively as possible for example together with financial systems of the organization. When choosing a CRM system should organization consider which information is useful and for which purposes. Organization can choose to use external data mining software for analyzing the data. This is recommended if the knowledge of all areas of analyzing in the organization is not sufficient. Data mining is the process of analyzing data from different perspectives and summarizing it into useful information. The data analyzing software enable user to find the useful information from large databases. Organization can find information about their customers' purchasing behavior and use that for market segmentation. When choosing right software and devises, organization needs to consider the amount of users, the frequency of use, and the amount of data. (Mäntyneva 2003, 60-63.)

Building a database system is ongoing process, which should have clear objectives and also possibilities for development, since new needs of information will come continuously. As integrating the database for the organization is relatively large project, it is recommended to share it into smaller projects. The project needs to be well managed so that the end result is integrated and well-functioning. Important for the success of the project is that the management is committed and participates to the project. To gain advantage from the CRM system needs the internal communication work efficiently and transition to use the system needs to be clear, in order to make

everybody understand how system works and for which purposes. (Oksanen 2010, 49; Mäntyneva 2003, 70-73.)

## 7.5 CRM in marketing

Customer analysis made in connection with CRM is beneficial when it is used to guide the marketing decisions. With customer analysis can marketing be more efficient. Information can be as simple as what customer have purchased previously, and forecast based on that if she/he will purchase that again at some point. Not to forget the timing, when to offer the products/services for the customers is relevant. To use information in practice can feel challenging at first so it is better to start with more simple analysis. When planning marketing campaign needs to clarify: for whom, what, how and when? Purpose of the marketing campaign need to be defined, is it to get new customers, activate the current customers, increase sales or keep the current customers. Campaigns also as projects need to have timelines, defined when it starts and when it ends in order to measure results. When using a CRM it is possible to target campaign for the certain group of customers. If marketing is implemented for too wide group, purpose of it weakens as customers receive so much information, so that they start to ignore it. After the marketing campaign is implemented, received customer feedback need to be analyzed and the success of the campaign measured, in order to develop marketing and find most effective channels. (Mäntyneva 2003, 95. 103. 107.)

Based on Mäntyneva, event-driven marketing is noticed to be effective way in many cases. Events can be shared into: events in the customer's life cycle, events in the life cycle of the customership, or events of the sales and marketing. Examples of event-driven marketing are noticing customer when moving to new address or reward five years lasting membership. Event-driven marketing can make marketing communications more meaningful for the customer. It is important to remember that each customer is individual so in some cases it can be hardly recognizable. (Mäntyneva 2003, 95-96.)

## 8 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

Research was implemented as a questionnaire (APPENDIX 1) for the customers of Sokos Mylly. Implementation happened as paper form questionnaire in the department store. This was chosen to be the best way to reach customers widely, as all of the customers are not using e.g. e-mail or social media. Google Sheet tool was used to create the base for questionnaire. Questionnaire included choice questions and two open questions. Choice questions made answering to be easy and fast, so that answering does not take a lot of time from the customer. To wake interest of the customers toward questionnaire two 50 € gift cards of the S-group were set as an award. (APPENDIX 2) Questionnaire was set up in two locations in the department store, in order to collect responses more widely. The questions were formulated to match with the research objectives set. Main purpose was to study knowledge of the customers, and research communication channels which have been relevant for the customers.

Questionnaire was published at the department store 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2015 and maintained until first of March 2015. Amount of total respondents were 119 customers. Purpose was to gain both female and male respondents, from all age distributions. After all responses were received, reporting and analyzing of the research findings started by marking up every answer to an Excel file. Open comments (APPENDIX 3) can be found in the end of this thesis and are submitted for the store manager of the Sokos.

## 9 RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 9.1 General demographics and purchase behavior

At the beginning of the questionnaire was asked demographical questions; gender and age of the respondent. These questions were set to give an overall image of the respondents but also to find out how age and gender of the customers' affects to their purchase behavior and awareness of the changes. As seen in the figure 1, majority of the respondents, 77% are females and 23% are males. This was expected result as

majority of the Sokos' customers are females. For this study is relevant to receive responses from both gender representatives to create comprehensive view. Total of 119, 27 male and 92 female respondents is satisfying result. Female customers are also customers of the Sokos for Men –store, so customer segmentation cannot be done only based on the gender.

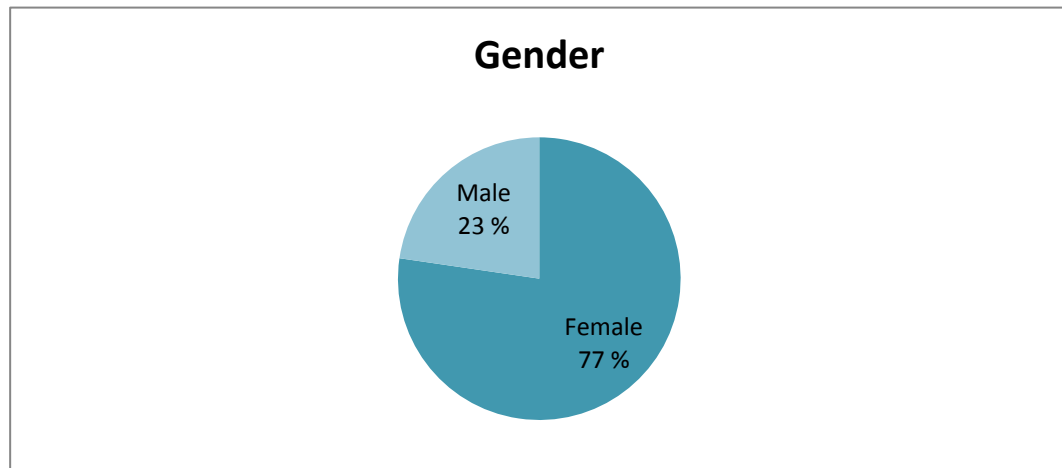


Figure 1. Gender of the respondents.

As seen in the figure 2, respondents from all age customers were received; most of the respondents are categorized to 20-36 years and 51-65 years. Least responses were received from the customers age 66 and over.

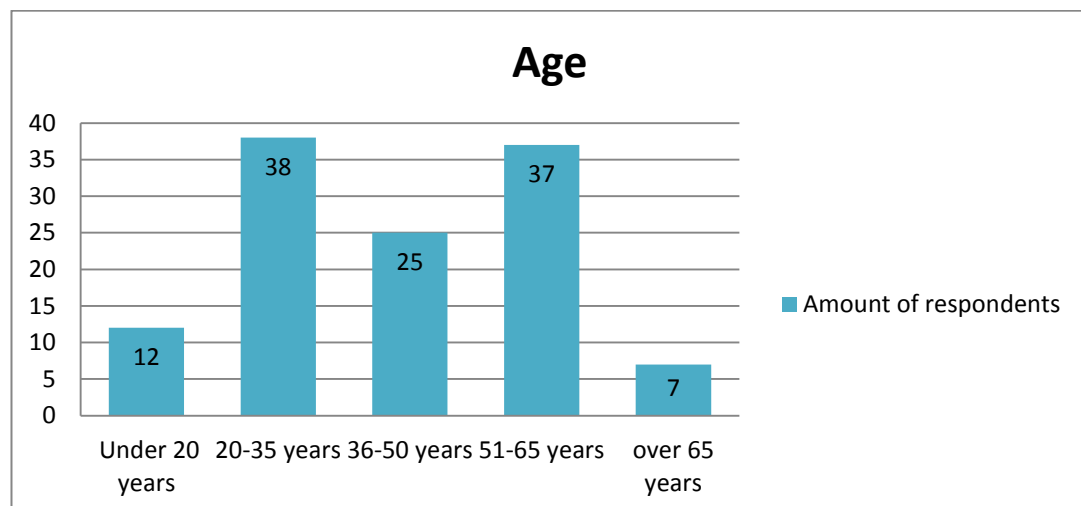


Figure 2. Age distribution of the respondents.

Question three was set to find out if the respondent is the co-op member of the TOK or member of another cooperative or not a member of S-group. Figure 3 shows membership division between respondents. Overall, 88% of respondents are mem-

bers of the S-group and 76% are members of the TOK. Members of the S-group receives frequently information about operations of the S-groups example via mail, e-mail or/and mobile application. Members of the TOK can be more effectively reached by the organization and are the main target group of the whole operations of the TOK.

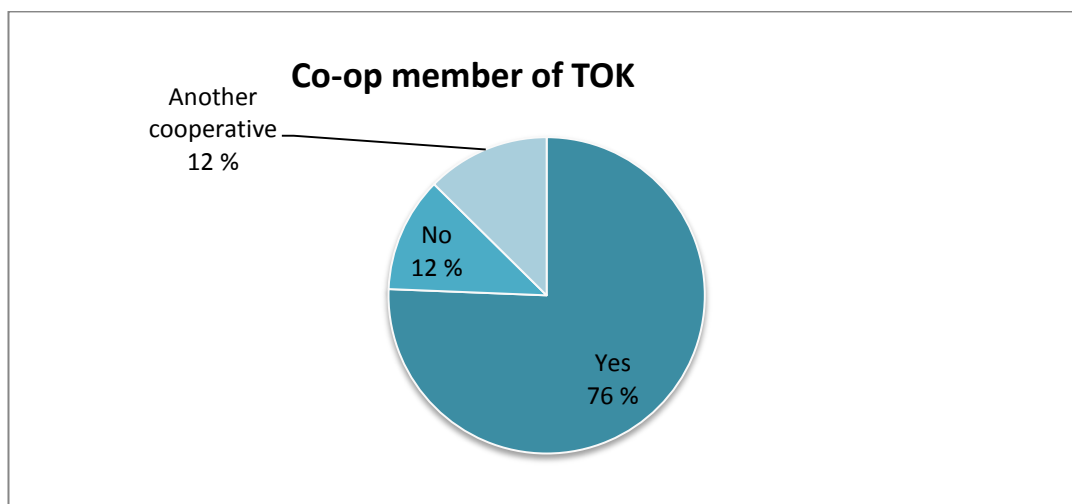


Figure 3. Respondent is the co-op member of the TOK/other cooperative or not a member.

Questions four and five give an answer to how often respondent visits in the store and in which department. With this information can be measured the loyalty of the customer and seek if some department is more popular among the respondents than others. Most of the respondents visit in the department store once a month or once a week, which is rather often from consumer's point of view. As seen in the figure 4, 55 respondents selected once a month, 35 respondents selected once a week, 19 respondents selected once in three month, 6 respondents ones in six month and 4 respondents once a year or less often. When customer visits in the store often, will customer at some point usually notice changes such as location and selection differences. Customers who visits often in the store more likely are interacting with the personnel and might receive information trough that. Purpose is to inform all the current customers despite of their loyalty or frequently of ther visits. Potential customers should also be noticed in order to create new customer relationships.

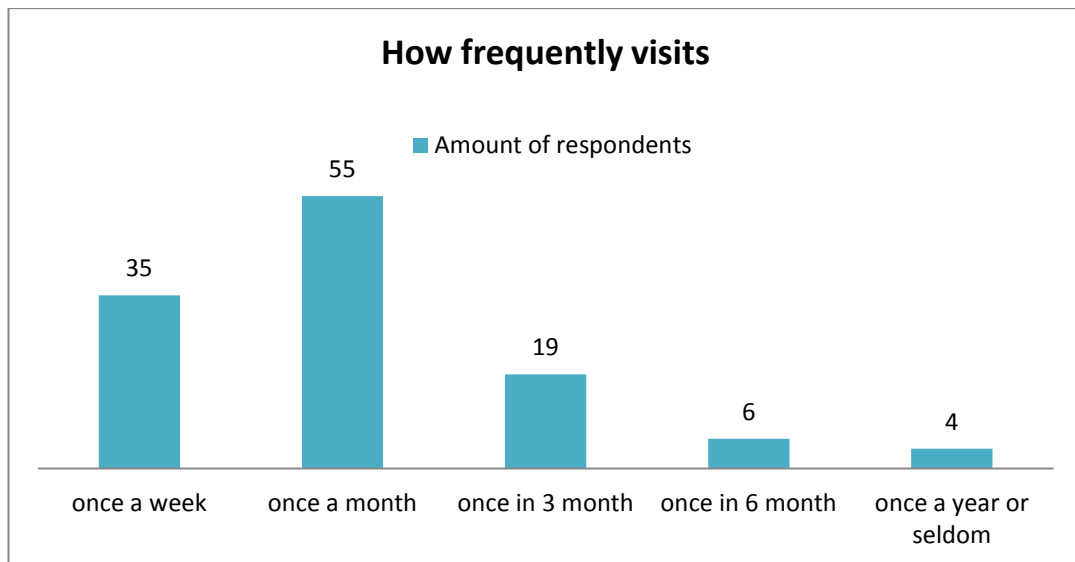


Figure 4. How frequently respondent visits in the department store.

Figure 5 demonstrates which department respondent visits most often. Most popular department among respondents is women's clothing department, with 54 responses. 46 respondents told that they visits most often in cosmetics department, and 30 respondents answered men's clothing department. Only 3 respondents selected beauty/hairdressing salon, this result can be explained so that beauty and hairdressing services are usually used relatively rarely.

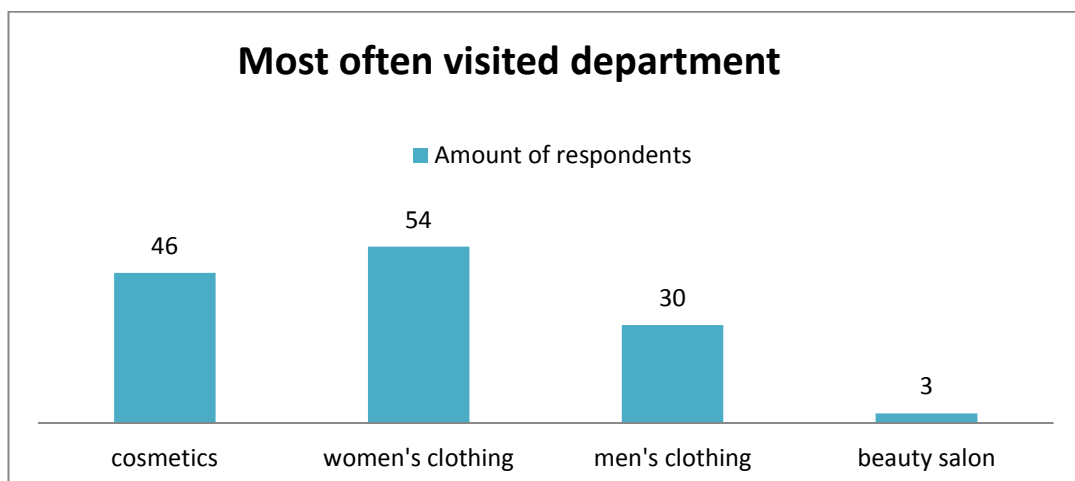


Figure 5. Department respondent visits most often.

## 9.2 Information flow

Questions six to nine studied customers' awareness about the changes in Sokos. Purpose was also to find out which communication channels have been relevant for receiving information related to the changes lately. Question 6 was set to find out if customers know about the existence of Sokos for Men –store, and question 7 studied how the information was received. Since 2015 Sokos have been operating only in the first floor of the shopping center, with question number 8 wanted to find out how aware customers are about it. With this information can be analyzed if more informing towards customers is needed and which communication channels have been effective ones.

As seen in the figure 6, 79% of the respondents are aware of the Sokos for Men-store, 21% are not. 21% of the respondents meaning 25 people, did not know about the existence of Sokos for Men, even it have been operating at centrally located place in the shopping center since August 2014.

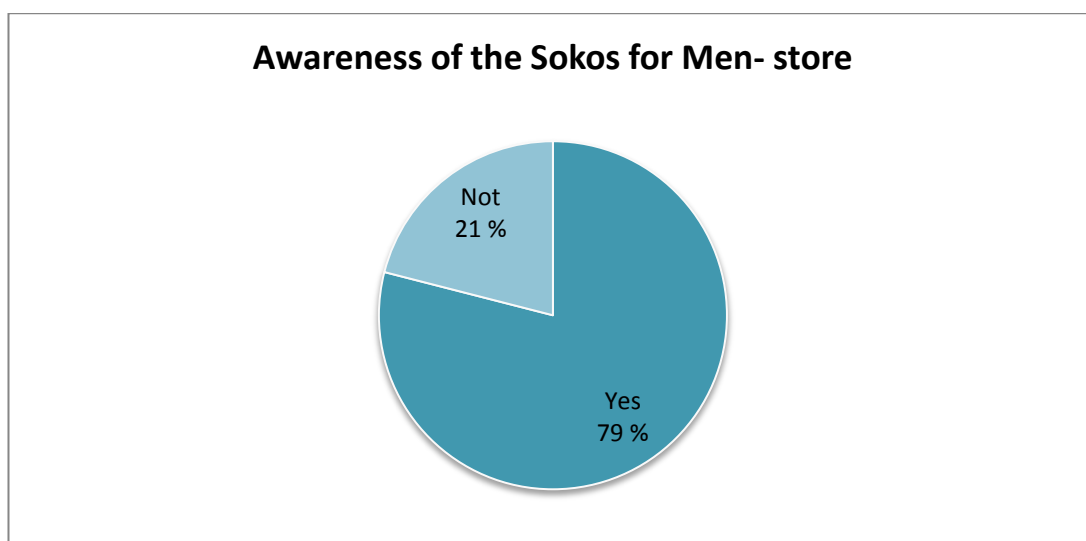


Figure 6. Respondent is aware of the Sokos for Men –store.

Figure 7 demonstrates from which source respondents have received information about Sokos for Men- store. Majority of the respondents, 61 out of 119 have noticed existence of Sokos for Men-store by themselves. 15 respondents have received information from the personnel, 14 of respondents received information through this questionnaire, 13 from advertisement, 10 from in-store posters and four respondents heard from a friend. As Sokos for Men –store is located opposite side of the original



Sokos store and has similar appearance, it can easily be recognized to be part of Sokos. Still informing is needed when the location of the store changes. Customers have been informed by advertising in customer magazine Ostokset during store's opening season. Also in store informing such as posters and in store radio were implemented. Interaction between the customer and personnel of the organization can be mentioned as information channel too. In the Facebook group of Sokos Wiklund (another Sokos department store of the TOK) was informed about the opening of Sokos for Men –store, but it have not been remarkable communication channel.

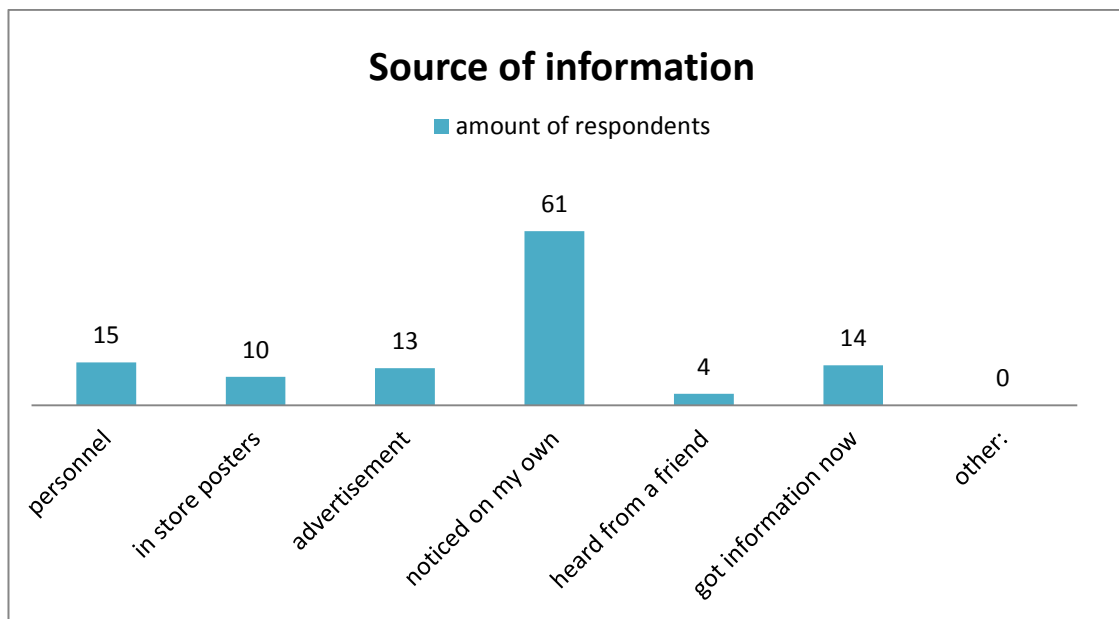


Figure 7. How respondent received information about the Sokos for Men –store.

As seen in the figure 8, 78% of the respondents are aware that women's clothing department is removed to the first floor of the shopping center. 22% meaning 26 respondents were not aware of it. As the change is still relatively recent, it was expected that all of the customers are not yet aware about it. To avoid misunderstandings and losing customers, should customers' be effectively informed that Sokos continue operating in the first floor as the second floor have been closed since 2015.

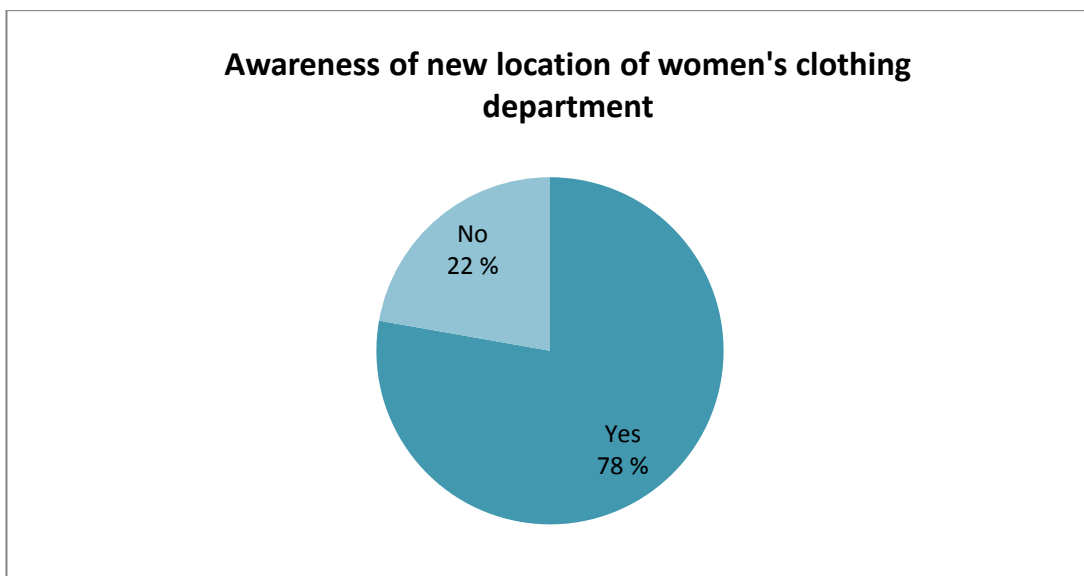


Figure 8. Respondent is aware that that women's clothing department is removed to the first floor.

As figure 9 demonstrates, majority of the respondents, 61 out of 119 have noticed by themselves that Sokos is centralized to the first floor. 19 respondents have received information through personnel, 14 from in-store posters and nine respondents heard from a friend. 12 respondents received information through this questionnaire. Four respondents selected “other”, which referred to printed media.

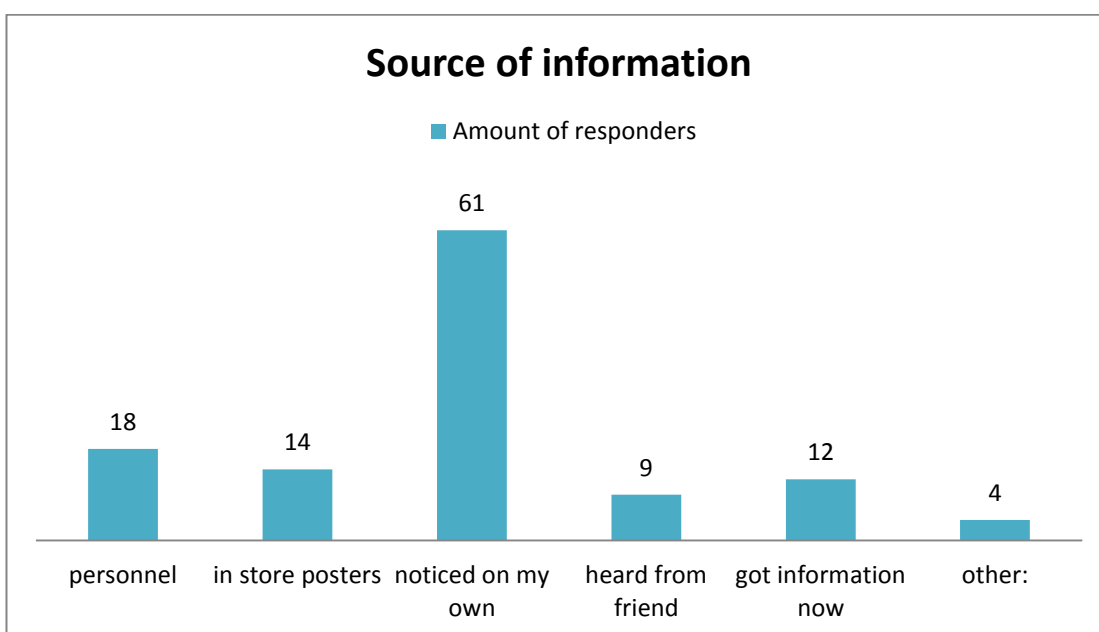


Figure 9. How respondent received information about centralization of Sokos to the first floor.

Purpose of the question 10 was to find out how large percent of the respondents are using social networking groups example Facebook, so that can be defined if it is useful communication channel for this organization or not. As seen in figure 10, 66% of the respondents are using social networking group example Facebook. Therefore it could be possible channel for sharing information. Flow of information in social media is so active that part of it will be ignored, so attention of the customers' cannot be anticipated. Still 34% of the respondents answered that they are not using social media, so use of other communication channels cannot be decreased in order to reach customers widely.

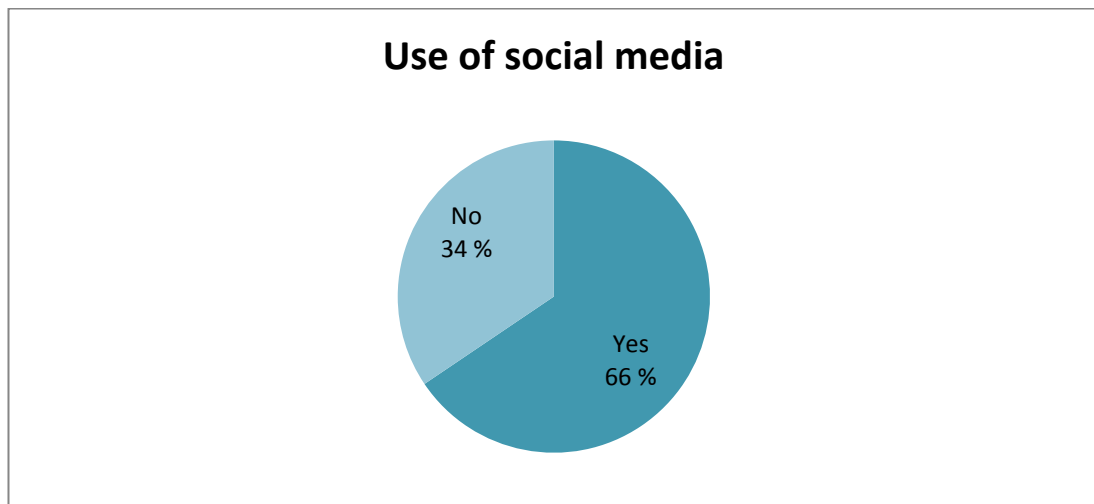


Figure 10. Respondent is using social networking group example Facebook.

### 9.3 Open questions

Last part of the questionnaire included two open questions with purpose to hear customers' opinions about the changes in Sokos and overall opinions about quality of the service and product range (APPENDIX 3). By receiving customer feedback, can be found possible improvement ideas for the department store. Generally feedback from the customers was positive. Most of the customers highlighted the good service they have got from Sokos. Following comments related to service were received:

“Service is great and professional”

“I have always received good customer service when needed”

“Friendly personnel, especially young employees. Sometimes too few staff”

“Excellent service”.

Also Sokos for Men-store received positive comments about its location, service and selection, such as:

“New separated men’s department seems to be workable solution”

“Good that everything is in the same floor, it is easy”

“Great that is own store for men”.

Received criticism focused mostly on product/brand range and narrowness of the store. This might be consequence of decreased area of the store and amount of products. Every customer’s needs cannot be satisfied as well as in the past because product range is decreased. Example selection of plus size cloths is decreased compared to old selection. Comments received about the changes were such as:

“Otherwise good but selection is decreased, especially at the shoe department.”

“Selection of plus size is honestly went to pathetic”

“Welcoming change, I will visit in the future as well”

“Bad, example in the women’s department is not always available qualified salesperson, and amount of personnel is decreased. I have seen Sokos as a store with good service, but I am not sure anymore”

## 10 ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The age distribution of the respondents was close to expected result as the main target groups of Sokos is adults. Surprisingly the amount of 20-35 years respondents was largest from all age ranges. This tells that younger consumers should be taken into account when planning marketing. Remarkable difference between age groups of 20-35 years and 51-65 years is the usage of social networking applications such as Facebook. Most of the consumers under 35 years are using social media. Therefore it can be seen as one of the potential communication channel for young consumers. The social media can be used as an additional communication channel, but it cannot totally replace existing channels. The customers who are not using social media should not be forgotten.

According to the research findings the majority of respondents were members of the S-group. These customers frequently receive information about the S-group's operations. The members of the TOK receive more direct marketing material and information can be targeted based on their location and previous purchases. Bonus and campaigns for the members commit them to centralize consumption into S-group. 12% of the respondents are not members of the S-group, and 24% are not members of the TOK. It is important to notice that customers who are not members of the TOK should receive information somehow as well, because by ignoring them can potential customers be lost. However information in the store, in the shopping center and in the social media is available for all the customers and it is not dependent of the membership.

Once a month visit was expected reply from the customers, as it is the average amount of visits based on the customer statistics of Sokos. 55 respondents answered "Once a month" and "Once a week" reply gathered 35 responses. As large part of the respondents visit in the department store relatively often, it would be expected that more respondents would have known about the changes. For the business it is important to get the customer s visit often in the store. Members of the loyalty program usually visit more often. With campaigns company is able to attract customers to visit more often, for example staff tells about a campaign which starts in a next week. The selection and the outlook of the store need to be changed regularly in order to tempt customers to visit in the store. Mobile application of the S-group called S-mobiili, is one way to get customers to visit more often. To wake customers' interest via mobile application usually requires benefits for the customer, such as discounts.

The most popular departments among respondents were women's clothing and cosmetics. As these two departments are located close to each other's and have similar kind of target groups they can benefit from each other's customers. In order to get customer buy products from both departments during one visit, salesperson need to know products of both departments. Sharing knowledge among the personnel workable internal communication is needed, as well as desire for development. In the department store it is possible to offer many different products for the customer and through that create additional sales. But as staff is not always able to interact with

each customer in the department store, should store be organized so that it would awake customer's interest and give information even without salesperson. From the results of the questionnaire noticeable was that young females often visits in cosmetics department, but rarely in women's clothing department. From this fact can draw a conclusion that women's clothing department is not attractive for younger generation. In the shopping center is a lot of supply for young females, so there is no point for Sokos to compete in that area. Instead Sokos could point out specific products with inexpensive prices, in order to create additional sales. These products could be example scarfs, tights and shoes. When most of the customers of women's clothing department are adult females, should the main focus be on the target group in order to offer more customized products and services.

According to the research findings majority of the respondents answered that they are aware about the changes in Sokos, but still over 20 percent of the respondents were not aware. This tells that fifth of the customers are unknowing about new arranges of Sokos. For the business it would be important that new locations would be noticed. Particularly customers who visit more rarely might not yet know that men's and women's clothing departments are removed to the first floor. The shopping center is competitive business environment, so important is to inform about new location in order to keep them as customers of Sokos. Sokos have been able to use store windows of the old location to guide customers to the first floor. Using the store windows in the second floor even rental contract is ended have been an advantage for Sokos. During 2015 new stores will be opened in the old location of Sokos, thereby might customers better notice that Sokos is removed.

A lot of resources have not been used for marketing of Sokos for men –store and centralization of Sokos. Majority of the respondents have noticed the changes by themselves. From given communication channels personnel have been the most effective channel what comes to informing customers. Even the amount of personnel is increased, the interaction between customers and personnel needs to maintain active. Personal communication requires a lot of human resources but it is also the most effective way of communication. Personnel of Sokos, cannot assume that all of the customers know about the changes, as the research findings shows that still fifth of the

customers is not aware of the new locations. Therefore it is better to inform customers often than assume that the customers know.

In Sokos, customers are expecting to receive service and if this change might customer lose their interest against products and services of Sokos. Couple of comments was received where the amount of salespeople was questioned. The majority of respondents were satisfied with the customer service Sokos offers. As many of the respondents mentioned decreased product range, Sokos should focus on selection they offer. Amount of products cannot be increased but it is important to offer products which are attractive for the target group. By choosing most essential products could as many customers been satisfied as resources enables. Based on the open comments females are missing wider collection of plus size cloths, example brand Zizzi. Zizzi is available in the store but could be better presented in order to customers to notice it. Male respondents' wished for more brands such as Tommy Hilfiger, Hugo Boss and Tiger of Sweden. Tiger of Sweden is relative new brand in collection of Sokos, and have attracted especially young adults. Overall the men's clothing department has woken more interesting among young adults, probably because of the new brands and location of the store.

For example display windows in the department store and fashion shows in the shopping center can be used to promote specific brands and products. Promotion and appearance of the store needs to be targeted for the main target group of the Sokos. As area of the store is increased but still objective is to offer comprehensive product range for the customers, department store needs to be organized well and kept in order to get best out from the business space.

## 11 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for the case company is to keep informing the customers about the new arranges, as based on the research findings fifth of the customers were not aware about their recent changes. The use of communication channels has not been very effective, as most of the customers have noticed changes by themselves. Communi-

cation channel which would be targeted specifically for the customers of Sokos Mylly is needed. For example monthly published customer magazine cannot be used to share targeted information for Sokos Mylly's customers, as it is same for all Sokos stores in Finland. With mobile communication Sokos could reach their customers with personal way. Text message usually gets attention from the receiver and can be assumed that most of the customers own mobile phone. Mobile application could also be used as an attraction for the customers to visit in Sokos Mylly, this requires offering benefit for the user of mobile application.

Another Sokos of the TOK, Sokos Wiklund, is actively using social media channels, Facebook and Instagram, for sharing seasonal information for their customers. Sokos Mylly is not using social media in marketing at the time. If they are not willing or do not have resources to create own Facebook group, could Sokos Mylly make use of Sokos Wiklund's, TOK's and shopping center Mylly's Facebook group by sharing information there. As customer base of Sokos Mylly and Sokos Wiklund varies from each other's, cannot benefit of using Wiklund's Facebook group be measured directly, but still almost 4000 customers are following Sokos Wiklund's postings. By using shopping center Mylly's Facebook group for seasonal informing could be reached about 20000 customers of the shopping center. Sokos could also benefit from other communication channels of the shopping center such as radio, information screens and website more often. Via shopping center's communication channels can share information about current news, products, events and changes of the stores.

The biggest sales campaign of Sokos is called 3+1 Päivää, which usually attracts more customers to the department store than normally. During 3+1 campaign can be implemented unusual things related to marketing and outlook of the store, such as colorful decorations, carnival music and a host who tells about discounts/happenings in the store. Sokos Mylly could highlight the existence of Sokos for Men-store and women's clothing department during 3+1 campaign. Because then customers who normally do not visit in the department store often, might visit during the campaign. Another remarkable campaign organized in the shopping center, is called Myllytys. During this campaign the amount of customers in the shopping center increases and stores are able to use space in front of the store. During Myllytys, Sokos could reach customers of the shopping center and not just regular customers of Sokos. For exam-



ple sharing flyers with men's and women's clothing offers in order to get customers to visit in the store.

Size of the store is now suitable to the environment which is the shopping center. Customers are satisfied that Sokos will continue operating in the shopping center Mylly, and positive feedback about the department store operating in one floor was received. Own clothing store for men was welcoming change from the customer's point of view. Based on open comments more narrowed collection would no longer awake interests among the customers. Over time will customers get more used to the revision of Sokos Mylly and hopefully notice implemented changes. Since the current state of customer's awareness and usage of communication channels is now studied, research findings can be used to compare situation in the future.

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# Customer survey for the customers of Sokos Mylly

Material is used for the thesis of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences

Two 50€ giftcards of the S-group will be shared among the responders, by leaving phone number on the last page you will participate to the lottery.

## Gender

- Female
- Male

## Age

- under 20
- 20-35
- 36-50
- 51-65
- 66-

## I am a co-op member of the TOK

- Yes
- No
- I am a member of other cooperative

## I visit in Sokos Mylly

- Once in a week or more often
- Once in a month
- Once during a three months
- Once during a six months
- Once in a year or more rarely

**Department which I visit in most often**

- Cosmetic
- Women's clothing
- Men's clothing
- Beauty/hair dressing saloon

**I'm aware of the new "Sokos for men" store**

Men's department="Sokos for men" store

- Yes
- No

**I heard about the Sokos for men store from:**

- Personnel
- Poster in the store
- Advertisement
- Noticed on my own
- Heard from a acquaintance
- I received that information now
- Muu:

**I am aware that women's clothing department is removed to the first floor of Sokos**

Second floor in not in the use of Sokos at 2015

- Yes
- No

**I heard that Sokos is centralized to the first floor from:**

- Personnel
- Poster in the store
- I noticed on my own
- Heard from a acquaintance
- I received that information now
- Muu:

**I use social networking group example Facebook**

Social media as communication channel

- Yes
- No

**My opinion about the changes in Sokos**

**Open comments**

example about service, selection, operations

**Phone number**

# Asiakaskysely Sokos Myllyn asiakkaille

Tietoja käytetään materiaalina Satakunnan ammattikorkeakoulun opinnäytetyössä.

Vastaukset käsitellään anonyymisti.

Arvomme vastanneiden kesken kaksi S-ryhmän 50€ lahjakorttia, jättämällä puhelinnumerosi viimeiselle sivulle osallistut arvontaan.

## 1. Sukupuoli

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Nainen  
 Mies

## 2. Ikä

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- alle 20  
 20-35  
 36-50  
 51-65  
 66-

## 3. Olen asiakasomistaja Turun Osuuskaupassa

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Kyllä  
 En  
 Kuulun toiseen osuuskauppaan

## 4. Asioin Sokos Myllyssä noin:

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Kerran viikossa tai useammin  
 Kerran kuukaudessa  
 Kerran kolmessa kuukaudessa  
 Kerran puolessa vuodessa  
 Kerran vuodessa tai harvemmin

## 5. Osasto jolla useimmiten asioin:

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Kosmetiikka  
 Naisten pukeutuminen  
 Miesten pukeutuminen  
 Hoitola/parturi-kampaamo

**6. Olen tietoinen uudesta "Sokos for men" myymälästä**

Miesten osasto = Sokos for men

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Kyllä  
 En

**7. Sain tietää uudesta miesten myymälästä:**

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Henkilökunnalta  
 Myymälän opastejulistesta  
 Mainoksesta, esim. sähköposti, asiakasposti  
 Huomasin myymälän itse  
 Kuulin tuttavalta  
 Sain tiedon nyt  
 Muu: .....

**8. Olen tietoinen Sokoksen naisten osaston siirtymisestä ensimmäiseen kerrokseen**

Yläkerta ei enää ole Sokoksen käytössä vuonna 2015

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Kyllä  
 En

**9. Sain tietää Sokoksen keskittämisestä ensimmäiseen kerrokseen:**

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Henkilökunnalta  
 Myymälän opastejulistesta  
 Huomasin asian itse  
 Kuulin tuttavalta  
 Sain tiedon nyt  
 Muu: .....

**10. Käytän sosiaalista mediaa kuten Facebookia**

Sosiaalinen media tiedotusvälineenä

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Kyllä  
 En

**11. Mielipiteeni Sokoksen muutoksista:**

**12. Avoimet kommentit:**

esim. palvelusta, valikoimasta, toiminnasta

**13. Puhelinnumero lahjakortin arvontaa varten:**

**Kiitos vastaamisesta! Ilmoitamme voittajille 6.3.2015 mennessä.**



## ASIAKASKYSELY SOKOS MYLLYN ASIAKKAILLE

Vastaamalla osallistut kahden 50€  
arvoisen S-ryhmän lahjakortin  
arvontaan. Voittajille ilmoitetaan  
6.3.2015 mennessä.

Haluamme kehittää palveluamme,  
siksi mielipiteesi on meille tärkeä

Open comments about the changes, service, collection, operations:

*“Quite compact, sure collection is decreased. Always good service, range in cosmetics okay, accessories quite narrow. “*

*“Old Sokos was larger, collection decreased. Still well organized. Good service”*

*“Service is great and professional”*

*“I have always received good customer service when needed”*

*“Friendly personnel, especially young employees. Sometimes too few staff”*

*“Excellent service”.*

*“New separated men’s department seems to be workable solution”*

*“Good that everything is in the same floor, it is easy”*

*“Great that is own store for men”.*

*“Otherwise good but selection is decreased, especially at the shoe department.”*

*“Selection of plus size is honestly went to pathetic”*

*“Welcoming change, I will visit in the future as well”*

*“Bad, example in the women’s department is not always available qualified salesperson, and amount of personnel is decreased. I have seen Sokos as a store with good service, but I am not sure anymore. No sense to have same collection in Mylly and in Wiklund”*

*“Otherwise good, but range in shoes is decreased”*

*“Very good, good service”*

*“Departments too narrow. Good service”*

*“Old was excellent. Freidly service, range decreased, ok”*

*“Very good”*

*“Very good”*

*“Good clear wholeness, previous clothing department was unclear. Service and range is good”*

*“Very good, always good service”*

*“Clear, clean. Joy to visit”*

*“I heard that small, but this small!! Range narrow, before this was better than Wiklund!*

*“Thumbs up. Excellent service, professional”*

*“Bad, as collection is narrowed”*

*"Okay, no need to improve"*

*"More brands for men such as Hilfiger, Boss"*

*"A bit narrow"*

*"Where is home department? This size fits better into shopping center based on amount of customers."*

*"I hope Sokos will stay in Mylly. Very good service"*

*"Clear to have own store for men. Always good service when needed."*

*"Waiting women's department to open. Friendly personnel"*

*"Good. Nice salespeople"*

*"Selection of Zizzi decreased?"*

*"Lovely Marcus salesperson"*

*"Collection narrowed too much, I do not like to visit in Sokos Mylly anymore"*

*"Range is too narrow. Service friendly"*

*"Less products, when size 48"*

*"Getting used to it, service good, collection decreased"*

*"Good to separate men's and women's stores!" Friendly personnel"*

*"Sparky, excellent service in women's department!"*

*"Good changes. Wish more cosmetics, some products not available"*

*"Average, collection weaken. Service sometimes good, sometimes not"*

*"Nice, even smaller. Hair salon is the best!"*

*"Good service"*

*"All changes not well considered. Listen personnel's opinions, let them choose what to sell"*

*"Smart changes. Excellent and friendly service. Collection is enough"*

*"Liked more the old one. Wide range"*

*"Not affecting. Good professional service"*

*"Good to have everything in the same floor. Excellent service"*

*"Attractiveness of the store is decreased. Service good, collection not attractive"*

*"First floor is good, everything easy to find and suitable size. Personnel okay but sometimes need to look for salesperson, could be more active"*

*"Not affecting to purchase behavior. Easy to move in one floor. Good, like offers"*

*"Good service"*

*"Good service, high prices"*

*"Hope important products are not moving. Good"*

*"Good to have everything in same floor, easy. Excellent personnel"*

*"Good. Friendly service"*

*"Okay but Zizzi is missing. Good professional personnel"*

*"Easy to come to buy cloths, even a bit less cloths, still well organized. Good"*

*"Pretty good, even smaller area. Service and collection good"*

*"For men is great. Otherwise not affecting, mostly use cosmetics. Everything works"*

*"Collection decreased but outfit is good. Good helpful personnel"*

*"Collection decreased way too few dressing rooms. Should i change place for buying cloths. Service as good as before, excellent personnel. Good to have trainees as well"*

*"Shoe and bag departments are narrowed. First floor was better before"*

*"Goos, change is always good. Good service, thank you!"*

*"More clear"*

*"A bit narrow. Service good, collection suitable"*

*"Changes coming, hopefully to better direction. If need can get service"*

*"Collection decreased"*

*"Useful, everything in the same floor. Wide and good collection"*

*"Decreased too much, big sizes"*

*"A bit unclear"*

*"Compared to old more narrow, more dressing rooms. Service good and professional"*

*"Old purse department was great, no reason to visit anymore"*

*"Good. Men's store is good, more brand such as Tiger..."*

*"Positive. Good professional service"*

*"More workable and clear than before. Service available, wide collection"*

*"Good and clear store. Good service"*

*"Great to have own store for men"*

*"Okay, friendly personnel"*

*"Clothing selection could be more youthful. Service is good!!"*

*"Ok, men's department very good and clear"*

*"Good solution for more easy visiting. More clear places for products. More gift ideas for men in men's store"*

*"Nice, happy personnel"*

*Good to separate men's and women's clothing. Good service, wide collection"*

*“Very good separated men’s department. ++++”*

*”Okay, Service always ok”*

*”Good collection, fashionable”*

*“Good direction. Good professional service”*

*“Haven’t notice changes”*

*“Women’s collection is small and narrow”*

*“Worse, cannot find anything to buy. Sometimes good service, clothing collection bad”*

*“Positive”*